

LUISS



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***THE CAMPAIGNS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF HUMAN RIGHTS***

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“We are way more powerful when we turn to each other and not on each other, when we celebrate our diversity, focus on our community and together tear down the mighty walls of injustice”

- **Cynthia McKinney**

To the Group 015 of Amnesty International Lazio, thank you for this amazing journey.

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INTRODUCTION

When faced with human rights violations and ongoing wars, it is easy to forget how far we have come since the middle of the last century. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has sparked conflicts that have altered the world's landscape. The Declaration have also provoked mass protests, against racial and gender inequality, which have radically altered societies. The latter have become a rallying cry for a global human rights movement that has evolved beyond recognition. International human rights conventions, as well as many national constitutions and laws have elaborated and codified the Universal Declaration, establishing a moral basis for the United Nations and regional efforts to resolve human rights issues, maintain sustainability, reduce poverty, combat illiteracy and protect public health. However, for most people, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is nothing more than a paper pledge, a promise that has yet to be fulfilled, especially for the 13% of the global population who lives on less than 1 dollar per day¹, for the 144 million children under 5 years-old that die every day from starvation and preventable diseases², for the billions of adults who are illiterate, the majority of whom women, for the prisoners of conscience languishing in jails around the world; for the victims of abuse and ill-treatment in over 150 countries; for the thousands of people sentenced to death or executed every day; for the tens of thousands people killed illegally each year in wars sparked by inequality, injustice, and human rights abuses.

All the human rights abuse that Amnesty International (AI) has been fighting for decades are now still causing devastation on people's lives all over the world. For instance, although prison gates have been opened in some societies and political prisoners have been released and at least eleven former political prisoners turned out to become presidents or head of states, other forms of repression such as widespread extrajudicial killings and "disappearances" have emerged in many cultures. Many of the people with whom Amnesty International operates are now subjected to human rights violations outside of prisons walls. They could be people killed in violent conflicts, women killed or abused in their homes or communities as well as victims of police brutality on the streets. We now live in a world where the end of the Cold War had reignited unprecedented ethnic and nationalists' tensions. Mass migrations are being triggered by political upheavals and unfair wealth distributions, revealing bigotry and prejudice in countries that claim to be free and democratic. Amnesty International arose during a period of wide spread global radicalization: people living under oppressive regimes in Spain, Portugal and the URSS fought to defend their right to protest in the 1960s as Africans struggled to liberate themselves from colonial dominance. Hence, it derived its power from the people who were willing to show solidarity with those who have been subjected to governmental repression. Firstly, Amnesty International said to "*let opinions flow freely*" (Amnesty International, 1961) and started the opening of cells of dissenters. Then, when military juntas in Latin America used torture to break up opposition in the 1970s and 1980s, Amnesty International called for an interventional convention against

¹World Bank Open Data, Nowcast of the Global Poverty Rate at the \$1.90 line, 2015-2021

² Save The Children, 16 October 2016

torture and the closure of torture chambers. As political violence shifted from jails to the streets in the forms of “disappearances” and extra juridical executions, the organization call out on these abuses too. In the 1990s and early 21st century, as armed wars became more common, Amnesty International expanded its mandate to include all combatants, not just governments. Beyond freedom of expression, AI has expanded its scope to include identity-based violations such as discrimination. Thus, they work with people who are threatened not only because of what they believe but also because of who they are. This is not a denying of their origins but rather an evolution and adaption to a new reality. Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was born out of the horror of the Holocaust, which is considered the fundamental identity human rights abuse.

Significant political, social and economic shift have occurred years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The human rights movement has increased in intensity and numbers, and human rights awareness is unquestionably higher that it has never been. Repression, poverty and conflict on the other hand, still provoke an enormous negative impact on many people’s lives. Therefore, more people’s hope in the 1990s has given ways to a well-founded fear and an increasing importance to human rights advocacy. The spread of the free market economy, multi-party political structures and technological change, all brought by Globalization, produced greater freedom and wealth to some, while increasing poverty and despair to others. Many national political and economic agendas have been dominated by global economic organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. At the same time, multinational companies have increased their wealth and power concentration. Nonetheless, in the face of new human rights problems, posed by globalization, Amnesty International has not stand still. It has recognized the international human rights movement’s neglect of economic, social and cultural rights and it has taken measures to address these rights more explicitly in its own work. In 1997, AI representatives reaffirmed their commitment to promoting all human rights, including socioeconomic rights, and agreed to advocate for human rights in the business and financial sectors, as well as in government and intergovernmental assistance, trade and investment policies. They agreed to expand and improve their efforts in 2001. Consequently, a question emerged since the movement is now devoted to the advancement of all human rights: should the movement take steps to condemn grave violations of all human rights? Strategic thinking, innovation and measures will be in high demand as Amnesty International grows and adapts to the changing environment. The collapse of existing powers systems in some countries, which have historically been targets to Amnesty International appeals, has posed a new major challenge. Especially, these crises can easily consume public and political consciousness around the world thanks to new technologies and global media networks. However, this focus can be very selective. Other crises, with all their human tragedies, may be overlooked or forgotten. Today, Amnesty International is part of a large and dynamic movement that has succeeded in bringing the fight for human rights to the forefront and keeping it there. It has done so, not in an abstract sense but by directly and usually successfully campaigning on behalf of countless thousands of people around the world, who have had their human rights highly violated. The essence of Amnesty

International is therefore the complete protection and application of human rights. Its strength not only lies in its ability to combat human rights abuses but also in its readiness to take urgent action and creating a dialogue with institutions and governments. This organization was born in the 1960s and it has proven to be able to adapt to any situation and environment. It has evolved and improved not only in matters of communication but also in its organization and following.

Starting from a study on the Sociology of Human Rights, their subdivision and social relevance, I decided to analyze Amnesty International in its entirety. Afterwards, I developed an analysis that starts from an historical overview, including a socio-political analysis of the organization, and follows the study of AI in details: the ideas behind it, the values, the role of the activists as well as the importance of its campaigns. Furthermore, I focused especially on the relevance and importance of campaigning, and I decided to compare Amnesty International's methodology to the Sociology of Human rights and its criteria. Finally, in chapter four, I wanted to get behind the campaign and the activists, understanding the communication method and the involvement of repertoires, institutions and governments. To conclude, I identified some possible prospective and evolutions starting from the 2020-2021 Annual Report.

1. A sociological prospective on human rights

Human rights are commonly addressed as immutable properties of human beings. Conversely, sociologists define human rights as highly “*contested claims that vary across historical time and geographic space*” (Frezzo, 2015). On the one hand, human rights are part of a linear process guided by Nature and trans-historical forces. On the other hand, they have been influenced by politicians, especially from non-Western cultures, as well as common people in the forms of non-governmental organizations, social movements and all those organizations focused on the awareness and the importance of building a community around human rights. In particular, sociologists are interested in the relationship between the latter groups, the state and the outcome reflected on citizens. The efforts of NGOs and UN agencies brought a conceptualization of poverty, social inequalities, cultural exclusion and environmental degradation besides social problems, as human rights abuses. Therefore, the sociological prospective can analyze the human right issues from a unique insight, and potentially make a life-changing contribution in disputes and struggles over human rights in the contemporary period.

The dilemma concerning human rights stands in their actual definition and application. Although human rights are, by definition, global, we still find 193 frameworks for the enacting and enforcing of human rights, depending on the different political and legal institutions of countries. Despite the incredible work of NGOs, SMOs and communities in pushing for an expansion of human rights on a global scale, and the increasing interaction among nation-states, the latter still have authority and influence over human rights norms. Indeed, UN agencies and NGOs must appeal to nation-states for new laws and policies no matter the type of right under discussion. Moreover, it is also important to note that a filter on cultures must be applied. The universalism-cultural pluralism problem kicks in, whether within or among nation-states. Although a Human Rights Canon is present in the form of a collection of documents, namely the 1948 UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the signatories have embodied different levels of commitment to these documents. Indeed, Amnesty International Annual Reports keep demonstrating that these documents “*have not compelled nation-states to respect human rights as deeply or consistently as their framers had wished*” (Amnesty International, no date). No nation-states resulted to have a perfect record. Therefore, are we sure that these documents offered an important purpose in spite of the limitations on nation-states?

Sociologists respond to the three major aspects of human rights. First of all, the circumstances in which those rights develop, in particular around NGOs, SMOs and their work in transforming grievances into rights claims. Secondly, the way in which those rights are implemented under different political and legal systems, whether in the form of laws, norms or official institutions. Thirdly, the rights effect among and within nation-states. According to Brunnsma et al. (2012) the sociological approach can reorient the discipline towards the use of a scientific method and the resolution of human rights problems. Examining

the wide spectrum of human rights under the sociological lens, we can argue that civil and political rights are the most understood and accepted rights; that different types of rights overlap in the real world; that rights claims could come into conflict with one another especially in the political scene. Indeed, one of the most important purposes of the sociology of human rights is that of identifying the possible causes and remedies of competing rights claims.

For the sake of analyzing human rights with a scientific method, it is important to define them at first. Sociologists define human rights as *“a set of protections and entitlements possessed by all members of the human community regardless of race, class gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, national origin or other forms of identity or social standing”* (Frezzo, 2015). Hence, they focus on the social character of both protections and entitlements, implying that all the constraints and duties referred to human rights are embedded in society, and therefore evolve across history, depend on the geographic space, and are subject to cultural mediation. Including the most universal rights, such as that of security of person, which in fact finds expression only in specific frameworks. From the sociologists' point of view, universalism is not established yet, but it could be constructed along with common institutions, regulated interactions, negotiated values. Thus, universalism can be established through dialogue and negotiation, among governmental actors as well as non-governmental organizations, to open spaces also for marginalized populations and developing countries.

As mentioned before, sociologists focus both on protections, in the form of negative rights, and entitlements, in the form of positive rights. By definition, negative rights protect individuals from any form of abuse, and it is the responsibility of nation-states to guarantee these negative rights. Indeed, they must check it through their own branches, the judiciary and the executive. This is the reason why sociologists tend to emphasize the role of NGOs in pushing governments for the respect of human rights. Many associations tend to use pressure as a major tool for the establishment of human rights. However, negative rights are very hard to establish and govern. Sometimes they overlap, and tension is created between two negative rights. An excellent example is the debate of 2001 in the US government. According to the US Constitution, the government must be the principal guarantor of the right to privacy. However, the same government authorized a program for the monitoring of private e-mails and phone calls of its citizens for the sake of protecting citizens after the terrorist attacks of the 9\11. The current debate of the US National Security Agency is therefore based on two fundamental rights: the right to privacy and that of personal security. Conversely, positive rights are entitlements that include *“food, clothing, housing, healthcare, an education, employment, unemployment and disability insurance, social security, a minimum wage and a basic standard of living”* (Blau and Moncada, 2009). Regarding politics and positive rights, political actors can reduce or expand positive rights available to the population. As history has taught us, no consensus on positive rights exist within or between the major political parties, especially in the policymaking circles. It is important to note that positive and negative rights usually overlap.

Nonetheless, debates on legitimacy of both positive and negative rights reflect the relationships between agencies of the UN, major NGOs, as Amnesty International, and SMOs. Among with collaborating and competing, these actors form a “nexus”, which determines the way in which the human canon should be applied in response to global problems. According to Oxfam International, there are five universal rights: the right of livelihood, of basic services, to be safe from harm, to be heard, and to be treated as equal. These rights transcend the distinction between positive or negative rights and all together address the causes and effects of poverty. Indeed, Oxfam International argues that the real solution to poverty is not only linked to economic matters but rather political, social, cultural and environmental factors. For these reasons, sociologists found three angles on human rights. These angles specify different insights into the work of global human rights: sociology of development, social movement research, and political sociology. However, there are many approaches analyzed and used by sociologists. They analyze the social condition under which grievances develop; they may analyze the process by which states enacts these rights; they may analyze the political outcomes of human rights legislation. In general, sociologists analyze conditions under which grievances occur; *rights claims*, therefore the demand on entitlements or protections made by certain groups to the authorities; the *rights effects*, how the attainment of certain rights can change political and social conditions; and the *rights bundles*, how different types of rights result to be interconnected with each other theoretically and practically. Taken together, these four ideas form the starting point of the idea of the sociology of human rights.

To conclude, we could say that the sociology of human rights is “*the application of sociological theories and methods to the analysis of the social conditions under which human rights are imagined, contested, implemented, enforced, and transgressed*” (Frezzo, 2015). They examine conditions, rights claims, rights effects and rights bundles in order to understand the global setting and find real solutions to human rights abuses.

2. Classification, circulation and legislation

To really understand human rights abuses and apply remedies, a classification of human rights occurs among activists, policy makers and scholars. For the sake of building campaigns and programs to mitigate human rights violations, NGOs and UN agencies need to apply either the existing canon or change it. Therefore, a theoretical reference is always needed to confirm which rights have been violated. However, results are variable depending on the classification schema and on the priorities placed on specific types of rights. If several European constitutions contain explicit provisions for positive rights, so the governments provide a range of economic and social entitlements to assist their citizens in making their way through life, other countries define positive rights as merely social programs that can be modified, abolished or contracted depending on the circumstances, such as those proposed by the US political system. In the first case, those countries define insufficient the application of only negative rights to lead good lives. Hence, classification of rights is particularly important in influencing claims-making, which is the process of formulating and

articulating demands from authorities for protections and entitlements. In this process, actors must construct an intellectual structure to which they lay claims attributed to the existing human rights canon or by reestablishing a new canon. Hence, this process is based on reflection, deliberation, negotiation and compromise and it is continuously filtered in order to enter inside societies.

In general, there are two ways of classifying human rights: the first one distinguishes between “negative” and “positive” rights while the second one schema is called the “three- generations schema”. The latter wants to define the differences between collective and individual rights. It could be explained within the context of the French Revolution’s motto: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. Indeed, the first generation of civil and political rights ensure liberty to all the individuals; the second generation of economic and social rights ensure equality to all individuals; the third generation, which includes the right of self-determination, development and participation, ensure fraternity, and therefore solidarity, among people as well as communities. Since the two schemas are both the consequence of the reconstruction of the interstate system and the institutionalization of the United Nation and all the sectors concerned with human rights, they may develop and change over time. Indeed, negative rights or protections, are normally defined as civil and political rights as well as positive rights may be defined as economic and social rights. Therefore, differences between the two schemas are only concerned with a certain “hierarchy” of human rights and the additional idea of collective rights. In fact, the positive-negative rights schema has troubles addressing to a group or community while the three generations schema embrace rights for them. Moreover, it is important to note that the order in the establishment of these rights is not mandatory: a nation-state can achieve second or third generation rights before completely achieving first generation rights, there is not a fixed path towards the realization of human rights.

Having recognized the possible classifications and limitations of human rights it is necessary to understand how circulation among and within societies occurs. Over time the process of circulation has challenged old institutions and it has created new ones, especially during the accelerating process of globalization. The sociological perspective, in the forms of political sociology, sociology of development and social-movement research reveals the conditions under which human rights circulate among various social actors such as governments and communities. The process of circulation can be examined in terms of “ethnoscope”, “mediascope” and “ideoscope”. The first concerns the process of circulation as diffusion of notions through migrants crossing border. Indeed, migrants are motivated by the ideas of civil and political rights and the economic opportunities that follow. The mediascope process refers to the mass media actor as responsible in spreading notions of human rights abuses. While the last process of circulation refers to the work of NGOs and nation-states and their creator role of new laws and policies referred to human rights claims. Hence, the Theory of Circulation denotes the way in which rights are claimed, the framework in which they are debated and negotiated with authorities, and finally the consequences brought by them to societies. Thus, the Theory of Circulation focuses on rights conditions, rights claim and rights effects and bundles. However, some national context and cultural frameworks could be more responsive and open-

minded than others in implementing certain rights. Because the process of circulation is always open-ended, this will lead to the claiming of rights from the same right bundle. Furthermore, social movement theory, along with political sociology give insights to social struggles that contribute to the implementation of rights and its process. According to it, the enactment of policy depends upon three factors; the identification of claims that could match with emerging right norms; the ability to mobilize the resources as well as possible; and the ability to involve allies by influencing them. With the reinterpretation or the application of these factors and of the human rights canon, constituencies have managed to pressure federal and state laws to enact pieces of legislation and create political outcomes favorable to human rights. Subsequently, human rights change over time as well as their language does, depending on the canon under consideration and the interested legal system.

