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PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES AND FOREIGN NEWS COVERAGE:
A CASE STUDY OF THE CARTER HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY'S EFFECT
ON U.S. NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

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Stories about Central and South America in four large daily newspapers were analyzed to study the effect of the Carter human rights policy on coverage of the region. A content analysis of coverage drew on issues of the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor and the Los Angeles Times for four years: 1975, 1977, 1978 and 1982. President Carter's human rights policy, which tied U.S. foreign assistance to governments' human rights observance focused increased attention on countries in the region. The research hypotheses suggested that increased attention would result in increased regional coverage by major U.S. newspapers. The results of the analysis of 314 stories indicated marked increases in coverage over the period of the study, and indicated increased coverage of human rights issues. Fluctuations in both the amount and types of coverage over the period, which corresponded to changes in the implementation of the policy, support a connection between the policy and newspaper coverage of the region.

To Ernest and Beverly Benner Cassara, who nurtured the spark, and to Thomas Moore, the teacher who set it free with a challenge that has never been forgotten.

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Because my teachers have done their job well, they share credit for any contribution this research might make. Responsibility for any errors of omission or comission, however, is mine and mine alone.

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INTRODUCTION

When Karen DeYoung went to South America for the Washington Post in 1976, the Post had one bureau in Buenos Aires and it was from there that she covered all of Central and South America.[1] By the mid-1970s, large papers across the country had cut back their foreign staffs and Latin America was not a priority coverage area.[2] But that would change. By 1978, DeYoung recalls, the Carter human rights policy of tying U.S. aid and assistance to the observance of individual human rights had shifted the spotlight of U.S. media attention to the region. DeYoung, who was to make a name for herself reporting from Central America, found herself in the right place at the right time. The Post allocated more resources to the region and created a second bureau there. Given her choice, DeYoung took up the new post covering Central America and left the Buenos Aires bureau to another correspondent.[3]

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[1]Interview with Karen DeYoung at the Washington Post London bureau, Upper Brook Street, August 6, 1986.

[2]John A. Lent, "Foreign News in American Media," Journal of Communication 27 (Winter 1977), p. 49; and, Mort Rosenblum, "Reporting from the Third World," in Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects, Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson, eds., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 227.

[3]DeYoung interview.

Recounting those events during an interview at the London bureau of the Post in August 1986, DeYoung sparked the questions from which this research project grew. DeYoung went from Central America to Washington, where she spent time as the paper's foreign editor, before moving on to the London posting. Because of her experience both as a correspondent and a foreign editor, DeYoung's recollections and perspective on the factors involved in the paper's coverage decisions were both credible and worthy of investigation. Had a single presidential foreign policy initiative been responsible for a major shift in coverage of an albeit sporadically-covered continent? And, if that were the case, what were the effects on coverage of the region? Had coverage improved, had the increased coverage been restricted to human rights issues, or had increased media attention to one subject triggered increased coverage across the board?

When a research project on newsmagazine coverage of land reform in El Salvador indicated U.S media coverage of the region had ballooned during the late 1970s or early 1980s, the question became more compelling.[4] What had wrought the change? A preliminary review of the literature produced no answers. Granted, in the late 1970s strife had grown in Central America, but both Central and South America have had their share of social upheaval over the last twenty years and coverage has been erratic. If media attention had already

[4]Catherine Cassara, "Land Reform: The Missing Issue," an unpublished paper prepared in the fall of 1986 for a Michigan State University course on peasant societies.

been focused on the region when conditions in El Salvador and Nicaragua heated up in the late 1970s, perhaps that might account for the volume of coverage. It is no secret that if correspondents are on the spot, or near, a nation's problems are more likely to become news in American newspapers.[5] Perhaps DeYoung held the key. It was a place to begin. At best, a connection could be found between human rights and increased coverage of Central and South America that would offer some explanation of the phenomenon. At worst, one possible explanation for the change would have been eliminated.

The surmise of a single foreign correspondent, no matter how respected, was not enough to prove the point. If the Carter human rights policy had directed the powerful beam of the U.S. media spotlight onto Central and South America, the place to find the evidence was in the media themselves. If DeYoung was right, the evidence should exist in the media record of the period.

The preliminary literature review indicated that most journalists and policy makers alike turn to the printed media for in-depth foreign coverage.[6] The Washington Post was the logical place to start, but it would not be enough. Research on foreign reporting indicated that, while the Post offers

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[5]Rosenblum, in Crisis, p. 229.

[6]Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 41, 59-62, 129, 133-139; and, Carol H. Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read," Public Opinion Quarterly 38 (Spring 1974), p. 5-7.

some of the best American coverage of foreign affairs, the New York Times was universally viewed as the leader.[7] No research on the interaction of foreign policy and foreign coverage would be complete without inclusion of the Times. Following close behind assessments of the Post and the Times, the Christian Science Monitor was reputed not only for its volume of foreign coverage, but also for its objective stance.[8] To round out the study, it seemed sensible to look at other papers besides the three that policy makers reportedly rely on. If the giants' coverage changed, had changes also been evident in other papers? With greater resources, other newspapers would have been included in the study, but resources were limited. It was likely that if Central and South America were to be covered at all in the large regional papers, that coverage was likely to appear in papers such as the Los Angeles Times, where a significant number of people in the market area come from Central and South America. The Los Angeles paper is also known for its international coverage.[9]

Having chosen a group of papers, it became necessary to selected a research method. The choice was clear. A qualitative analysis might shed light on DeYoung's conclusions, but would not provide replicable results. A

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[7]Cohen, The Press, p. 138.
[8]Ibid., p. 137.
[9]John C. Merrill and Harold A. Fisher, The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers (New York: Hastings House, 1980), p. 20; and, Merrill, "The World's Elite Newspapers," World Press Encyclopedia (London: Mansel Publications Limited, 1982), pp. 37-52.

content analysis, on the other hand, would provide evidence to back the thesis that the Carter human rights policy had an effect on coverage or to refute it.[10] Any additional qualitative research would provide context to the quantitative results. Given that decision, it then became necessary to select a sample of newspapers that would measure what it was intended to: whether coverage changed over time and whether the changes occurred in a time sequence which would support the thesis. For that reason four years were chosen for study: 1975 and 1982, before and after the Carter presidency, and 1977 and 1978, at the height of the human rights policy's implementation.

Before the research could proceed, it was also necessary to arrive at a workable definition of human rights. Because whole books have been written, pursuing complicated philosophical definitions of the concept, it was necessary to arrive at a basic definition, which could reasonably be argued to transcend social and political differences. To that end, for this research human rights were defined as "the rights to life, liberty and the integrity of the person." Human rights violations were defined as the denial of those rights "without due process of law,...torture and other forms of cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, including prolonged

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[10]Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 15-23.

detention without trial."[11] Unlike other aspects of the research, human rights violations were generally easier to recognize in practice than in theory. Stories about the thousands of "disappeared" in Argentina or two hundred dead Indians found floating in a Honduras river were easily classified.

Theoretical Framework

At the heart of the American democratic system lie two assumptions which provide the underpinning for the both the role of the press in the process of foreign policy formulation and the role of human rights in that policy. The American democratic philosophy rests on both assumptions: that the voting public is both capable of and worthy of determining the course of U.S. actions and involvements; and, that it is the purpose of government to protect the rights of individual citizens, not to abuse them.[14] Those two fundamental values are interwoven in the American concept of the role of the press. It is perceived to be the role of the press both to provide the information the public needs in order that it may judge its government's actions and the elected and appointed officials who implement them.[15] The protections provided the press by the First Amendment were in

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[11]Lars Schoultz, Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 3.

[14]Cohen, The Press, pp. 15-16; and, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, introduction to Joshua Muravchik, The Uncertain Crusade (Lanham, M.D.: Hamilton Press, 1986), pp. ix-xi.

[15]Ibid., pp 22-28.

large part secured to leave the press free to take on government, especially where government actions cease to protect and begin to hurt the individual.[16]

> In the American view, human rights are universal and the very purpose of government is their protection. American politics ring with declarations that our rights are inextricably intertwined with the rights of others, and assertions that no one's rights are safe while others' rights are violated.[17]

Tracing American foreign policy patterns of isolationism and involvement alike, Kirkpatrick finds at the heart of both an American sense of moral involvement in government decision making which sets it apart from the beginning. From Jefferson to Lincoln to Wilson, American presidents have concerned themselves with the larger world or withdrawn from it as alliances served or impeded the moral purpose of the underlying democratic principles. To support her argument, Kirkpatrick quotes Lincoln's observation that, "While man exists, it is his duty to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating that of mankind." In that sense, President Carter was renewing a traditionally American theme when he sought to restore a moral purpose to American policy. It is also reasonable to assume, therefore, that after an unhappy experience with the realpolitik of those like Henry Kissinger, the nation should undertake "a new approach to foreign policy--the deliberate use of American

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[16]Vincent Blasi, " The Checking Value in First Amendment Theory," American Bar Foundation Research Journal 521 at 538, 1977.

[17]Kirkpatrick, introduction Uncertain Crusade, p. ix.

policy to influence the internal policies of other nations with regard to the respect for human rights."[18]

For several reasons then, it is not surprising that the American press would find human rights an attractive topic, especially in coverage of those countries where the most basic individual rights were being violated by governments receiving American aid.[19] Like any other businesses, however, news organizations succeed or fail according to their decisions on how to allocate scarce resources.[20] Such decisions affect the shape and substance of the news product, particularly when it comes to international news coverage.[21] Given competing demands for space and funding, the limited audience appeal of international news, and the expense of maintaining foreign coverage, it would, for instance, take a considerable change in commitment for a news organization to decide to establish two bureaus to cover a region previously covered by one.[22]

The pressures on newspaper managers reviewing their commitment of newsgathering resources to international news coverage may support critics' charges that the press of the First World over-emphasizes coups and earthquakes in its

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[18]Ibid., p. xii.

[19]Mort Rosenblum, Coups and Earthquakes: Reporting the World for America (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 196.

[20]Ibid., p. 6.

[21]Ibid., pp. 113-119.

[22]During an interview in London on August 6, 1986, DeYoung said the Carter policy focused attention on the area and led the Post to decide to increase its commitment from one bureau in the region to two.

Third World coverage.[23] With limited resources to keep correspondents in the field, traditional news criteria would demand the coverage of such obvious news events first.[24] Were only one correspondent per paper covering all of Central and South America, there is little doubt that the region would produce more than enough of the coup-and-earthquake-variety story to fill the limited newshole available in the paper at home for news from the traditionally under-covered southern hemisphere.[25]

It is no secret that Central and South America have traditionally received erratic coverage in the U.S. press.[26] And, where coverage has not been sketchy or non-existent, critics have charged that the issues involved have frequently been misunderstood and misreported.[27] Had the United States no long-term interests or involvements in the region, the lack of quality coverage might be less critical. U.S. political and economic investments in the region, however,

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[23]Donald Shanor and Donald H. Johnston, ed., Third World News in American Media: Experience and Prospects, Columbia Journalism Monographs No.4, (New York: Columbia University, 1983), pp. 1-14.

[24]Ibid., p. 9.

[25]Cohen, The Press, p. 13

[26]Landrum R. Bolling, ed., Reporters Under Fire: U.S. Media Coverage of Conflicts in Lebanon and Central America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 100-109; and, Emile McAnany, "Television and Crisis: Ten Years of Network News Coverage of Central America," Media, Culture and Society 5 (1983), pp. 199-212.

[27]Ibid; and, Georgie Anne Geyer, "Latin America: The Making of an 'Uncontinent,'" Columbia Journalism Review, Winter, 1969-1970, pp. 49-53.

are long-standing and complicated.[28] It is important to look at the factors--like newsworthiness and social significance--that might account for the fluctuations in coverage of the region, particularly given the media's agenda-setting power and the role coverage plays in those democratic processes that shape U.S. policies and involvements abroad.[29]

In recent years, the U.S. press has begun to focus more attention on Central and South America, but it is still an unfamiliar area of the globe for the great majority of the Americans.[30] The criticism of the press's tendency to spotlight issues has always been that fleeting illumination does not provide the context necessary for complete understanding.[31] And yet, it is those very same Americans who elect the senators, congressmen and presidents who make foreign policy and vote to spend hundreds of millions dollars in the region each year.[32]

In light of the U.S. press record in Central and South America, it becomes important to study how changes in coverage come about and how the quality of the coverage may have been affected by those changes.

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[28]Roger Morris, "Through the Looking Glass in Chile: Coverage of Allende's Regime," Columbia Journalism Review, November-December, 1974, pp. 15-26; and, Schoultz, Human Rights, passim.

[29]Cohen, The Press, pp. 248-263.

[30]Rosenblum, Coups and Earthquakes, p. 202; and, McAnany, "Television and Crisis," p. 199.

[31]Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Pelican Books, 1946), p. 275; and Cohen, The Press, p. 100.

[32]Schoultz, Human Rights, passim.

CHAPTER II

HUMAN RIGHTS BACKGROUND

Human rights concerns have played a role in American foreign policy since the Second World War. Their elevation to a central position in foreign policy decision making, however, did not come about until Jimmy Carter assumed the presidency many years later.[1] Carter was not among the first human rights advocates, nor among the foremost, but he had a long-standing commitment to a quest for morality in American foreign policy--a driving force which dove-tailed with the aims of the human rights activists who had been working in Washington on a small scale since the Vietnam War.[2]

For the purposes of this study it is necessary to review the development of the human rights issue in foreign policy, its implementation, and its successes and failures. Without such a review, it would be impossible to provide necessary context for the analysis of coverage of the subject. It should be understood, however, that no attempts will be made to determine either the validity of the efficacy or validity of human rights as a moving factor in foreign policy

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[1]Lars Schoultz, "The Carter Administration and Human Rights in Latin America," in Human Rights and Basic Needs in the Americas, ed. Margaret Crahan (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1982), p. 301; and, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, forward for Joshua Muravchik, The Uncertain Crusade (Lanham, Md: Hamilton Press, 1986), pp. ix-xii.

[2]Muravchik, The Uncertain Crusade, pp. 1-6.

formulation. The purpose of this project is to look at the relationship between the Carter human rights policy and coverage of Latin and Central America.

Human rights assumed a role in American foreign policy at the end of World War II when the U. N. Commission on Human Rights labored for two years to produce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt and her U.S delegation. The declaration was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948, but it was twenty years before human rights surfaced again. With the horrors of the war fading and the Cold War heating up, international differences grew over the human rights definitions and the Eisenhower administration swore off any commitment to international human rights agreements abroad. At home, American groups opposed the declaration on the grounds of its alleged incompatibility with federal-state jurisdictional boundaries. Human rights concerns were dragged out for their propaganda value when it was convenient, but the few human rights activists who swam against the tide were considered unrealistic utopians. It was not until the 1960s that the situation began to change.[3]

Growing concerns about human rights violations in the Third World and Soviet bloc combined with spreading opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam. Opposition to the war focused in part on the country's continuing support for the South Vietnamese government, which showed little respect for

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[3]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 302.

the human rights of either its prisoners or subjects.[4] The civil rights movement and the anti-war movement both offered examples of how interest groups could be mobilized, a lesson human rights activists were not alone in learning. By 1976, human rights had begun to play a role in policy issues on Capitol Hill. Both liberal congressmen, concerned about the activities of right wing dictatorships, and conservative congressmen, concerned about Soviet activities, had begun to focus on human rights.[5]

Though there was interest in human rights on the Hill, there was next to no interest at the White House. Under the supervision of Henry Kissinger, the Nixon-Ford administration "realpolitik" prospered and humanitarian values were discounted in the formation of foreign policy.[6] When a badly shattered Democratic Party gathered to devise an election platform, a stand on human rights was one of the few things on which the left, right and Carter factions of the party could all agree wholeheartedly.[7] Ford's campaign debate gaffe about Soviet control in Eastern Europe and his refusal to welcome Solzhenitsyn to the White House, provided candidate Carter with the ammunition he needed. Human rights became a central campaign issue, one which bracketed both Ford and Kissinger and which focused hostile public opinion on the administration.[8]

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[4]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 302.
[5]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, p. 2.
[6]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 302.
[7]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, pp. 2-4.
[8]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, p. 4-5.

Resonating as it did with his strongly-held feelings about the need for renewed commitment to morality and ethics in foreign policy, the human rights issue provided Carter with a popular cause. Even after his election, his private polls continued to show the strong public approval for his stand.[9] But, while Carter's inaugural address stressed the place of human rights as the "soul" of his foreign policy, the idea was as yet a long way from implementation. It was no secret to American diplomats that human rights had become an issue they must consider, but it took six months or more before an implementation pattern emerged and critics charge that as the pattern emerged it was more inconsistent than consistent and frequently less than effective.[10]

> When Jimmy Carter became president in 1977, human rights assumed an unparalleled prominence in foreign policy...Critics have charged that the Carter human rights policy was administered inconsistently and that several of the nation's most powerful foreign policy instruments were not utilized in the effort to promote human rights. Nearly everyone agrees, however, that human rights considerations came to enjoy a substantially enlarged role in United States foreign policy in general and U.S. policy toward Latin America in particular.[11]

There were several reasons that Latin American countries became a major focus of the Carter administration's human rights efforts. Several countries in the area were among the first the administration acted against, but the early focus of the human rights attention was the Soviet Union and the administration quickly learned that the Soviet leadership did

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[9]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, p. 7.
[10]Ibid., pp. 23-46.
[11]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 302.

not take kindly to public chastisement on its internal affairs, particularly in the area of alleged human rights abuses.[12] If the administration sought any productive relationship with the Soviets, it became clear early on that its lobbying for Russian Jews and dissidents would have to occur out of the public view. It was necessary to amend its initial stand on the supremacy of human rights in foreign policy formulation, it would be important, administration officials explained, but it might not always be the most important consideration.[13]

If the U.S. had important strategic interests at stake in its relations with the Soviet Union, Latin America was a very different story, with the possible exception of Brazil, Panama, and Mexico. It had never been an area of particular concern to large numbers of Americans. At the point when Carter assumed the presidency, U.S. strategic interests in the area were at a low ebb.[14] And, if there were not an overwhelming strategic interest at stake in Central and South America, then there was a moral interest. Possible U.S.

