

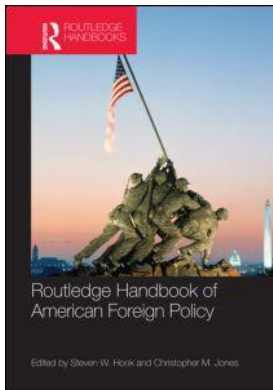
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Human Rights

Shannon L. Blanton and David L. Cingranelli

Through much of U.S. history, human rights concerns in U.S. foreign policy have been subordinated to traditional material-based conceptions of American national interests. Realist scholars and policy makers have eschewed the idea that U.S. foreign policy should be guided by what they have critically seen as “idealistic” or “utopian” humanitarian notions. However, the past few decades have seen the resurgence of liberal and constructivist thinkers touting the importance of human rights concerns, for both moral and strategic purposes, amid the growth in international human rights norms and activism.

In this chapter, we focus on human rights and U.S. foreign policy. We begin by reviewing the historical trends and moments of transformation as the salience of human rights concerns has waxed and waned in U.S. foreign policy. Next, we discuss the four primary participants in U.S. foreign policy—the president, the Congress, the federal bureaucracy, and the American public—and examine the role they play in addressing international human rights concerns. We then turn our attention to the instruments of U.S. foreign policy and consider the extent to which human rights concerns have guided their use and the degree to which they have successfully shaped human rights conditions and practices around the world. In the course of this analysis, we review the scholarly research and examine enduring policy debates regarding human rights and U.S. foreign policy. Our conclusion highlights the major points of our discussion, and contemplates the questions and puzzles for future research that, to date, remain unanswered.

The Historical Background

“Americans have agreed since 1776 that the United States must be a beacon of human rights to an unregenerate world. The question,” noted Schlesinger (1978: 505), “has always been how the U.S. would execute this mission.” For the first 125 years of its existence, the U.S. government placed little emphasis on using foreign policy to influence the manner in which other countries treated their own citizens. Rather, U.S. policy makers tended to see the purview of American foreign policy to be almost exclusively for protecting the United States from external threat and promoting its economic prosperity.

In the mid-1970s, however, a dramatic shift occurred as the United States took the lead in advancing human rights as a global issue and a goal of its foreign policy. While the promotion of human rights had long been consistent with values and beliefs in American political culture, the mid-1970s witnessed the intensification of the level of U.S. interest and action. Due in part to a general effort by Congress to assert itself over many aspects of U.S. foreign policy in the wake of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, human rights as a U.S. foreign policy concern benefited from the passage of significant legislation that explicitly made U.S. support for a country contingent upon its human rights practices.

In 1974, for example, Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to place restrictions on the allocation of U.S. security, economic, and humanitarian assistance to countries with consistent and gross human rights violations. Additionally, the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the 1974 Trade Act, which was unanimously adopted by both houses of Congress, denied most favored nation (MFN) trade status to countries that unduly restricted emigration. Human rights continued to rise on the U.S. foreign policy agenda with the presidency of Jimmy Carter, who took office in 1977 promising to make moral conduct and ethical concerns a defining feature of his foreign policy. As Secretary of State Cyrus Vance explained in a speech that same year at the University of Georgia Law School, the United States sought to advance the right of all people to be free from governmental violation of personal integrity rights. The Carter administration would promote an array of other human rights embodied in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to civil and political liberties and the fulfillment of basic needs including food, shelter, health care, and education.

The new legislation and the professed foreign policy priorities of the Carter administration were joined by a number of other developments within the United States government and around the world to provide a more robust foundation for the permanence of human rights as a consideration in U.S. foreign policy. Domestically, the civil rights movement helped to cultivate a policy environment that was receptive to the importance of human rights in general. Congress began to require that the Department of State prepare annual reports that assessed the human rights practices of almost every nation of the world. Numerous congressional committees were reorganized to more explicitly take into account human rights conditions in making U.S. foreign policy decisions.

Internationally, support for human rights was also growing. This was reflected in the Helsinki Accords of 1975 and the International Human Rights Covenants, which entered into force in 1976. The number and stature of nongovernmental organizations monitoring and promoting human rights was also on the rise, and in 1977 Amnesty International received the Nobel Peace Prize. All of these factors, domestic and international, served to elevate the importance of human rights in U.S. foreign policy (Cingranelli 1993; Liang-Fenton 2004).