Lastly, after having analyzed the possible classification schemas, two difficulties come up: the negative-positive rights schema does not keep under consideration a range of rights, mostly collective rights; while the three-generation schema implies a hierarchy of rights and the idea that development of human rights is indeed fixed. Despite its limitations, this last schema is found to be particularly useful to scholars is finding out rights conditions, so the “*circumstances that give rise to grievances*”; rights claims, therefore the “*reinterpretation of old rights and the invention of new rights*”; and rights effects. Also, the three-generations schema contributes in the construction of right bundles which are “*packages of organically connected rights that cut across the three generation and by that meet the needs of new constituencies*” (Frezzo, 2015). We should then move on in explaining first the categories of the three-generations schema and then how the rights bundles are later proposed by UN agencies, NGOs and SMOs based on these three categories.

3. About the three-generation schema

3a. Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights are classified under the idea of liberty, established by the French Revolution. Therefore, they protect human beings from any form of abuses, they allow them to participate in the political life and permit them to pursue their own ideas and interests without any interferences from political authorities. Hence, they include both checks on governmental powers and protections by the government. They are somehow more embraced than other forms of rights, especially in Western Countries. This fact is both dependent on traditions and on moral primacy. The first argument is therefore historical: in the final documents of the most important revolutions in terms of human rights, the French Revolution and the US War of Independence, civil and political rights are the focal point. Since these documents have been especially influencing in the modern world, there has been a privileged position for civil and political rights within the context of human rights canon. The second argument is more practical, as it highlights the value of civil and political rights for the work of NGOs and social movements actors. Indeed, in the absence of these rights, activists would find it very hard to pursue their claims and goals. Moreover, civil and political rights’ effects in terms of law, are necessary because they have the power to alter relations between nation

states and societies. Taking as an example the United States of America, several minorities, as women or ethnic minorities, could empower themselves and have direct influence, thanks to the right to vote and that of assembly. As a result, the Enlightenment and its movements established the priority of civil and political rights while extending the project of human emancipation to those unrepresented minorities that were exploited and marginalized and consequently creating a path toward economic, social and cultural rights. Therefore, it could be said that civil and political rights have been crucial because of their relevance in the revolutions and because of their place in the UN system and in the framework of NGOs. Amnesty International is a perfectly relevant example in which civil and political rights were just the starting point to the expansion of campaigns concerning other forms of rights.

Furthermore, according to the NGO Oxfam International's rights-based approach to poverty, civil and political rights are part of the multifaceted dilemma. Poverty must not be reduced to economic factors but it is also brought by cultural destruction, environmental degradation and lack of popular participation as well as any form of discrimination. In particular, these last two aspects are falling under the category of first-generation civil and political rights and therefore the remedy to poverty necessitates granting first generation rights as well as second and third generations. Indeed, communities may fall into poverty because of discrimination, such as in the case of the untouchable cast in India, and consequently being poor means being excluded from civil and political rights. In fact, one of the defects of the most development projects in the Global South has been a lack of popular participation, so a violation of civil and political rights. Scholars have started to argue the possible "right to democracy" that should be created as an extreme conceptualization of civil and political rights. However, several problems occur trying to implement democracy on a global scale: cultural pluralism is a crucial one, the differences among 193 sovereign nation-states would make it very hard for advocates of the right to democracy to implement it in every country.

To conclude, it is clear how civil and political rights are not just "end in themselves" but are also means to other ends, especially when intertwined with other second and third generations rights to push the action of social movements activities and NGOs. Although they are decisive in certain situations that does not mean that are prominent and universally more important than other rights. There is no linear progression from civil and political rights to other forms of rights but the process varies depending on culture and conditions. Hence, the absence of civil and political rights does not necessarily mean that other forms of rights cannot be achieved. Even if it is easier to advance claims regarding economic and social rights or even collective rights, having already established civil and political rights, the first-generation rights only facilitate social movements activity in the name of other rights.

3b. Economic and Social Rights

As mentioned before, the three-generation schema was somehow already introduced by the European Enlightenment and its revolutions. However, after 1945, the human rights canon has shown that human rights are always relational and in a complex and dynamic interaction with one another. The complex relationship between liberty and equality started in the Enlightenment, and it is now concrete in the nation-states policies

of civil and political rights and economic and social rights. Indeed, economic and social rights are usually enacted through public policies and rarely established in the constitutions. They could be defined as “*entitlements that nurture the physical, intellectual, personal and professional development of individuals*” (Espaza, 2011). Therefore, they protect humans from unfortunate events, provide them with basic necessities in life and ensure that they have access to everything that could improve their life and ensure a wealthy standard of living. Economic and Social rights are fundamentally based on the idea that individuals require several social supports to actualize their potential.

Despite their importance, economic and social rights are part of a crucial debate especially in the US where they are considered as public goods rather than human rights. By saying that social programs are the expression of human rights, it means that capable governments should provide that. Amnesty International is advocating this idea by launching a complaint in defense of several economic, social and cultural rights such as that of work in fair conditions, that of a free and compulsory education and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Amnesty International encourages these rights on a global scale, by pressuring for a reform of these social programs for the sake of really establishing these rights. However, Amnesty International also acknowledges that different nation-states have different capabilities in delivering these social programs to the whole population. For example, in theory, the US has a great capability in implementing economic and social rights through policy making but everything is connected to a question of political will. Hence, the Amnesty International’s campaign tries to incorporate economic and social rights to civil and political rights in order to ensure a fruition of the former. This new campaign, together with Oxfam International’s anti-poverty program proves that NGOs, UN agencies and SMOs’ views emphasizes the intersections among different forms of rights.

This clearly shows the importance of right bundling, which package together different forms of rights to meet the need of new constituencies, especially in this age of globalization. The first step to right bundling is the consideration of the space of economic and social rights. For the sake of doing so, is important to analyze the limits of the first-generation rights. Indeed, although they come from the same sources, economic and social rights found their expression in the working-class activism or the women’s emancipation and liberal nationalism of the 19th century, which built the complex relationship between liberty and equality. In fact, the worldwide conflict for civil and political rights was still incomplete when populations started demanding for economic and social rights. These movements struggled both with the civil and political rights that support liberty and with the economic and social rights that defend equality. According to Wallerstein, the hostilities between negative or first generation civil and political rights and positive or second generation economic and social rights were particularly sharp with the post-second World War, the founding of the United Nations and the proposal of an international Bill of Rights.

Since changes and differences in human rights are not linear, we can only acknowledge how right are achieved after the fact, but we cannot predict where human rights will be headed in the future. They always exist in relation to the social context in which they are built, implemented and finally enforced, as

well as they always exist in relation to one another. Considering the right to same sex marriage, as a first generation right, we know that is a consequence of both the achievements of the LGBTQ+ community but also of the women's movement and the civil rights movements. They all focused on the pursuit of liberty as well as equality. In the 19th century, this right would have been inconceivable because of the absence of a LGBTQ+ identity and awareness; at the same time, due to the limitations in the medical field several economic and social rights, such as that of free comprehensive healthcare, would have been impossible to achieve. Nowadays, LGBTQ+ people can visit their same sex partners in hospitals and take decisions for them. In this case, first generation civil and political rights were amplified by second generation economic and social rights, and that is given by the fact that thanks to the former, social movements could make claims regarding positive rights. Therefore, human rights are planted in every type of social formation and that is particularly evident with second generation economic and social rights since they provide social entitlements and protections through the all cycle of life.

3c. Collective Rights

Since individuals are also part of a community, they are citizens of nation-states as well as carriers of certain identities based on race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexual orientation. Therefore, it is important to analyze the possible connections between first and second generations individual rights and third generation collective rights. The real question consists on finding out how much it means for a person to be a member of a group. As notable, this varies depending on cultures.

If first and second generations rights ensure the French Revolution's ideas of liberty and equality, the term fraternity, as solidarity, is identified with third generation rights. However, right claims to solidarity have been pursued mainly in the late 20th century and early 21st century and they are mainly associated with non-western cultures. Moreover, they were formulated as a response to the development project of the Third World and the increasing globalization worldwide. Indeed, with the intensification of consumerism, homogenization of cultures and destruction of natural environments, the proclamation of these rights occurred. Thus, these collective rights are based on the protection of cultural traditions and of the natural environment as well as on the proposal for sustainable development. In a nutshell, all these rights express the establishment of norms, rituals, and traditions which have been obscured by consumerism in the Global North but are still prominent in the Global South.

Although rights to solidarity may seem as unconnected to each other, they are linked to one another in the sense that they belong to communities, groups and people rather than individuals. An important junction, especially regarding cultural protection, environmental preservation and sustainable development, is that all these rights involve access to invisible goods like cultural heritage, the right to benefit from development and life ways. The birth of these rights is a direct consequence of the power of development which can alter literally and figurate the land scape of countries and create problems in terms of culture and environment. With the globalization age, two problems occurred: the endangerment of the life style of minorities, such as indigenous people, and the increasing degradation of the environment. If the first one is

not new at all and it dates to the conquests of the New World of the 15th century, the second one is relatable to the Industrial Revolution in the pan-European world. According to McMichael's thesis, development connected to consumerism is encountering its limits: "*we are at a critical threshold: whether consumer-based development remains a minority activity or becomes a majority activity among the earth's inhabitants, either way is unacceptable to social or environmental reasons, or both*" (McMichael 2021: 1). Hence, consumerism is threatening the implementation and enforcement of solidarity rights and mainly environmental and cultural rights.

Another crucial right of the third-generation rights is that of "sustainable development", defined as the right to popular participation, or democracy, as crucial in avoiding imposition of foreign values. In the early 1970s, the concept emphasized the need to "catch up" to the rest of the world through programmed industrialization. The countries in question rejected the ideas of economic reductionism, positivism and Eurocentrism as they were potential enemies to both culture and environment. Hence, sustainable development is not just a turning point for the field of human rights but also a concrete right bundle itself. Furthermore, to reconnect with McMichael's argument, we can say that there is a "*pressing need to rethink the regime of mass consumption*" (Frezzo, 2015) because it invades into indivisible goods of culture and environment. Even though state-forms that put an emphasis on industrialization and mass consumption, such as the Keynesian welfare state, have proved to be successful in improving the standard of living, mainly by protecting individuals from market failures and catastrophes, they also altered global conditions, culture and ecosystems amidst the beginning of globalization. In the context of disintegration of Keynesianism, third-generation rights were created: they were initially proposed in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration then elaborated in the 1992 Rio Declaration and in the 2007 Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People; advanced by cultural minorities and all those whose lifeways were negatively influenced by global consumerism.

Moving on, according to Blau and Mocada, these rights are important because they belong to anyone: "*like public goods, collective goods exhibit non-excludability- none can easily be barred from benefitting- and like private goods collective goods exhibit rivalrousness- one's person consumption can reduce the chances of other consuming it. (...)*" (Blau and Macada, 2009). They emphasize how culture is embedded in environments and therefore how healthy people and communities are strictly related to the preservation of natural environment. Hence, only these rights to solidarity can really preserve invisible cultural and environmental goods. In conclusion, it is important to note that, in spite of the distinction between first, second and third generations rights, and the fact that the first two are referred to individuals rather than collectivities, these rights bundles have surpassed the third generation of human rights and have indicated the double status of human beings as both individuals and citizens and as members of societies and communities, especially in all those cases connected to rights of race, class, gender and sexual orientation, therefore cases in which group of individuals are under consideration.

4. Rights Bundling

The concept of rights bundling can be understood as “*parcels of organically connected rights that transcend the conventional categories*” (Frezzo, 2015). They fall into more generations and hence can correct insufficiencies of the three-generations framework. Although the concept of rights bundling is not formalized, its practice is very common among NGOs, SMOs and community groups. Both Oxfam International’s anti-poverty program and Amnesty International’s campaign for economic, social and cultural rights combine different types of rights from different generations. Indeed, in the former case, Oxfam International combines both the access to resources and the need to be recognized and to participate; while Amnesty International’s campaign combines economic and social rights such as that of highest achievable level of physical and mental health and that of cultural rights of indigenous people and minorities. Hence, rights bundling operates especially in the UN-NGOs-SMOs nexus in which new rights are invented and old ones are reinterpreted. They move beyond the three-generation schema when transforming grievances into claims, which is particularly true when minorities are under consideration.

Concerning the Right to Sustainable Development which rectify poverty while favoring gender relations, cultural heritage and at the same time protecting the environment, many organizations imply that there is no reason at all for the separation of poverty from that of cultural differences or inclusion. Advocates of Women, Culture and Development (WCD) realized that, and proposed a connection between the Right to Alternative Development, mainly second generation rights, that of women’s rights, mainly first generation rights and environmental rights, which are third generation rights. This proposal constitutes a bundle itself since it introduces the idea that poverty is an abuse that cuts across three generation and that human right remedies to poverty problems must be address from all three-generations’ point of views. They try to combine universalism with cultural pluralism as well as globalism with localism.

Even though political economy of development, together with social movement research and political sociology can shape rights conditions, claims and effects, other branches of sociology can also illuminate regarding other human rights, namely cultural and environmental sociology which give insights about the Global South rights conditions and claims. Therefore, sociologists who are concerned with human rights trends to define a clear approach to human rights conditions and development as well as struggles among them, and they want to identify human rights bundles since it is crucial in this operation.

As seen before, the three-generations framework promotes both the actions and the method of human rights scholars, UN agencies and NGOs as well as the public. The theoretical implications of rights bundling are better understood in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the three-generation schema. First, this framework has created a several debates without providing for the resolutions: individual rights versus collective rights; universalism versus cultural pluralism and globalism versus localism. Therefore, Mark Frezzo suggests not only to think beyond the boundaries of the schema but also to think thorough the relations between collectivities and individuals. Hence, the three-generation rights are the key to rights bundling. Moreover, the schema is limited in the sense that in real life searching for remedies for human

rights abuses not always fall into the established categories. Considering again the issue of poverty, we found out that: the causes are many and that governments are embedded to do something. Thus, poverty is a condensation point for a series of human rights abuses and the most significant rights puzzles. Indeed, the grievances of poverty exceed second generation rights and touch both the first and the third generations. Consequently, the implementation of an anti-poverty rights bundle is necessary. Remediation of poverty address all three-generations of rights since it restricts the realization of economic and social rights as well as political, cultural and environmental ones. The proposal of rights bundle is more productive in a dialogue among social actors and contributes to the enactment of policy at the nation-state level.

Nonetheless, the formulation of right bundles is a complex action that involves several steps. First, the isolation of a grievance that has not been addressed sufficiently by existing rights; secondly the demonstration of how the addressed grievance cuts across two or more categories of rights and third the articulation of a right claim that operates in each of these categories. After that, social actors propose the right bundles and the latter enters circulation of debates, even before the official approval or denial of political authorities. Thus, rights bundles are subjects to contestation by a balance of forces in the political and legal contexts. Indeed, domestic governments institutionalize rights bundles by enacting protective legislation or social programs through court decisions or by proposing constitutional revisions.

Furthermore, it is crucial to analyze three rights bundles that show how problems related to cultural exclusion, poverty, inequality and environmental degradation are all related to one another as characteristics of globalization: the right to longevity, the right to the full development of the person and the right to peace. The right to longevity may be conceptualized as a way of addressing the problem of declining life expectancy of high levels of infant mortality and presume the right to healthful food, potable water, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and a clean environment. It emphasizes the poverty paradox of the spreading of consumerism and at the same time it goes beyond the right to life because it includes the resources and services to mental and physical health. The right of full development of the person tries to remove obstacles to personal discovery and growth of human beings and it includes the rights to a nurturing milieu, a rigorous education from childhood to early adulthood, vocational training, viable job prospects, information, leisure time, and the opportunity to cultivate one's gender, sexual and cultural identities. It goes beyond the freedom of expression by emphasizing the importance of political places for the development of the human being as well as beyond the right to education in proposing mechanisms to encourage people to nurture their talents. The right to peace not only presuppose the negative peace, so the cessation of wars of any kind, crimes against humanity or of interstate warfare, but also positive peace, the violence associated with racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia. Therefore, it is not limited to the right of personal security but it includes ways of reducing also effects of discrimination and prejudice. These rights bundles are necessary to solve interrelated problems mentioned before. They are connected to first, second and third generations of human rights and appeal for a series of protections and entitlements that must be promoted by intergovernmental organizations, nation-states, NGOs and SMOs. They are normative proposals, so they

need to be legislated at the global, national and local level. States are crucial actors because they are the ultimate arbiters of human rights. However, it goes without saying, that the legislative resolutions would vary depending on the legal framework of nations. It is not possible to predict which bundles will find resistance or support by political and civil actors, but they may still change the way citizens think about acting for human rights. The rights bundling can be reproduced by policy makers as well as NGOs and community groups with different objectives and perspectives. Finally, right bundling indicates that the language of human rights is not static, something that we have already seen before, they are a living testimony to the historicity and geography of human rights.