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[12]On February 24th, 1977, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance announced before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations that the administration planned to reduce aid to Argentina, Ethiopia, and Uruguay because of their gross violations of human rights. Early in February, the Carter Administration had begun to comment on a Soviet crackdown on dissidents. According to Schoultz and Muravchik, Vance went to Moscow in March hoping for a breakthrough of strategic arms limitation, the Soviets were still too upset to get down to business.

[13]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, pp. 28-30; and, Schoultz, in Basic Needs p. 308.

[14]Lars Schoultz, Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 37 and 118.

involvement in the Allende overthrow in Chile and support for the repressive Pinochet regime left a bad taste in many American mouths.[15]

> By 1976, Latin America was dominated by repressive conservative governments. There were no Allendes or Goularts to threaten stability-oriented foreign policy officials...There were only the Sandinistas in Nicaragua with little hope in 1975 of ever overwhelming the strength of Somoza's U.S.-supplied National Guard.[16]

The most likely targets of rights activists were those countries where the United States had leverage in the form of military, economic and social aid. The underlying assumptions of human rights activists being, that the United States should not be providing the means for continued repression. Critics of the human rights policy argue, however, that its results were to hurt America's friends, leaving her enemies unhindered.[17]

The fact remains that there were human rights violations throughout the region, which American policy makers prior to the Carter administration acknowledged even if they chose to take no action to stop them:

> Statements by United States policy makers in the early and mid-1970s often explained lapses of respect for human rights as an indication of either a shortcoming of Hispanic political culture or, more frequently, an anomalous despotism. These were not novel interpretations: prior to the twilight of the tyrants in the 1950s, U.S. officials and academicians had been nearly unanimous in attributing human rights violations to the individual tyrannies of Batista, Perez Jimenez, Peron, Rojas Pinilla and Trujillo. Two decades later, there was a familiar ring to the arguments that human rights violations reflected lamentable individual

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[15]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 371.
[16]Ibid., p. 372.
[17]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, pp. 53-70, passim.

> excesses that responsible Latin American officials were powerless to halt. In mid-1974, for example, the Department of State informed Congress that "Chilean authorities have acknowledged instances of mistreatment of detainees; they have declared that such abuses are not sanctioned, and that persons responsible for them are being tried and punished." In late 1976, a State Department survey of human rights practices among foreign aid recipients reported that "Argentine leaders...are seeking to curb violations of human rights...they cannot yet control the situation.[18]

Schoultz argues that it was "obvious by the mid-1970s that human rights violations in Latin America were the result of some dynamic other than the despotism of powerful individuals or the sadism of minor officials."[19] While such an explanation might have accounted for behavior in some of the more rudimentary regimes of the region, like that in Nicaragua, he argues that it failed to capture the essence of politics as they evolved in the region's most important nations, particularly Brazil and later Chile.[20]

> In retrospect, it was difficult to have missed the evidence that something more than a changing of the palace guard had occurred in the "developed" politics of Latin America--Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay--where a vigorous pluralism was exchanged for the harshest of dictatorships...the novel feature of post-Alliance politics in key Latin American nations was the type of government that emerged from these military takeovers ...these regimes were supported by the coercive powers of the military and the technocratic abilities of highly sophisticated civilian sectors, members of which characteristically prefer a minimum of interference by politicians and the public in the formulation of public policy...Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes developed in response to increased popular political participation.[21]

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[18]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 6.
[19]Ibid.
[20]Ibid.
[21]Ibid., p. 7.

Schoultz argues that the repressive regimes in the region developed in response to more growing participation in government by populist interests that threatened the supremacy of the elites. While faced with the swing toward repression and the loss of power and self-determination, the populists fought back with strikes, slowdowns, and demonstrations--measures the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes countered with more repression.[22] Whatever the political and social mechanics of the Latin American nation in the 1960s and 1970s, the fact remains that rights violations existed and were recognized as a problem long before Carter took over the White House in January 1977.

Human rights had been recognized as a factor in foreign policy under the Nixon-Ford administration, but only to a very limited extent and as the result of growing pressure. The few state department diplomats designated as human rights officers were chosen not for their ability to do anything about the problem, but rather for their ability to counter criticism from the public and Congress.[23] Late in the day, Kissinger began to talk about rights concerns, but stressed his belief that human rights must remain secondary to maintenance of peace and world order.[24]

Though the Carter administration gradually backed off its early stand giving human rights supremacy, it never backed off them completely and the Carter appointments to

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[22]Schoultz, Basic Needs, p. 11.
[23]Ibid., p. 307.
[24]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 112.

human rights positions were one of the strongest indications that the policy was meant to have teeth. Those appointees became a formidable force in policy implementation, overseeing all aid proposals for countries with records of rights violations.

The most significant human rights appointment Carter made was naming Patricia Derian to head the State Department's newly-formed Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. The bureau was formed by Congress in 1976 and halfway through 1977 Derian's position was upgraded to that of an assistant secretary of state. As the first assistant secretary for human rights, Derian set the tone of the bureau's activities.[25]

> A civil rights activist, a founder of the Mississippi Civil Liberties Union, and an organizer of the biracial Loyalist Mississippi Democratic Party that successfully challenged the all-white Mississippi delegation for seating at the 1968 Democratic Convention, Ms. Derian is a person of exceptionally strong will. If President Carter wanted an assistant secretary who could present forcefully the case for human rights and who was not intimidated by established bureaucratic procedures, there could have been few better choices than Derian.[26]

Under Derian, the bureau focused on building its staff and expanding its expertise in specific policy areas such as foreign aid, but also persisted in its pursuit of direct bilateral diplomacy on behalf of human rights, both inside the State Department bureaucracy and directly with leaders of repressive governments.[27] Once it established itself within

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[25]Schoultz, Human Rights, pp. 120 and 126.
[26]Ibid.
[27]Ibid., p. 127.

the bureaucratic network at State, Derian's bureau was an insistent and dreaded opponent of agencies pushing for aid free of human rights considerations. Its oversight roles extended from a voice in direct U.S. economic and military aid requests to whether the U.S. should back development bank loan requests from "problem countries."[28]

From the 1977 aid reductions to Argentina and Uruguay, the Carter administration went on to denounce the use of torture and Vance went on to a meeting of the Organization of American States in June to rebut the contention that human rights abuses are a necessary by-product of the war against terrorism.[29] Terrance Todman, an assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs, who publicly challenged the administration's human rights policies, was first publicly rebutted by the State Department and then laterally promoted to a new post as ambassador to Spain. The public rebuttal for Todman indicated that while the administration may have felt it was necessary to back off absolute standards for human rights in all its foreign dealings, it was willing to pursue the issue on a case by case basis.[30]

Where the case allowed, the administration used four principal foreign policy tools to reduce levels of human rights violations: military aid, economic aid, multilateral development back loans, and private economic transactions.

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[28]Schoultz, Human Rights, pp. 294, 300, 310-311, and 331-332.

[29]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, p. 35.

[30]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 308-311.

While worldwide military assistance expenditure requests remained roughly unchanged between federal fiscal years (FY) 77 and 79, Latin America's share of the total dropped from 8.1 percent to 2.3 percent.[31] While political dissent in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay had been largely eliminated by 1977, and thus less aid was requested to contain the political groups considered threats by earlier administrations, the level of human rights violations accompanying this political repression had risen so dramatically that Congress acted to limit the types of aid that could be provided. By the end of 1978, country-specific aid reductions affected Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Uruguay.[32] To preempt action, some countries chose not to request aid and thus avoid censure, and aid agencies within the U.S. government stopped asking for aid where they thought either Derian's bureau or the liberal members of Congress would put up a fight.[33]

In 1977, the State Department delayed the release funds to the Somoza government because of its human rights violations, and in 1978 placed a complete ban on military aid to that country. In mid-1978, the Carter administration briefly suspended military aid to Bolivia when General Juan Pereda Asbun seized power following a disputed election, and

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[31]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 322.
[32]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, pp. 36-39.
[33]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 322.

it suspended aid again in July 1980 when the Bolivian military launched another coup.[34]

By 1978, Congress and the administration had reached agreement that bilateral economic assistance to Latin American countries was to be halted or reduced to countries with bad human rights records, unless the aid could be shown to directly benefit needy people. From 1975 to 1978, for example, U.S. economic assistance to Chile fell from $93.7 million to $5.8 million, and by the end most of that aid was in the form of Food For Peace funding.[35] From the Ford administration's $220,000 level of economic assistance to Uruguay in FY 77, the Carter administration cut its request aid request to $25,000 for FY 78.[36] By FY 79, the first budget request the Carter administration could be held fully responsible for, the distribution pattern of economic aid to Latin America had changed dramatically. Aid programs to nations with relatively repressive regimes like those of Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti had changed dramatically, and were redesigned to reach only the neediest social sectors. Aid to Chile and Nicaragua had dropped precipitously and substantial increases had been recommended for relatively non-repressive governments.[37]

As aid was reduced, the U.S. government's influence over offending nations was also reduced, leading to a change of

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[34]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 323.
[35]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 172.
[36]Ibid., p. 203.
[37]Ibid., p. 205.

policy philosophy.[38] Begun as an effort to dissuade offending governments from human rights violations, the aid reductions came to be seen as a means of disassociating the American government from the offenses.[39] By 1978, aid was going to showcase countries like Costa Rica and Jamaica, and bilateral aid had become a minor instrument of U.S. policy toward Latin America. Though the administration was less adamant in its stand against repressive nations when it came to the multilateral development banks, it nonetheless adopted a policy of using its influence to promote greater respect for fundamental human rights in the MDVs and, if nothing else, served to deter loan applications by Latin America's most repressive governments.[40]

In the private sector, the Carter administration exercised less clout. Business interests in good investments meant that the most stable governments, most likely to facilitate repayment on investments, were the most attractive to business interests. That the countries in Latin America which fit that description were among the most repressive under their bureaucratic-authoritarian leadership meant the administration and those in Congress who hoped to influence business interests faced an uphill battle against powerful lobbying interests. The only celebrated Export-Import Bank activity on behalf of human rights was the decision early in 1978 to suspend activity in Argentina. After that decision,

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[38]Muravchik, Uncertain Crusade, p. 181.
[39]Ibid., p. 181.
[40]Schoultz, in Basic Needs, p. 325.

Argentine President Videla met with Vice President Mondale at Pope John Paul I's coronation in Rome. In return for a promise from Videla to permit the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to conduct an in-country human rights investigation, the United States agreed to permit financing of a $270 million loan to purchase Allis-Chalmers turbines.[41] Shortly afterwards, Congress passed a law forcing the administration to lift any remaining prohibition on Eximbank transactions with human rights violators.[42] With the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which insured investments abroad, the human rights activity tended to take the form of early censoring of applications rather than direct action. Between April 1978 and November 1978, 108 OPIC proposals were reviewed by the Bureau of Human Rights and only one was vetoed--a proposal to insure the expansion of a Phelps-Dodge facility in El Salvador.[43]

The Carter human rights policies have been criticized by people from all the hues of the political spectrum--from those who think human rights should never have been introduced as a policy issue to those who objected to the form of its implementation and think it did not go far enough. The test of a policy is in its effects and only time can bear witness to its long-term effects.[44]

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[41]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 311.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 320.

[44]Muravchik argues that Freedom House average scores for political rights and civil liberties in the 28 countries where the Carter administration took human rights actions were worse at end of the Carter administration than when it

In several Latin American countries, however, the 1970s ended with a somewhat improved human rights picture. The overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua, encouraged if not facilitated by American aid cuts, and improved conditions in Brazil were the most hopeful signs. By 1979, Amnesty International reported that Brazilian jails held fewer than seventy political prisoners and habeas corpus for political offenses had been restored. That same year a Christmas amnesty granted freedom to all but about 20 political prisoners. Incidents of torture, political arrests, harassment of returning exiles, kidnapping and disappearances of Argentinean and Uruguayan exiles in Brazil continued, but were viewed as exceptions to a larger trend toward greater respect for human rights.[45] In the Dominican Republic about 200 political prisoners were granted amnesty by a new government, though Amnesty International reported in late 1979 that some were still being held. For a brief period in late 1979 both Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department agreed that for the first time in living memory there were no political prisoners in Bolivian jails. In Mexico, by contrast, a purported amnesty for more than 1,000 political prisoners left many still in jail and was balanced by an increase in the number of the disappeared and the resurgence of paramilitary death squads.[46]

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took office. Uncertain Crusade, p. 176.

[45]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 346.

[46]Ibid., pp. 346-347.

> States of siege, special security measures or similar legislation were in force in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and periodically in El Salvador and Peru. Political murder and torture, sometimes by security forces or paramilitary death squads, were widespread.[47]

Things got worse, not better, in Argentina. Torture, disappearances, and kidnappings continued. In 1979 Amnesty International accused the Videla government of the disappearances--or political murder--of 15,000 to 20,000 citizens and of the detainment of 3,000 political prisoners. Other estimates of the number of disappeared by 1979 ranged 6,500 to 10,000.[48] The end of the decade saw little significant change in Chile. Uruguay still had the highest number of political prisoners per capita in the Western Hemisphere. In Guatemala there were few political prisoners, but few prisoners were taken alive.[49]

With the end of the Carter presidency, things had changed in Latin America. Nicaragua could be perceived as a threat to U.S. interests, and the American hostages were being held in Iran. Whether the Carter human rights policy could have become effective given more time became irrelevant. Carter had other problems, America's security was being threatened by small peripheral countries and Reagan was waiting in the wings talking of containment and American

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[47]Amnesty International, Newsletter, January 1980; and Amnesty International Report 1979, p. 46.

[48]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 348; Amnesty International 1979 Report.

[49]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 350.

pride. Neither notion left much room for human rights concerns.

Which president's approach was valid is not the purpose of this study. Rather this review serves to put the Carter effort in perspective and to point out how substantial a policy it was, in spite of its critics. Case-by-case action against human rights violators was significantly more action than any administration before had taken and more than the succeeding administration was willing to take. From the "soul" of foreign policy, the American administration's approach to human rights reverted to a charge to be leveled in propaganda wars against governments of differing views. Once an issue has been elevated and built into the decision making process--if only the bureaucratic end of that process--it remains an issue. And, the Carter effort gave human rights activists four years to dig in and establish themselves and an audience for their concerns. Time has only continued to highlight the reasons for their concern.[80]

The morality and ethics of the issues aside, these are important considerations for this study. If Carter was the impetus behind a new emphasis on human rights in U.S. policy, particularly with regard to Latin America, then coverage of the region during his administration offers an opportunity to study the interaction between presidential policy initiatives and foreign news coverage in American papers. The ups and downs of policy implementation may also be reflected in

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[80]Schoultz, Human Rights, p. 376-378.

coverage. And if, as is the case, the Reagan administration has not pursued human rights as a central foreign policy issue, then later coverage should offer an opportunity to measure lasting effects of coverage changes. Unfortunately, more than enough evidence exists to indicate that human rights violations existed in Latin America long before Carter took office and continued unabated after he left. Therefore there can be no argument that what did not exist could not be covered.

An understanding of how the Carter policy developed, its strengths, results, and shortcomings may also be helpful later in providing a context against which coverage of the subject and the region can be gauged. But, while it is important to understand the process through which the Carter human rights initiative was developed and implemented, it is also important to view human rights from the correspondent's perspective.

In Coups and Earthquakes: Reporting the World for America, Rosenblum included a chapter on reporting human rights, which sheds light on the many difficulties facing a journalist covering the stories reviewed by this study.[51]

Rosenblum begins with an account of a meeting with one of his own sources when he was working for the Associated Press in Buenos Aires. Meeting in a restaurant, the man told him Argentine security agents dumped suspected guerrillas

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[51]Mort Rosenblum, Coups and Earthquakes: Reporting the World for America (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 193-202.

into the sea from helicopters, preferring to drop them alive because on impact they would breathe in water and sink like stones.[52] He also connected the secret police with the kidnapping and torture deaths of Uruguayan dissidents and guerrillas in Argentina. The man recalled being offered a Uruguayan child, because the security police didn't know what do with the two they had orphaned. Coming from a trusted source and just after the 1976 military coup, the information was big news for Rosenblum. For the first time, it connected Argentine officials to the "right-wing terrorists" who had been systematically eliminating leftists since before the overthrow of Isabel Peron. With the information the first source gave him, Rosenblum got other sources to talk, but none wanted to be quoted.[53]

> I got most of my source's information on the AP wire, in one way or another, but it had to be couched so carefully with qualifiers and with ritual government denials that only experienced readers could decipher its real impact...I could only write a general story which started out saying that security forces had cracked down harshly on suspected extremists...Professional newspeople know that no serious correspondent would include an assertion like that unless he was personally convinced it was true. But to a casual reader such sidestepping vagueness is hardly convincing.[54]

Other correspondents had their own sources, Rosenblum points out, but the same problems. The result was vague allegations of terrorism by the police and military attributed to mysterious outsiders denounced by the government as an embarrassment to the country. The upshot,

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[52]Rosenblum, Coups, p. 193.
[53]Ibid., p. 193-194.
[54]Ibid., p. 195.