Key Policy Actors

Within the literature on human rights and U.S. foreign policy, some studies embrace the analytical simplification of treating the United States government as a unitary rational actor. Others, however, have sought to cast light into the “black box” of state policy making by examining the role of various actors in determining the significance of human rights concerns in the formulation and implementation of policy. The president is generally seen as the most important actor in determining the salience of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, but other key actors include the U.S. legislature, federal bureaucracy, and American public.

The President

Some studies have linked variation in the importance of human rights in U.S. foreign policy to the changing preferences, priorities, and decisions that distinguish one U.S. president from the next. Some offer extended historical chronologies that identify change and continuity between presidential administrations (Apodaca and Stohl 1999; Apodaca 2006), while others provide case studies that more narrowly focus on a particular president (Rosati 1987; Walker, Schaefer, and Young 1998).

Given strong professions of support for human rights and moral conduct, and the shift in emphasis in U.S. foreign policy from realism to liberalism that this was seen to signal, President Carter has been a frequent focus of study. A number of studies concluded that human rights, seen largely in terms of political rights, served as a defining value of the Carter administration (Rosati 1987; Walker et al. 1998). For example, one study examined Carter's operational code and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and concluded Carter maintained a stable worldview and support for human rights (Walker et al. 1998).

Nonetheless, the importance of human rights considerations in the implementation of U.S. foreign policy under the Carter administration was rather limited, and scholars have sought to explain this outcome. Examining the relationship between beliefs and behavior over time, Rosati (1987) argued that there was a lack of consensus in the beliefs and images of key decision makers within the Carter administration, and that over the four-year term there was change in values—among them the importance attached to human rights considerations—that eventually resulted in change in foreign policy behavior. Apodaca (2006) similarly attributes the failings of Carter's human rights policy, in part, to the divisions between an idealist secretary of state and a realist national security advisor as they (and their bureaucratic staffs) struggled for power and control of U.S. foreign policy.

Congress

Of course, the U.S. president does not act alone in shaping American foreign policy. Considerable attention has been paid to both the implications of congressional initiatives for human rights concerns in U.S. foreign policy, as well as the role of the legislature in the policy-making process. It is often said that rather than clearly separating the responsibilities of the legislative and executive branches of government, the U.S. Constitution instead provided an "invitation to struggle." Along these lines, a number of studies have examined the tensions and interactions between the American president and the U.S. Congress with regard to foreign policy in general, and human rights in particular. In the 1950s, for example, there was a nearly successful movement to add a series of amendments to the U.S. Constitution that would have placed restrictions on the ability of the U.S. government to enter into certain types of executive agreements or to ratify some types of international treaties, including human rights treaties. These so called "Bricker amendments" were named for their sponsor, Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio, a conservative Republican. The Bricker amendments controversy grew from the strong vein of non-interventionism, nationalism, and suspicion of foreign influences that has existed from the beginnings of the American republic.

"Brickerism" enabled Congress to successfully pressure the executive branch to withdraw support for human rights treaties in the 1950s and 1960s (see also Fagen 1980; Forsythe 1988, 1990; Hevener and Whiteman 1988). However, in the decades to follow, Congress became much more active in terms of placing human rights on the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Due to the passage of critical legislation in 1974, Congress is widely attributed with advancing human rights as a concern in U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, the conflict between Congress and

the executive branch is now seen as contributing to the development of effective human rights policy (Apodaca 2006).

In an early study of the policy-making process (Avery and Forsythe 1979), the perceptions of U.S. Senators were examined in an effort to understand the factors that led some members of the Congress to vote in favor of human rights legislation. The findings indicated that Senators with a strong pro-defense orientation towards national security were less likely to support human rights legislation. Geographic region, party identification, and likelihood of continued incumbency also influenced votes. Moreover, political party and ideological differences accounted for divisions in voting regarding human rights, and contributed to congressional difficulties in maintaining effective oversight (Forsythe and Welch 1986).

Identifying members of the U.S. House of Representatives who were active participants in the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC), McCormick and Mitchell (2007) assessed the influence of those members on proposed human rights legislation. The authors were interested in determining the characteristics of members of Congress who were actively committed to human rights concerns, as well as identifying the form and level of their involvement. Supported by documentary and interview evidence, they concluded that the decision to join the CHRC was determined by the individual's policy motivation and the influence of national and transnational human rights interest groups.