To conclude, the sociology of human rights shows how the epideictic community built around human rights would benefit immensely from pressures from the general public. They could push policy makers to define the highest attainable level of health, education and the universal human rights to a protected culture and a clean environment. These rights demand bundles of legislation from nation-states. Therefore, NGOs, SMOs and UN agencies push governments to act and implement the human rights canon at local and national levels. Especially, Amnesty International has a crucial role in this sense. The campaigns and the grievances behind them show not only the relationship between human rights and international institutions but rather the relationships between human rights and the general public.

1. The origin and the major steps

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people who defend human rights. The basic idea of the movement is to give everyone the possibility to speak up on behalf of other human beings who are at risk of abuse. And that is the way the Organization started. In November 1960, the Londoner lawyer Peter Benenson approaches the newspaper reading about a couple of Portuguese students arrested and condemned to seven years for “toasting to liberty”. As a first instinct, Benenson wishes to protest personally to the Portuguese Embassy in London. However, the effort would be useless. He is already engaged in the protest for the repression of governments. Indeed, during the 1950s he managed to assist to injustices protests in Hungary, Cyprus, South Africa and Spain as either a lawyer or an observer. In 1957, he founded the organization of lawyers called JUSTICE³ to enforce the importance of human rights on all those governments that do not respect it. With the condemn of the Portuguese students, he developed the idea that a greater mobilization of forces is necessary in order to emphasize the importance of fundamental liberties for human beings. The idea of an organization, based on an international campaign which can influence and get all the world press involved against the injustice conditions of prisoners, started to develop. Initially, Luis Bloom-Cooper and Eric Baker were the only people that accepted and agreed to collaborate, as members of the JUSTICE organization.

On the 28th of May, the English lawyer published in the newspaper *The London Observer* the article “The Forgotten Prisoners” calling for the Appeal for Amnesty of 1961. The term “amnesty” initially resulted to be inconsistent since it refers to the idea of something that is forgotten if not deleted, implying the mercy of authorities rather than the liberation of innocent victims unfairly imprisoned and symbol of the violation of human rights. It is important to say that in 1960s human rights were universally recognized but not equally guaranteed. The campaign is officially opened: several articles are published the same day on *Le Monde* newspaper, on *Journal de Genève* and in *The New York Post*, followed by hundreds of newspapers in the following weeks. “*Open your newspaper any day of the week and you will find a report from somewhere in the world for someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government. There are several millions of people in prison (..) and their numbers are growing. The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence. Yet if these feelings of disgust all over the world could be united into common action, something effective could be done*” (The Observer, 1961). This is just the beginning. Indeed, Benenson moves on quoting the Charter of Human Rights of the United Nations arguing the importance of the right of freedom for anyone, of religion and expression which resulted to be forgotten and in a sense, ignored. Peter Benenson clearly emphasized the importance of a public mobilization, which goes beyond sectors and classes but it is strengthened by a more wide and large force.

³ Organization based in the UK for the reform of the law, devoted to human rights (1957)

The article had major impact on socio-political structures. Firstly, it determined the construction and organization of local groups in England and later, abroad. Those groups were characterized by the “adoption” of single prisoners for helping them as well as their families. The enormous success brought by the initiative led to the first international meeting in July 1962, held in Luxembourg and attended by representatives from Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland and the United States. The meeting determined the establishment of “*a permanent international movement in defense of freedom of opinion and religion*”. On September 1962, the First Annual Report came out, 210 prisoners are under adoption, 1200 cases are documented in Prisoners of Conscience Library. During the Second International Meeting, held at Chateau de Male, the movement was officially called “Amnesty International” turning into a permanent international association for the defense of freedom of expression and religion.

As time moves forward, Amnesty International tended to grow even more. Primary, the first annual reports are published regarding the improvements and works of the association during the year. Secondly, the Department of research is extended in various sections. The former was characterized by an office where central operation of information, regarding all the prisoners of conscience, occurs. Furthermore, the public opinion, which is the last form of expression of the movement, kept following and paying close attention to the latter. Especially in Great Britain, where the movement started and the public is particularly attracted by it and hence, impressively participatory in the work of the association. The British tradition, in a way immune to the revolutions of the 19th and 20th century, is a perfect fertile ground for the reception of Amnesty International, especially during the first years of the association. Londoners started charity sales in private homes; door-to-door disclosure; as well as parish systems that unite people and energies in collecting money and ideas. Amnesty International find itself growing inside the traditional idea of English liberalism focused on personal freedom and individualism, already rooted in the English constitution. From these traditional ideas people find the increasing necessity of a fundamental freedom, independent from any authority or political constraint. Hence, from the freedom of thought and the idea of liberty as personal expression, all those rights related, namely that of association, as well as manifestation, rise to the surface.

In August 1964, the United Nations gives to the association the consultative status. Amnesty International takes care of all those situations in which the Charter of Human Rights and the European Convention are not able to reach and spread civil rights. From the birth of the association, Amnesty International understood that its work was destined to be against political opinions and impositions of several governments. For this reason, from the beginning it seeks to find credibility and demonstrate its professionalism. Neutrality in political terms was essential in this sense. Although the association has been considered sometime left imprinted sometimes right imprinted, as well as defined as “spy for imperialists” or “at the service of the reds” (Maria Grazia Lalloni, 1982), depending on the specific campaign, neutrality in respect of political sphere has always been declared. The year 1965 marked a turning point for the association. AI promotes resolution at the United Nations to suspend and finally abolish capital punishment for peacetime political offences. In the meantime, the number of freed prisoners increases up to 800

compared, especially thanks to Amnesty's effort and the Kit Scheme Campaign, also called Write for Rights⁴.

However, at the end of 1966, a crisis for the organization occurred. Indeed, in Aden there was a revolution against the British project to grant independence to the South Arabia but keeping it under the control of pro-British sheiks. Consequently, when Amnesty International condemned the British Aden soldiers for their violent attitude and the several torture practices towards the prisoners, the Great Britain population attacked the organization and the political figures start get agitated. On one hand, according to the popular opinion, the movement was argued to be irresponsible and start losing participants. On the other, the Association itself encountered a rupture, which sees the founding-father, Peter Benenson, leaving Amnesty International because profoundly in contrast with the current "caution attitude". The crisis is greater than expected and amplified by the international newspapers. However, at the end of the year 1967, Amnesty International is still expanding and moving forward. The Annual Report presented AI working for more than 2,000 prisoners in 63 countries and 293 prisoners released (Amnesty International 1976). Members are tenacious and kept working even in difficulties, for the sake of preventing disintegration and weakening. Amnesty International acquire more and more influence especially after being recognized with consultative status by the United Nation on August 1964, by the Council of Europe in January 1965 and by the UNESCO in 1969. The association reaches the consultative status obtaining not only the official recognition, but the possibility to work with governmental international organizations. Therefore, Amnesty International is not only connected to these organizations in matters of integration of activities but rather of stimulus: through the presentation of projects and resolutions the Association keeps promoting the adoption of numerous acts in favor of human rights protection.

Furthermore, between the years 1967-1969, Amnesty International was engaged with the Council of Europe against the brutalities and atrocities practiced by the military towards political prisoners in Greece. This period was particularly hard to handle given the circumstances and resulted in the final decision of Greece withdrawing the Council of Europe in 1969. In 1972, Amnesty International start a relation as observer with the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) and especially with the Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees. The same year the Association builds relationships with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of Organization of the American States grants Amnesty International consultative status. On December 1972, Sean MacBride, the President of the International Executive Committee opens the Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (CAT) describing the increment of torture as an epidemic and arguing that it was a consequence of government's decision to ensure order and control through punishment and elimination of possible and effective enemies of the regimes. From the USSR to Latin America, physical and psychological torture was used as a favorite method to find out information and repress it. Amnesty's duty concerned the exposing of governments to the public opinion and to governmental organizations. In November 1973, the General Assembly of the United Nations

⁴ Amnesty's global campaign and the world biggest Human Rights event

unanimously accepts Amnesty's resolution denouncing torture and begging all governments to adhere to existing international instruments that forbid practice. Consequently, in 1984, on Human Rights Day, the United Nations adopted the Convention against Torture.

Currently, another dominant subject pursued by Amnesty International is that of the abolition of death penalty in all countries. During the 70s, both public opinion and the attention of governments was focused on the use of death penalty. The death penalty is considered both a great deterrent and a legalized homicide and it is still practiced in more than 100 countries. In 1974, Amnesty International included the abolition of the death penalty among the principal goals of the association together with the help for prisoners and the abolition of torture. The year 1977 marked a major turning point for the Association with the awarding of the Nobel Price for Peace because able to reinforce liberty, justice and therefore, world peace. As argued by the Nobel Price Commission: *"The basic task of Amnesty International has been to spotlight the victims in every society where imprisonment results from political or religious belief, or from racial, linguistic or sexual discrimination. The issues and the opinions involved are not ours. What to us is essential is the right to be that person, to have that faith, to express that point of view. There are people in prison because they belong to a particular party or group, and because they do not. Because they want social change, and because they do not. Because they have spoken out, and because they have kept silent. Because the regime has changed, and because it has not"* (Soysal, 1977). Obviously, the decision of the Committee has been partly influenced by the political choices adopted by Western Countries and by the Charter administration especially focused on the actuation of Human Rights. However, it is important to note that Amnesty International has always avoided any official alignment that would result to be contrary to their policy of neutrality.

Thereafter, in 1994 AI started a major international campaign for Women's' Rights, in 1995 the Stopping the Torture Trade, in 1997 the famous Respect Refugee Campaign. Furthermore, during the last years, Amnesty International's campaigns have been enormously enforced by the mass-media. Not only newspapers, but also the radio, the television and later, social media. Those instruments have been particularly crucial in the amplifying phenomena, giving the possibility to the Association to increase in size and effect, reaching a greater number of people and emphasizing how respect for human rights is a matter of everyone.

Finally, the importance reached by Amnesty International in the international scene was caused by two major reasons. The first one is the increasing role of governmental institutions and the second one is their inability to deal with problems concerning human rights. The defaults of the UN Commission for Human Rights could be justified by Article 2.7 of the UN Charter⁵ which forbids any intervention in a country's internal affairs. Governmental organizations are indeed imprisoned by these concepts and cannot deal in a decisive way for the protection of human rights. Therefore, this void is filled by non-governmental institutions. In 1978, Amnesty International argued that more than 100 countries, all part of the United

⁵ United Nation Charter, *Chapter I: Purpose and Principles*, June 1945

Nations are not respecting human rights because of their legal capacity to ratify the UN declarations. In 1979, AI counts 2.283 groups in 39 countries. Now Amnesty International is spread in more than 160 countries (Amnesty International, 1976). The continuous growth and progress of the Amnesty International Organization and its transformation from a small association into a global movement is given by its ability to adapt to both the structures and instruments of the time as well as their ability to change and adapt their goals. Indeed, now the Organization is also concerned with right of minorities as well as gender based issues.

2. Missions and Principles

From an organizational point of view, Amnesty International's idea is to decentralize the work in order to give more space to national sections to administrate their members. It is organized to make it possible for ordinary people to speak up and protest on behalf of other human beings in danger. Members came from several cultures and with different backgrounds beliefs but all united by a determination to work for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all human beings. Campaigns, laws and policies address directly individual victims and their fate. The Association is independent from any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion. For the sake of being independent, it does not support or oppose any government, it does not accept money from political parties or government but its funding entirely depends on worldwide contributions and membership.

Amnesty International is a democratic, self-governing movement, where all decisions are taken by elected bodies. It emphasizes and shares the principles of international solidarity, universality and indivisibility of human rights, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, democracy and mutual respect. It has more than one million members in over 150 countries and territories, there are thousands of local groups among with individual members and coordinators. It is globally recognized and respected and it has delegations to consult with governments and inter-governmental organizations, such as the UN, to take part in international debate on human rights issues. AI imagines and wishes for "a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights written and proposed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, the mission and the goals of the association are focused on preventing and breaking up any abuse of the rights to physical and mental integrity as well as freedom of conscience, expression and freedom from discrimination (Amnesty International, 2002). As notable, the UN Declaration "*sets out the human rights which are fundamental to the dignity and development of every human being*"⁶. This preclude any political right, such as freedom of opinion, expression, association; any economic right, such as the right to work and having an adequate standard of living; equality before the law, and the right to marriage; social or cultural rights such as those of education or participation in the cultural life of the community. Every government has the immense responsibility to respect, observe and protect the human rights of people under their territorial sovereignty. Therefore, AI particularly demand governments to do that.

⁶ United Nation Website, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948

Although all human rights are interdependent, Amnesty International concentrates on ending grave abuses. Historically, the focus of the organization has been freedom for all prisoners of conscience, meaning all those people imprisoned because of their beliefs, either religious or political, that are not tolerated in their home country. The other main focuses have been to ensure a fair trial for all political prisoners, abolish death penalty as well as any kind of torture and inhuman treatment, and finally to ensure that human rights abusers are put on trial with conformity to the international standards. In addition, over the years, AI increased and amplified its mandate opposing also to armed political groups, civilians and non-combatants who abuse human rights and it had also targeted abusers in homes or in a community in all those cases in which the government was not able to step in, or failed at it. Especially, Amnesty International now focuses on genitalia mutilation, abuses in trafficking of women and children, abuses towards the LGBTQ+ community, and the protection of all those minorities which still encounter violence and are not protected by the authorities. Furthermore, AI appeals to all governments to observe the rule of law and implement human rights standards. It also inspires and advocate non-governmental organizations and any human being to support and respect human rights. For the sake of doing so, AI carries out research in human rights' abusers, publishes them through social media platforms as well as newspapers and start campaigning to end them. Examples of AI's campaigns are the release of individual prisoners of conscience, starting in 1960s, the substitution and abolishment of death penalty, which started in the 1970s, and the change in people's awareness in human rights especially towards minorities. Several types of actions are prosecuted: direct appealing to governments calling for action on specific cases, such as in the case of Patrick Zaki; lobbying intergovernmental organizations to make human rights central to their programs in order for them to take action on specific situations, such as in the case of the UN; it puts pressure on several actor such as certain governments or companies in order to promote and preserve human rights; they cooperate with community or rights groups and provide training and support for human rights activists, such as in the case of Black Lives Matter of 2020; it directly supports victims and their families, as in the case of Giulio Regeni's family; they support and organize human rights education programs and push for mobilization in their communities though the intervention of the social media.

As mentioned before, Amnesty International's principles are those of international solidarity, effective action for victims, global coverage, universality and indivisibility, impartiality and independence. For what is concerns international solidarity, AI's main belief regards the idea that respect and protection of human rights does not only concern national responsibility but rather, international one. Therefore, a strong community with different members and backgrounds is needed to really contrast human rights abusers and work in solidarity. Secondly, in referring to effective action for the individual victim, we especially mean all the campaigns, researches and efforts that are mainly established based on what is helpful for those real women, men and children. Thus, these attempts and achievements go beyond politics and ideology, they try to report and illustrate the fate of individual victims to emphasize the human being and the story behind the headline statistics. Thirdly, AI works for human rights for all everywhere. It operates for distinct victims

under all kind and divergent governments. Therefore, there is no comparison between country and most certainly between individuals. Regarding universality and indivisibility, human rights are equal for all people regardless any difference in race, sex, age sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or social origin. As affirmed by the UN Charter “we are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. Therefore, for the sake of living in dignity, humans are entitled to freedom, security and decent standard of living. Human rights are universal and indivisible. The principle of impartiality refers to the neutrality of the organization towards political parties and governments. Hence, AI is independent from any governments, political ideology, economic or religious interest. The organization is not with or against any political actor or system, it only supports and defend the victims whose rights are not respected, no matter the government they are under jurisdiction. As a result, by remaining both impartial and independent, Amnesty International turns aside the common argument that the organization is against certain governments and criticize them because of political biases rather than human rights’ records. However, Amnesty International’s strength is indeed, its reliability in this sense in the eyes of the international community.