Rosenblum says, was that "for long afterward, the Argentine military government retained its moderate image."[55]

According to Rosenblum, human rights reporting is a genre that developed in the 1970s in response to growing world-wide concern about widespread abuses. A powerful tool, which can outrage U.S. public opinion and legislators and prompt action in Washington, he said it is an important safeguard against official reporting that is overly sympathetic to repressive regimes. He notes, however, that it is "extremely difficult for the correspondent to do and often misleading for the reader."[56]

> When reporters accuse officials of mass murder, torture or flagrant violation of their constitutions, it is not enough for them to be sure in their own minds. They must back up their assertions with specific attribution and supporting detail. But torturers and murderers operate secretly, and they are hardly willing to discuss their activities with reporters. Victims--if they survive--are of course good sources. But reporters cannot be certain that reliable-sounding testimony is not faked. Churchmen, diplomats and lawyers can be valuable sources, but they are always anonymous.[57]

But finding reliable sources is only one of several problems facing the correspondent. Rosenblum recounts the experience of a New York Times correspondent who began to investigate discreetly when the Argentine death squads first appeared. The day after his first inquiries, he received a call warning him that pursuing the story would be dangerous for him. Conferring with his editors, the consensus was reached that writing the story would mean he would have to

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[55]Rosenblum, Coups, p. 195.
[56]Ibid.
[57]Ibid., p. 196.

leave Argentina, so he waited until he was leaving anyway and ran the story then.[88] "Publish and be damned is an admirable credo for societies in which disputes are settled with libel suits and negotiations, but it is hardly practical in a country where letters to the editors are often in the form of car bombs and machine-gun bursts," Rosenblum explains.[89]

Additional problems arise because there is no general agreement on what should be covered, and for what purpose. Rosenblum writes that American news organizations seem more concerned with reporting on rights violations beyond national borders than do those of most other countries, but points out that the extent of the concern varies with each correspondent and executive.

> Some newspeople feel a human responsibility to draw attention to abuses, particularly in countries which receive American aid. Others, however, regard too much harping on rights as do-good meddling. They feel that harsh treatment is endemic in many countries, like bribery and inefficiency, and writing about it is belaboring the obvious.[90]

Rosenblum suggests that patterns of interest in human rights are even more spotty than coverage of foreign news in general, and that while the case of one Soviet dissident may become a cause celebre in the American press, scores and hundreds of nameless victims are murdered elsewhere without a note of the fact. And at the other end of the spectrum, he notes, even the most conscientious news organization could not cover the thousands of violations in scores of countries-

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[88]Rosenblum, Coups., p. 196.
[89]Ibid.
[90]Ibid.

-including the United States--detailed in the annual reports of the human rights monitoring groups.[61]

> Because of these problems, what is reported depends not so much on what is happening as on the level of interest, the availability of sources, the government's ability to manage news and the number, the skill and the courage of the reporters on hand. It also depends upon whether the editors want to risk possible expulsions and whether they consider the story worth the space in competition with other news. The result is that few Americans have any real idea of how a particular government abuses human rights, or how widespread the violations are...What reporting is done has less impact that it might because it is done with words, not news film or pictures. If a television crew could film sixty seconds of a brutal interrogations session, or even if a radio reporter could report a minute of the sounds from the next room, human rights might become a tremendously compelling issue.[62]

With pictures, however, the problem of sources arises again. In the rare cases where pictures are available, the new organizations are left to make judgment calls on their authenticity.[63]

Rosenblum stresses that one of the major problems is the terminology itself. "Human rights" by itself means little, as do torture or arrest, and it falls to the correspondent to provide the context. While an arrest may be illegal in one country if a suspect is not allowed to call an attorney, in another it is perfectly legal for the police to break into a home and drag suspects off to detention, where they will be held incommunicado indefinitely. In the same way, every police force in the world may at one time or another handle suspects roughly, but "a sharp elbow in the ribs hardly

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[61]Rosenblum, Coups., p. 197.
[62]Ibid.
[63]Ibid.

compares with the systematic use of dental drills on good teeth or alternately gang raping and electroshocking women prisoners chained to an iron bedframe."[64]

> For readers, the constant use of such general words as "torture," "human rights abuses" and "arbitrary arrest" have a numbing effect. The best human rights reporting goes immediately to the specific, with graphic testimony and precise descriptions of individual cases. A well-phrased account of the persecution of a single family can have more impact that a general reference to the killing of thousands with nothing to help a reader form a mental image. Good reporting should establish some context at the same time pinning down totals of prisoners or victims--or at least by explaining why such figures are impossible to calculate. But most dispatches tend to deal with well-worn catchwords and vague numbers.[65]

Rosenblum notes that correspondents may sometimes be aware when they file stories that originated with a government that it is unlikely that things happened exactly the way they are reported. However, they are frequently powerless to do anything short of including enough of the erroneous detail so as to shed doubt on the story. In Argentina, he noted, the correspondents would receive reports that six anti-government guerrillas had been killed in a clash with security forces, when it was much more likely that the six had been tortured and killed and the clash faked as a cover. Though evidence would sometimes show up later that someone reported to have been killed in an attack on police had been arrested several days earlier, when it came such information was too late to use. Then it would fall to the correspondent to include the detail "that although police

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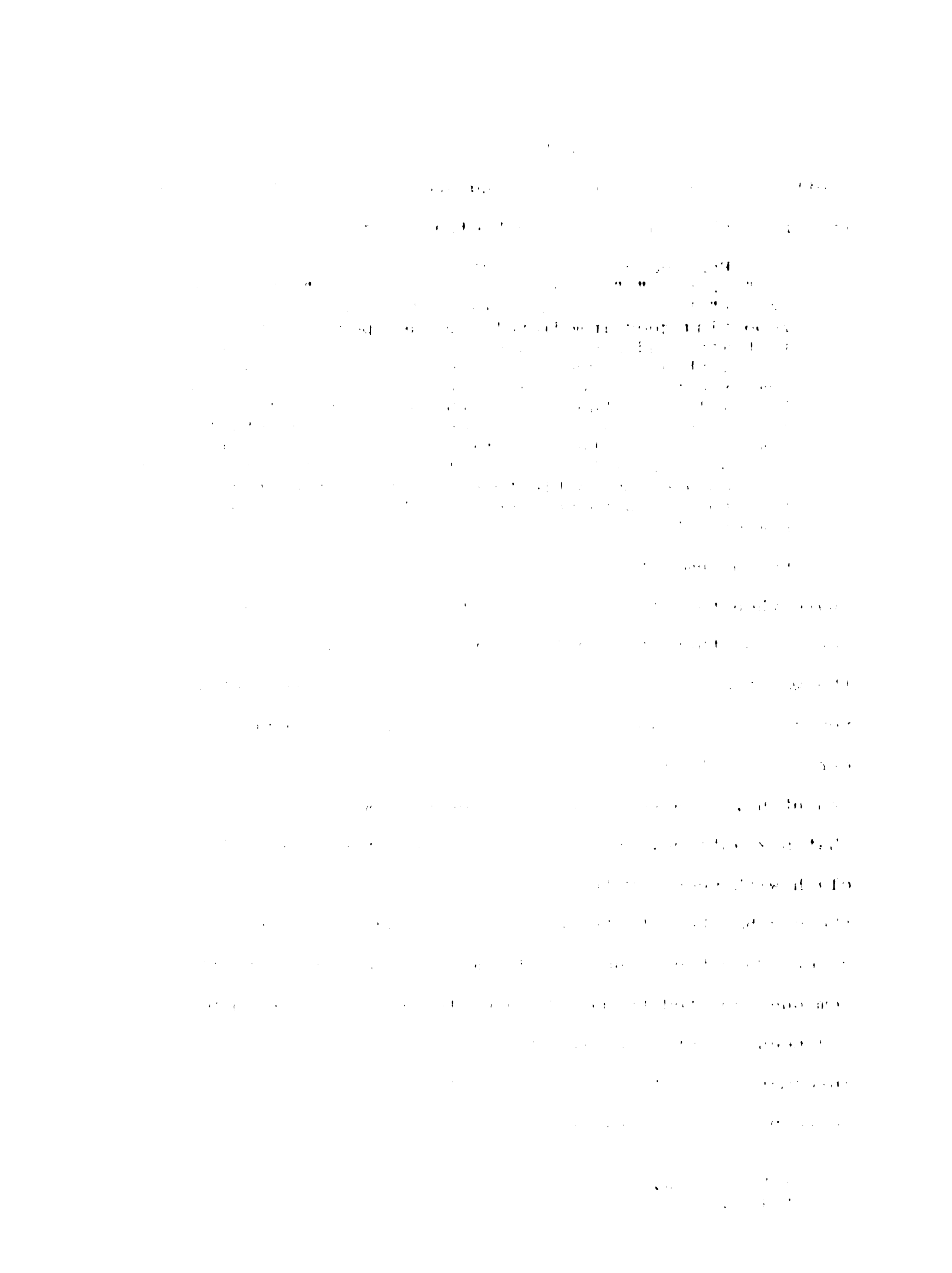
[64]Rosenblum, Coups., p. 198.
[65]Ibid.



said six guerrillas launched the surprise attack, in the ensuing battle all the guerrillas were killed and no policeman was hit."[66] For even that tidbit to have meant anything to a reader, however, it would have had to survive trimming to make it into the paper. While a questionable domestic police account in a U.S. paper could be balanced by challenges from defense attorneys or witnesses, the same is not true of accounts of events in countries where a witness would be crazy to talk and there is no one representing the "guerrillas."[67] Where details are available, every detail must be absolutely accurate:

> If a correspondent or an editor makes an error at all, however slight, authorities can jump on it and dismiss the entire dispatch as "full of lies" and "tendentious." Reporters must beware of long lists of victims and abuses supplied by the most reliable of sources. Mistakes slip in, and if officials can produce someone who was reported dead--or if they can disprove just one allegation--they can impugn everything else written by the same organization for the next three years.[68]

The problems aside, Rosenblum says more--and better--human rights reporting in the mid-1970s had a snowball effect, creating more interest in the subject and more space for coverage. It also had its drawbacks, however. Security forces learned from others' mistakes and made a point of leaving fewer victims around to talk. On the other side, increased coverage meant reporters and editors were paying

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[66]Rosenblum, Coups., p. 199.
[67]Ibid.
[68]Ibid., p. 200.

more attention to the international organizations monitoring rights violations.[69]

Significantly, Rosenblum records the effect of the change of administrations on human rights coverage:

> Since the end of the Ford administration--at the insistence of Congress and President Carter--the U.S. State Department has revealed more information about human rights abuses abroad. Embassies were ordered to pay close attention to the subject, and desk officers in Washington made new contacts with experts in the field. New laws required the State Department to issue reports on the condition of human rights in countries which were to receive military aid. Administration officials at times have been brutally forthright in criticizing abuses, giving reporters legitimate pegs to write at length on the subject.[70]

Given the newsgathering constraints facing correspondents writing on the subject, the impact of the fact that the U.S. government under Carter was required to monitor rights abuses and issue reports cannot be underestimated. Those reports not only focused attention of the region, but also gave the correspondents the quotable facts and attributable sources they had been missing. It is important to note the negative effects of increased coverage for consideration later.

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[69]Rosenblum, Coups., p. 200.
[70]Ibid., p. 202.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

A great deal has been written about foreign news coverage. During the last twenty years, a growing number of articles appeared on the topic of Western media coverage of Third World areas. And, especially since Vietnam, attention has been paid to the role news coverage plays in shaping U.S. foreign policy and whether coverage is affected by foreign policy stances. In the last decade, the number of works on human rights has also grown, though little has been written about the coverage of human rights issues. It is convenient, therefore, to break a review of the literature referred to by the study into three areas: works on the interaction of the press and foreign policy, works on foreign news coverage, and works on U.S. human rights policy. The second area--works on foreign news coverage--will be further broken down into those works that deal with theory of foreign coverage and those that deal with coverage, particularly coverage of Central and South America. Some attention will also be given to literature concerning the theory behind and the methodology employed in the study, though that is also touched on to some extent in the introduction and method sections.

Foreign Policy and the Press

No study concerning the interaction of the press and foreign policy would be complete without reference to Cohen's The Press and Foreign Policy.[1] Researched in the mid- to late 1950s and published in 1963, Cohen's remains the seminal work on the subject. Compiled from interviews with both journalists and policy makers, it is frequently cited and has guided the footsteps of researchers.

From the material gathered in his interviews, Cohen approached the interaction of the press and foreign policy from a number of micro- and macroscopic perspectives. Looking at the actors, audience and the process, he suggested that the press sets the agenda for the public and that press and policy makers were equally guilty of pursuing self-serving ends in their relationships with each other.[2]

Among those findings most important to the study at hand, however, was Cohen's establishment that both journalists and policy makers alike turn to newspapers, particularly an elite press headed by the New York Times, to find what is happening nationally and internationally.[3] Such readership grants those papers considerable influence, beyond that which would be indicated by their circulation figures alone, and makes it

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[1]Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[2]Ibid., pp. 26-30.

[3]Ibid., p. 137; also supported by Carol H. Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read," Public Opinion Quarterly 38 (Spring 1974), p. 5-7.

more likely that changes in their coverage patterns would affect others' coverage.[4] It was in this context that Cohen commented on the agenda-setting function of the press, noting:

> But generally the external world, the world of foreign policy, reaches us--via the media of mass communication, and most importantly via the press. For most of the foreign policy audience, the really effective map of the world--that is to say, their operational map of the world--is drawn by the reporter and the editor, not by the cartographer. (Latin America, for instance, takes up a lot of space on the cartographer's map, but it scarcely exists on the political map delineated by most newspapers in the United States.) And if we do not see a story in the newspapers (or catch it on radio or televisions), it effectively has not happened so far as we are concerned...This is to say, then, that the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.[5]

Cohen's list of the elite papers included also the Christian Science Monitor and the Washington Post.[6] Additionally, he noted that regional papers assumed additional importance in the policy makers' media consumption habits when they represented constituents far removed from Washington. The reading of the regional papers still came second to the Times.[7] This makes the review of Los Angeles Times coverage especially relevant. Because of the geographic interests and cultural ties residents of this area have in Central and South America, the Los Angeles paper might offer decision makers something different in the way of foreign news coverage.

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[4]Cohen, The Press, pp. 59 and 139.
[5]Ibid., p. 13.
[6]Ibid., p. 137.
[7]Ibid., p. 140.

Looking at what makes foreign news of interest both to editors and reporters alike, he noted the attraction of "big stories" that contain conflict and controversy, an attraction that results in a peak-and-valley kind of crisis coverage that offers a choppy view of a world from which "a sense of the whole cannot be gained."[8] He went on to cite Walter Lippmann's analogy of news coverage as being "like the beam of a search light that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision," revealing scenes of conflict without continuity or reason.[9] Also important in context of this study, was Cohen's observation that once the news media have focussed attention on an issue or on a geographical area, it tends to stay in the news for a time.[10]

As the result of his analysis, Cohen concluded that the press is such an important actor in the policy-making network "that any of press coverage would leave a substantial mark of one kind or another on the participants and thus on the process."[11] He argued that to do a better job, the media would have to base more correspondents in non-Western regions of the world and pay more attention to underlying issues, the "whys" of stories, instead of crises.

Because of the exhaustive nature of his work, Cohen remains one of the most frequently quoted expert on the subject of policy and press interactions. It is important to

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[8]Cohen, The Press, p. 99.
[9]Ibid., p. 100, citing Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, (New York: Pelican Books, 1946), p. 257.
[10]Ibid., pp. 62-64, 97-100, 241.
[11]Ibid., p. 269.

note, however, that his work was based on surveys and interviews and in their self-reporting, both policy makers and journalists may to some extent have been relying on commonly accepted truths, which may not have had foundation in fact. In addition, in the years since he did his work much about the world, both at home and abroad, has changed and it is important to keep the possibility of change in mind. If the press played an important role in foreign policy formulation then, before Vietnam and the technological progress that made it a living room war, it may play an even more potent role now, as evidenced by the military's desire to leave the press at home when it landed in Grenada.

Many researchers have picked up where The Press and Foreign Policy left off, Cohen among them. From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, he researched and wrote The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy. A logical progression from his first work, the second book continues to stress the role of the press in the policy making process--particularly as a source of information for policy makers, but it is not intended as an update of the original work and does not provide much of new information of relevance to this study.[12]

One article of particular import for this study is Altheide's, "Media Hegemony: A Failure of Perspective," which examined research findings on the socialization and ideology of journalists in context of the media hegemony theory, which

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[12]Bernard C. Cohen, The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 107-111. Originally copyrighted 1973.

suggests that the press tends to bolster the status quo, particularly as it relates to foreign policy and foreign news coverage.[13]

Focusing on how those factors that affect the quality of news coverage, Altheide looked at story balance and source use as they related to U.S. policy interests, which has applicability for this study. He concluded that journalists' coverage does not bolster the balance of power, but rather calls into questions the legitimacy of the interests upon which the prevailing system is based.[14] Though at first glance such a finding might not appear to bode well for the premise of this study, it is in reality one of the strongest omens of positive results, because the very nature of the Carter human rights policy was challenge to existing power structures in Central and South America. If Altheide's is reading of the research was on target, its very threat to the status quo would have made the policy very attractive to correspondents reporting on the region.

Chang's two papers on the press and U.S. foreign policy and on press coverage of Reagan's China policy were also extremely helpful, in large part because they deal with areas which bear directly on the subject at hand--the interaction of presidential foreign policy initiatives and foreign news

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[13]David L. Altheide, "Media Hegemony: A Failure of Perspective," Public Opinion Quarterly 45 (Summer 1981), pp.143-163.

[14]Ibid.

coverage.[15] In his article on the theoretical and methodological implications of research into press-foreign policy interactions, Chang looked at external and internal factors that may undermine the press's role and function in the foreign policy-making process, as viewed from the philosophical position that the press as a representative of the public should play a role in policy formulation.[16] In addition, the paper indicated that past studies of the role of the press in foreign policy formulations were inadequate because of their form. The unobtrusive nature of content analysis makes it an appropriate technique to study the subject, Chang contended, thus supporting the choice of method for this study.[17]

The other Chang article looked at China coverage in the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times to chart the newspapers' coverage of the Reagan's China policy over an 18-month period.[18] The study concluded that there is an interaction between presidential policy shifts and newspaper coverage, but advised that further study would be

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[15]Tsan Kuo Chang, "The Press and U.S. Foreign Policy: Some Theoretical and Methodological Considerations," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Fla., August 1984; and, Chang, "Press Coverage of Reagan's China Policy: A Study of Agenda and Treatment," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Dallas, May 1983.

[16]Chang, The Press.

[17]Ibid., p. 43.