The Federal Bureaucracy

Though it does not have independent authority, the federal bureaucracy still plays an important role in shaping human rights concerns in U.S. foreign policy. A number of departments within the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy are charged with various aspects of formulating and implementing the human rights goals of U.S. foreign policy. Moreover, with the establishment of the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (now the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) in the State Department in 1977 by the Carter administration, human rights found a permanent home in the federal bureaucracy. The State Department is also charged by the U.S. Congress with preparing annual reports on human rights that serve as an important source of information for both Congress and the president during the formulation of foreign policy. Sullivan (2004) argues that the reports themselves have further consequences for human rights as, at a minimum, they put countries on notice that the United States is taking human rights conditions into account in its international relations and may also provide recognition and some protection to local human rights activists and monitoring groups.

Yet the federal bureaucracy does not speak with one voice. As Donnelly and Liang-Fenton (2004: 16; see also Apodaca 2006) point out, the “distinctive bureaucratic interests of different agencies—and even different branches within a single agency—add a further level of complexity and present potential impediments to coherent and effective human rights policy formation and implementation.” According to Western (2004), an unwillingness to overcome bureaucratic constraints accounted, in part, for the lack of responsiveness by the United States in the beginning stages of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia and the subsequent U.S. ineffectiveness in stopping mass human rights abuses. Looking at human rights and U.S. foreign policy more broadly over time, Apodaca (2006; see also Rosati 1987) similarly concludes that bureaucratic rivalries and inertia often frustrate the successful performance of American foreign policy. By way of example, she points to the competition between the National Security Council and the State Department, as well as divisions within the State Department itself, as hindering and undermining human rights policy during the Carter administration.

American Public Opinion

Societal character and culture, as well as the perceptions of elites, shape how a country views itself and its role in the world. In turn, this self-image shapes foreign policy decisions. It is assumed that in countries where human rights are seen as an important idea and value by the population as a whole, the government will be more likely to make human rights concerns a foreign policy priority. In an early study of U.S. foreign policy and human rights, Vogelgesang (1979; see also Fraser 1979) argued that advocacy of human rights by the United States was largely dependent upon the extent to which Americans viewed the promotion of human rights as advancing the U.S. national interest. In a subsequent analysis of the importance of public opinion in the policy-making process, Luard (1981) similarly contended that states usually take action against human rights repression only when it is called for by domestic public opinion. Along these lines, he argued that public opinion in the United States was responsible, in part, for changes in U.S. foreign policy toward Haiti, the Philippines, and Chile. Other scholars, however, have argued that human rights is not viewed as an important issue by the U.S. public (Geyer and Shapiro 1988), and therefore such concerns are not likely to influence U.S. foreign policy.

Providing a more nuanced examination of public opinion about human rights, Holsti (1979) demonstrated how a division on human rights issues produced cleavages in U.S. foreign policy. He argued that intense divisions in public opinion were unintentionally created by the efforts of the Nixon-Ford and Carter administrations to use détente and human rights to forge a foreign policy consensus. Political party differences also accounted for variation in public opinion, with those who identified as Democrats being far more likely than their Republicans counterparts to consider human rights to be an important goal of U.S. foreign policy (Holsti 1996).

While the need to deepen human rights as a defining principle of U.S. foreign policy remains, the institutionalization of human rights norms has been advanced as the American public has come to embrace the idea of global human rights norms. As Mertus (2004: 17) notes, “Civil society has a subtle yet significant impact on human rights and U.S. foreign policy.” Yet she also observes that, at times, the U.S. public will tolerate behavior that runs contrary to its human rights principles and beliefs.

Policy Instruments

American policy makers must repeatedly decide whether engagement or isolation best furthers its foreign policy goals. On the one hand, “constructive engagement” is seen as a way to develop relationships and dependencies with rights-abusive states that may in turn provide the United States with sufficient leverage to influence their human rights practices. The U.S. role in helping South Africa to move from apartheid to democracy is widely touted as a successful case in which both regional strategic objectives and the promotion of human rights were advanced by the deepening of U.S. engagement with the anti-apartheid opposition (Baker 2004). On the other hand, isolating a country from the United States and the rest of the international community is a foreign policy tactic intended to compel rights-abusive countries to alter their human rights behavior. This has long been part of the reasoning justifying the placement of U.S. sanctions on Cuba, for example.