3. The structure as an international democratic organization

As an international movement, members of Amnesty International are spread all over the world. Therefore, activities are organized at local, national and international level. Local level groups follow AI actions and work together in this sense; at a national level, the work of groups and members is developed, supported, and harmonized by other coordinating structures. On the contrary, at the international level, the work is supported by the International Secretariat (IS). There, research on human rights abusers is directed and campaigns are initiated. The International Secretariat has the power to implement policies of the movement; it collects and analyzes information about human rights abuses and advices sections, groups and members on their campaign’s activities. Furthermore, Amnesty International is democratic and self-governing. Hence, members can decide the subjects and the approach of several campaign through the decision-making process. Groups of AI discuss issues, propose resolution at the general meetings of their national sections. After voting on resolutions, the latter are sent to the International Council, the main governing body. The International Council is made up of representatives from every section who meet twice a year and have the power to amend the organization’s Statute as well as establishing overall policy, programs and set of budgets. At the time of the meeting, the International Executive Committee (IEC) is elected to implement decisions. These members have the role of providing supervision of IS’s work as well as form a governing body at the International Council Meeting. Another important duty of the IEC is that of appointing the Secretary General which is primary spokesperson and chief of the executive office of the IS. As mentioned in section 2, one of Amnesty International’s beliefs is that of working in international solidarity in order to bring real change. Even though it could emerge to be challenging to prove that actions can have an impact and result in improvements in human rights situations, Amnesty’s opinion was to establish a concrete record of achievement. Since 1961, many victims of human rights abuses saw an

improvement in their situations, they were either released from prison or received a fair trial. In 1973, Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action on behalf of men, women and children in immediate danger. In this case, AI created some improvement in the situation of the person in about one third of the cases ⁷. In 1964 Amnesty International was given the consultative status by the United Nations. Therefore, along with other organizations, it pushed the UN to set international standards for the protection of human rights. Within the years, a whole body of international law has been established with the purpose of protecting all human beings. Amnesty International's actions have been crucial from the beginning in formulating human rights as issues that transcends both nationality and political opinions.

Amnesty International is divided into sections, all characterized by specific goals, which are not always easy to achieve. In the case of the International Criminal Court for example, the organization started mobilizing at the beginning of the 1990s but the former was adopted only in 1998. Although, researches and campaigns always aim at affecting the fate of individuals, Amnesty International does not call for credit when a prisoner is released or when human rights conditions improve. According to the association, changes are given by several factors even though international pressure always results to be crucial especially according to the victims. Chris Anyanwu, the Nigerian Newspaper editor, was released from prison in 1998. She is one of the human rights defenders sentenced to long prison terms in 1995 by the military trial. According to what stated above, she quoted: *"I cannot tell you how wonderful it feels to be free again and to be able to write you this note. It is something I have wanted to do since 1997, when I received my first batch of cards... generated through Amnesty's efforts. It is impossible to paint an accurate picture of my reactions as I sat in that tiny cell, the floor carpeted with cards and envelopes. It was deeply touching, greatly encouraging and strengthening. Thereafter, I knew that I was not alone, and held on to the thought till the end... Maybe you just sent one card, but these cards are like little drops of water that combine to create and avalanche of pressure."* (Anyanwu, 1998)

4. Groups and members

Amnesty International is an organization based on active participation of members. People promote support in its goals and principles by taking an active role in the campaigns. Members have different ways to participate, either in a group or as individuals. They can be asked to write letters in order to make direct appeals to the authorities, as in the cases of prisoners of conscience or victims of other human rights abuses; individual members can also join specific networks, such as the Urgent Action Network; they can make donations or promote Amnesty International's publications. Especially, direct appeals are considered as powerful as simple action. Members are usually asked to write direct appeals on individual cases regarding the ongoing campaign. On the other hand, groups are created within their community. Therefore, they can develop in local neighbors, villages or towns, schools or colleges or even work places. They meet regularly for the sake of planning action on specific Action Files assigned to them. Groups meetings also give them

⁷ Amnesty International, *1961-1972 A chronology*, Amnesty International Publications, 1972

the opportunity to discuss several issues that are broad to their attention by the local assemblies. In particular, groups are entitled to raise awareness on AI's campaign and persuade people to join the organization through public demonstration or events, as well as through social media and publicity. Fundraising is also an important part of Amnesty International's groups. Like individual members, groups can decide and organize their work based on specific cases, joining the Urgent Action, the Regional Action Network or a thematic network. Amnesty International pushes activists to spread their work not only locally but among different regions. Hence, local groups are trained by sections on national and international campaigns. Training groups are entitled to assign Action Files and support group's campaigning activities. Several groups also provide education programs as well as advice and support on their work. Furthermore, each group should have a specific structure: this involve a chairperson, a coordinator, a treasurer for the finances, a secretary and members responsible for recruitment, fundraising and media relations. Units shall follow Amnesty International Statute, be committed to goals and decisions of the elected governing bodies; ensure in any case political impartiality; train incoming members and raise money to sustain and support the group. Finally, groups must align with all the principles mentioned above in section two.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CAMPAIGNS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The campaigns: the heart of the activities

Amnesty International's campaign starts from activists all over the world. Campaigns are for Amnesty International the main form of action, they are considered the heart of the activities. Amnesty International's campaigns can focus on a group of individuals, a country, several countries or even a specific theme. An international campaign involves the entire organization and therefore includes all the sections of Amnesty International in the world. They basically work through the sending of appeals to the authorities of the violating countries, the pressure on the embassies, the awareness and mobilization of the public opinion and the activities of lobby on local, national and international institutions, communication work and human rights education. Constant attention is paid to the victims of human rights violations for which Amnesty International dedicates the so called "urgent actions". In general, Amnesty International campaigns could be divided according to the three-generations schema. From an historical point of view, AI started the organizations for matters of civil and political rights which later were amplified in economic, social and cultural rights. Currently, Amnesty International is also giving a lot of space to collective rights, especially regarding environment and discriminated groups.

2. Civil and Political Rights: Prisoners of Conscience, The Campaign for the Abolition of Torture and the Abolition of Death Penalty

Originally, Amnesty International was focused on the fundamental civil and political rights. Since 1961 activists started campaigning for fair trials, effective legal processes and rapid and regular access to lawyers as well as the abolishment of secret detention, torture and violent treatments to prisoners. However, the starting point of the organization revolves around the campaign for prisoners of conscience. By definition, prisoners of conscience are all the people "imprisoned for peaceful expression and manifestation of their political, religious and cultural identity". According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all people are entitled to all rights and freedoms, including those defined by Article 3, rights to life, security and liberty; Articles 18-20, rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression as well as association and peaceful assembly. Hence, considering these articles, torture towards prisoners of conscience or even execution towards them is unacceptable, because the "crimes" they are accused of having committed, should not be considered crimes in the first place but rather expression of their independence in civil society. Amnesty International adheres with this prospective: many countries are not following the adequate processes for prisoners, their rights are denied in the sense that there are no lawyers presents at the interrogations, contact with families is denied and torture is used to obtain confession. In December 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was written and came into effect also thanks to the efforts and pressures of Amnesty International in the international scene. Moreover, AI's Fair Trial Manual

must be considered as a decisive document in analyzing this issue. Indeed, the document is a crucial tool for lawyers and judges, as well as political prisoners that represent themselves in court. The manual offers some standards, guidelines and minimum guarantees for the protection of human rights towards the whole process of trial. It also includes special cases regarding death penalty or cases brought against children. The member of the US Institute of Peace, Dr. Vivienne O'Connor testified "*When I found the Fair Trial Manual it felt like I had struck gold*" (Amnesty International, 2019).

Going into the specifics, freedom of expression is guaranteed by Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It clearly stands that our voice matters, we have the right to say what we think, the right to share information and pretend a better world. We should have the right to agree or disagree with those in power and consequently we have the right to express beliefs and opinions in peaceful protests. For the sake of living in an open and candid society, people should have the possibility to exercise these rights without angst or illegitimate interference. However, the reality is not that fair and open: millions of people are still arrested by their government for speaking out and for exercising their right of free speech. According to Amnesty International, the way government tolerate adverse and critical voices is a crucial indicator of their treatment towards human rights. On the one hand, government should prohibit hateful speeches but on the other hand authorities should not abuse their power to control speech but rather support people that speak up for themselves and their similar. Amnesty International supports those people and anyone that is "*put in prison solely for exercising their right to free speech peacefully*" (Amnesty International, 1977) and they are all considered prisoners of conscience. Protecting and preserving freedom of expression has always been a core point of Amnesty International's campaigns, because that freedom presupposes other human rights, such as those of thought, conscience and religion, as well as construct other human rights, including the freedom of association and to take part in a peaceful demonstration. Limits on freedom of speech can have several shapes. Firstly, press freedom, which concerns all journalists and reporters. Indeed, in some countries press freedom is not even contemplated and journalists face repression and threats regularly. For example, in July 2019, Maria Ressa, executive editor of an online Philippine newspaper was arrested after releasing detailed investigations on several extrajudicial executions effected by the police and encouraged by President Rodrigo Duterte. This case is basically an example of attack to press freedom by the government. Recently, with the raise of the digital world and the free access to information, people are more likely to engage and challenge the authorities. However, internet and the digital world has a downside: as Amnesty International explained, several platforms were not paying enough attention to hate speeches and comments and posts were violating rights of other people and inciting discrimination and violence. In 2018, Amnesty International denounced Twitter as "*a platform where violence and abuse against women flourish*" (Amnesty International, 2018). Theoretically, Twitter should have been about expression for everyone and peaceful discussions, but it led women to self-censorship, ultimately failing its responsibility to respect everyone's rights. Furthermore, freedom of expression is also a reflection of the still present gap between the wealth and privileged reality and the poor and disadvantaged

one. Indeed, those who are rich and powerful are hardly restricted in expressing their views. Authorities that desire to limit free speech and digital communication increasingly tend to respond to mass street protests with internet shutdowns or by creating systems that can control them, such as in the case of Egypt, Iran, Chad and Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, Amnesty International is still trying to find a way to stop website being blocked in China. In 2014, the organization launched “Deteckt” which is *“a tool that allows activists to scan their devices for surveillance spyware”* (Amnesty International, no date), while in 2020 the organization founded a Task Force Hate Speech to reinforce the control against violence and discrimination online. Therefore, Amnesty International is calling for: prisoners of conscience to be released, for the end of laws against people that speak peacefully; for specific laws against hate speech or anything that could lead to discrimination of any kind and violence; for the sake of people having unlimited access to information and for strong restrictions to government’s ability to obtain information about individuals and organizations.

In Egypt, the situation is quite critical: during the year 2018 only, the authorities arrested 113 individuals because of unacceptable reasons such as “tweeting”, “denouncing sexual harassment” or even “giving interviews”. Several people have been detained without a trial or they have been illegally sentenced by a military court. The most famous and debated case is that of Patrick Zaki. Amnesty International is fighting the Egyptian authorities for his release since February 10th, 2020: *“I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release Patrick Zaki as his detention stems solely from his human rights work and political opinions he has expressed on social media. I also urge you to open an independent investigation into his torture allegations. I further urge the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience. All persons in detention in Egypt must be guaranteed access to lawyers, family and adequate healthcare, especially if they are at high risk of COVID-19”* (Amnesty International, 2020). This is the final sentence of the Urge Action sent by activists of Amnesty International to the Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi.

Strictly connected to the campaign of Prisoners of Conscience, are The Campaign for the Abolition of Torture and that for the Abolition of Death Penalty initiated by Amnesty International in 1972 and 1977. Right after the foundation of the organization in 1961, activists of Amnesty International started issuing appeals to stop the execution of prisoners of conscience. As we all know, there are several countries that still apply death penalty for a variety of reasons: some for drug-related crimes, others for terrorism or murder, a few use death penalty for crimes committed by people with mental and intellectual disability. Most of these decisions are consequence of unfair trials. According to Amnesty International *“the death penalty is cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment(..) The death penalty is a symptom of a culture of violence, not a solution to it”* (Amnesty International, 2021). The organization fight death penalty regardless the situation and the crime involved, because it argues that executions are extreme violations of human rights, especially that of life and free from torture or cruel. Among the several documents that protect these rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights argues the complete abolition of death penalty. Most of the executions of 2020 occurred in China, Iran, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

China is believed to be the top executioner but data are unknown. Excluding the latter, 88% of the executions last year took place in Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Amnesty International, 2021). Although the current pandemic is challenging the whole world, it has not stopped several countries from executing people. The annual global review published by AI revealed that a general decrease occurred but some countries are still pursuing these practices. As Agn s Collamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International, declared: *“The penalty is an abhorrent punishment and pursuing executions in the middle of a pandemic further highlights its inherent cruelty.”* (Amnesty International, 2021). Therefore, these countries showed a neglect and indifference for human life and the use of death penalty in the current health crisis is offensive to all human rights. As mentioned before, the countries that have been extremely cruel are Egypt, which tripled the number of death penalties; Iran which continued to execute as a means of political repression against protesters and minorities; and the USA which has been the only country in the Americas which performed death penalty in 2020. However, even though the number is still high and shocking, in 2020 Amnesty International reported the lowest number of the last decade. Several countries in which death penalty is still happening reported no executions at all, while others committed to the abolishment of the practice. April 2021 counts 108 countries in which death penalty is annulled for any crime and 144 in which it is abolished in law. Therefore, 2020 was overall a positive year which signed a step forward to the elimination of the world’s most cruel and inhuman punishment.

Amnesty International’s campaign is based on five reasons to abolish the death penalty. The first one is connected to the idea of irreversible: execution is irrevocable and the risk of killing an innocent cannot be underestimated. Amnesty International counts that, from 1973, the USA have executed 184 innocent prisoners. Secondly, death penalty does not discourage any crime: there is no evidence that death penalty is indeed effective. Thirdly, Amnesty International’s records shows that most of the time the decisions is taken during unfair trials. Moreover, death penalty resulted in many cases to be discriminatory and only a political tool: statistics show that disadvantaged people and members of ethnic, religious and racial minorities have been subjected to unfair penalties because they have limited access to legal representation. For the sake of abolishing this inhuman practice, Amnesty International has been campaigning for 40 years, monitoring death penalty in every state and publishing an annual report to analyze the trend. The work is focused on advocacy and reinforcing national and international standards, supporting the resolutions proposed by the UN General Assembly, and the movements at national, regional and global level. The campaign started in 1977 with only 16 countries where death penalty was abolished. Currently, more than half of the world’s countries eliminated this practice. Moreover, AI was one of the funding members of the World Coalition Against Death Penalty and it coordinates the activities of the Anti-Death Asia Network. Since 2014, a Task Force is engaged against death penalty. The organization urges all leaders of all countries to end this punishment and it will keep campaigning until Countries that still use the death penalty will not immediately suspend all executions; countries that have already suspended executions will not abolish this penalty for all

crimes permanently; and all death sentences will not be commuted to prison terms. Hopefully, 2021 will be the year for the final elimination of death penalty.

3. Economic and Social Rights in AI: The Right to Dignity

Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: “*For the United Nations, health care, education, housing, and the fair administration of justice are not commodities for sale to the few, but rather rights to which all are entitled without discrimination*”⁸. Therefore, the Right to Security explained by this article, safeguards the second-generation rights, hence economic social and cultural rights. Among those rights there are that of a safe home, an adequate healthcare, a permanent job and nurture, which are not just established by the UDHR but also in other international documents, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). However, more than 20 countries have neither signed nor ratified the international document, including the Arab States; a few have signed the document without ratifying it, such as the United States. Hence, despite the several efforts made by the international actors, economic social and cultural rights are still denied to millions of people. For instance, several governments still deprive men and women of their rights to a safe and guaranteed housing, leaving them in poor and inadequate conditions.

The right to an adequate standard of living include that of an acceptable housing, food and clothing. Over a billion people all over the world still live in poor conditions in areas called *slams*, *baraccopolis* or *favelas*. They are called differently but they are all characterized by overcrowding, inadequate sanitary facilities, low or nonexistent water and electricity and numerous criminal activities and violence. Many people are then deprived from basic services and lack any access to a proper education. The causes should not be reduced to a lack of resources but also to matters of discrimination as well as carelessness and omission by national governments. To emphasize the human rights scandal, it is important to recall some numbers: according to Amnesty International annual reports, 842 million people are undernourished, 61 million children do not have access to education while 8.1 million children do not even reach the age of five because of poor health conditions and the lack of access to healthcare services. For these reasons, Amnesty International is working all over the world to help communities engage with their national governments and claim their rights to improve their lifestyle. People who live in poverty are often trapped. According to AI they can be excluded, denied a say and threatened with violence and insecurity. For them to escape this trap, governments must ensure their rights, as well as inclusion and protection of any kind.