[18]Chang, Press Coverage.

necessary to determine whether the president sets the agenda for the newspapers or visa versa.[19]

Kern, Levering, and Levering looked at the presidential-press relationship for one administration, in the context of other influences. The researchers combined both content analysis of press coverage of foreign policy issues with extensive interviewing of the editors, publishers and reporters who were responsible for that coverage, and policy makers who sought to influence it.[20]

Reviewing coverage of four crises of the Kennedy presidency in the five newspapers, Kern, et al., concluded that neither the press nor the president is always dominant, and that depending on the issue, the time, and the external and internal factors affecting the status of relations between the two, the balance can shift. The papers--the New York Times, Washington Post, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Chicago Tribune and San Francisco Examiner--were not found to have presented homogeneous coverage, though the Times was found to be the most independent of government and to have influenced the coverage of the other papers, particularly as the result of its overseas coverage.[21] The researchers also concluded that where there was little domestic political involvement or

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[19]Ibid., p. 16.

[20]Montague Kern, Patricia W. Levering and Ralph B. Levering, The Kennedy Crises: The Press, the Presidency, and Foreign Policy (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

[21]Ibid., p. 199.

intra-administration squabbling the president could dominate the press.[22]

Though their results are far from earthshattering, the researchers began by bemoaning others' tendencies to overgeneralization when it comes to government-press relations.[23] The researchers set out to explore some of those commonly-held "overgeneralized" views about presidential coverage in general, and coverage of Kennedy administration in specific, by focusing on complete coverage of specific crises during the Kennedy years. While what they ended up with is interesting and valuable, they are tempted in their conclusion to overgeneralize their own findings from a five paper sample to "the press."[24] For the purpose of this study, the Kern, et al., findings support the suggestion that the Times is looked to by other papers. In addition, the findings suggest that not only may there be differences between the way papers cover an administration's foreign policy initiatives, but that coverage may also vary over time. In part, because coverage changes are the result of changes in the relationship between the president and the press. It may be necessary to weigh such factors in order to account for changes in human rights coverage over time and across the different papers of this study.

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[22]Ibid., p. 202.
[23]Ibid., p. 6-8.
[24]Ibid. p. 195-204.

Foreign News Coverage

Galtung and Ruge broke ground with their 1965 analysis of the factors--such as geographic and cultural consonance or nation status--which affect how newspapers cover foreign news.[25] They found that Norwegian newspapers covered foreign news differently depending, among other factors, on whether the news originated in elite nations or lower rank nations, whether the news events were ones that would normally be expected from a nation of a certain status, and whether or not the story was positive or negative.[26] The lower a nation's rank, the less likely it was to get coverage. The more an event fit the stereotype of the country, the more likely it was to be covered--military coups in Latin America, for instance, would be considered news. And, less negative stories had a shorter life.[27] These are important hypotheses, especially in terms of the study at hand, because whether presidential foreign policy initiatives affect foreign news coverage of a region may be related to the extent to which they shift perceptions about the status of the region.

If a change in coverage is found, it would be important to review the possible reasons for the change in light of the Galtung and Ruge hypotheses. It might be possible, for instance, that the Carter human rights policy shifted

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[25]Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News," Journal of Peace Research 1 (1965), pp. 64-91.

[26]Ibid., pp. 81-83.

[27]Ibid.

perceptions of the region thus making it more newsworthy or rather played on existing stereotypes by calling attention to the region by focusing on events with strong negative characteristics. The Galtung and Ruge article ran as a companion piece to Ostgaard's review of the literature looking at what factors influence the flow of foreign news.[28] His findings--that the media tend to reinforce the status quo and to exaggerate the importance of actions by leaders of big powers--are particularly pertinent to a look at the effect of a president's policies on news coverage.[29]

The Ostgaard and Galtung and Ruge articles served as a starting point from which other researchers proceeded.[30] Their work must also be taken into consideration as it adapts and adjusts the original hypotheses. Peterson's 1981 article looked at foreign news coverage in The (London) Times, using concepts framed by Galtung and Ruge.[31] She looked at foreign coverage in The Times precisely because it is read by the British elite--which parallels this study's purpose. She was also interested in the coverage because of Third World criticism of western news coverage. Peterson found support for Galtung and Ruge's propositions, particularly that the

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[28]Einar Ostgaard, "Factors Influencing the Flow of News," Peace Research Journal 1 (1964), pp. 39-61.

[29]Ostgaard, "Factors," p. 51.

[30]Oystein Sande, "Perception of Foreign News," Journal of Peace Research 6 (1971), pp. 221-237; and, Karl Erik Rosengren, "International News: Methods, Data and Theory," Journal of Peace Research 11 (1974), pp. 145-156.

[31]Sophia Peterson, "International News Selection by Elite Press," Public Opinion Quarterly 45 (Summer 1981), pp. 143-163.

nation's status and the negativity of the news affected its use.[32]

In a 1987 paper, Lacy, Chang, and Lau analyzed foreign coverage in view of the in a stratified sample of 114 newspapers.[33] The study found that conflict orientation in foreign coverage tended to increase in wire coverage and that, therefore, the more a newspaper relied on wire coverage, the more likely it was that its foreign coverage would be crisis-oriented. They also concluded that the larger a city's population, the less likely the newspaper was to carry more foreign coverage. Both of these points may be found to bear on the types of coverage offered by the newspapers analyzed for this study.

In a short, concise review of the literature, Lent reviewed the constraints on international coverage that affect foreign news coverage in American media. The article provided a valuable stepping-off point for further research in crucial areas, but was not intended to provide the depth in any one area.[34] In addition, for the purpose of this study, what detail Lent's provided was tantalizing, but out-of-date.

Shoemaker, et al., proposed a theory of newsworthiness

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[32]Ibid., pp. 157-158.

[33]Stephen Lacy, Tsan-Kuo Chang, and Tyen-Yu Lau, "The Influence of Market and Organizational Variables on Foreign News Coverage in U.S. Newspapers," a paper presented to the International Communication Association, Montreal, 1987.

[34]John A. Lent, "Foreign News in American Media," Journal of Communication 27 (Winter 1977), p. 46-51.

based on deviance.[35] The paper argued that the more deviant an event was, the more likely it was to be covered. The authors provided three dimensions of deviance, statistical deviance--novelty or oddity, pathological deviance--the extent to which the event threatens the status quo, and normative deviance--conflict, controversy or prominence, or the extent to which the event would violated U.S. norms.[36] Two dimensions were assigned to measure social significance, the extent to which an event was of consequence or interest to U.S. Timeliness and proximity were used as control variables.[37] Among the results of study, were the findings that the New York Times covered more of the studies' randomly selected events than did the three television networks, and that amount and prominence of Times coverage was shown to be directly related to the measure of an events' deviance and the level of U.S. involvement.[38]

Based on cognitive psychologists' findings that deviant content gets more attention and is better remembered than nondeviant content, Shoemaker, et al., conclude that while social significance may play a role, it is the deviance of events that predicts their news value unless the major funding source of the medium has its own agenda.[39] The importance of the Shoemaker study's findings are severalfold. Applied to the

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[35]Pamela J. Shoemaker, Nancy Brendlinger, Lucig H. Danielian, and Tsan-Kuo Chang, "Testing a Theoretical Model of Newsworthiness: Coverage of International Events in the U.S. Media," a paper presented to the International Communication Association, Montreal 1987.

[36]Ibid., p. 4.

[37]Ibid., p. 5.

[38]Ibid., p. 16.

[39]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

subject of this research, its finding would suggest that American government human rights concerns would have the weight to alter coverage patterns, since they involve high levels of deviance and significant U.S. interests. Beyond the confines of this study, however, the Shoemaker research is important because it advances a generation beyond Galtung and Ruge, providing a new dimension to the study of the factors which influence foreign news coverage.

In his 1985 paper, Kelly reported that coverage given those Nicaragua and El Salvador in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times in 1983 differed significantly.[40] The differences arose not in the balance of reporting presented by the correspondent filing the story, but rather in the presentation of the story by editors at home. Nicaragua, whose government the United States opposed, made the front page more often than did El Salvador's U.S.-supported regime, and stories about peace efforts did not make the front, though conflict-oriented stories got premium play.[41] Kelly's method and findings bear considerations, if for no other reason than that they present an elegantly simple research design which is capable of providing concrete and yet valuable answers to the questions it proposes.

No review of literature concerning coverage of South America would be complete without reference to Markham's 1961

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[40]James D. Kelly, "A Content Analysis of Foreign Correspondent Reports from Nicaragua and El Salvador," a paper presented to the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, 1985.

[41]Ibid., p. 12.

comparison of foreign news coverage in the U.S. and Latin American press.[42] Markham found vast differences between meager American foreign news coverage and much more extensive Latin American foreign coverage. The article is valuable as a reference point on Latin American coverage, if only for its historical value. The research design has a valuable premise, but Markham's sample selection raises questions for several reasons. He compared foreign coverage in the New York Times and a number of smaller papers in the United States to papers the equivalent of the Times in the capitals of South America. He also looked only at weekday coverage in papers drawn from a three-month period, overlooking the fact that foreign news coverage patterns might been different on the weekend and that three month period might not be representative of coverage for the year.

Much has been written about foreign news coverage, particularly television coverage, which adds insight and varying perspectives on the subject. Many of the works address the concerns raised by proponents of the New World Information order. Neither time nor space allow for a complete review of all such works, though several works need mention. In Coups and Earthquakes:Reporting the World for America, Rosenblum provided an insider's look at how correspondents cover human rights. Written in the late 1970s, it charts the uncertain ground correspondents cover when writing about human rights,

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[42]James W. Markham, "Foreign News in the United States and South American Press," Public Opinion Quarterly 25 (Summer 1961), pp. 249-262.

offers valuable insights on everything from source citations and the euphemisms used in coverage, to patterns of public interest in stories about human rights violations.[43] Rosenblum noted that in the mid-1970s more--and better--human rights reporting had a limited snowball effect. More coverage produced more interest, and more interest generated more space. Whether his inferred causation is correct, the fact remains that he as well as DeYoung and other saw a change in human rights coverage.[44] He noted, however, that increased coverage had some drawbacks, and cites "the Latin-American security forces which drew a lesson from Chile: one reason for all the fuss was that torture victims has been allowed to live and were released to talk to reporters. As a result, there were more deaths."[45] In addition, Rosenblum noted a definite connection between the advent of the Carter administration and increased coverage of human rights.[46]

McAnany's study of ten years of U.S. television coverage of Central America, 1972-1981," does not address the role human rights issues played in coverage of the region. It does note an astronomical jump in television reporting on Central American between 1977 and 1978, however.[47] His conclusions about the causes for the sudden and dramatic attention to the

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[43]Mort Rosenblum, Coups and Earthquakes: Reporting the World for America (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 193-202.

[44]Ibid., p. 200.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., p. 201-202.

[47]Emile G. McAnany, "Television and Crisis: Ten Years of Network News Coverage of Central America, 1972-1981," Media, Culture and Society 5 (1983), pp. 199-212.

region are not at odds with the premise of this research. Especially interesting are his findings that the bulk of the coverage once television discovered the Central American crisis were "war-terrorism" stories. If television journalists--like others--get their foreign news from the Times and the Post, McAnany's findings offer support for the premise that once the human rights policy focused attention on the region, the media "discovered" it. McAnany's other observations, particularly those of later even more dramatic increases in coverage in the early 1980s also offer reassuring support for the face validity this study's findings.

Another valuable reference on coverage of the region is Reporters Under Fire: U.S. Media Coverage of Conflicts in Lebanon and Central America, the transcript of a seminar involving experienced correspondents and editors and specialists from the academic and foreign service communities.[48] Dealing with the thorny question of how well American media have covered the crises in Central America, the participants--among them correspondents Karen DeYoung and Daniel James--agreed that coverage of the region could have been better. They also raised the possibility that human rights, while an issue of critical concern, had perhaps been over-covered at the expense of other equally serious problems.[49] Whether the panelists could resolve the issue or

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[48]Landrum R. Bolling, ed., Reporters Under Fire: U.S. Media Coverage of Conflicts in Lebanon and Central America (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985).

[49]Ibid., pp. 98 and 103.

not, the perception existed that human rights had gotten priority coverage. Comments, particularly by DeYoung of the Washington Post, also offer some detail about the allocation of newsgathering resources in the region during the period in question.[50]

The 1983 Columbia Journalism Monograph, Third World News in American Media, offered a number of valuable articles, particularly those by Payne and Dassin. Both deal with the role correspondents play in conveying news to a domestic audience and raise questions about what that role should be.[51] Dassin also offers a valuable capsule summary of Latin American coverage in the U.S. press.[52]

In a 1972 article in the Columbia Journalism Review on coverage of the Allende regime in Chile, Morris looked not only at coverage of the regime but also at the forces which brought Allende to power and those which brought about the coup that upset him. Among those forces, he argued, were U.S. economic and political interests that went unreported by American correspondents covering Santiago.[53] The Morris article is a model for qualitative analysis of U.S. foreign coverage and also offers useful background material on

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[50]IBolling, Reporters, p. 105 and 114.

[51]Chapters by Joan Dassin and Les Payne in Third World News in American Media: Experience and Prospects edited by Donald Shanor and Donald H. Johnson, (New York: Columbia Journalism Monographs, 1983).

[52]Ibid., pp. 22-24, 30-32.

[53]Roger Morris with Shelley Mueller, and William Jelin, "Through the Looking Glass in Chile: Coverage of Allende's Regime," Columbia Journalism Review, November-December 1974, pp. 15-26.

coverage of Latin America. Geyer's "Latin America: The Making of an 'Uncontinent,'" which ran in the same magazine several years earlier, offers similar valuable guidance on coverage of the region.[54] Holland makes particular note of the accounts of the human cost of the Nicaraguan revolution filed by correspondents in the field, including one each from the Miami Herald, the Los Angeles Times, and the Washington Post.[55] DeVoss deals mostly with coverage of events after the time period covered by this study, but provides some comment on the dynamics of in human rights coverage which might nonetheless be relevant.[56] The same is true of Massing's article on coverage of El Salvador, which ran late in 1983.[57]

Human Rights

By far the most useful book on human rights was Schoultz's Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America.[58] Though cumbersome in many places, mainly because of its unyielding focus on the structure and processes of foreign policy formation, Schoultz's work is exhaustive and detached. It provides the grist and analysis, but maintains a

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[54]Georgie Ann Geyer, "The Making of an 'Uncontinent,'" Columbia Journalism Review, Winter 1969-1970, pp. 49-53.

[55]Max Holland, "Nicaragua: A Despot Falls, the Press Stumbles," Columbia Journalism Review, September-October, 1979, pp. 46-57.

[56]David DeVoss, "Complaints from El Salvador: Duarte and Compatriots Critique the U.S. Coverage," Washington Journalism Review, March 1985, pp. 21-25.

[57]Michael Massing, "About-face on El Salvador," Columbia Journalism Review, November-December, 1983, pp. 42-49.

[58]Lars Schoultz, Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

dispassionate distance from a topic that elicits passionate emotions. The only drawback of the work, for the purpose of this research, is that it deals with the non-governmental forces in policy formation only as they influenced the immediate process and yet does not touch on media influence. Schoultz' theories on the causes of U.S. policy shifts toward the region, also dealt with in his later book National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America, may prove helpful not only in charting the course of the Carter policy, but also shifts in media coverage of human rights.[59] Similar assistance also comes from Egeland's 1984 article, which analyzes the effectiveness of human rights policies as exercised by large and small nations, looking particularly at the contrasting Carter and Reagan policies.[60]

Muravchik also offered background material on the topic, but without Schoultz's dispassionate touch.[61] Heavily critical of the Carter implementation of the policy, it was much easier to read, but lacked the distance and objectivity preferable as the basis for even the least rigorous of historical standards. Like Schoultz, Muravchik ignores press involvement in, and influence on, the policy making process.

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[59]Lars Schoultz, National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[60]Jan Egeland, "Human Rights--Ineffective Big States, Potent Small States," Journal of Peace Research 21 (1984), pp. 207-213.

[61]Joshua Muravchik, The Uncertain Crusade (Lanham, Md: Hamilton Press, 1986).

Because systematic U.S. government reporting on human rights began only with the Carter administration, the most consistent and reliable source of human rights facts and figures for the period in question are Amnesty International's annual reports and periodic reports on torture and political killings.[62]

Much of the literature already cited provided theoretical and methodological guidance for the study. In different ways the Cohen, Schoultz, Chang, Kelly, and Shoemaker, et al., works all shaped the project and its results. For additional guidance, however, reference was made to a number of sources including, but not limited to Holsti's Content Analysis for the Social Sciences, McCombs' Using Mass Communication Theory and Stempel's articles and books. Credit for the basic understanding of coding categories goes to early contact with McQuail's Analysis of Newspaper Content.[63]

A review of the literature in the field indicates that there is substantial evidence of an interaction between press coverage and foreign policy, but that there are no easy answers about how that interaction works. From Cohen to Chang,

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[62]Rosenblum, Coups and Earthquakes, pp. 201-202; and, Amnesty International, The Amnesty International Report 1 June 1975-31 May 1976; Annual Report 1974-1975, Report on Torture, 1975; Amnesty International Report 1982, Political Killings by Governments, 1983.

[63]Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969); Maxwell E. McCombs and Lee B. Becker, Using Mass Communication Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979); Guido H. Stempel III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly 29 (Summer 1952), p. 334; and, Denis McQuail, Analysis of Newspaper Content, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977).

the researchers found the press to be an active participant in the process of foreign policy formulation and explication. But none found the press to be an independent actor in the process. Chang particularly notes that it is necessary for research to look separately at the press role in domestic and foreign policy issues. While the press may play an more independent, agenda-setting function in domestic issues, when it comes to foreign policy the press role is much less certain.[64] Factors ranging from presidential control of foreign policy to the indifference of the public to foreign policy affairs and press reliance on government information, may tilt the agenda-setting balance away from the press and toward the president.

Students of foreign policy agree that human rights assumed had been on the foreign policy agenda prior to the Carter campaign, but only assumed center stage when Carter took office. Journalists agree that human rights reporting assumed a new prominence in the mid- to late 1970s. Researchers looking at coverage of Central and Latin America have found that over the period in question coverage of the region blossomed.