Human rights considerations now affect whether, and how, the United States uses an array of instruments in its foreign policy arsenal, including:

- The distribution of military foreign assistance;
- The sale and transfer of U.S. arms;

- The distribution of economic foreign assistance;
- The distribution of food assistance;
- Political risk insurance for private companies investing overseas;
- Regional and bilateral trade agreements;
- The granting of MFN status to trade partners;
- The enactment of trade sanctions;
- Military interventions; and
- American influence over the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

While ideas and rhetoric are critical to promoting human rights as an issue for U.S. foreign policy, effectiveness must be evaluated in terms of the reality of action as well (Shattuck 2003). Along these lines, considerable scholarly research has been devoted to determining the extent to which human rights considerations actually influence the use of the various foreign policy instruments and to evaluating the effectiveness of these instruments in promoting human rights.

Social scientists have generally addressed these foreign policy puzzles by conducting either case-specific analyses that focus on particular countries and policy dilemmas or large-N comparative analyses of the determinants and consequences of U.S. foreign policies. We selectively review some of these studies so as to provide a broad overview and sense of theoretical, methodological, and empirical developments in the scholarly literature.

Foreign Assistance

Early studies cast doubt about whether a principled commitment to human rights was reflected in the allocation and distribution of U.S. foreign assistance. Indeed, McKinlay and Little (1979: 243) found that there was “no ground for asserting that humanitarian criteria have any significant direct influence on the pattern of U.S. aid.” The findings of Lars Schoultz (1981) were even grimmer, where he concluded that U.S. foreign assistance was disproportionately allocated in Latin America to countries with poor human rights records. Comparing U.S. presidential administrations, he found that during the Ford administration and even during the Carter years, when human rights considerations influenced decisions about aid allocation, they were almost always overshadowed by other policy concerns. Subsequent studies that drew on multiple sources for human rights data in an effort to reduce bias similarly found little empirical support for the importance of human rights in determining U.S. foreign assistance allocations (Stohl, Carleton, and Johnson 1984; Carleton and Stohl 1985).

More methodological and sophisticated studies, however, began to produce findings that indicated a positive relationship between human rights and U.S. foreign aid. In a widely cited study, Cingranelli and Pasquarello (1985) expanded upon prior scholarship in a number of important ways and found human rights to be linked to U.S. military assistance. They analyzed data for countries that received aid as well as those that did not, separated economic from military aid, and moved beyond bivariate analysis to include a number of control variables in their statistical model. Theoretically, they conceptualized the decision-making process as proceeding in two stages, where policy makers first decided whether a potential recipient would receive any aid at all and, if so, then determined the amount of the aid allocation.

Building upon this foundation, subsequent studies further refined the statistical techniques used to estimate the potential selection bias and applied the two-stage decision making framework in assessing other U.S. foreign policy instruments (see Poe 1991, 1992; Poe and Meernik 1995; Meernik, Krueger, and Poe 1998; Blanton 2000, 2005). Yet while the study by Cingranelli and Pasquarello made many lasting contributions to the study of U.S. foreign

assistance, it was not without criticism. Some took issue with the exclusion of El Salvador from the analysis and the exclusive reliance on the U.S. State Department for data on human rights conditions. Targeting these perceived weaknesses, the validity of the findings of the Cingranelli and Pasquarello (1985) study were questioned by replication studies that found either no relationship between human rights and foreign aid (Carleton and Stohl 1987) or a negative relationship between the two (McCormick and Mitchell 1988). Similarly, though the focus was on the relative impact of donor interest versus recipient need in determining aid allocations, Lebovic (1988) found political-military concerns to overshadow humanitarian ones. Therefore the debate over the importance of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, and U.S. foreign assistance in particular, remained unresolved.

The movement towards greater methodological rigor continued with studies that further challenged the conventional wisdom and suggested instead that human rights were significant in determining the distribution of U.S. foreign assistance. Poe (1990), in particular, led the way with a comprehensive meta-analysis in which he constructed multivariate models that took into account a two-stage decision-making process, used multiple sources for human rights data, assessed both per capita and absolute aid allocations, and included a time lag to allow for the delayed effect of human rights conditions on decisions about U.S. foreign aid. This work was followed by studies on military aid (Poe 1991; Poe and Meernik 1995) that found that countries were less likely to receive U.S. military assistance if they had poor human rights conditions. A study on economic aid (Poe 1992) similarly found that human rights conditions influenced aid decisions under the Carter administration and, to a lesser extent, even under the Reagan administration as well.