Moreover, several people living in these places are not protected from harassment and forced eviction because their rights are not legally recognized. By forced eviction we mean all cases in which people are revoked from their houses or lands without prior notice, often by means of violence and destruction of livelihood. Hence, forced evictions are violating the right to housing and are considered illegal by the international community. Recently, Amnesty International has been at the center of the discussion regarding

⁸ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 22

the thousands of people at risk of displacement due to forthcoming forced evictions in Eswatini and Zimbabwe. On March 2021, Amnesty International said that during the current pandemic thousands of people across South Africa are at serious risk of being removed from their houses without any alternative accommodation, because local authorities are following commercial interests. Indeed, in Mendoza (Eswatini) around 150 people live in anxiety and under threat of having to make their way for the Eswatini National Provident Fund. According to AI's report, 106 people are facing eviction after the ENPF brought a legal notice on February 16th to have their habitations evacuated from their land by March 6th. Likewise, in Zimbabwe, more than 12000 people of the Shanghai Indigenous minority group are persecuted by authorities to leave their ancestral land in Chilonga. The eviction has been temporarily stalled by a court order, however according to Muleya Mwananyanda, the Deputy Director for Amnesty International South Africa: *"Forced evictions drive people into poverty and destroy livelihood. The community in Chilonga and Mandosa have lived for years under constant threat of losing their homes, living in limbo while their governments utterly disregard their human rights in the pursuit of patronage and commercial interests"* (Amnesty International, 2021). In fact, the threat of eviction began in 2012, but on February 2021 the local government published a legal notice commanding thousands of people to leave their land promptly. The Statutory Instrument 50 of 2021 shows that villagers are being evicted *"to set aside land for licerne grass production"* (Amnesty International, 2021). Although the eviction was considered entirely inadequate, because it does not offer any alternative allocation, some people still preferred to start dismantling their homes for the sake of avoiding any violent forced evictions in the future. Thanks to the efforts of Amnesty International South Africa and the international pressure, on March 6th 2021 the Masvingo Magistrates Court acknowledged a temporary ban for the eviction of villagers that *"no one can order people to evict from their housing without following the proper process established by law"* (Amnesty International, 2021). Indeed, forced evictions are violation of human rights since why can have a direct effect on people's lifestyle. According to Amnesty International *"Under international human rights law, evictions may only be carried out as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives have been explored and appropriate procedural protections, including genuine consultations with the affected people, are in place. Both Eswatini and Zimbabwe have ratified international and regional human rights treaties prohibiting forced evictions, including the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights"* (Amnesty International, 2021).

For what it concerns the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, established by Articles 12 and 12.2 of the ICESCR, health is not just understood in terms of being healthy but rather the possibility to access adequate health care and information no matter the social status, the ethnicity and the sex or gender, and the chance to make decisions about our body and health. In July 2018, Tity Agbahey, an African Amnesty International's campaigner conducted a research regarding health conditions in Chad. The mission developed in Bebedjia, in the Logone Oriental region in southern Chad. The reporter denounced the local healthcare center as a "devastating story". There was no running water at

all and no electricity. Since the most patients were pregnant women, and most of them had their deliveries during the night, the reporter was shocked to learn that doctors and nurses used their phone during the whole process. They interviewed the nurse who said, *“we light the torch of the phone, hold the phone in the mouth to free our hands and proceed the delivery”* (Agbahey, 2018). The center is not that far away from Bebedjia’s new hospital which was built in 2010 but still lacks some of the basic medical equipment. In Chad, most of the pregnant women cannot afford a pre-natal check before the fifth months of pregnancy and even then, the majority is forced to go to the hospital on foot, some walks for more than 15 kilometers. They are victims of the austerity measures taken by the government in relation to the 2015 economic crisis. Chad lost control of sectors that should always be considered priority: health and education which saw their funding cut in half. By doing so, they affected all investments, current transfers, material assets, services and health worker’s salaries. In 2017 Amnesty International’s report showed that the categories protected by the emergency healthcare program were reduced from 45 to 5. On July 16th, the organization launched a campaign to mark and give prominence to the consequence brought by the austerity measures on the population’s economic, social and cultural rights. According to the report, *“The realization of economic, social and cultural rights is progressive and international human rights laws recognize that it can be affected by a lack of resources, including during an economic crisis. However, even in times of economic crisis, obligations regarding economic, social and cultural rights continue to apply. (...) They have noted that austerity measures should never violate the minimum core content of economic, social and cultural rights. Such measures should be temporary and only remain in place only as long as they are necessary. Furthermore, as per the Guiding Principles on Foreign Debt and Human Rights, States should ensure that their rights and obligations arising from an external debt agreement or arrangement, particularly the obligation to repay external debt, do not undermine their minimum core obligations with respect to these rights.”* (Agbahey, 2018). Furthermore, Amnesty International also highlights the Chadian authorities and the International Financial Institutions, entitled to advise the government, have regularly ignored the destructive effects of the austerity measures. Even worse, they have repressed any form of protest by the population which was attempting to denounce the measures and claim their basic social, health and education services. Amnesty International proposes some recommendations to fix the situation by focusing on Chad’s ability to minimize the impact of those measures and achieve the end of violations of several rights including that of a peaceful assembly and the freedom of expression.

Moving on, concerning Article 12.2 and the right to make decisions concerning their own body and health, Amnesty International is currently launching a campaign of Urgent Action in the Dominican Republic aimed at decriminalizing and constituting abortion. Indeed, under the Dominican Republic’s Criminal Code, women that want to request an abortion service and all the people involved in providing these services are under criminal sanctions, regardless the circumstances under which the abortion was seek or provided. In 2014, the Chamber of Deputies incorporated the approval of abortion in three extreme circumstances: in cases of possible death of the mother, in cases in which the child will not survive outside

the womb and in cases of rape or incest. However, in December 2012 the Constitutional Court invalidated the proposal and left into force the old Criminal Code. Amnesty International called the Dominican Republic to the obligations of the international human rights law to *“respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women, girls and life, health autonomy and dignity by approving a new criminal code that decriminalize abortion in the three circumstances proposed in 2014”* (Amnesty International, 2021). As the organization outlines, evidence reveal that total bans on abortion do not reduce but rather increases the risk of pregnant women of dying due to illegal and unsafe procedures. The report shows that in the Dominican Republic women and girls continue dying because of the ban on abortion. Thus, the United Nations Committee Against Torture argued that *“denying women access to abortion services can in certain circumstances cause suffering that is so severe it could amount to torture”* (Amnesty International, 2021).

According to Article 13 of the ICESCR, the right to free education concerns everyone, that is because it is crucial to *“the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity”*.⁹ Article 13 pictures education as both a human right and *“an indispensable means of realizing other human rights”*¹⁰. Amnesty International follow and protect these arguments. Especially it urges governments in regards of primary education, in the sense that it must be free and compulsory for everyone. According to the organization: *“Children need to be able to get to school without working for hours or through minefields. They should be able to learn and enjoy school life”* (Amnesty International, 2021). Therefore, the organization is battling for this fundamental right too, notably because children from poor and marginalized communities are denied an education or experience forms of discrimination. Considering the previously cited campaign in Chad, regarding the impact of austerity measures imposed by the national government from the point of view of the education, the latter decided to dismiss all monthly scholarships for all students. Amnesty International reported a severe discontent and worrying among young students who saw their future hanging on unfair decisions and had to put aside their dreams because of that. During a manifestation, documented by the organization, a student claimed, *“these decisions are unfair and contradictory to the authorities’ claim according to which education is a key priority”* (Balkiss Ide Siddo, 2018). In addition, the current study conditions are alarming: some schools and universities do not have electricity or enough water; students are getting arrested and imprisoned for protesting over the past two years. From January to March 2018, Amnesty International documented 150 arrests for *“engaging in unauthorized protests”* (Amnesty International, 2018) and public disorder. Two thirds of these arrests were young students. Currently, Amnesty International is pressuring the government to look for alternative ways for balancing their budget. According to the organization, the authorities need to realize the major impact brought by the austerity measures on education and health services and create a prospect that could build the right guidelines that would guarantee equal opportunity to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, on the one hand, most of those students came from a disadvantaged background and they are struggling and are forced to

⁹ ICESCR, Article 13

¹⁰ Ibidem

study and work to continue their lifestyle and substitute the scholarship that supported them in many ways, from school fees to rent. On the other hand, these new measures will stop people from rural areas to engage in higher education and they will prevent themselves from having a better future.

Nonetheless, as noted before, education is sometimes denied by means of discrimination. One of the longest campaign of Amnesty International on this matter is the one concerning the pregnant school girls in Sierra Leone. The image of the campaign is a 14-years-old girl who reported the issue in 2015. She contacted Amnesty International saying that *“I had to stop going to school because I got pregnant, my family was counting on me but I have disappointed them”* (Coloner, 2020). In fact, on April 2015 a policy was introduced in the country banning visibly pregnant girls from attending schools and taking exams. According to Marta Coloner, Amnesty International Acting Deputy Director for West and Central Africa, repercussion of the discriminatory law was particularly extreme because the policy was issued right before the re-opened of schools subsequent of the Ebola crisis. During that time, there was an increase in teenage pregnancies. Many girls interviewed by Amnesty International were forced to have sex with men in exchange for food or protection because they lost their parents and family members during the pandemic. The information mentioned in the numerous reports have been brought to the attention of the international scene. The case was presented to the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice and in December 2019 the court found that the policy was not only discriminatory towards pregnant girls but also a violation of economic, social and cultural rights established in the ICESCR. Also, the court established that the policy was against Sierra Leone’s commitment under both the African Charter of Human Rights and People’s Rights but also the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. The court claimed to be grateful for the intervention of AI in letting them reach the decision. Although the battle is not over yet, it is a step forward in reaching equal treatment, opportunity and education without discrimination. In fact, according to the UNHR Office of the High Commissioner, *“there is increasing evidence that violations of economic, social and cultural rights are causes, consequences and often even predictors of violence, social unrest and conflict”* (Coloner, 2020).

Hence, about economic, social and cultural rights’ campaigns, Amnesty International is particularly engaged. Especially, the campaign “Right to Dignity” focus on the accomplishment of these rights bundle for the sake of living in physical and mental health. The organization is calling governments for *“guaranteeing all economic, social and cultural rights without discrimination; prioritizing disadvantaged people and countries as well as essential levels of rights such as that of a primary education; signing and ratifying the Optimal Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; ascertaining that development projects avoid human rights abuses and help most of the disadvantaged.”*(Amnesty International, 2021). Principally, the Optimal Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which came into force in 2013, it is now giving people the opportunity to pursue justice from the UN if in their own countries this is not possible.

4. Collective Rights in AI: Climate Change and Self-Determination

As mentioned in chapter I, the sociology of human rights found out that collective human rights are strongly connected to climate change due to its devastating effect, not only on the environment, but also on our well-being. Climate change is altering our community rights and, in addition to threatening our very existence, it is having detrimental effects on our rights to life, health, food, water, housing and livelihoods. The longer governments wait to take meaningful and concrete action, the harder they will take to solve the problem and the greater the risk that inequality will increase rather than decrease.

As one of the most important collective rights and rights bundle, climate change impacts and will impact our human rights. Concerning the Right to Life, climate change is threatening the safety of billions of people on this planet. The most obvious example is represented by extreme weather events, such as storms, floods and fires. Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines affected the lives of nearly 10,000 people in 2013¹¹. While, heat stress is among the deadliest impacts: the summer heatwave in Europe in 2003 killed 35,000 people¹². However, there are many other less visible ways in which climate change threatens life. The World Health Organization predicts that climate change will cause 250,000 deaths a year between 2030 and 2050, due to malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea and heat stress. Likewise, climate change's greatest impacts will be those concerning right to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health. Indeed, climate change will include a greater risk of injury, illness and death from heat waves and more intense fires; an increased risk of malnutrition due to reduced food production in poor regions; and the increased risk of food and waterborne diseases. Children exposed to events such as natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, could suffer from PTSD. Thus, the impacts of climate change on health require an urgent response because the unreserved warming we are experiencing threatens to undermine health systems and the fundamental goals of global health. Moreover, we will not be able to have the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing. In fact, extreme weather events such as floods and fires are already destroying people's homes. Droughts, erosions and floods can change the environment over time and, above all, rising sea levels threaten the homes of millions of people around the world.

Last but not least, climate change is threatening water resources. Over a billion people lack access to clean water, and climate change will make the issue even worse: extreme weather events - such as cyclones and floods - affect water and sanitation infrastructures, leaving contaminated water behind and thus contributing to the spread of waterborne diseases. According to Kumi Naidoo, General Secretary of Amnesty International, : *"It is clear that climate change is already having an impact on human rights and that this impact will intensify in the coming years"* (Amnesty International, 2021). Indeed, millions of people are already suffering from the catastrophic effects of climate change. Despite the awareness of climate change and the consequences it will have on our planet, Amnesty International's greatest concern is the devastation it is causing and will continue to cause to human rights by amplifying the inequalities that already exist. Its

¹¹ Amnesty International, *Campaign for Climate Change*

¹² Ibidem

effects will continue to grow and worsen over time, affecting in particular the life of future generations. This is why the failure of governments to act on climate change could be the largest intergenerational violation of human rights in history. Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General, said that governments must set credible targets by 2020 to stop the increase in emissions, otherwise *"we risk missing the moment when we can avoid climate change, with disastrous consequences for people and for the planet "* (Amnesty International, 2021). In 1992, 165 nations signed an international treaty: the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since then the States who agreed, have held meetings every year, called "Conference of the Parties", with the aim of developing objectives and methods to reduce and combat the phenomenon of climate change. Today 197 countries have joined the UNFCCC. Nevertheless, climate change will continue to harm us all, unless governments take immediate action.

Moreover, it is important to say that effects of climate change are likely to be much more evident for some communities, particularly those dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods, as well as those that are generally already vulnerable, disadvantaged and subject to discrimination. Indeed, native peoples are among the communities most affected by climate change. They maintain a close link with nature and their traditional lands, on which their livelihood and cultural identity depend but they often live in marginal lands and fragile ecosystems, which are particularly sensitive to climate variations. According to Amnesty International, this is one of the reasons why climate change worsen disparities. In fact, at the national level, those living on small islands and less developed countries will be and already are, among those most affected. People in the Marshall Islands have already experienced the devastating floods and storms that destroy their homes and livelihoods. The 2018 heatwave in the Northern Hemisphere made headlines in Europe and North America, but some of the worst effects were also felt in places like Pakistan, where more than 60 people died when temperatures have risen above 44 ° C. But disparities will intensify also among ethnic groups and social classes: in North America, it is the largely poorer communities of color that are forced to breathe toxic air because their neighborhoods are more likely to be located next to power plants and refineries resulting in African Americans that suffer significantly higher rates of respiratory disease and cancer and they are three times more likely to die from air pollution than the entire US population. Also, women are particularly affected by climate change because in many countries they are more likely to be marginalized and disadvantaged. This means they are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate events as they would not have the ability to protect themselves from the climate and would have a harder time recovering. Finally, as mentioned before, future generations will suffer the worst effects unless governments act now. In fact, young people already suffer from their particular metabolism, their physiology and their needs: any displacement due to a climate event would be particularly damaging not only for rights to water, sanitation and housing, but also to education and development.

Amnesty International argues that it is necessary to act as soon as possible because we all deserve equal protection; because the fight against climate change gives us the opportunity to put people's well-being first, by guaranteeing the right to a healthy environment; and because we have the knowledge, the power

and the ability to stop climate change. Many people and international actors are already working on creative, inspiring and innovative solutions to deal with climate change, they are working on policies, campaigns and solutions that will protect people and the planet. Especially, Amnesty International's contribution and claims to the Paris Agreement on climate change have included advocating for human rights and supporting environmental groups. The organization argued that they will work with a multitude of different groups in major countries in order to exert pressure against governments and companies that hinder progress as well as support young people, but also native peoples, trade unions and affected communities, to facilitate the work of those who protect the land, food and communities from climate impacts, extraction, the expansion of fossil fuels and deforestation. Moreover, Amnesty International ask national governments to do everything possible to stop the global temperature increase of over 1.5 ° C; reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050; stop using fossil fuels; ensure that future climate action is conducted in a way that does not violate anyone's human rights and reduce rather than increase inequalities; ensure that everyone, especially those affected by climate change or the transition to a fossil-free economy, is adequately informed about what is happening and is able to participate in decisions about their future. Finally, AI pushes government on working together to share the responsibility and duties related to climate change equally.