The literature suggests several reasons the American press would find human rights an attractive topic, especially in coverage of those countries where the most basic individual rights were being violated by governments receiving American

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[64]Chang, "The Press," pp. 3-5.

aid.[65] The common philosophical bases for American human rights concerns and the press's vision of its own role would tend to enhance coverage. Not only would the press be championing the individual's rights, it would be doing so in spite of heavy governmental opposition. Altheide contends that journalists' coverage does not bolster the balance of power, but rather questions the legitimacy of the interests upon which the prevailing system is based.[66] The Carter policy in essence challenged the legitimacy of the repressive governments in Central and South America. At the same time then, the press could follow the president's lead as Chang suggests and still challenge the status quo.

Human rights topic have the additional appeal for journalists and public alike that they are in essence deviant, and thus would have newsworthiness value according to several of the criteria established by Shoemaker, et al.[67] Human rights topics would qualify under all three of the deviance dimensions Shoemaker outlined. For American readers rights violations are odd and unusual, and thus statistically deviant, and also, threaten the status quo and are thus are pathologically deviant. And, even in some of their most mild forms rights violations break U.S. norms and thus could be argued to represent normative deviance at its height.[68]

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[65]Rosenblum, Coups, p. 196.
[66]Altheide, "Media Hegemony."
[67]Shoemaker, et al., "Testing a Theoretical Model."
[68]Ibid., p. 4.

The literature supports content analysis as a means of approaching the question, and backs the selection of the press elite as the place to seek an interaction between foreign policy formulation and foreign coverage. There are also indications that studies of coverage of a specific issue can add to something to understanding of foreign policy coverage in general. The literature supports the need for continued study of U.S. coverage of Central and South America.

On the basis of those findings, this study of coverage in the New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor and Los Angeles Times was approached with three hypotheses:

1. The number of newspapers stories devoted to coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy

2. The space devoted to newspaper coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy

3. The depth of newspaper coverage of the region increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Tracing a possible connection between presidential policy initiatives and American press coverage of foreign news could be approached in several ways.[1] This project originally was designed to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, focusing on a content analysis of newspaper coverage of Central and South America. The qualitative component of the research was included in order to provide context for the quantitative findings. It became necessary to scale down the scope of the initial qualitative design, however, both because of time constraints and because much of the necessary information could not be obtained with available resources. The remaining qualitative facet of the research dealt with the development of the human rights policy and human rights reporting.

The prestige press was chosen as the most appropriate media in which to look at the interaction of presidential foreign policy initiatives and foreign news coverage.[2] In

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[1]Tsan-Kuo Chang, "The Press and U.S. Foreign Policy: Some Theoretical and Methodological Considerations," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1984.

[2]Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 13, 59-60, 140, 149.

all, five papers were selected from among the papers commonly referred to as the prestige press.[3] Three of the papers chosen are among the media relied on by decision makers and journalists alike as the standard for foreign coverage--the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Christian Science Monitor.[4] The other papers chosen, the Los Angeles Times and the Miami Herald, also generally included on the list of prestige papers, were selected because of their location closer to the region being studied and their large populations of Central and South Americans, both reasons for journalistic sensitivity to the subject matter.[5] These papers have a reputation for foreign coverage though they may lack the national impact of the others. The Miami paper is particularly noted for its coverage of Central and South America.[6] For practical reasons, however, it became necessary to eliminate the Miami Herald.[7]

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[3]John C. Merrill and Harold A. Fisher, The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers, (New York: Hastings House, 1980), p. 20; and, John D. Merrill, "The World's Elite Newspapers," World Press Encyclopedia (London: Mansel Publications Limited, 1982), pp. 37-56.

[4]Cohen, The Press, pp. 59, 137, 139; and, William A. Henry III, "The Ten Best U.S. Dailies," Time, 30 April 1984, pp. 58-63.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Henry, "The 10 Best," p. 60.

[7]The MSU holdings do not include the Miami Herald. The lack of Miami holdings at MSU was known from the start, but the paper was included in the research design on the basis of assurances by librarians that interlibrary loan would be able to produce them. That is not the case. Few libraries in the country have microfilm holdings of the Herald, and those that do are not necessarily willing to loan them. As a result, microfilm deliveries were sporadic, incomplete and uncertain, and coding for the study could not be completed.

The four years--1975, 1977, 1978, and 1982--were chosen to obtain a longitudinal perspective on topic. The first, 1975, was selected because it was the last year before the campaign in which Carter won the presidency. Human rights were not a priority foreign policy concern under the Nixon and Ford presidencies, but because they became an issue during the 1976 presidential campaign it was felt that year should not be chosen for study in case the campaign affected coverage.

The second year, 1977, was selected because Carter took office during that year and began to formulate and implement his human rights policies. Thus, it was expected that 1977 and 1978--the third year chosen for study--would represent the climb and peak of the policy's effect on coverage. It was expected also that looking at two consecutive years of the Carter presidency at the height of the policy's potency would compensate for any time lag in the policy's implementation and effectiveness. The two-year span should provide some picture of what, if any, effect that lag might have had on coverage. It was assumed also that second time lag might have occurred between the policy's implementation and its effect on coverage if such an effect existed, and it was hoped that the years chosen for study would serve in that event.

The fourth year, 1982, was chosen because it is the second year of the Reagan administration. By then, the Carter policy was no longer in force. By 1982, any fleeting effects the Carter policy might have had on coverage under Reagan

should have disappeared, and the study's results could then be taken as an indicator of more permanent coverage changes.

The unit of analysis chosen for the study was the individual news story from or about countries in Central and South America. The stories were found in a stratified random sample of each of the newspapers for each of the years in question. Based on Stempel's findings that a sample of 12 papers maximizes research resources, the sample included fourteen issues for each paper for each year.[8] Because newspapers frequently establish coverage patterns that vary with the day of the week, the 14 days were made up of two randomly constructed weeks.[9]

The 14-day sample size could not be adhered to in the case of the Christian Science Monitor, however, because the Monitor prints only five days a week. As a result, only 10 issues of the paper were reviewed. Additionally, because the Monitor does not print on Monday holidays, it was twice

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[8]Guido H. Stempel III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. x, Summer, 1952, p. 334; and, Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 134.

[9]For each year, there were two randomly selected Mondays, Tuesdays, and so forth. Chosen using dice, a random numbers table and a calendar, those dates were: 1975: Jan. 1, Jan. 3, Jan. 5, March 5, March 16, April 25, June 9, June 26, Aug. 5, Aug. 12, Oct. 30, Dec. 6, and Dec. 20. 1977: Jan. 27, Jan. 28, Jan. 30, Feb. 14, Feb. 23, April 2, April 24, June 22, June 27, Aug. 16, Sept. 22, Oct. 1, Nov. 1, and Nov. 11. 1978: Jan. 2, Jan. 7, Feb. 22, March 12, March 13, March 18, June 6, June 21, June 29, July 7, June 1, Feb. 16, Dec. 1 and Dec. 24. 1982: Jan. 3, Feb. 17, March 12, March 13, March 14, March 19, April 13, June 30, July 1, Aug. 7, Sept. 23, Oct. 11, Oct. 12, and Oct. 18.

necessary to substitute either the preceding or succeeding Monday's paper in order to compensate.

It should also be noted that it became necessary to replace four of the dates originally chosen in 1978. A strike by the New York pressmen meant that there were no issues of the New York Times for several months in the fall of that year. Since the goal was random sample selection that would provide generalizability of study findings to the years and papers in question, and not one of mapping the distribution of coverage over the course of the year, four new dates were randomly selected to replace the dates that fell during the strike. The new dates were used for all the papers.

The importance of stratified sampling was shown by a preliminary look at New York Times coverage of Central and South America for three of the four years in question. Sunday papers tended to run several stories with regional datelines, while Friday papers carried none. Though such extreme results were not found in the actual sample there were day-to-day differences in coverage levels, and stratified sampling thus avoided the possibility of a biased sample presented by straight random selection--that of 14 days made up mostly of Sundays or mostly of Fridays.

Stories were sought in those sections of each newspaper where international news generally run. Business, sports, and other sections where international news coverage is not expected were not reviewed. The goal was not to arbitrarily rule out coverage, but rather to look for coverage where each

paper's readers would expect to find it. Where any doubt existed every section was scrutinized. This was especially necessary with the Los Angeles Times, where copy was sometimes found to have run international news both in the front section and buried on open pages behind the classified ads.

Only those stories which dealt with news of Central or South American countries were included in the study. A dateline originating in the region was not required for inclusion since many stories bore no dateline or originated in Washington, New York or Geneva. In order for a story with an out-of-region dateline to be included in the study, however, it had to deal with a strictly relevant topic and could not have a major theme involving a non-region country. For instance, if a story about the Jonestown massacre originated in Guyana and was handled as a foreign story, it was included in the study. If, on the other hand, it originated in a U.S. city and dealt with the massacre from a local angle, it was not included. Similarly, stories originating from Panama about the canal treaties were included in the study, while stories about domestic U.S. political battles over the treaties were not.

News stories on relevant topics that ran in the week-in-review sections or on the op-ed pages were included in the study only where it was clear that they originated as a news stories. It was necessary to include such stories because some of the papers run much of Sunday's foreign news in those

sections. To be included in the story, the story had to carry a standard byline and dateline and be written in news, as opposed to editorial style. Where there was any question, however, a piece was not included. Opinion pieces on op-ed pages were also excluded.

Coding was conducted by a single coder working with a pretested coding instrument. Each story was measured in square inches and coded according to thirteen coding categories.[10] In order, as they appeared on the coding sheet, those categories were: prominence; topic country; dateline; picture and or map; byline--whether it originate with staff or wire correspondents; international interaction; the type of international interaction, whether it was a human rights topic; whether there was a human rights mention; whether there was man-made violence involved; topic; and, the number of sources cited (see appendix 1).

A story's prominence was determined according to an index assigning points for story placement and play.[11] The topic country, dateline and whether the story ran with a picture or map are self-evident. Byline identified the origin of the story with staff, special correspondents or wire services. Where a correspondent or wire service was mentioned note was made of the name. International interaction gauged

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[10]Square inches were used since they take into account the column with of the story which varies from paper to paper and story to story.

[11]Richard W. Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News Play," Journalism Quarterly 41 (Spring 1964), pp. 259-262.

whether it was a domestic or international story. If it the story did involve international interaction, note was made of the level of involvement, whether it was among Third World countries or between First and Third or Second and Third world countries.[12] Human rights topics were anything like massacres, torture, political prisoners, the "disappeared," or death squads--violations of human rights as defined at the start of this study. A human rights mention was noted separate from the topic and could involve either "human rights" or similar phraseology which called attention to the concept of human rights. Man-made violence was also noted separately and included anything from rebels blowing up a building to a shootout. Topic categories ranged from diplomacy to domestic politics, religion, and economics. Further explanations are provided by the coding definitions (see appendix 2).

The categories were chosen both to arrive at precise information about individual stories, but also with an eye to identifying common traits of a paper's coverage of the region. Most of the coding categories served to answer the study's hypotheses, but several were included to help the researcher better understand coverage of the area. Some categories were added after coding was complete on the basis of repeated findings during the coding process. For instance,

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[12]For the purposes of this study, all of the countries in Central and Latin America were identified as Third World countries. Second World countries were defined as the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc nations, and First world countries were the U.S. and the countries of Western Europe.

note was made during coding of any topic that fell in the "other" category on the coding sheet and afterwards two additional categories were added to the original list, categories for stories dealing with journalists and with natural disaster.[13]

Pretesting of the coding sheet and definitions brought to light several fairly minor areas in need of refinement and changes were made. After ten issues of a paper from one year had been coded, three stories were randomly selected for recoding, both as a test of the coding reliability and as reinforcement of the coding standards and methods as delineated by the coding definitions (see appendix 2). Recoding of the Christian Science Monitor occurred after the seventh issue of the paper had been reviewed. Recoding indicated a 98.6 percent agreement between coding efforts (see table 1). That figure was arrived at by dividing number of categories coded by the number of categories which showed coding agreement. Because all coding was conducted by one coder, the regular recoding also served as a benchmark for the coder and, if a coding error had occurred, an effort was made to identify its cause. The errors that did occur tended to result from fatigue, and not from any confusion in the

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[13]Other changes in the coding categories were instituted simply to adapt the data from the coding sheet to a form acceptable to a computer. For instance, one category on the coding sheet provided information on a story's origin, but for data process in was necessary to add an additional category to distinguish between wire and non-wire copy, in order to record the specific wire service responsible for the story.

coding definitions. It is important to note, that of the eight coding errors found in recoding 44 stories from all four papers half occurred in the category measuring the number of sources cited (see table 1). The source number category was one intended to shed light on reporting techniques and not one of the central categories of the study. The next highest category for error was topic, where there were two errors.

Table 1--Coding Reliability

Coding Category	Coding Agreement	Coding Disagreement	Agreement Percentage
Prominence	43	1	97.7
Topic Country	44	0	100.0
Dateline	44	0	100.0
Picture or map	43	1	97.7
Story type	44	0	100.0
Byline	44	0	100.0
Geographic focus	44	0	100.0
International interaction	44	0	100.0
Human rights topic	44	0	100.0
Human rights mention	44	0	100.0
Violence	44	0	100.0
Topic	42	2	95.2
Source number	40	4	90.9
Total	564	8	98.6

Measurement Reliability

Stories measured	Measurement agreement	Measurement disagreement	Total difference in sq. inches
44	42	2	.93

*All coding and reliability testing were conducted by the same coder.

The validity of a coding instrument depends on its ability to measure what it is intended to measure.[14] The research design must be able to be translated to a coding instrument that will be workable. Coding categories must be precise, reliable and objective. There should be no question as to how an item should be categorized and the coding definitions should be such that a competent judge would agree as to how an item should be coded.[15] The coding instrument was developed after careful study and adaptation of categories used in studies with a similar intent. Pretesting the coding instrument on stories of the sort that would be found in the content analysis highlighted any definition and category problems.

Holsti identifies types of validity--content, predictive, concurrent and construct--which must be addressed in research involving content analysis to ensure that a study measures what it is intended to. Content, or face, validity refers to the informed judgment of the researcher as to whether the analysis results are plausible and consistent with other information about the phenomenon under study.[16] Such a judgment, based on the review of literature in the field, is arrived at only at the conclusion of the research, but must nonetheless be considered throughout. In this case, the distinct changes in coverage levels and content were born

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[14]Ole Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), p. 142.

[15]Ibid., p. 136, 142-143.

[16]Ibid., p. 143.

out indirectly by observations of other researchers. The predictive validity of content analysis refers to it ability to provide information from which the researcher can generalize from his findings to a larger as yet unstudied population, in this case unanalyzed coverage. The predictive validity of a study is concerned with the extent to which research can be used to predict for unstudied material. The predictive potential of this study is limited by nature. The random selection is intended to allow for generalizability to other samples from the years and the papers in question. Care must be taken, however, that only those things which cna be generalized are. For instance, to predict from the results of one year's findings that stories about Surinam appeared regularly in any paper would be absurd. It would not be insupportable, however, to say that unusual events can throw a fleeting spotlight on small nations generally ignored by the American press.

Establishing concurrent validity involves checking research findings against information other than that upon which the research is based. It is important that the outside measures used as benchmarks are also valid measures of the phenomenon understudy. In this case, the question would be whether the reference to the development of the Carter human rights policy, human rights reports and writings on foreign coverage provide valid external points of comparison. Newspaper indexes for the years in question were reviewed a possible source for comparison with the data produced by the

analysis, but their form and frequent format changes failed to provide a valid measure of coverage of the region. Construct validity takes into account the validity of both the measures used in the analysis and the theory underlying the research design. Both the theoretical framework provided in the introduction and the review of literature dealing with the theories of news and foreign coverage have addressed this issue, as will the analysis and conclusion.[17]

There are inherent validity concerns in a research design that relies on a sinlge coder, particularly when the coder was also responsible for the structure and form of the research instrument. To address those concerns, care was taken to keep the research design simple and replicable. Coding categories were kept simple and patterned on instruments well-tested in previous research. Every effort was made to keep coding definitions simple and clear cut.

Once the data were collected, they had to be translated into forms which would isolate the information needed to answer the research questions. It quickly became clear that it would be necessary to divide coverage into four categories. The first included those on a human rights topic that also mentioned human rights. The second included those stories on human rights topic that did not mention human rights. The third category was stories that were not primarily human rights topics but did mention human rights. And, the fourth was those stories that were not on human

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[17]Holsti, Content Analysis, pp. 142-149.

rights topics and did not mention human rights. These four categories figure prominently in the analysis of the data collected from the study. The idea behind the breakdown was that not all stories on human rights topics mentioned human rights. If the Carter human rights policy focused attention on human rights issues, it was thought this might be particularly true of stories written before and after the policy's heyday. At the same time, it was felt that topic alone was not enough of a measure of human rights coverage since in-depth reporting on a country's political conditions might also mention human rights, though not as the central topic for coding purposes.

The results of the analysis were processed using computer assistance. Numbers representing each coding category for each story were fed into the computer and values were assigned to each number. For instance, in the topic category 1 stood for diplomatic and 2 for domestic politics. Frequencies tabulations were then run for all of the coding categories. In this way, for instance, it was possible to tell the number of stories run about Argentina and the number of stories carrying a Buenos Aires dateline. Frequencies were also run on some categories, controlling for others. In that way, it was possible to find out how many stories ran in a particular paper each year.

The first hypothesis--that the number of newspapers stories about Central and South American increased as a result of the Carter human right policy--was easily

addressed. Using year and paper as independent variables, it was a simple question of measuring the dependent variables--the number of stories and the level of human rights involvement in the stories.

The second hypothesis--that the space devoted to newspaper coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy--was addressed by looking at coverage patterns over time. Thus, the year was the independent variable and human rights involvement and coverage length were the dependent variables. To support a causal relationship it would be necessary to identify changes in coverage which followed policy changes. It would also be necessary to prove a correlation between the changes and the policy, and to rule out other possible causes.