Focusing on U.S. foreign assistance to countries in particular regions of the world, additional studies similarly found respect for human rights to be an important consideration, among others, in U.S. foreign aid allocations to Latin America (Blanton 1994; Poe et al. 1994) and Africa (Poe and Sirirangsi 1993). Increasing the number of years and countries examined, subsequent studies continued to find varying degrees of support for a relationship between respect for human rights and receipt of U.S. foreign aid. Apodaca and Stohl (1999) found a positive linkage between human rights and economic assistance, though the findings for military aid were mixed.

Expanding analysis to include years following the Cold War, studies found countries that respected human rights to be more likely to receive U.S. aid (Meernik et al. 1998; see also Lai 2003). Along these lines, Demirel-Pegg and Moskowitz (2009: 196) found autocratic states with poor human rights practices to receive less U.S. aid in the post-Cold War period. However, they also found human rights considerations to have a different impact depending upon the level of economic development and regime type of the recipient, with the United States not holding “underdeveloped countries nor transitioning regimes accountable to high human rights standards.”

While most studies focusing on human rights and U.S. foreign assistance have looked at the role of human rights concerns in determining patterns of aid allocation, a few have examined the consequences of U.S. foreign aid for human rights conditions in the recipient. Regan (1995) specifically examined the impact of U.S. economic aid during the Carter and Reagan administrations, and found there to be no discernable impact upon human rights conditions in recipient countries. In a comprehensive study of the impact of U.S. assistance specifically intended to strengthen civil liberties and political rights around the world, Finkel et al. (2007) found such aid to have negative effects on government respect for human rights in recipient countries. Looking at data on “obligations” for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) programs during post-Cold War years, they suggested three possible explanations for the negative relationship between foreign assistance and human rights. The authors argued that, while it is not likely given the statistical models used in their study, it

is possible that USAID allocates greater assistance to countries experiencing a human rights crisis.

Alternatively, it may be that nongovernmental human rights organizations in the recipient country were energized by the attention and resources from USAID, which in turn resulted in better reporting of human rights violations. And finally, it is possible that authoritarian regimes violently punished the opposition as a response to the distribution of foreign aid intended for the improvement of democracy and human rights. Focusing on U.S. foreign policy toward Egypt, which is the largest recipient of USAID assistance in the world, Sullivan (2004) shares a similarly dim view of the effectiveness of USAID to promote human rights. One possible explanation he gives for this shortcoming is a lack of bureaucratic coordination between USAID and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor in the State Department.

Arms Transfers, Trade, Economic Sanctions and Intervention

In addition to foreign aid, scholars have examined the linkages between human rights and other instruments of U.S. foreign policy. Applying a two-stage decision-making framework to the transfer of U.S. arms, Blanton (2000) found that arms were more likely to be transferred in the post-Cold War period to countries that respect human rights. Extending this work in a subsequent analysis in which she compared the patterns of U.S. arms transfers during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods (Blanton 2005), she found that the end of the Cold War saw fundamental changes in the determinants of U.S. arms exports, with human rights moving from insignificance during the Cold War to being an important determinant of arms transfers during the post-Cold War years. Yet sometimes U.S. arms transfer decisions have unintended consequences for human rights. As Western (2004: 238) explains, the United States supported an international arms embargo on Bosnia as it did not want additional weapons to be introduced to the destabilized conflict region. However, the result was a major disparity in military capabilities by which the opposing Serbs possessed superior arms, equipment, and training that were used to commit widespread human rights violations.

There have also been scholarly studies that have systematically examined the extent to which human rights concerns as a foreign policy goal shape U.S. trade policy and behavior. With the waning of the Cold War, the United States paid increasing attention to economic aspects of its foreign policy and pursued a number of initiatives designed to promote U.S. trade around the world. Despite U.S. initiatives that explicitly linked human rights with trade, such as the African Growth and Opportunities Act, Blanton and Blanton (2001) found that, at least with regard to Africa, human rights practices were not a significant determinant of U.S. trade in the 1980s and 1990s. Apodoca (2006: xviii) similarly concluded that, in general, U.S. foreign policy during the Clinton administration “was one that stressed trade expansion and the opening of foreign markets at the expense of human rights.”