Collective rights are crucial especially for the protection of minorities, often discriminated and victims of violence. Another important campaign proposed by Amnesty International is the one regarding the right to self-determination of Indigenous People. In particular, AI started several projects for indigenous people, which represents around 5% of the current world's population. They are victims of eviction from their ancestral lands, discrimination, which sometimes limits them in expressing their culture and leave them with a different treatment as second-generation citizens, and violence. Marginalization and discrimination make them vulnerable to threats and abuses and the formers are also the reason why they are part of the 15% of world's extreme poor: their life expectancy is 20 years lower compared to non-indigenous people and they estimate the highest number of prisoners, unemployed and illiterate persons. Notwithstanding, they are protected by the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which deals with indigenous' economic, social, cultural and environmental concerns as well as all kinds of human rights applicable to them. Hence, their lands' rights are recognized by the international law. Indeed, states are not allowed to force eviction without previous consent and without an alternative allocation. Despite that, they have been reallocated many times due to discriminatory policies and any form of defense or protest by Indigenous People have been suffocated in murder or physical violence. Throughout the years, Indigenous People have been forced to move to cities and towns, facing even more marginalization, poverty and sometimes extinction. An example of this was the case of Màxima Acuna Atalaya, who stood up for her land in Peru and was charged with criminal offence against one of the biggest gold mining companies. The Supreme Court of Justice finally argued in favor of Maxima in 2017. Moreover, the situation for indigenous women and children is particularly though. Statistically, indigenous women are more likely to die during pregnancy or for sexual transmitted diseases and they are more exposed

to any form of violence, especially domestic one. This is because they have not complete access to healthcare facilities due to discrimination and mistreatment. Indeed, Amerindian adolescents girls are more likely to die giving birth than women from non-indigenous populations; also in Kenya, women are twice as likely to have no antenatal care and the same happens in countries such as Panama, Russia and Namibia. In Peru, during the 90s, 2,0000 poor indigenous women were sterilized by their government without their consent. This is an example of how they constantly face discrimination and violence leading to their children being also affected by that. In fact, children hardly achieve access to education. Amnesty International is currently involved in a campaign for the protection of the Sengwer Indigenous People who have always lived in the Embobut Forest in Kenya but the Kenya Forest Service is forcing them to leave their land. Authorities have been accusing the Sengwer of harming and damaging the land without any actual proof and the former have been burning down indigenous people's houses and using both violence and intimidation against them. According to Irungu Houghton, Amnesty International Kenya's Executive Director: "*The Sengwer people were never genuinely consulted nor was their free and informed consent ever obtained prior to the eviction. This is a flagrant violation of Kenyan and international law*" (Amnesty International, 2021). Therefore, all around the world, Indigenous People are denied the third generation right of self-determination. The right to self-determination, as argued by the Charter of the UN, allow people to "*freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development*"¹³. However, in several countries such as Canada or Australia, indigenous children have been assimilated into white culture by being forced to go to certain schools where they cannot speak their own language or express their own identities. In spite of that, they are currently suffering from discrimination, neglecting and abuse and they are called "Stolen Generations". Because of the critical situation, Amnesty International is involved in a macro-campaign asking for laws that can protect Indigenous People, their cultures and their lands. The organization was in fact one of the external actors pushing for the approval of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Amnesty International is now asking to implement specific laws that permit the complete and clear application of the UNDRIP at a national level. In order to do so, AI proposes an effecting communication between authorities and Indigenous People, in matters related to them. The organization also asks for the maintenance of their cultural identities, without facing discrimination or threats and a secure access to all resources available on their lands.

¹³ Charter of United Nations, Article I

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE CAMPAIGNS

As mentioned in chapter II, Amnesty International encountered many changes and obstacles during its 60 years of life. Changes and issues concerned membership and geography as well as money and internal authority. In particular, during its first 30 years, AI was mainly focused on in the internal organization and the extension of the latter in terms of groups and national sections. The first particles were governed and coordinated by the International Secretariat in London, while currently, groups are somehow independent and free to propose and activate. During the 70s and the 80s, a great number of campaigns were initiated by Amnesty International and the number of members increased as a direct consequence: people were not just interested in AI as an organization but rather on its goals, especially about women's rights and sexual rights. Moreover, the critical turning point was the adoption of campaigns concerning the Global South and the several human rights abuses that occurred there. From the 1970s on, the organization focused more on practical activism than theoretical research. The Integrated Strategic Plan was a first step towards integration and decentralization. In 2013, the Global Transition Plan (GTP) was designed to make Amnesty International "closer to the ground" in terms of being more significant and influential for the sake of becoming a global movement. According to the outlines of the plan: "*Amnesty International will reduce the size of its London headquarters and develop a substantial number of hub offices in other parts of the world*" (Amnesty International, 2013). Therefore, AI's first goal was to expand, act with greater legitimacy and relevance and develop projects carried out by activists as well as local governments. For the sake of doing so, growth and development were, and still are, considered foundational steps. Amnesty International is not just interested in expanding in new territories but also in better responding to political challenges and struggling human rights environments. The GTP ended in 2017 and strengthened the areas of stakeholder engagement. However, the next steps of AI are currently still based on the five strategic goals of the GTP: reclaiming freedom; securing equal rights for all; responding to crises; ensuring accountability; and maximizing their resources and engagement. The carried-out strategy also includes support of existing movements that get along Amnesty International's beliefs and the development of training programs to raise the quality of the engagement. The 2018 Accountability Report stated that Amnesty International investigates and exposes facts through research, activism, campaign mobilization and lobbying and attempts to influence all the people and institutions that have enough power to make changes. For this reason, campaigns planning is often specific and include exit points in mind to ensure suitable goals and objectives.

1. Goals, objectives and the theory of change

Nowadays, every single NGO and SMO set up and base their work on campaign planning. However, they all use different strategies. For Amnesty International, a campaign is a complete project or course of action that includes many different teams and expertise, and it is designed to achieve a specific change. They are a priority, limited in time, based on an achievable goal that can create an effective impact for human

rights issues. There are different types of campaigns: global, regional or national campaigns and the so called “urgent actions”. Any kind of campaign is created according to the perfect opportunity: a window of opportunity to reach a goal that can improve human rights globally or nationally. Hence, the impact is not based on the visibility obtained, but rather on the actual change that the campaign reached. Different instruments and methods are used when generating a campaign, for instance some may need media involvement while others may only suffer from it. Especially, the Theory of Change is a common methodology that allows activists to identify the best strategies for developing the campaign, based on the identification of the problem and the levels of influence, it also requires great knowledge of the context and of the authorities involved. Moreover, as noted before, organizations use different methods and approaches to campaigning: Amnesty International in general sets up different levels of campaigns in order to involve both regional and national sectors but also with the aim at working all together against a common issue. At an international level, AI conducts global campaigns where all its energies are concentrated because they may require the involvement of the whole movement. An example is the campaign “My Body, My Rights” which transversally touched different countries and contexts, or the “I Welcome” campaign which required international engagement especially from European countries. Both are campaigns that have enormous potential but are also very risky since it is difficult to create a frame and a language that is transversal to all countries involved. Another example of campaigns is those of “Individuals at risk” which are committed to urgent cases of individuals who are at risk, often prisoners of conscience, and that require specific mobilization. The most representative campaign is certainly the “Write for Rights”. Conversely, national and regional ones are coordinated by regional offices or country sections, hence they are not necessarily coordinated by London headquarters, and focus on regional priorities, such as those working on refugees, that may require the intervention of some sections to put pressure on national governments. A crucial example which includes both individuals at risk and national campaigns are those for the human rights abuses in Egypt and in particular the cases of Giulio Regeni and Patrick Zaki. Finally, there is another type of campaign called “Crisis and Tactics campaign” that is identified and elaborated in a very practical way to deal with an urgent situation. Usually, the former is developed in cases of conflict, where AI must take a position and act quickly to defend human rights. Nonetheless, it is relevant to note that these types of campaigns can obviously intersect and de facto, they usually do.

Building a campaign, especially an international one, is clearly very complex: several needs and interests may conflict with each other and get in the way of the objectives and final goals. The real challenge is to work in parallel at different levels and arrive at usable and crucial content for all Amnesty International’s sections. In general, the first step is to define what AI wants to achieve, the goal set in terms of change, and the way and instruments to accomplish that. Basically, it is necessary to start from a theoretical comparison on what to achieve and how to do it. The second step is called the “sensing activity”, carried out according to the type of campaign that is built. It consists in talking directly with people to understand their perception on the topic and their perception of Amnesty’s relation to that topic. For the sake of creating a campaign that

can reach people, it is essential to raise awareness on the issue. Also, these people can and should fall into different categories: right-holders, supporters, stakeholders or civilians who might have different characteristics. The sensing activities are crucial in understanding the people involved and the relationship with the issue or the abuse. Moving on, based on the results of the sensing, activists begin to understand how to involve people and how to initiate change. To reach the goal, they might invent something different and innovative or employ some more traditional repertoires. This third process involves a lot of creativity and many actors. Furthermore, once a draft has been created, it is possible to concretely understand which outputs to achieve and which actions to implement. Therefore, the team moves on to the creation of a prototype of a well-defined project, to provide an example and a model of the campaign that is going to be implemented. In 2018, Amnesty International developed a toolkit called “Strategies for human rights defenders”¹⁴ which includes instructions and eight tips on how to arrange, plan and enforce campaigns. As mentioned before, the toolkit highlights the importance of defining the problem as clearly as possible and the usefulness in using a participatory process since collaboration with other members of the organization or community is crucial in defining the real impact of the dilemma. For this first step, AI together with the community of “Defending the defenders”, propose the S.W.O.T. Analysis, hence the identification of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats. According to the manual, identifying the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, and environmental factors that create the context of the community under observation is essential, especially in terms of recognizing the before and after changes that would be possibly brought by the campaign. Once the context is determined and analyzed, the organization and the activists involved need to select the key point for the structure of the campaign. However, goals and objectives should not be intertwined: the goal is the final aim of the campaign that guides the whole process; while objectives are several steps that must be achieved in order to pursue the goal. In general, both goals and objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). Furthermore, actors involved in the campaign, or those that might have an interest or might influence the course of the campaign, must be identified too. They must be limited and have a real impact on the campaign, they must be the right targets. The following step is the most important one: creating a theory of change. Fundamentally, the theory of change “*describes the strategies that you put in place to make a difference in the world and lays out the changes the campaign wants to see and how the campaign expects its actions to lead to these changes*” (Amnesty International, 2018). Hence, the theory of change demand to identify what is the most important change we want, starting from the final end. Indeed, Amnesty International published the summaries regarding the most recent theories of change from 2016 to 2019. For instance, the Theory of change for Human Rights Education, identified as an objective of Goal 1: Reclaiming Freedoms, states that the major problems are “*the work of human rights defenders on the ground is delegitimized and undermined as a result of competing narratives; and the inadequacy of formal and non-formal Human Rights Education both online*

¹⁴ Amnesty International, *Community Campaigns: Strategies for Human Rights Defenders*, 2018

and offline for a large number of people” (Amnesty International, 2019). Consequently, the document proposed by AI emphasizes that the impact of the problems is not just the unawareness of people’s rights but also that States keep perpetuating human rights abusing and therefore discrimination and prejudice are unchallenged by the authorities. In this regard, Amnesty International wants to achieve a stronger support for marginalized classes for the sake of making them understand and claim their rights as well as influence the education system to address the growing disparity and ensure equal opportunity. Anyhow, once the key actors, the context, and the theory of change are established, tactics must be spotted. For instance, both advocacy and sensitization are recognized as tactics but the first one focuses on the persuading of the decision-makers or influencing people, while the second one is referred to the continue awareness of the community about the issue. The last steps emphasized by Amnesty International’s toolkit are the reduction of risk and the monitoring and evaluation of the campaign. On the one hand, the first one is essential because there is always the possibility that something or someone will obstacle the achievement of the objectives or the goals. On the other hand, *“monitoring the implementation of your campaign is important and lets you adapt to any changes that may happen. You need to avoid reaching the end of the campaign only to realize that none of your goals or objectives have actually been achieved”* (Amnesty International, 2018). Therefore, as mentioned and highlighted before, effectiveness, relevance and impact are the key conditions that must always be considered.

2. Communication strategy: Amnesty Italia’s Hate Speech Campaign of 2018-2019

As someone might imagine, the evolution of the organization in terms of both aims and goals and approaches to the campaigns, affected the communication strategy towards the external world. There are several reasons why the way to communicate changed. First, the generation of a growing number of NGOs and secondly the technological evolution. Indeed, the increasing use of technological devices allowed NGOs to communicate decisively, reach more people and obtain more information about human rights abuses. These enormous changes brought to the professionalization of the human rights organizations in a sense that NGOs are more concentrate into the use of marketing techniques and strategies.

Especially, Amnesty International communication strategy developed a lot during the last few years, leading to an internal conflict between conservative and progressive forces. The major conflict was connected to the idea of branding: some activists and pioneers of the organization contested the idea of branding as in contrast with that of education and awareness raising, crucial values of AI. However, the AI’s Manifesto of Communication strategy disseminated in 2019, presents itself as appealing and tempting. The manifesto stands *“Making Human Rights Popular: Amnesty believes that by inspiring people to take injustice personally and by mobilizing the humanity in everyone, everyone will be able to enjoy human rights”* (Amnesty International, 2019). As suggested by the document, Amnesty’s communication strategy is focused on generating a unified and compact communication and engaging with all the possible tools. Although it is clear-cut that human rights are represented in a more populist way, they want to make human

rights more popular and aggressively use any tool available to reach as much people as possible, Amnesty's goals should not be misunderstood. As declared in the manifesto: *"we will now be more focused on enhancing the brand and using communication levers to drive human rights change and organizational growth. We will communicate in a way that will be driven by data, will appeal to audiences and will better serve our sections. It reaches digital and traditional audiences in a joined-up way"* (Amnesty International, 2019). They moved on proposing the goal and the way to achieve them but also inviting the audience and the civilian to become part of the AI's mission. It is crucial to understand why human rights matter, and how and why people benefits from them. In the new era, opponents to human rights are increasing and their tools are as sophisticated as Amnesty's, the direction of the communication must start from the inside.

Hence, Amnesty International started the so called "road to change": its work on communication focuses on the engagement of online campaigns, media outputs, and education to human rights. Amnesty's aim is to be closer to the communities, create more space for people's voices and be recognized by everyone as a hope that change is possible. The organization uses a multi-modal approach, images and videos are crucial; the register is emotive, but positive emotions are highlighted such as trust and hope; in order to create a sense of inclusiveness they use pronouns as "we", "us", "our". Social media are not just used as media channels but rather as educational platform, they are focused on raising awareness and denounce human rights abuses. The organization breaks from the traditional "registers of pity" based on shock and sense of compassion moving to a post-humanitarian communication that *"breaks from the traditional registers of pity as motivations for action"* (Amnesty International, 2019) but rather morality and grand gesture that can inspire confidence and lead to greater awareness on the subject. Post-humanitarian communication is about creating identification between the individual and the organization, it is about creating a match based on morality and beliefs.

Nowadays, movements start online and then take to the streets, protests are kept alive in the social platforms and they are not limited in space or time but they are worldwide in real-time. Hence, the use of digital communication has revolutionized the strategies and repertoires of NGOs. According to the 2019 NGO Technology Report, 90% of NGOs worldwide use social media to include more people, gain supporters and donors. Despite of that, organizations use different approaches depending on the objectives and goals they wish to achieve: the digital broadcasting and customization strategy; digital conversing; digital analytics; and digitally enable distributed strategy. The first one focuses on the incensement the supporter participation through marketing strategies. Essentially, it is the production of several contents on social media, the collection of data and the creation of email lists. Hence, it is considered passive and not very useful to the organization per se and the development of advocacy campaigns. Conversely, the digital conversing or listening intends to *"establish a more authentic relationship with existing members and lower the boundaries separating staff from supporters. Conversing focuses on regularly soliciting members feedback about campaigning topics, strategies and other issues"* (Amnesty International, 2019). This strategy is very popular among activists of AI to strengthened the activity and "enhance power by increasing

commitment”. Furthermore, digital analytics is an activity that focuses on listening and collecting data for the sake of measuring the impact of communication. Usually, this active strategy goes along with the digital broadcasting and customization strategy and it is used by several NGOs, including Amnesty International. Finally, the digitally enable distributing campaigning strategy aims at involving supporters and activists through social media. The Amnesty’s support-produced advocacy is an example of this method in which some decisions are taken by supporters only.