To address the third hypothesis--that the depth of newspaper coverage of the region increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy--it was first necessary to define depth. For that purpose, depth was defined as being equivalent to average length of coverage. The premise of the definition was that the longer the story, the more likely it is to provide the information and background necessary to offer a reader context. For example, based on stories found in the analysis sample it is clear few facts and less context can be provided in a story of four square inches, while a story of 20 or so square inches can begin to address the facts of a story. Stories of 30 to 40 square inches would begin to offer context as well as facts. For the purposes of

addressing the second hypothesis, story length was identified as the dependent variable and the year and human rights involvement were identified as the independent variables.

Using the four categories of human rights involvement, analyses of variance were run on the data to test differences among several variables, including the human rights involvement, year, paper, and length of coverage, and story origin. For example, it was possible to determine the amount of coverage given to each human rights category according to the topic country or dateline, or to determine the levels of human rights involvement in stories depending on whether they were written by staff correspondents or wire services. Chi-square statistics were used to determine whether shifts in coverage patterns could be explained by chance. The lowest acceptable level for such a test was set at $p<.05$ level of significance, meaning that there would have to be no more than five chances in 100 that the study results could have occurred by chance.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The content analysis of the 208 newspaper issues included in the sample turned up 314 stories. The combined totals for all four papers were: 48 stories in 1975, 65 stories each for 1977 and 1978, and 136 stories for 1982. Of those stories, 44 were stories on human rights topics that included mention of human rights and 37 were on human rights topics but did not mention human rights. In all, 13 stories that were not primarily about human rights mentioned them, and 220 stories about non-human rights topics did not mention human rights. A Chi-square statistic indicates the probability that the sample story distribution was due to chance was less than one in a thousand (see table 2).[1]

For a longitudinal perspective, the combined paper findings were broken down by year and human rights involvement (see table 3). The break down indicates that the highest percentage of human rights involvement in coverage occurred in 1977, when human rights topics with human rights mentions accounted for 25 percent of the papers' coverage. In

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[1]Chi square is a very general statistical test designed to evaluate whether frequencies obtained empirically might have occurred by chance. If the chance distribution of data can be ruled out, the conclusion can be drawn that the association found among the variables does exist.

1977 and 1982, non-human rights topics without human rights mentions represented 58 percent and 65 percent of total coverage, respectively, while in 1975 and 1978 that category accounted for over 80 percent of all coverage (see table 3). Chi square tests proved significant for 1975 at $p<.01$ and for the other three years at $p<.001$. The chi square for the four years was also $p<.001$.

Table 2--Stories by human rights involvement. All papers, all years, total number of stories (% of total)

	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	44 (14)	37 (11)	81 (25)
non-human rights topic	13 (4)	220 (70)	233 (74)
	57 (18)	257 (81)	314

$x^2 = 206$, df= 1, $p<.001$

Table 3--Number of stories for combined papers by year (% of total)

1975	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	2 (4%)	7 (15%)	9 (19%)
non-human rights topic	0 (0%)	39 (81%)	39 (81%)
	2 (4)	46 (96%)	48

$x^2=10.37$, df=1, $p<.01$

Table 3--Continued

1977

	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	16 (25%)	7 (11%)	21 (36%)
non-human rights topic	4 (6%)	38 (58%)	42 (64%)
	20 (31%)	45 (69%)	65

$x^2=25.2$, df=1, $p<.001$

1978

	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	7 (11%)	2 (3%)	9 (14%)
non-human rights topic	1 (2%)	55 (84%)	56 (86%)
	8 (13%)	57 (87%)	65

$x^2=41.5$, df=1, $p<.001$

1982

	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	19 (14%)	21 (15%)	40 (29%)
non-human rights topic	8 (6%)	88 (65%)	96 (71%)
	27 (20%)	109 (80%)	136

$x^2=27.5$, df=1, $p<.001$

Overall Chi-square for four years:
$x^2=83.51$, df=7, $p<.001$

Coverage figures were also broken down by human rights involvement into square inches and the number of stories run (see table 4). They were also broken down by human rights involvement, into the percentage of coverage by length and number (see table 5). These figures indicate that stories on human rights topics without human rights mention were most common in 1975 and 1982. It is also noteworthy, that there were more human rights mentions in stories with non-human topics in 1977 and 1982, the two years which also had the most human rights coverage. These figures also indicate that though there were fewer stories about Central and South American in 1975 than in 1977, more space was given to those stories. And, although the total number of stories remained the same for 1977 and 1978, the length of coverage increased.

An analysis of variance indicated there were significant differences in the average length of coverage by human rights involvement and by year, but not by paper.[2] By year the difference was significant at p=.009 and by human rights involvement at p=.006, while by paper the significance, at p=.074 was not acceptable (see table 6).

Findings concerning square inches of coverage followed an overall pattern not unlike that of story number, though the average square inches per type of story was distinctly

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[2]Analysis of variance is a statistical test which provides a measure of the significance of the relationship between a number of variables.

Table 4--Human rights involvement in overall coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1	62.6	2	275.3	16	207.7	7	603.5	19
HR2	161.5	7	42.7	7	9.2	2	577.6	21
HR3			86.6	4	43.9	1	308.2	8
HR4	872.6	39	631.9	38	985.1	55	1,805.8	88
Total	1,096.7	48	1,036.5	65	1,245.9	65	3,295.1	136

Table 5--Overall coverage by percentage for each year. Percentage of coverage by length/percentage by number

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	length	no.	length	no.	length	no.	length	no.
HR1	5%	4%	27%	24%	17%	10%	18%	14%
HR2	15%	15%	4%	11%	1%	3%	18%	15%
HR3	0%	0%	8%	6%	4%	2%	9%	6%
HR4	80%	81%	61%	59%	78%	85%	55%	65%

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 6--Analysis of variance. Square inches by year, by human rights involvement, by paper

Source of variation	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Significance of F
Main effects	10,265.530	9	1140.614	3.288	.001
Year	4,104.279	3	1368.093	3.944	.009
HR	4,353.989	3	1454.663	4.193	.006
Paper	2,430.567	3	810.189	2.336	.074
Explained	10,265.530	9	1140.614	3.288	.001
Residual	105,455.206	304	346.892		
Total	115,720.736	313	369.715		

different. For convenience sake, square inches will be referred to as length not area. The most coverage for the four years, 4,395.4 square inches, went to stories with no human rights involvement. Coverage of human rights topics with human rights mentions was measured at 1,149.1 square inches. Human rights topics with no human rights mention ranked third at 791 square inches, and non-human rights coverage with a human rights mention came to 438.7 square inches (see table 7).

The average story lengths followed a different pattern. Non-human rights topics with human rights mention averaged the longest stories at 33.7 square inches, while stories on human rights topics followed at 26.1. Stories about human rights with no mention averaged 21.4 square inches, while the category that got the most coverage, non-human right topics with no mention of human rights, averaged the shortest stories 19.5 (see table 7). It is important to note that while the overall average length for all stories was 21.2 square inches, the most frequent length was only 2 square inches and standard deviation was 19.2, indicating a great deal of variance in story length. Stories ranged in length from .9 square inches to 80.5 (see tables 5, 7 and 8). A wide range is also noted later in this section when the stories are broken down by credit line and human rights involvement.

The average length of stories dealing with human rights topics with human rights mentions were longest in 1982 and

Table 7--Human rights involvement by square inches (average story length). All papers, all years

	with human rights mention	without human rights mention	
human rights topic	1,149.1 17% (26.1)	791.0 12% (21.4)	1,940.1 29%
non-human rights topic	438.7 6% (33.7)	4,395.4 65% (19.5)	4,834.1 71%
	1,587.8 13%	5,186.4 77%	6,774.2

x^2=29.4, df=1, p>.001 (Chi square calculated for percentages)

Table 8--Length of overall coverage in square inches

314 stories

Mean	21.23	Std Err	1.085	Median	14.25
Mode	2.0	Std Dev	19.228	Variance	369.715
Range	79.6	Minimum	.9	Maximum	80.5
Sum	6,674.2				

Table 9--Average story length in square inches, by human rights involvement

human rights involvement	year			
	75	77	78	82
HR1	31.3	17.2	26.9	31.7
HR2	23.0	6.1	4.6	27.5
HR3	0	21.6	49.3	20.5
HR4	22.3	16.6	17.9	20.5
Total	22.8	15.9	19.1	24.2

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

1975, in keeping with overall story averages (see table 9). In 1977, when a higher percentage of coverage was given to the category the average length of the stories fell (see tables 5 and 9).

The New York Times had the most stories, with 107. The Washington Post had 83 stories. The Los Angeles Times had 78 stories. The Christian Science Monitor had 46 (see table 10). It should be noted again here, however, that the Monitor prints only five days a week, and thus so that for each year there were two fewer papers studied, and eight fewer for the study as a whole. The Monitor's topped the papers in the average length of coverage given to the region, with an average story length of 27.6 square inches. The story length for the New York Times was 20.8 and the Washington Post averaged only slight less, at 20 square inches. The Los Angeles Times averaged 19.3 square inches per story.

The New York Times also had the most coverage of the region measured by length, with 2,225.8 square inches. The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and the Christian Science

Table 10--Average story length, by paper

paper	av. square inches	total number of stories
NYT	20.80	107
WP	20.03	83
CSM	27.68	46
LAT	19.36	78

Monitor all had significantly less (see table 11). While all four papers showed immense increases in coverage from 1975 to 1982, over four years the coverage levels for the the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor were more consistent than those of the others. Though all show markedly increased levels of coverage for the region over the period of the study, for the Times that increase is 244 percent and for the Monitor 214 percent. The Post showed an increase of 435 percent, and the Los Angeles Times, an increase of 342 percent.

Coverage was also broken down for review of human rights involvement by country, looking at the overall coverage of the six most frequently covered countries. It is particularly important to note the differences between coverage of Argentina and El Salvador, which topped the list of countries both in terms of the volume of coverage given them, but also because they are the countries which received the most human rights coverage (see table 12).[3] And, with only the exception of Brazil, the bulk of the coverage each country originated from its capital. It is also notable that, with the exception of Nicaragua, most of the coverage in Central

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[3]Individual datelines were noted only where they appeared, in other words no other dateline appeared in Chile so none was mentioned. The number of stories about a topic country for a country and the number of datelined stories from that country do not always add up because stories on human rights violations did appear with datelines from the United States and Europe.

Table 11--Human rights involvement by paper. Total Square inches, by human rights involvement, by year

Year	75	77	78	82	Total
NYT					
HR1	32.6	89.8	144.2	76.6	
HR2	77.0	8.4	4.5	150.4	
HR3	0.0	70.1	0.0	148.2	
HR4	297.7	134.4	369.9	622.0	
Total	407.3	302.7	518.6	997.2	2,225.8
WP					
HR1	0.0	122.1	3.4	165.4	
HR2	81.0	16.2	4.7	227.5	
HR3	0.0	70.1	43.9	0.0	
HR4	144.5	138.2	126.1	589.8	
Total	225.5	276.5	178.1	982.7	1,662.8
CSM					
HR1	30.0	36.4	55.7	157.8	
HR2	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.4	
HR3	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.4	
HR4	184.3	254.6	252.9	240.9	
Total	214.3	291.0	308.6	459.5	1,273.4
LAT					
HR1	0.0	27.0	4.4	203.7	
HR2	3.5	18.1	0.0	184.3	
HR3	0.0	16.5	0.0	114.6	
HR4	246.1	104.7	236.2	353.1	
Total	249.6	166.3	240.6	855.7	1,512.2
Combined papers					
HR1	62.6	275.3	207.7	603.5	
HR2	161.5	42.7	9.2	577.6	
HR3	0.0	86.6	43.9	308.2	
HR4	872.6	631.9	985.1	1805.8	
Total	1096.7	1036.0	1245.9	3295.1	6,674.2

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 12--Country coverage breakdowns

	Topic country frequency	Dateline frequency	HR no.	HR sq.in.	Other no.	Other sq.in.
Argentina	62		19	448.6	43	1038.0
Buenos Aires		54	17	414.4	37	880.4
Other		6	1	33.0	5	110.4
El Salvador	49		21	635.5	28	477.8
San Salvador		32	12	284.4	20	367.5
Other		7	4	188.6	3	93.6
Guatemala	30		18	374.5	12	152.5
Guatemala City		17	9	135.9	8	109.0
Other		4	4	120.2	0	0.0
Nicaragua	27		6	186.8	21	342.5
Managua		14	1	40.1	13	205.5
Other		1	0	0.0	1	72.5
Chile	21		11	214.0	10	227.1
Santiago		9	3	113.5	6	138.3
Brazil	20		8	230.0	12	397.6
Brasilia		2	1	280.0	1	3.0
Rio de Janeiro		12	6	180.3	6	218.7
Other		4	4	0.0	4	172.2

HR was a story on a human rights topic, with or without human rights mention, or on a non-human rights topic with human rights mention. Other was defined as a story on a non-human rights topic without a human rights mention.

America involved human rights in some form, while most of the coverage of the South American countries did not.

Coverage given each country was further broken down by human rights involvement over the four years of the study. The results show obvious differences in the coverage given Central and South American countries (see tables 13-19). For all intents and purposes, Guatemala and El Salvador were uncovered for the first three years of the study, that in spite of the fact that El Salvador ranks second in terms of the number of stories devoted to it and comes in first in the number of square inches of coverage which in some way involved human rights (see tables 12, 17 and 19). Chile and Argentina received the most consistent human rights coverage across the period of the study.

Table 13--Argentine coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1			28.2	3	26.4	1	208.9	5
HR2	7.0	1	35.4	5				
HR3			12.3	1			130.4	3
HR4	439.0	14	51.9	7	57.9	3	489.2	19
total	446.0	15	127.8	16	84.3	4	828.5	27

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 14--Bolivian coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1								
HR2	53.0	2						
HR3			27.5	1				
HR4	14.6	3	11.3	2	19.7	4	225.5	7
total	67.6	5	38.8	3	19.7	4	225.5	7

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 15--Brazilian coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1	32.6	1	27.0	1	1.7	1		
HR2	58.0	2						
HR3			46.8	2	43.9	1		
HR4	111.7	4	111.2	3	78.7	3	96.0	2
total	202.3	7	185.0	6	124.3	5	96.0	2

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 16--Chilean coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1	30.0	1	124.1	5	4.4	1	44.7	1
HR2	3.5	1	7.3	2				
HR3								
HR4	133.8	5	88.8	4	4.5	1		
total	167.3	7	220.2	11	8.9	2	44.7	1

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 17--Guatemalan coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in	no.
HR1							82.6	5
HR2			4.7	1			202.6	10
HR3							84.6	2
HR4			3.2	1	24.0	1	125.3	10
total			7.9	2	24.0	1	495.1	27

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 18--Salvadoran coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1			1.5	1			187.3	7
HR2					4.5	1	339.0	9
HR3							93.2	3
HR4	4.1	1	10.2	3	6.1	3	457.4	23
total	4.1	1	11.7	4	10.6	4	1,076.9	42

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Table 19--Nicaraguan coverage, by year. Coverage in square inches/number of stories

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1			66.8	4			80.0	1
HR2	40.0	1						
HR3								
HR4	3.5	1	.9	1	161.8	11	176.3	8
	43.5	2	67.7	5	161.8	11	256.3	9

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Coverage was also analyzed by its origin to determine whether the origin--staff correspondents or wire service--affected the nature of human rights involvement in the coverage across the four years of the study (see table 20). Because much of the foreign coverage came in the form of short briefs with no clear origin, however, the picture presented by the figures may not be complete. It can be discerned, however, that in general the staff stories ran considerably longer than the wire material and that in the coverage of human rights topics with mention of human rights there were a markedly larger number of pieces by correspondents than there were wire stories.

Table 20--Coverage broken down by staff/wire origin, by square inches and the number of stories per human rights category.

human rights involvement	year							
	75		77		78		82	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1 staff	62.2	2	106.8	4	173.5	4	490.9	12
wire	0	0	36.7	3	26.4	1	56.5	5
HR2 staff	119.0	3	0	0	0		479.8	12
wire	9.0	2	21.8	2	4.5	1	94.8	8
HR3 staff	0	0	57.8	2	0	0	157.6	3
wire	0	0	16.5	1	26.4	1	21.2	1
HR4 staff	649.1	19	376.5	9	749.6	26	1,362.8	42
wire	147.2	9	71	14	152.6	17	233.4	2

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

Breaking the overall figures down using all five categories of story origin, it becomes much clearer that the bulk of all coverage came from the staff correspondents, 4,786 square inches to 891.6 from wire sources and 749.5 from special correspondents (see table 21). Human rights coverage particularly came from the papers' staff. The number of staff stories on human rights topics which mentioned human rights was equal to the number of stories in the same category from all four other sources. The same is not true of any of the other categories and it is important to note that on average, staff-originated stories were also markedly longer than stories from any of the other sources. The longest mean story length, 43 square inches, was found in the staff coverage of non-human rights topics which mentioned human rights. The longest mean length for special correspondent stories and wire stories were also found in that human rights category. The most staff coverage, 3,138 square inches, was given to non-human rights topics with no human rights mention, but that was followed by staff coverage of human rights topics with human rights mention at 833.8 square inches. The length of the human rights coverage even superseded wire-originated copy on non-human rights topics, 604.2 square inches. That, in spite of the fact that there were 68 of the latter to 22 of former. Looking only at those categories, the difference would be between a mean story length of 37.9 square inches for the staff written human rights stories and 8.8 inches for the wire stories on non-human rights stories.