Since the turn of the century, the United States has negotiated and signed Free Trade Agreements with Singapore (2003), Chile (2003), Morocco (2004), and Bahrain (2004), among others, that have included social clauses requiring all parties to acknowledge children’s and worker’s rights and to protect them in domestic law. While Hafner-Burton (2009) notes that most signatories do not support such rights and have no intention of implementing the regulations, she concludes that trade agreements can be reasonably effective in shaping human rights practices when they offer enforceable standards that link the material benefits of integration to compliance with human rights principles. Looking at a number of different global actors, including the United States, Aaronson and Zimmerman (2007) are rather pessimistic about the linkage between trade in general and human rights. They found there to be a great deal of variance in how the conflicting policy goals of promoting human rights and

expanding trade were addressed. They concluded that, even in the case of the United States, the institutional structure needed to manage the intersection of these two policy goals was far too weak and thus the outlook for simultaneously promoting these interests was problematic at best.

As a coercive policy instrument, sanctions are imposed by one country on another as a nonviolent way “to apply economic and diplomatic pressure on target countries to induce the target political leadership to comply with sender countries’ demands” (Peksen 2009: 59). While the United States has imposed sanctions on others with the goal of discouraging repression, there is considerable debate as to whether sanctions actually improve or deteriorate human rights conditions within the target country. Spurred by U.S. foreign policy concerns over human rights practices in China, Drury and Li (2006; see also Li and Drury 2004) examined the efficacy of U.S. sanction threats between 1989 and 1995 and concluded that, in general, the threats were not effective, and were even counterproductive, to the improvement of human rights. They argued that constructive engagement with China might have been a more effective incentive-based approach for the United States to take. Conducting an aggregate empirical examination of sanctions imposed by the United States (as well as the United Nations), Wood (2008) similarly found economic sanctions to have a negative impact upon human rights conditions in the target country. He argued that in response to sanctions, political incumbents increased repression as a means to protect their supporters, weaken potential challengers, and suppress public opposition. He also concurred with the findings of others that sanctions contribute to social, physical, and political hardship for the target country’s population.

Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to specify how human rights influence and are affected by U.S. military intervention, it is important to note that the promotion of human rights has been frequently cited as justification for American involvement in conflicts abroad. In recent times, U.S. military intervention in countries such as Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Iraq, and Kosovo have been justified, in part, by the occurrence of gross human rights violations. Furthermore, the “war on terror” and the military actions that it entailed are explained not only in terms of U.S. national security, but also as a crucial moral fight for global human rights and dignity. In interviews, Mertus (2004: 2) found that U.S. policy makers and military officers “genuinely identified with being ‘on the side of human rights,’” though often their conception of human rights included a double-standard by which one set of international expectations applied to the United States and another for other countries.

U.S. Influence Over the IMF and World Bank

Another way the United States influences the human rights practices of other countries is through its participation in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the IMF and the World Bank. Here we focus on the influence of the U.S. representatives on the boards of directors of the IMF and World Bank who play a strong role in deciding whether governments with relatively good human rights records get IMF and World Bank loans. They also have played a major role in determining the standard package of policy conditions typically attached to loan agreements. Many scholars (e.g., Chomsky 1999) and leaders of less-developed countries have argued that implementation of these loan conditions typically lead to worse respect for human rights in loan-recipient countries.

These charges are surprising given that the U.S. government plays a large role in determining these policies. The International Financial Assistance Act in 1977 mandates that the representatives of the United States on the decision making boards of the World Bank and

IMF use their voices and votes to advance the cause of human rights in loan recipient countries (Forsythe 1988). The United States is the largest contributor of funds to the World Bank and IMF, and both use a weighted voting system in which the number of votes cast is proportionate to the relative contribution of each member of the boards. Therefore, the U.S. representatives have the most votes and influence over selecting loan recipients and in determining the policy conditions associated with loans (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007).

For more than thirty years, U.S. representatives to these IGOs have used their influence to advocate “structural adjustment” programs sponsored by the IMF and World Bank. This thrust in U.S. foreign policy began in 1980 when the Reagan administration in the United States, the British government, and their allies compelled the IMF and World Bank Group (known as the “International Financial Institutions” [IFIs]) to launch an ideological assault against the state and promote a shift in power from the state to the market. The influence of the U.S. government over this economic reform initiative was so strong that John Williamson (1989) coined the term “Washington Consensus” to describe a set of ten specific economic policy prescriptions that constitute the typical structural-adjustment programs imposed upon developing countries by Washington, D.C.-based institutions. The ten broad sets of recommendations were:

- trade liberalization—liberalization of imports, with particular emphasis on elimination of quantitative restrictions (licensing, etc.); any trade protection to be provided by low and relatively uniform tariffs;
- liberalization of inward foreign direct investment;
- privatization of state enterprises;
- deregulation—abolition of regulations that impede market entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudent oversight of financial institutions;
- legal security for property rights;
- fiscal policy discipline;
- the elimination of price subsidies;
- tax reform—broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates;
- interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms;
- competitive exchange rates; and
- improving the business climate.