The most fitting example is the Amnesty Italy’s campaign of 2018-2019 against hate speech on social media. The campaign was based on the training and involvement of online activists who had to contrast hate speech generated during the elections. They succeeded in collecting and evaluating thousands and thousands of comments. The campaign was all developed online and more than 300 activists participated, relying on external agencies as well as professional actors. The first step depended on a survey on the Hate Barometer, which lasted 23 days and monitored 1.412 candidates. The Barometer collected almost 800 offensive comments mainly based on racism and discrimination towards migrants and religious minorities. Among the 129 candidates that stand out for their racists and violent comments, several used a lexicon based on war metaphors and dehumanizing analogies. Amidst them, 77 were elected. Obviously, the goal of the campaign was to *“monitor the political debate and comprehend to what extent politicians have a responsibility to generate hate speech and aggressive behavior”*, and it came into surface that hate speech is indeed stimulated by both the language used by certain politicians and the ideas they carry on. Amnesty Italy performed a counter narrative that was carried out by specific education projects and norm activities of campaign. Candidates took positions against hate speech allowing and carrying constant feedback to the organization. This campaign case study highlights the fact that the new digital world is affecting also the work of the organizations and that human rights defenders NGOs, such as Amnesty International, are always open to change of any kind, to attract new supporters and pursue their missions against human rights abuses. Moreover, the case study of Amnesty Italy Hate Speech also gave us the idea of how crucial is the role of NGOs and SMOs in the virtual reality: there, abuse could be buried or it could hide behind pages, comments and screens, and an active participation of human rights defenders is necessary and crucial.

3. NGO- Government relationship and the political strategies carried on by them

The role of NGOs and their impact on government is something that should be taken into consideration when analyzing the activity of Amnesty International. In dealing with governments, it is crucial to participate according to the core values and beliefs of the organization. Usually, organizations with their own identity and autonomy are more likely to succeed in influencing political strategies as well as in responding to policies. Autonomy could be defined by several different factors: organizational commitment, financial diversification, a mass base, technical expertise, social and managerial knowledge and experience in training government workers. Obviously, these capacities are not likely to develop in repressive context but in all those cases in which collaboration is an opportunity to influence the state in a positive way. The

first of the seven keys to autonomy is necessary because organizations need self-consciousness and commitments to their own goals. Conversely, financial diversification is harder to achieve for all organizations, because funders may be already involved in the political life. If we look at the cases of both social movements and NGOs we realize how a mass base can influence politics in many ways. In the former case, a mass base could provide a collective impact while engaging in political protests. For instance, in the 1970s mass protests have taken on a political connotation, while social movements in Latin America became even “de facto governments”. In the latter case, every time NGOs and organizations create a network, they strengthen themselves and they structure also assuming the role of “links between people and policies” (Ritchie-Vance, 1991). Moreover, regarding technical expertise as well as social and managerial knowledge, NGOs that carry out them have usually greater chances to influence policies especially when governments are already committed to the major change proposed. Finally, autonomy can also be reached when NGOs dedicate to the training of government personnel and consequently might end up shaping the policies and the values behind them. As Julio Emilio Velarde Flores said in 1988, Chairman of the Central Reserve Bank of Peru: *“The vast majority of the intellectual production of the country is provided by the “Centros” (NGOs), their experience and personnel. Research themes, seminars and debates are in the center of the national debate and many themes and alternatives launches from the “centers” appear in the rhetoric of the government”* (Fisher, 1997) . However, sometimes NGOs’ success can culminate in governments that put aside their responsibilities and exploit the role and the impact of the organizations to fulfill their duties. In general, if NGOs are autonomous enough, they do not put aside their goals and objectives when dealing with governments but rather they tend to use this relationship to increase their effectiveness and faculties. Despite their capabilities and knowledge, NGOs should always consider the inconsistencies of governments and the possible risks of becoming substitutes and commissioners of the latter. In accordance with Adil Najam (1996), the relationship NGO-Government is confrontational, complimentary and collaborative. As stated before, any NGO has a political strategy which may be more or less practical and reactive, but in general, autonomy pushes NGOs towards proactivity while those organizations that are less self-conscious may only turn out to reflect political culture and context rather than redefine them. The degree of proactivity or reactivity may also establish the level of catalytic in the relationship: *“being catalytic for change is not a role for NGOs but the goal for all NGOs activity in the policy stream (...) Similarly, cooptation is also not a relationship per se but a goal for all players in the policy stream and in many regards the other face of the catalytic influence (...) Governments and NGOs will take strategic institutional decisions to use the resources they command to attempt to – catalytically or co-optively - influence the other to conform to their preferred decision path. It is the resulting relationship between them that the direction of change, one way or the other, will be determined.”* (Adil Najam, 1996). However, governments tend to co-opt while NGOs tend to act as catalysts, the latter still follow the two “twin challenges” of empowerment and development (Berg, 1987) which are both democratization and sustainable development. In regards to democratization, it is part of the broader process that includes NGOs

and it can be promoted in two ways: by strengthening the self-determination of civil society and therefore having a long-term impacts such as the expansion of political space and the improvement of the accountability of the political system; or by advancing political reforms that promote the “progressive extension of citizenship” (O’Donnell and Shmitter, 1989), in the sense that they promote top-down reforms from below by means of protesting human rights abuses and challenging government’s repression in court.

There are three possible strategies used to ensure that these “twin challenges” are achieved through contact with governments. The first one is isolation, usually adopted to avoid co-optation. Indeed, non-governmental organizations that use isolation prefer to avoid relationships with the state and build a mass-base or promote different approaches to development that could affect policies in the long-run. On the one hand, isolation can be efficient in cases of both repression and co-optation, but on the other hand lack of external relationships could weakened them and make them vulnerable to attacks. In general, this strategy has very little impact on both sustainable development and top-down democratization although it could have long-run impact if NGOs manage to build a strong autonomy and mass-base. A second potential political strategy is that of political advocacy, which could involve everything from mass protests to quiet negotiations. It does not accept co-optation but it is based on the idea of direct communication with governments. NGOs may employ different forms of advocacy such as friendly persuasion, used to commence a positive relationship with policy makers. Acupuncture, based on being permanently involved in the process of change, was suggested by the WALHI Organization’s Leader who defined the advocacy technique as “placing needle into the sensitive points of a sick system”.¹⁵ Conversely, legal efforts are not that effective, but attempts to reform legislation may offer stronger long-run possibilities for promoting sustainable development and top-down democratization. Furthermore, electoral politics are not very popular among non-governmental organizations, but some have contacts with opposition parties and can enter indirectly in the policy debate. Networking is considered the key to success for NGOs since it can work both inside and outside the policy arena. Indeed, NGOs may cooperate with one another to implement advocacy campaigns on several issues. Finally, mass advocacy strategy allows non-governmental organizations to be strong policy advocates especially when linked with media campaigns and alliances with foreign donors: they can be risky but also effective if the supports are many and organizational autonomy can surmount political obstacles. Therefore, advocacy avoids co-optation and leads to forms of collaboration that do not take away a part of NGOs’ autonomy. Commonly, advocacy has more impact on crises and on strengthening civil society than on national policies and democratization. Ultimately, cooperation is the third strategy used by non-governmental organizations to achieve empowerment and development. It can be initiated by both NGOs and governments and it may be in forms of parallel cooperation as well as full field collaboration. The first case includes all NGOs that prefer this type of collaboration in order to avoid co-optation and duplication. Conversely, field collaboration involves joint planning and can offer NGOs a greater impact than the one produced solo. Collaboration is usually pursued along with advocacy since the latter can better

¹⁵ Julie Fisher, *NGOs and the Political development of the Third world*, Chapter IV

lead to top-down democratization and while the former provides governments with lower costs, and allow NGOs to increase their ability and scale out. Also, cooperation can lead to informal learning on both sides. Even though autonomy is crucial for NGOs, when trying to affect government the organizations tend to be satisfied with an autonomous self-definition and strong grassroots ties. There is no exact way to estimate the effectiveness of the relationship NGO-Government in the long run, everything depends from the political context and the impact of other NGOs.

Considering the case of Amnesty International, as mentioned in Chapter II, the organization cooperate and has a relationship with governments, intergovernmental organization, armed political groups, companies and non- state actors. Since the goal of the organization is to reveal all human rights abuses and eliminate them, AI's staff is focused on encouraging intergovernmental organizations, individuals and all organs of society to support and respect human rights. One way to do that is trough human rights education (HRE) which intends to *"promote awareness and understanding of the full range of human rights and equipping people with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills necessary to respect and defend those rights"* (Amnesty International, no date). This form of education combine several strategies such as lobbying governments to secure that human rights are incorporated in all aspects of education, and educating programs for networks such as community groups and trade unions as well as journalists and activist groups. Amnesty International HRE programs must be carefully planned in order to have long-term goals, they must be coherent with the cultural context of a location or region and they must include participatory learning methods as well as teach skills that include communication, advocacy and problem solving. Moreover, Amnesty International *"encourages organizations to develop international human rights standards and to strengthened the legal and practical machinery for ensuring that these standards are respected by governments"* (Amnesty International, no date). Indeed, the International Secretariat coordinate the relationships with the UN family, in particular with those parcels that deal with human rights issues, with intergovernmental organization such as the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States and several sections of AI are dedicated to making human rights abuses known also to local authorities. Amnesty International also proposes reports and research to the several international institutions for the sake of both arising awareness and demonstrate the world-wide problems. One case in which Amnesty International's reports were extremely important is that of the Istanbul Convention, aimed at preventing violence against women, greater protection against all forms of discrimination and the final eradication of stereotypes and prejudices. To summarize, action is carried on in different forms by AI activists: *approaches to intergovernmental organizations; action files*, which are dossiers of information concerning particular issues regarding human rights; *campaigns*, that I have analyzed before and are considered the heart of the organization's actions; *company approaches; crisis response actions*, in which the Secretary General identifies a "crisis response mode" focused on reinforcing research and campaigning and mobilizing AI members all over the world to respond to the emergency, for instance after the 9\11 attacks in the USA; *demonstrations and symbolic events*, which can be either spontaneous or planned as part of a campaign and

which capture public notice and gain public attention; *direct appeals through letter writing and petitions*; *human rights education*; *lobbying home governments*; *media and publicity work*; *missions*; *outreach*; *regional action networks*; *urgent actions and worldwide appeals*, which are cases regarding individual victims of human rights abuses but that require the action of the AI's worldwide community, such as in the case of Patrick Zaki.

CONCLUSION

To conclude I believe it is necessary to analyze the 2020-2021 Annual Report produced by Amnesty International. In this report, a question comes up. This is an unprecedented era, is Amnesty International up for the challenge? Indeed, 2020, with a simple molecule, has shaken every aspect of the world, including NGOs and human rights. At first, Covid-19 has advanced so much, due to the wide differences among nations in the global context. The situation has been worsened by, on the one hand, austerity measures which have led to extreme complications in public infrastructures and health systems, and on the other hand, institutions were weakened in form, function and leadership. Notwithstanding, “unprecedented times require unprecedented responses and extraordinary leadership”¹⁶. In 2020, an extraordinary leadership did not emerge. Doctors, nurses and health workers, as well as citizens engaged in civil security, were the ones on the first line to save lives. These were the people who made a difference. Nonetheless, behind this heroism the pandemic has uncovered the destructive consequences of the long-standing and structural abuse of power. Covid-19 may have not defined who we are, but it certainly has amplified what we should not be. Again, individuals understood it better and started opposing to human rights abuses and injustices, as in the cases of Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo movement. They protested inequality. They challenged the police because of their violent attitude towards targeted groups such as black people, minorities, indigenous people and the homeless. They fought against exclusion and patriarchy, hate rhetoric and the brutal behavior of a sovereign leadership.

In the last year, Amnesty International highlighted with campaigns and reports, several issues related to the pandemic, which have particularly affected some groups or segments of the population including the elders, especially those in retirement houses, health workers, homeless people and women. AI has documented a series of misappropriate, discriminatory or unjustified actions in the application of the lockdown measures by the police forces and local authorities. Covid-19 has stopped many activities and a large part of our lives but it has not stopped violations of human rights. Indeed, in some situations it has highlighted them more, or even aggravated them. This happened for example for housing law: many families were left homeless in such a delicate moment, unable to access safe housing during the lockdown and having difficulty finding assistance due to the closure of public authorities. Furthermore, for many women and girls, the lockdown has been a real nightmare: violence against women, and especially domestic violence has risen worryingly. Only in Italy, data reported 23,000 calls to the national number for assistance compared to the 13,000 calls registered in 2019. However, these are just some examples of major violations of human rights. They are just examples of issues that do not only persist today, but have been made worse by Covid-19.

Now that we have entered the second year of a global pandemic, many of the thoughts that had kept our spirits high in the early days seem a long way off. Unfortunately, we cannot refer to the past when speaking about Covid-19, and we have seen that “everything did not go well”. The examples cited above,

¹⁶ Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2020-2021*

referring to people who were already in difficulty before the pandemic and who encouraged greater difficulties in this period of crisis, deserve a reflection: a common problem is not enough to change human behavior. The pandemic has given us the tools to read the truth about our societies, they are full of contradictions in which violation of human rights and abuses towards them are still on the agenda. Amnesty International's Annual Report of 2020-2021 denounced this. Concrete and coordinated action is needed in the defense of human rights. After 60 years of activism the organization still fights to defend democracy and oppose to human rights abuses, stressing out to governments that "*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*"¹⁷ something that has been written and signed in 1948. Despite that, after 73 years, there is still no country in the world where human rights are fully respected. That is no longer acceptable and we must not pretend nothing is happening.

When 60 years ago, the English lawyer had the idea of launching an "Appeal for Amnesty" to ask for the release of prisoners of conscience in the world, he did not know that he had created a real "Social Network", a network full of people located in every part of the planet, united by a common goal and by action and communication techniques. The latter, created in 1961, was based on common denominators: people cannot go to jail for their ideas; people's bodies cannot be violated; whatever crime has been committed, the state must not respond in the same or even in a worse way. Since the first campaigns for the prisoners of conscience, for the banning of torture and for the abolition of the death penalty, Amnesty International has rapidly expanded its range of action to deal with majorities of right holders to whom those rights are denied every single day. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights led Benenson's social network from the beginning. As stated by the founder of the organization: "*if those 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were applied, the world would be a beautiful place*" (Benenson, 1961). After 60 years, from aerograms written in pen and sent by airmail, to online petitions, AI has made many steps forward. In terms of culture and human rights regulations as well as amelioration of an incalculable number of people's lives, Amnesty International has brought a change. Therefore, as Riccardo Noury, spokesman for Amnesty International Italy argued in the 2020-2021 Annual Report: "*to those who say that we are still at the dawn of human rights, I reply that dawn is always better than sunset*".

However, behind the strong intentions of the organization, there are people. People who are also broken by the pandemic and who also must fight for their personal battles. It is not something that can be ignored. Amnesty International is based on noble intentions but the actors involved have no superpower. Therefore, AI can have laid the first stone, but a new way of thinking is needed for the sake of respecting the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although culture must be protected, it should not be a limit to the protection of human rights. Although we are all full of diversity, this should not be used as a weapon and the thing that pushes conflicts over the edge, but rather as a way of learning more about each other and become more cultural sensitive. Amnesty International is fighting for all of us, are we really going to sit and just watch? In times like the ones we are living, everyone should be engaged in helping

¹⁷ Article I of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

others, especially those who cannot help themselves. If Covid-19 has taught us anything, is that at the end of the day we are all living in the same reality, and that we are all affected by the same problems. However, it has also shown us that many people lack access to means and repertoires to manage these situations and they are forced to give up. Hence can we say that Amnesty International is working? Has it really made the difference? I believe that this question is indeed inadequate. Amnesty International is highlighting a problem, it is creating awareness and trying to fix whatever is fixable, but it cannot make the difference, because change is in people's hands.

I wanted to analyze the role of this organization because its major intention is to report and inform people about human rights abuses, creating awareness and a sense of justice that it is necessary nowadays: *"it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness"*¹⁸. Procrastination and indifference must be destroyed, there is no place for them anymore. Therefore, I believe that it would be more reasonable to ask ourselves if we are making a difference thanks to the efforts of Amnesty International, and if we are more aware and informed thanks to the efforts of the organization and of its activists. As Emanuele Russo, President of Amnesty International Italia said: *"Amnesty International wishes not to celebrate the next 60 years because in the world we wish for we will not be necessary anymore"* (Russo, 2021).

¹⁸ Peter Benenson, *Human Rights Day Ceremony*, 10th December 1961

ABSTRACT

Quando si parla di diritti umani e di guerre interminabili, spesso si dimenticano tutti i passi avanti che sono stati fatti dalla metà del secolo scorso in merito ad entrambe i temi.

La Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani adottata nel 1948, ha provocato proteste a livello globale contro razzismo ed ineguaglianza, ed anche attraverso queste forme di protesta è cambiata, per gran parte del pianeta, la mentalità e la società in cui viviamo. Il movimento dedicato ai diritti umani si è evoluto incredibilmente, così come la legge nazionale che ha codificato la Dichiarazione. Le Nazioni Unite sono state in grado di impostare una morale per risolvere i conflitti legati ai diritti umani, mantenere la sostenibilità, ridurre la povertà e proteggere la salute pubblica. Tuttavia, ancora per molte persone nel mondo, la Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani è solo un pezzo di carta. Mi riferisco a tutte quelle persone che vivono ancora in condizione di estrema povertà, di tutti quei bambini che muoiono per malnutrizione prima ancora di arrivare al loro quinto compleanno, e di tutti coloro che vengono sottoposti a tortura o addirittura uccisi. Mi riferisco a tutti coloro che sono ancora vittime di abusi e di negazione dei diritti umani. Amnesty International, organizzazione non governativa internazionale impegnata nella difesa dei diritti umani, si occupa proprio di questo ed attraverso campagne, report, relazioni con i governi locali, protegge e assicura che tutti abbiano accesso ai loro diritti e che questi ultimi vengano rispettati e conservati.

Questa tesi di laurea vuole infatti analizzare l'operato di questa istituzione ed il suo attivismo, partendo dall'importanza dei diritti umani e dal ruolo che ricoprono nella società in cui viviamo.

Amnesty International nasce dopo un periodo di repressione da parte di numerosi governi nei confronti delle diverse minoranze sociali, e dopo il quale i cittadini di tutto il mondo si sono visti uniti e solidali nel pretendere i loro diritti. Quest'organizzazione ha sempre cercato di incrementare i propri strumenti operativi per creare una catena umanitaria in grado di distruggere e combattere tutte le ingiustizie e le violenze legate ai diritti umani. La mia attenzione si rivolge in particolare ai diversi strumenti che sono stati utilizzati negli anni, agli obiettivi raggiunti, ed alle diverse azioni umanitarie portate avanti da questa organizzazione.

La prima parte di questa tesi, riguarda la Sociologia dei Diritti umani, che riconosce il ruolo imprescindibile di questi ultimi e verte ad applicare i metodi di analisi e le condizioni sociali nelle quali i diritti umani si sviluppano, vengono implementati ed applicati, così come violati e trasgrediti. Ho analizzato le diverse categorie di diritti umani, le rivendicazioni nel corso della storia nei diversi Paesi, e gli effetti sociali prodotti dalle varie conquiste dei diritti.

Successivamente ho approfondito l'analisi della storia, delle radici e della struttura di Amnesty International. Nata nel 1961 grazie ad un articolo dell'avvocato Peter Benenson, Amnesty International ha visto più volte mettere in discussione le proprie idee, così come ha assistito ed operato durante numerosi conflitti politici tra paesi e non ha mai arretrato davanti alle difficoltà nell'operare per la protezione dei diritti umani. Principale strumento utilizzato da Amnesty International sono le "campagne", le quali interessano tutto il mondo e sono mosse proprio dai principi della Sociologia dei Diritti umani. L'analisi sulle varie campagne

mi ha portato anche a studiare più approfonditamente il sistema di comunicazione che vi è dietro queste, e ad analizzare la relazione che Amnesty ha con le Nazioni Unite, così come con i governi nazionali nei quali agisce.

La parte conclusiva della Tesi riguarda il rapporto annuale 2020/2021 di Amnesty International e le future sfide che l'organizzazione dovrà affrontare, così come alcuni aspetti di disuguaglianza sociale emersi in particolare dopo la pandemia globale per il Covid-19.

Sebbene i diritti umani siano, per definizione, globali, ci sono 193 diversi sistemi in cui, pur essendoci rispetto dei diritti umani, la promulgazione ed il rispetto delle leggi variano a seconda delle diverse istituzioni politiche e legali dei diversi paesi.

Nonostante l'incredibile lavoro di ONG e comunità nello spingere per un'espansione dei diritti umani su scala globale, e nonostante la crescente interazione tra stati, questi ultimi hanno ancora autorità e influenza sulle norme sui diritti umani sui diversi territori. In effetti, le agenzie delle Nazioni Unite e le ONG devono ancora fare appello agli stati-nazione per nuove leggi e norme che proteggano i diritti, indipendentemente dal tipo di diritto in discussione.

Il problema dell'universalismo-pluralismo culturale si manifesta sia all'interno degli stati che tra gli stati stessi. Sebbene il canone dei diritti umani sia presente sotto forma di una raccolta di documenti: la Dichiarazione Universale dei diritti umani del 1948, il Patto internazionale sui diritti civili e politici ed il Patto internazionale sui diritti economici, sociali e culturali del 1966, i firmatari hanno incarnato diversi livelli di impegno in merito a questi documenti.

I Rapporti annuali di Amnesty International continuano a dimostrare che questi documenti "*non hanno obbligato gli stati-nazione a rispettare i diritti umani nel modo più profondo o coerente come avrebbero voluto i loro autori*". Secondo l'organizzazione, infatti, nessuno stato dei 193 è risultato avere un record perfetto. La sociologia dei diritti umani analizza e contesta i tre aspetti principali dei diritti umani: le circostanze in cui questi ultimi si sviluppano, il modo in cui questi diritti vengono implementati sotto diversi sistemi politici e legali, ed infine, l'effetto che apportano ai cittadini ed alle nazioni stesse.

I sociologi definiscono i diritti umani come un insieme di protezioni e diritti posseduti da tutti i membri della comunità umana indipendentemente da razza, genere, classe, orientamento sessuale, background culturale, origine o altre forme di identità o posizione sociale. Protezioni e diritti sono parte stessa della società ed evolvono nel corso della storia, inoltre, dipendono dallo spazio geografico e sono soggetti a mediazione culturale.

Malgrado questo, la suddivisione dei diritti umani avviene sia dal punto di vista verticale sia da quello orizzontale e quindi i diritti umani possono essere considerati positivi, sotto forma di concessioni, e negativi sotto forma di protezione. Inoltre, la sociologia dei diritti umani identifica anche forme di diritto in riferimento a diversi argomenti come: diritti culturali e politici, diritti sociali ed economici, diritti collettivi. Queste classificazioni sono necessarie per identificare gli abusi e le eventuali soluzioni promosse dalle ONG o dai governi stessi. La classificazione è importante per poter identificare quale diritto è stato negato o

violato, ed il ruolo che il governo dovrebbe assumere nel gestire e risolvere l'abuso. In particolare, la seconda classificazione si rifà al sistema francese di Libertà, Eguaglianza e Fratellanza, presupponendo una sorta di gerarchia dei diritti umani, che a livello pratico risulta molto spesso ignorata o comunque disattesa. Infatti, uno stato potrebbe avere pieno controllo dei diritti di seconda generazione quali i diritti economici e sociali, mentre potrebbe avere delle lacune riguardanti i diritti di prima generazione, quindi culturali e politici. Ovviamente queste classificazioni sono in qualche modo limitanti. Nel primo caso i diritti negativi e positivi non prendono in considerazione i diritti di un individuo all'interno di un gruppo, nel secondo caso il limite sta nel dare per scontata la presenza di una gerarchia e di un sistema fisso che non viene alterato dal tempo o dalle condizioni sociali. È importante comunque sottolineare che il secondo schema di classificazione è spesso utilizzato dalle ONG, inclusa Amnesty International, nella formazione delle campagne in quanto sono stati riconosciuti diversi trattati che vertono proprio alla protezione di una delle generazioni. Il punto fondamentale che viene analizzato dalla sociologia dei diritti umani è quello del "raggruppamento dei diritti".

Quest'ultimo, si riferisce ad un insieme di diritti che può appartenere a diverse generazioni ma che viene portato avanti come unico, molto spesso perché i diritti sono estremamente correlati tra di loro e portano avanti un tema di maggior importanza. Un esempio critico è quello del programma anti povertà di Oxfam International o il diritto di Dignità di Amnesty International. In entrambi i casi, una serie di diritti viene rilevato come imprescindibile per arrivare ad un fine comune di sanità mentale e fisica. Questi raggruppamenti di diritti potrebbero spingere i responsabili politici a definire il più alto livello raggiungibile di salute, istruzione e diritti umani universali in modo da raggiungere una cultura protetta ed un ambiente sano. Questi diritti richiedono pacchetti di leggi da parte degli stati, è quindi necessario che le ONG, le organizzazioni per i movimenti sociali e le agenzie delle Nazioni Unite spingano i governi ad agire e attuare il canone dei diritti umani a livello locale e nazionale.

In particolare, Amnesty International ha un ruolo cruciale in questo senso. Le campagne ed i reclami portate avanti dall'organizzazione mostrano non solo l'importanza della relazione tra i diritti umani e le istituzioni internazionali, ma soprattutto le relazioni tra i diritti umani ed il pubblico in generale.

La caratteristica principale di Amnesty International è quella di essere un movimento di persone localizzato in tutto il mondo, che difende i diritti umani in tutto il mondo. Amnesty International è nata nel 1961 come risposta alla carcerazione di prigionieri di coscienza, come protesta alla mancata libertà di parola e di espressione. Benenson era dell'idea che se tutti i 30 articoli della Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani venissero rispettati, il mondo sarebbe un posto migliore. Purtroppo nel 1961, ed anche oggi è così, Amnesty International ogni giorno identifica una carcerazione ingiusta, torture ed addirittura pene di morte inflitte a persone che semplicemente esprimono la loro opinione e le loro idee. Amnesty si sviluppa proprio intorno all'idea che tutti abbiamo il diritto di esprimerci e la conseguenza delle nostre parole non può portare un abuso nei confronti dei diritti umani. Da un punto di vista organizzativo, l'idea di Amnesty International è di decentralizzare il lavoro per dare più spazio alle sezioni nazionali per amministrare i propri membri. Il

sistema è organizzato per consentire alla gente comune di parlare e protestare a nome di altri esseri umani in pericolo. Gli attivisti provengono da diverse culture, con convinzioni e background diversi, ma tutti uniti dalla determinazione a lavorare per un mondo in cui i diritti umani siano goduti da tutti gli esseri umani. Campagne, leggi e politiche si rivolgono direttamente alle singole vittime ed al loro destino. L'organizzazione è indipendente da qualsiasi governo, ideologia politica, interesse economico o religione. Per poter mantenere la propria indipendenza Amnesty International non sostiene, né si oppone, a nessun governo, non accetta denaro da partiti politici o governi, ma il suo finanziamento dipende interamente dai contributi privati e dall'appartenenza a livello mondiale.

I principi su cui si basa l'organizzazione sono quelli di solidarietà internazionale, universalità e indivisibilità dei diritti umani, azioni efficaci per la singola vittima, una copertura globale, democrazia e rispetto reciproco. Attualmente Amnesty International ha più di un milione di membri iscritti in oltre 150 paesi, i quali comprendono all'interno gruppi regionali e territoriali. Amnesty è riconosciuta e rispettata, in quanto dispone di delegazioni che si consultano con governi e organizzazioni intergovernative, come le Nazioni Unite. Lo scopo è quello di prendere parte al dibattito internazionale sulle questioni relative ai diritti umani.

Amnesty International immagina un mondo in cui ogni persona gode di tutti i diritti scritti e proposti nella Dichiarazione. Pertanto, la missione e gli obiettivi dell'organizzazione sono quelli della prevenzione e della rottura di qualsiasi abuso dei diritti dell'integrità fisica e mentale, nonché della libertà di coscienza, espressione e libertà dalla discriminazione. Ogni governo, secondo la Dichiarazione delle Nazioni Unite, ha il dovere di rispettare, osservare e proteggere i diritti umani delle persone sotto la loro sovranità territoriale. pertanto, uno dei ruoli di Amnesty International è proprio quello di spingere i governi a fare quanto sopra citato.

Le campagne di Amnesty International partono da attivisti di tutto il mondo. Queste ultime sono per Amnesty International la principale forma di azione e sono considerate il cuore delle attività di attivismo. Le campagne di Amnesty International possono concentrarsi su un gruppo di individui, un paese, diverse contee o persino un tema specifico. Ad una campagna internazionale prende parte tutta l'organizzazione e quindi include tutte le sezioni di Amnesty International del mondo. Fondamentalmente, quest'ultime operano inviando appelli alle autorità dei paesi violatori, ponendo pressione su ambasciate e sensibilizzando la mobilitazione e le attività di lobby sulle istituzioni locali nazionali ed internazionali.

Costante attenzione è rivolta alle vittime di violazione dei diritti umani per i quali Amnesty International dedica le così dette "azioni urgenti". In generale, le campagne di Amnesty International potrebbero essere suddivise secondo lo schema delle tre generazioni. Da un punto di vista storico infatti, Amnesty International ha avviato gli attivisti per le questioni riguardanti diritti civili e politici, poi ampliando le campagne verso gli abusi di carattere economico e sociale. Ora, Amnesty International sta dando anche molto spazio ai diritti collettivi, soprattutto per quanto riguarda l'ambiente e le minoranze discriminate.

Attualmente, ogni singola ONG o organizzazione umanitaria basa il proprio lavoro sulla pianificazione delle campagne usando strategie diverse. Per Amnesty International, una campagna è un progetto completo, a

lungo termine, che include uno specifico team di riferimento e delle specifiche competenze, progettata per ottenere un cambiamento specifico. Le campagne sono una priorità. L'obiettivo deve essere raggiungibile ma anche creare un impatto efficace per le questioni relative ai diritti umani.

Esistono diversi tipi di campagne: globali, nazionali o le "azioni urgenti". Ogni campagna viene creata a seconda dell'opportunità perfetta, a seconda della finestra di opportunità per raggiungere un obiettivo che può migliorare i diritti umani a livello globale o nazionale. L'impatto quindi non si basa sulla visibilità ottenuta, ma piuttosto sul cambiamento raggiunto dalla campagna. Gli strumenti utilizzati nelle campagne possono essere differenti, alcuni potrebbero richiedere il coinvolgimento dei media mentre altre potrebbero soffrirne. Il metodo più comune utilizzato da Amnesty è quello della Teoria del Cambiamento, la quale consente agli attivisti di identificare le migliori strategie per lo sviluppo della campagna, identificando pienamente il problema e i livelli di influenza necessari, così come il contesto e le autorità coinvolte o da coinvolgere nella campagna stessa.

Ne segue che la relazione tra Amnesty International ed i governi coinvolti nelle campagne è di estrema importanza ma anche estremamente delicata. Per questo motivo, sin dall'inizio l'associazione ha voluto mantenere credibilità e dimostrare la propria professionalità dichiarandosi neutrale nella sfera politica. In ogni caso, l'organizzazione collabora quotidianamente con governi e organizzazioni intergovernative per raggiungere l'obiettivo di eliminare e rivelare tutti gli abusi dei diritti umani ed incoraggiare una cooperazione volta a questo. L'azione volta alla protezione dei diritti umani è svolta in diverse forme dagli attivisti di Amnesty International. Primo fra tutti, l'approccio alle organizzazioni intergovernative, periodici report riguardanti la situazione dei diritti umani nel mondo, azioni di risposta alle crisi come campagne mirate incentrate sulla ricerca e sulla mobilitazione dei membri di Amnesty International, dimostrazioni ed eventi simbolici che possano coinvolgere e sensibilizzare la popolazione in modo spontaneo o programmato, appelli scritti in forma di lettere o petizioni, un sistema di educazione dei diritti umani che viene portato avanti in diversi modi, in particolare nelle scuole, così come un grande lavoro di sensibilizzazione e formazione che parte dai social media, e che va a coinvolgere tutta la comunità mondiale di Amnesty International.

Sfortunatamente, oggi l'organizzazione si è trovata impreparata come tutto il resto del mondo. Il rapporto 2020-2021 sottolinea come, non soltanto siano venuti al pettine tutti i problemi relativi alla sanità pubblica e ad una discriminazione delle classi più svantaggiate, ma anche come questa crisi mondiale abbia fatto crollare i sistemi del mondo e abbia sottolineato gli abusi di diritti umani che ancora persistono, anche nei paesi che dovrebbero aver assimilato al massimo i 30 articoli della Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani.

Amnesty International, come la maggior parte delle organizzazioni umanitarie, dovrà dedicarsi con attenzione a tutti i problemi che la pandemia ha svelato e a tutti i problemi che svelerà.

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