Table 21--Combined totals for coverage, broken down by story origin and human rights involvement. Square inches/story number (mean story length)

human rights involvement	story origin									
	staff		special		wire		combined		unident.	
	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.	sq.in.	no.
HR1	833.8	22	167.3	7	119.6	9	16.6	5	11.8	1
	(38)		(24)		(13)		(3)		(12)	
HR2	598.8	15	38.4	2	130.1	13	23.7	7	0	
	(40)		(19)		(10)		(3)		0	
HR3	215.4	5	185.6	6	37.7	2	0		0	
	(43)		(31)		(19)		0		0	
HR4	3,138	96	358.2	14	604.2	68	195	42	0	
	(33)		(26)		(9)		(5)		0	
Totals										
	4,786	138	749.5	29	891.6	92	235.5	54	11.8	1
mean	(35)		(26)		(10)		(4)		(12)	

Involvement category totals

	sq.in.	number	mean length
HR1	1.149.1	44	26.1
HR2	791.0	37	21.4
HR3	438.7	13	20.8
HR4	4,395.4	220	19.5

HR1=human rights topic with human rights mention
HR2=human rights topic without a human rights mention
HR3=non-human rights topic with human rights mention
HR4=non-human rights topic without a human rights mention

The content analysis, then, showed a 170 percent increase in overall coverage of Central and South America in the four papers between 1975 and 1977. Between 1977 and 1978 coverage held steady, and between 1978 and 1982 there was an additional coverage increase of 209 percent. Coverage of

human rights topics which included a human rights mention also increased across the years of the study, though not as evenly. That coverage went from 4 percent of total coverage in 1975 to 25 percent in 1977, dropping back to 11 percent in 1978 and increasing again to 14 percent of the total in 1982 (see table 3). During the middle years of the study there was less coverage of human rights topics which omitted a mention of human rights. The length of coverage of the different human rights categories also differed (see tables 9, 10 and 11). The longest stories tended to be those which were not directly about human rights but mentioned them, followed by stories on human rights topics. The greatest number of stories run in any year were those which had no human rights topic or mention, but those were also the shortest stories.

The two countries which had the most written about them over the period of the study were Argentina and El Salvador. At the same time, El Salvador and Argentina, in that order, topped the list of topic countries for human rights stories (see table 12). With the exception of Nicaragua, coverage of Central American countries tended to be concentrated at the end of the study, while coverage of South American countries tended to be distributed more evenly across the time (see tables 13-19).

There are distinct differences in the length of stories depending, both on their origin and their human rights involvement. The longest stories in all categories were those written by staff correspondents, while wire stories and

combined staff and wire briefs were the shortest. Staff correspondents were responsible for most of the human rights coverage, both in terms of story number and story length.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research was to determine what if any effect the Carter human rights policy had on American newspaper coverage of Central and South America. Triggered by DeYoung's recollections of its effects on her own career, the study sought an explanation of the connection between an American presidential foreign policy initiative and changes in prestige press coverage of a region the policy affected.

This study was approached with three hypotheses about coverage in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor and the Los Angeles Times:

1. The number of newspapers stories devoted to coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy

2. The space devoted to newspaper coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy

3. The depth of newspaper coverage of the region increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy.

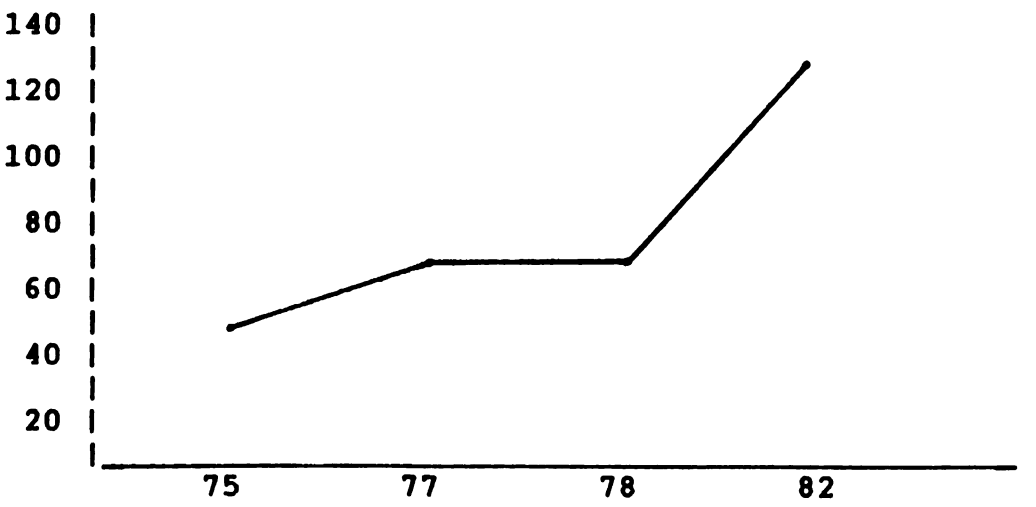
As could be expected, the study results support parts of the hypotheses, suggested connections not proposed by the hypotheses, and raised questions the hypotheses had not addressed. The study findings will be reviewed first as they

address the stated hypotheses, and then in terms of the other coverage issues that need to be addressed.

1. The number of newspapers stories devoted to coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter Human Rights policy.

There is no question that the number of stories run about the region increased over the period of the study, rising sharply between the first and second year of the study and even more dramatically between the third and fourth years (see figure 1). Between 1975 and 1977 the number of stories in the sample increased 135 percent, from 48 stories to 65. From 1977 to 1978, the number of stories the newspapers ran about the region remained level, while between 1978 and 1982, the number of stories in the sample increased from 65 to 136, an increase of 207 percent.

Figure 1--Coverage levels by story number. Combined papers



At the same time that the number of stories overall increased, the number of stories about human rights topics with human rights mentions were also increasing. Those stories increased from two in 1975 to 16 in 1977, an increased from 4 percent of coverage in 1975 and 24 percent in 1977. The number of stories on human rights topics with no human rights mention held level at 7 between 1975 and 1977, but their percentage of the whole dropped from 15 percent to 11. At the same time the number of stories on non-human rights topics which addressed human rights issues increased from none in 1975 to 4 in 1977, when they represented 6 percent of the total. The number of non-human rights stories with no human rights mention dropped from 39 in 1975 to 38 in 1977, a decrease from 81 percent of all stories the first year to 59 percent of the total in 1977.

While the number of stories overall held level between 1977 and 1978, the number of stories on human rights topics with human rights mentions decreased from 16 to 7, or from 24 percent of the year's stories to 10 percent. The number of human rights stories with no human rights mention decreased from 7 to 2, or from 11 percent of the whole for the year to 3 percent. The number of non-human rights stories with a human rights mention dropped from 4 to 1, or 6 percent of the whole to 2 percent. At the same time, the number of non-human rights stories with no human right mentions increased from 38 in 1977 to 55 in 1978, a jump from 59 percent of the total to 85 percent.

As the number of stories from the region increased again between 1978 and 1982, human rights coverage also increased. The number of stories on human rights topics reach a peak at 19, though that was nonetheless only 14 percent of the total and thus less than the 24 percent of total for 1977. The number of human rights stories with no human rights mention increased to 21, or 15 percent of the whole on par with its 1975 position. The number of non-human rights topics with human rights mentions, 8 stories, represented 6 percent of the total for the year, equal to 1977. And while the number of non-human rights stories with no mention of human rights increased to 88, that represented only 65 percent of all the stories run that year.

These findings are consistent with the hypothesis. Over the four years of the study the number of stories the newspapers ran about Central and South America increased. And, as coverage increased, the amount of coverage of human rights issues also increased. Human rights coverage peaked in 1977, the first year of the Carter presidency. Even the coverage drop between 1977 and 1978 can, which at first glance appears inconsistent with the hypothesis is not, and will, be explained later in this chapter.

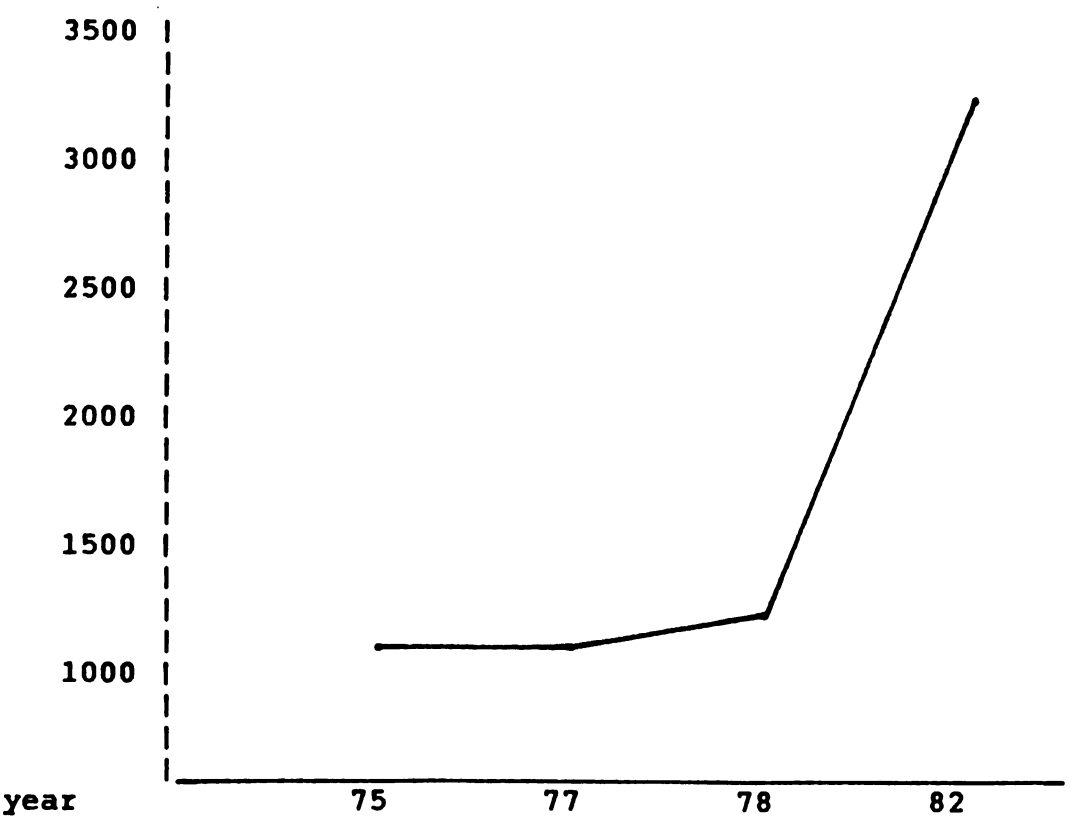
2. The space devoted to newspaper coverage of Central and South America increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy.

Though the number of stories increased, between 1975 and 1977, the overall length of coverage actually dropped, from

1,096.7 square inches to 1,036.5. By 1978, the amount of coverage had increased to 1,245.9 Between 1978 and 1982, the length of coverage jumped by just over 2,000 square inches to 3,295.1 (see figure 2).

Though overall coverage decreased between 1975 and 1977, the amount of coverage given over to human rights which mentioned human rights directly increased from 5 to 27 percent. And though the amount of coverage given same topic in 1978 decreased to 17 percent, the length of coverage fell less radically to 207.7 square inches, more than three times

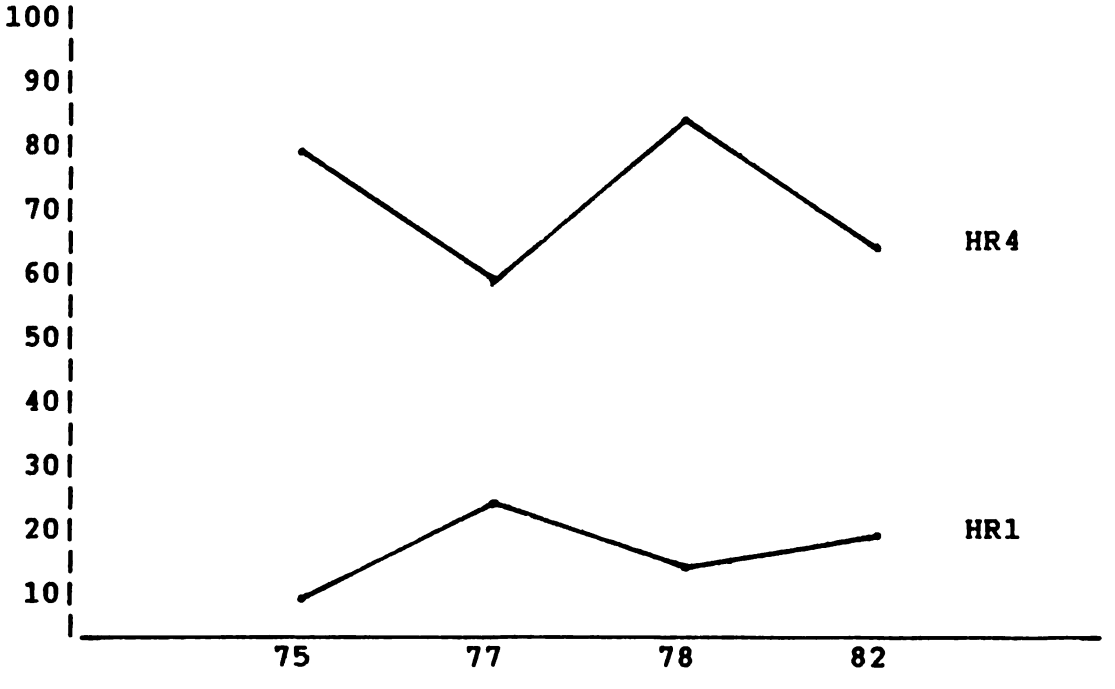
Figure 2--Coverage levels by length. Combined papers, square inches



the amount of coverage given the same category in 1975. While the coverage of human rights topics with human rights mentions increased slightly, from 17 percent of the whole in 1978 to 18 percent in 1982, it did not return to 1977 levels (see figure 3).

From 1978 to 1982, the number of stories about human rights topics which did not mention human rights increased to 18 percent of overall coverage, up substantially from 4 percent in 1977 and 1 percent in 1978, and higher even than the 15 percent found in 1975. Coverage of non-human rights

Figure 3--The extremes of human rights involvement in coverage. Percentage of annual total square inches.



HR1=human rights topics with mention of human rights
HR4=non-human rights topics without mention of human rights

topics which mentioned human rights was highest in 1982, at 9 percent of overall coverage.

The study findings on the length of coverage support the hypothesis that the human rights policy increased the amount of space devoted to the newspapers' coverage of Central and South America. As human rights coverage increased, overall coverage increased. When it declined, overall coverage declined (see figure 3). Again though the 1978 findings might appear inconsistent at first glance, they follow a pattern in the implementation of the policy, which will be dealt with later.

3. The depth of newspaper coverage of the region increased as a result of the Carter human rights policy.

If coverage of the region increased over the period of the study, which it did, and part of that increase is accounted for by a marked increase in human rights reporting, which it was, then the depth of reporting increased. For, while the most common story in the study was the 4 square inch brief and the average story length was about 20 square inches, the staff-generated human rights story averaged 38 square inches.

An important finding to point to increased depth of reporting is the coverage of non-human rights topics that included mention of human rights. Averaging longer stories even then the human rights topics with human rights mention, this coverage offers the human rights mention as context for other issues. It is important to note that this category of

stories was not present in the 1975 coverage and was at its highest percentage of overall coverage in 1977 and 1982, the two years when coverage of human rights topics peaked. There are also distinct differences in the average length of stories about non-human rights topics that did not mention human rights and those that did. Staff-generated stories about the former averaged 33 square inches and about the latter averaged 43 square inches. Overall, stories about non-human rights topics without a human rights mention averaged 19.5 square inches, while those with a mention averaged 33.7 square inches.

The study findings offer strong support for a connection between the length of a story and the level of human rights involvement. If length is accepted as a measure of depth, then the findings support for the hypothesis that the depth of coverage of the region increased as a result of the human rights policy.

All three hypotheses address issues which are better understood in context of the issues involved. To begin to grasp some of the explanations behind coverage changes, it is necessary to review them in light of the history of the human rights policy.

Coverage changes coincided with Jimmy Carter's election and his implementation of the human rights policy. Attention to human rights concerns did not begin with the Carter administration, and rights activists on Capitol Hill and elsewhere were already concerned about violations,

particularly in Chile and Argentina. For the first time, however, human rights had been placed high on the American foreign policy agenda. South American countries were on the list of the first countries denied aid because of their rights records.

To establish a causal link between the presidential human rights initiative and the coverage changes, it is necessary to establish that the policy change preceded the changes in coverage, that there is a connection between the two, and, that no other factor could be responsible for the change. The military regimes responsible for the most systematic and far reaching human rights violations in Central and South America were in place before Carter assumed the presidency, as were the economic and social strife which gave rise to them and fed the cycle of human rights violations.

According to Amnesty International, death squads and paramilitary right-wing gangs emerged in Argentina in 1973. Directing their efforts against students, lawyers, journalists and trade unionists, they were responsible for a large proportion of the approximately 1,500 assassinations in Argentina in the 18 months following Juan Peron's death in 1974.[1] Between the 1976 coup which overthrew Peron's wife and the end of 1976, Amnesty International reported that at least

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[1]Amnesty International, Political Killings by Governments, (London: Amnesty International Reports, 1983), p. 51.

6,000 people "disappeared."[2] In 1975, and Amnesty report on torture noted "a marked difference between traditional brutality and the systematic torture which has spread to many Latin American countries within the past decade." Costa Rica was the only country in Latin America from which the organization could report that it had received "no torture allegations of any kind."[3] Thus human rights violations in the region definitely predate the change of administrations, and the Nixon-Ford administration did not consider human rights in its foreign policy dealings.

When Carter administration attention to human rights violations in the Soviet Union backfired and began to interfere with superpower relations, the policy's focus shifted to countries in Central and South America. With that shift in focus came the first U.S. government reporting of rights violations in countries receiving American aid. Diplomats were put on notice that human rights were an important policy concern. Serious human rights violations had been occurring in the countries of Central and South America for years, but where correspondents had earlier been struggling to find reliable sources willing to provide the material they needed for stories, they now had diplomatic and bureaucratic sources both in Washington and abroad. The new attention to human rights issues put Amnesty International and other rights monitoring groups on the map

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[2]Ibid., p. 55.

[3]Amnesty International, Report on Torture (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), p. 191.

as reliable sources of information. The presidential initiative both attracted attention to the topic and provided the regular and reliable sources correspondents needed to cover the issue.