The U.S. government uses its representatives to the WTO to promote many of these same norms so it can advocate for the same or similar norms through its participation in several IGOs and NGOs. Over time, the influence of major economic powers has created widespread agreement that the Washington Consensus represents the one and true way for less developed countries to achieve growth and development. Mainstream critics like Stiglitz (2002), however, see these reform prescriptions as too rigid, and, as a result, usually ineffective at promoting economic growth (see also Vreeland 2003).

More radical critics such as Noam Chomsky (1999) see the Washington Consensus as encouraging the governments of developing countries to reduce their respect for human rights. According to this perspective, the typical reform package encourages the exploitation of workers in developing countries, requires the use of state coercion to enforce unpopular economic policies, and undermines efforts to provide for the progressive realization of economic and social human rights of their citizens, which require strong state intervention into the economy. According to the strongest critics, the Washington Consensus mainly benefits multinational corporations and political elites in rich and poor countries. Some socialist political leaders in Latin America are vocal and well-known critics, including Venezuelan

President Hugo Chávez, Cuban ex-President Fidel Castro, Bolivian President Evo Morales, and Rafael Correa, the president of Ecuador.

The scholarly literature has also examined whether human rights practices of potential loan recipients play a role in whether or not loans are negotiated and whether recipient governments that adhere to the Washington Consensus tend to have worse human rights practices than governments that do not. Most studies of the selection practices of the World Bank and IMF have not examined the role of human rights in the selection process, but there is a consensus that both political and economic factors matter in selection. The few quantitative studies that have examined the role of human rights practices in the selection process have found that the World Bank and the IMF tend to enter into structural adjustment lending agreements with countries that have relatively high levels of respect for worker rights and physical integrity rights (e.g., Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007). Most qualitative studies, however, have reached the opposite conclusion (e.g., Pion-Berlin 1989).

Scholars also have examined the human rights effects of accepting loans with structural-adjustment conditions on various human rights practices in developing countries. Most studies have shown that compliant governments have worse records of respect for physical integrity rights (Franklin 1997; Keith and Poe 2000; Fields 2003; Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007). However, Ericson and DeSoya (2009: 486) disagree, arguing that their “results indicate that receiving loans from the IFIs has positive effects on government respect for physical integrity rights.” The research program examining the strength and human rights effects of the exercise of this kind of influence is in its early stages. What is clear at this point is that several studies have identified statistically significant effects. In addition, most studies have found that IFI policies motivated by the Washington Consensus have led to reduced respect for most types of human rights practices around the world.

Conclusions

Many argue that not only is it a moral imperative that the United States make human rights a central feature of its foreign policy, but that it is also in the United States' own national and strategic interests to do so. In an era of increasing globalization, human rights conditions throughout the world have implications that transcend national borders and affect U.S. welfare and security. As William Schulz (2001: 14) noted, “Whether it be war and peace, international trade, economic growth, the security of jobs, the state of our environment, the public health, the interdiction of drugs, or a host of other topics, there is a connection between America's own interests and international human rights.”

Studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy in embracing and promoting human rights have found some successes, but also point to a need for further integration of human rights with other U.S. policy concerns. As Donnelly and Liang-Fenton (2004: 4) explain, U.S. policies that focus on human rights concerns “too often are impeded by a recurrent pattern of ad hoc, and thus too often incoherent, implementation.” The enhancement of human rights in U.S. foreign policy will be better served to the extent that the United States is able to move beyond focusing on human rights conditions and practices in short-run challenges and crises, and adopt a long-term perspective that more coherently link human rights concerns to other U.S. foreign policy objectives. Critical to the approach will be consistent support for human rights by the U.S. government. Too often in U.S. foreign policy, discourse about human rights has been the political equivalent of a “bait and switch” tactic by which the United States holds others to one human rights standard and itself to another. The extent to which “the doctrine applies only to others and not to oneself with the same consistency undermines the main tenet that human rights are to be applied to all equally”

(Mertus 2004: 17). Such double standards weaken the credibility and legitimacy of the United States as it seeks to promote improved human rights practices around the world.

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