Again in 1978, coverage patterns correspond to what had been happening on the policy front. Human rights were still a major concern of the Carter administration, but after the first flush of aid cutbacks the administration encountered problems in pushing its stance. Once the strings attached to aid had pulled, there was little concrete action the administration could take. Latin American governments chose to withdraw aid requests rather than have them rejected. And once aid had been cut, the administration lost its pull with the offenders gradually shifted its policy from one of intervention to one of disassociation.

Coverage increased in 1982 are also explainable in terms of the climate changes in Washington. When Carter left office, the Reagan administration made no secret of the fact that it would not put human rights before other foreign policy concerns. Instead, Reagan announced he would draw the line on communism, particularly in Central America. And early focus of that Reagan policy initiative was El Salvador. While coverage of El Salvador and Guatemala jumped noticeably, human rights coverage did not cease.

The Carter administration had established human rights as a serious foreign policy concern in Washington, particularly in regard to relations with the countries in

South and Central America. That concern took many shapes, but one of its most effective was the creation of a bureaucratic process within the State Department, which reviewed all aid proposals. Additionally, the four years of the Carter administration gave rights activists a strong foothold on Capitol Hill. Opponents of Reagan's policy found rights violations a powerful argument against support for oppressive regimes, thus keeping the issue alive on the foreign policy front. In addition, editors and correspondents had established patterns of reportage which included regular reference to monitoring groups reports on rights violations.

By 1982, human rights were still a concern for correspondents, but as the Latin American governments learned to disarm the diplomats they likewise learned to counter correspondents. Where Chile had once released victims who could talk to the press, other regimes learned to leave no live victims. U.S. government and rights monitoring groups were still reliable sources, but the governments learned to bar entry to rights observers and took advantage of any opportunity to discredit correspondents by disproving their work where possible. It makes sense then, that while coverage of the region held level, less of it would have focussed on human rights than previously.

Other studies support the research findings that indicate that changes in coverage occurred after Carter took office at the beginning of 1977. The changes in coverage, which include significant increases in human rights coverage,

followed the Carter inauguration. Weakening in the Carter initiative may be mirrored in a reduction in human rights coverage in 1978. While the continued coverage of human rights issues after Carter, argues in favor of the power of a policy initiative to establish an issue on the press's agenda. Similarly, the noticeable increases in coverage of El Salvador and Guatemala in the last year of the study, which coincide with the Reagan initiative in the area, support the argument that a presidential foreign policy changes can shift coverage patterns.

Civil and political strife is not new to the region, and plenty of events can be found in countries throughout the region which were not enough to attract steady and increasing media attention prior to the implementation of the Carter policy. At the same time, the events which focussed U.S. security concerns in the region postdate the first changes in coverage levels. The same limited security concerns that made the region a fitting testing ground for the Carter policy--when it was found that strained relations with the Soviets preempted action in that direction--support the argument that there were no other overriding involvements that could account for the coverage changes. Those security perceptions shifted with the overthrow of the Somoza regime in 1979, but that came after the first three years included in this study. Events in Nicaragua did not pickup until part way through 1978, when the coverage increases had temporarily leveled off. Other research which found that a shift in television

coverage occurred between 1977 and 1978, noted a large increase in coverage of war-terrorism stories, likely the category in which human rights violations would fall.[4]

There is also support for the suggestion that if the Carter human rights policy was instrumental in bringing about the changes in coverage of Central and South America, then by definition it also increased the depth of reporting from the region. Measuring the depth of reporting by the square inches of average coverage makes sense if one understands that few facts and less context can be provided in the short news brief that was the most common form the foreign reporting from the region took. The longer the story, the more likely it is to offer the readers both facts and, one would hope, the context in which to understand them.

The research was undertaken with several assumptions, which, while not couched in the form of hypotheses, nonetheless need to be addressed. It was assumed from the start that the New York Times and Washington Post would out-cover the other papers. While that is the order in which the papers ranked in order of the amount of space given to the region, Times gave the region 2,225.8 square inches over the four years, much higher than the Post's 1,662.8. Not surprising, perhaps when it is considered that four Times staff bylines appeared regularly from the region in the

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[4]Emile G. McAnany, "Television and Crisis: Ten Years of Network News Coverage of Central America, 1972-1981," Media, Culture and Society 5 (1983) p. 201-203.

sample papers from 1975 and 1977, while eight each appeared in 1978 and 1982. Two names appeared in the sample issues of the Post for 1975, four in 1977, one in 1978 and seven in 1982. The Los Angeles Times was not far behind the Post with, 1,512.2 square inches and two staff bylines in the samples for 1975 and 1978, one for 1977 and seven for 1982. The Christian Science Monitor had 1,273.4 square inches, one regular byline for each of 1975, 1977 and 1978 and three for 1982.

While all four papers showed marked increases in the volume of coverage between 1978 and 1982, the Times and the Monitor were more regular in their coverage across the period of the study showed percentages increases for the last year that were substantially lower than those of the Post and Los Angeles Times. It is important to note, however, that while the Monitor may have been more consistent in its coverage than other of the papers in all but the final year, that meant coverage in only two of the four human rights involvement categories--human rights topics with mention of human rights and non-human rights topics with no mention. Of the four newspapers, the sample coverage found in the Post and the Los Angeles Times seem the most sensitive to policy changes, and the New York Times the least. It is also possible, that with more staff available to cover the region, the Times simply had the resources to do a better job and did.

That most of the correspondents in the region were based in Buenos Aires becomes clear in the amount of coverage devoted to the country. Argentina was covered regularly throughout the four years of the study, while Brazil and Chile were covered more in the first three years of the study than they were in the fourth. El Salvador and Guatemala, on the other hand, got little attention in the first years of the study but plenty at the end in 1982. While coverage of Bolivia and Nicaragua was less skewed. Obviously, as things heated up in Central America in the early 1980s attention and newsgathering resources shifted there, though the South American correspondents in Argentina continued to cover the issue there. Coverage of individual countries is hard to generalize from a two-week sample to a year, except in cases like Argentina and El Salvador where the patterns of coverage are strikingly evident. It may be worth noting, however, that the list of the six nations with the most coverage is evenly split between Central and South America.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore a connection between the Carter human rights policy and newspaper coverage of Central and South America. Based on the coverage patterns found in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Los Angeles Times, it would appear that such a connection does exist. Human rights and overall coverage increases in both by volume and number support the thesis that the presidential initiative, implemented in the first year of the Carter presidency, had a significant impact on coverage of the region. Observations of American correspondents based in both Central and South America also support the premise that the Carter policy had an impact on their efforts there.

The drop in coverage from 1977 to 1978 identified by the content analysis had not been anticipated; and the study was not designed to account for the spectacular increase in coverage between the last two years of the study. Nonetheless, possible explanations have been found for both phenomena within the theoretical and practical frameworks of the study.

Both the premise of the research and the explanation of the results find a basis in existing research and theory. The appeal of human rights as topic can be explained according to

Shoemaker's theories of deviance as an factor of newsworthiness.[1] According to her model, stories of human rights violations would be newsworthy for American media because their very subjects are outside most American's experiences and appeals to basic human curiosity about things which are uncommon, and which violate societal norms. The premises about the reasons for the changes in coverage also fit with the Shoemaker framework, since one of the controlling variables in the deviance theory is the level of U.S. interest and involvement in an area.

The interdependence of the correspondents and bureaucrats involved in the development of the policy and its ramifications, suggests that thirty years later Cohen's observations about the interactions of the press and policy makers are still relevant. In that light, the study would be bolstered by surveying editors and correspondents to identify how newsgathering resources--the budgets for the regional bureaus, the number of bureaus, the number of correspondents and the foreign news budgets--changed as coverage changed.

The study's findings, especially those highlighting the contrast in the number of correspondents whose names appeared on copy from the different years, reinforce the importance of an exploration of the levels of newsgathering resources committed to Central and South American coverage.

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[1]Pamela J. Shoemaker, et al. "Testing a Theoretical Model of Newsworthiness: Coverage of International Events in the U.S. Media," a paper presented to the International Communication Association, Montreal, 1987.

An integral part of continuing studies of the subject, however, would be more extensive content analysis that looked at successive years throughout the policy. Research supports the fact that coverage increased significantly in the late 1970s and then again in the early 1980s, but a more precise plotting of the patterns of change is basic to addressing the forces at work. An analysis looking at papers for six months period through the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s would provide the detailed information necessary to address the precise dynamics of the changes which occurred.

In that context, it would also be important to look the differences in coverage of Central and South America over time, to find out if increasing coverage of El Salvador and Nicaragua meant a diminution in coverage of countries like Brazil and Chile.

It would also add to the research if it were expanded to include other newspapers, and perhaps even other media. Inclusion of the Miami Herald would add a distinctly different dimension to the study, an perhaps even act as a control variable against which the other papers could be measured. It would also be worth looking at other large regional papers beside the Los Angeles Times, particularly papers like the Boston Globe and the Baltimore Sun

The study findings suggest other research, especially a comparison between the nature of the Carter and Reagan policies and their coverage. The especially striking coverage increases found between 1978 and 1982 suggest that an early

Reagan initiative to draw the line against communism in Central America exerted its own influence on media coverage of that area. The Carter and Reagan policies differed substantially in the extent to which they committed American resources to the attainment of their ends--Carter denied aid while Reagan promised it in ever-growing sums.

APPENDIX 1--CODING SHEET

Paper_____Date_____Page_____jump_____

Story #_____Square inches_____Prominence_____
Topic
country_____Dateline_____w/pix or map_____

1. story type
   1. news
   2. analysis
   3. other

2. byline
   1. staff_____
   2. special to_____
   3. wire_____
   4. combined
   5. unidentified

3. geographic focus
   1. domestic
   2. international

4. type of int'l interation
   1. 1st world/3rd world
   2. 3rd world/3rd world
   3. 2nd world/3rd world

5. human rights topic
   1. yes
   2. no

6. human rights mention
   1. yes
   2.no

7. violence
   1. yes
   2. no

8. topic
   1. diplomatic
   2. political
   3. civil war
   4. religion
   5. crime, political
   6. crime, other
   7. economic(non-aid)
   8. aid
   9. military
   10. other_____

9. source #
   1. one
   2. two
   3. more
   4. not clear
   5. none

10.head_____

_____

APPENDIX 2

CODING DEFINITIONS

The unit of analysis is the story. Stories will be sought in newspapers chosen from a stratified random sample.

A story will be included in the study if it appears in those sections where international news is found regularly, this would include the front page and international sections and exclude sports, business and entertainment. Everything under one headline will be considered part of that story, except were that story is broken by a subheading and a change of topic, in which case the copy following the subhead will be considered a separate story.

Paper:
1. New York Times
2. Washington Post
3. Christian Science Monitor
4. Los Angeles Times
5. Miami Herald

Story #: Each story will be assigned a number. The numbers will be determined by the sequence in which the stories from each newspaper are viewed. For instance, the first story found in the New York Times would be #1-1 and the first story found in the Miami Herald would be #5-1. Stories will be assigned numbers in the sequence in which they are found.

Square inches: copy length times column width. This measurement form is chosen because it can be applied to all of the papers involved, overcoming differences in column widths across papers.

Prominence: An index number arrived in the following manner:

headline of 2 or more columns.....1 pt.
first line of story appears above the fold.....1 pt.
takes up 3/4ths of a column, including pix.....1 pt.
runs with related picture and or map.....1 pt.
appears on page 1 or international front.....1 pt.

Topic country: Central and South American countries will be listed in alphabetical order and assigned identification numbers on that basis.

Datelines: Where one appears, the name of the city where the story originated.

The capital cities of the applicable countries in Central and South America are listed below in alphabetical order and as they appear other cities will be added to the end of the list and assigned individual numbers.

Country and dateline are recorded separately because stories do not always originate in topic countries, especially if they are being written from the country in which the newspaper has a bureau.

For purposes of future analysis, stories carrying a Washington dateline which are predominantly about countries in Central and South America will also be recorded and content analyzed.

Country	Dateline
Central America	
1. Belize	1-1. Belmopan 1-2. Other_____
2. Costa Rica	2-1. San Jose 2-2. Other_____
3. El Salvador	3-1. San Salvador 3-2. Other_____
4. Guatemala	4-1. Guatemala City 4-2. Other_____
5. Honduras	5-1. Tegucigalpa 5-2. Other_____
6. Nicaragua	6-1. Managua 6-2. Other_____
7. Panama	7-1. Panama City 7-2. Other_____
South America	
8. Argentina	8-1. Buenos Aires 8-2. Other_____
9. Bolivia	9-1. La Paz 9-2. Other_____
10. Brazil	10-1. Brasilia 10-2. Rio de Janeiro 10-3. Other_____
11. Chile	11-1. Santiago 11-2. Other_____

12. Colombia	12-1. Bogota 12-2. Other_____
13. Ecuador	13-1. Quito 13-2. Other_____
14. French Guiana	14-1. Cayene 14-2. Other_____
15. Guyana	15-1. Georgetown 15-2. Other_____
16. Paraguay	16-1. Asuncion 16-2. Other_____
17. Peru	17-1. Lima 17-2. Other_____
18. Surinam	18-1. Paramaribo 18-2. Other_____
19. Uruguay	19-1. Montevideo 19-2. Other_____
20. Venezuela	20-1. Caracas 20-2. Other_____
North America	
21. Mexico	21-1. Mexico City 21-2. Other_____
22. United States	22-1. New York 22-2. Washington
23. Other--------	23-1. Other_____

w/pix or map:
1. pix
2. map
3. pix and map
4. no illustration

1. Story type:

1. news--a story which covers an event or issue and satisfies at least two of the following distinct news criteria: timeliness, proximity, prominence, rarity and conflict.

2. analysis--goes beyond reporting facts to provide additional insight or depth. May include opinion or conjecture, general labelled as such or found in section of a paper labelled in such a way to indicate that the stories there may contain opinion. Will include exceptionally long stories--of a full page or more in papers where that is rare--or stories that run in a series.

3. other--anything else.

2. Byline: the name of the staff writer and/or wire service running at the head of the story.

1. staff: may or may not include a writer's name, where it does the name will be noted in the space provided.

2. special to: for use for papers or correspondents where special to indicates other than staff writer

3. wire:
   1. AP
   2. UPI
   3. Reuters
   4. Other____name should be noted_____
   5. combined wires

   Where wire reports are mentioned within the body of the copy they will not reflected in this category unless listed at the head of the story as well.

4. combined: stories carrying credit line which indicates that they combine staff and wire stories.

5. unidentified: source of story not clear

3. Geographic focus: the general topic of the story.

1. domestic: only about events or issues within the topic country may mention other countries as long as the mention is not about a relationship between the two. For instance, if it is a story about hunger or social problems in one country and mentions refugees from another country it would be considered domestic unless the relationship of the two countries negotiations entered into the story.

2. international: the story involves a cross-border relationship between two or more countries.

4. International interaction:

1. 1st world/3rd world: involves an interaction between developed nations, such as those of North America and Western Europe, and the LDCs, or less developed nations.

2. 3rd world/3rd world: interaction between two or more LDCs.

3. 2nd world/3rd world: interaction between Soviet Bloc country and LDC.

5. Human rights topic:

1. topic of story falls into list of topics that will be developed according to criteria established and adopted by US government for the purposes of implementation of the human rights doctrine. Criteria will be provided for coder reference. They would include topics such as unreasonable detention, torture, death or denial of social or political opportunity on the basis of ethnic, economic or social status or geographic location.

2. no mention of such a topic.

6. Human rights mentioned:

1. yes: per se mention of human rights, rights violations

2. no: no such mention

7. Violence:

1. yes: predominant topic involves man-made physical violence including, but not limited to, military attacks, building seizures, gun battles, murders, beatings, and torture.

2. no: no such mention.

8. Topic: The predominant topic will be that topic of the story which is the focus of the headline and first six inches of the story. If more than one topic appears in the first six inches, preference will go to the topic which dominates the lead and provides the news hook for the others. This decision is made in order to provide a manageable framework for complicated stories. The first six inches of the story were chosen because those are often the only part of the story a reader will read, and those readers who proceed do so generally based on what they find in the first four inches.

1. diplomatic--involved relations between two or more countries

2. political--domestic politics--may involve illegal or unrecognized political opposition parties, if those parties do not seek government overthrow, but rather

recognition within the existing system.

3. civil war--domestic politics--involves attempts to overthrow the existing governmental system, need not be formally recognized but must pose serious threat to that system, may involve one party's use of violent force against an opposing force. Does not include political crime

4. religion-- includes domestic and international church issues, except where the international issues involve a relationship between a large church organization and the state, which would be diplomatic.

5. crime, political--crime with political motivation, may or may not be carried out by government, can include terrorist activities with a declared political motivation, where those activities are isolated incidents and not part of a larger pattern of violence.

6. crime, other--all non-political crime, includes terrorist activities with no declared political motivation.

7. economic--all economic topics, except those which involve foreign aid

8. aid-- economic assistance of all types, except military, given by to a country by another country or by an international organization or financial institution

9. military--includes military build ups, assistance, armaments, etc., where intended for defensive or offensive use against another country. does not include use of militia in domestic setting, which would fall instead under civil war or political crime, depending on the context.

10. other-- includes natural disaster, note should be made of story topic if clear.

Possible additional topics will be identified and defined when coding categories are pretested

9. Source #: A source is identified as a person or organization quoted as the origin of the information from which the story is developed. Individual or organization need not be named.

1. One: attribution of bulk of story to individual, does not rule out glancing references to other people as long as those people are not quoted or cited prominently.

2. Two: attribution of story information to two distinct sources of information, both distinctly cited.

3. More: attribution of story information to more than two sources of information, distinctly cited.

4. not clear: vague reference to source, source not clear

5. none, no attribution

Attribution to anonymous sources, whether singular or plural, count as one source, i.e. "labor leaders"

Coding will be conducted by a single coder, though pretesting may be conducted by that single coder and an outside coder in order to ensure category and definitional validity.

Random recoding of three stories from each paper will be done after the coding of analysis of the stories in the tenth of the 14 issues of the paper. In the case of the Christian Science Monitor, the recoding will be done after the coding of the stories in the seventh issue.

After the coding is complete and the results have been tabulated, empty categories will be dropped and those remaining will be reviewed for clustering.

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