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Advocacy: An Exercise in Measurement
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Human Rights Review

ISSN 1524-8879

Hum Rights Rev

DOI 10.1007/s12142-013-0266-2



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Foreign Policy and Human Rights Advocacy: An Exercise in Measurement and Explanation

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Abstract This article addresses three questions: How can we define and measure what constitutes a foreign policy in human rights? How is it possible to explain both the activism of a state and its ideological orientation in the international promotion of human rights? What is the empirical evidence found when we try to answer these questions in intermediate states? Research done on four cases (Argentina, Australia, Brazil and South Africa) suggests a correlation between domestic efforts in the promotion of human rights and international advocacy. It also shows that the greater the power of intermediate states, the greater their activism in human rights. Further, as development grows states show less support for economic, social and cultural rights. Last, the strategic relation with the USA shapes how states vote regarding human rights violators states.

Keywords Foreign policy · Human rights advocacy · Democracy · Development · Civil society · Power

Introduction

Over recent decades the idea that human rights should be internationally protected has taken hold and seems now a prime example of norm diffusion in the global international society. Scholars of International Relations (IR) have increasingly recognized the need to study in more detail the working logic of human rights in international organizations as well as in foreign policy circles. This is a crucial analytical move as the international dimension of human rights sits at the crux of international politics, international law, trade, and foreign aid.

The authors thank Christopher Kiessling, Florencia Montal, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, and three anonymous reviewers for comments on previous drafts of this article.

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International Relations research on human rights has mainly focused on compliance and enforcement. It has also explored diffusion processes of human rights norms and state delegation towards international/regional organizations. However, the development of theoretical arguments for why the promotion of human rights has become a foreign policy goal has lagged behind the empirical observation of its presence in governments around the world. This is even more so when trying to explain the various degrees of activism in the promotion of human rights through foreign policy.

This article examines the relationship between foreign policy and human rights advocacy. Building upon quantitative data on four intermediate states, it fleshes out the contours of a metric to assess human rights activism in foreign policy. It also puts forward preliminary explanations to understand both activism and ideological orientation. More specifically, it aims to answer three interrelated questions. First, how can we define and measure what constitutes a foreign policy in human rights? Second, how is it possible to explain both the activism of a state and its ideological orientation in the international promotion of human rights? Third, what is the empirical evidence found when we try to answer these questions in intermediate states?

The text is divided into four sections, followed by a conclusion. First section explains what it means to speak of a human rights foreign policy (hereinafter HRFP) and explores the relation between foreign policy and human rights in the International Relations discipline. Second section introduces two dependent variables to study HRFP, namely activism and orientation. It explains their meanings and proposes a metric to assess them. Third section presents three hypotheses to explain foreign policy activism in human rights and six hypotheses to explain foreign policy orientation. To test these hypotheses, we examine four intermediate states presenting variability both in activism and orientation between 2003 and 2010, namely Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa. Fourth section proceeds with data analysis. The article concludes by summarizing the findings and evaluating IR's contribution to the study of HRFP.

Foreign Policy and Human Rights

Thirty years ago, say Schmitz and Sikkink (2006, p. 529) “human rights were considered a peripheral and even inappropriate topic for foreign policy.” Today, however, states around the world have included human rights into their foreign policy agendas. Simply put, a HRFP has to do with the support and promotion of human rights by a state beyond its borders. As such, it is yet another issue area of a state foreign policy, such as trade, security or migration.¹

That a HRFP may conflict with other national interests is beyond dispute. States deal with national responsibilities (with citizens), international responsibilities (to other states) and humanitarian responsibilities (with humanity) in different, complex, and sometimes contradictory ways (Donnelly 2003, pp. 155–172). States continuously have to square norms with material interests, political alliances, and policy

¹ A HRFP can be done unilaterally, as when the USA demands higher levels of compliance with human rights to recipient states, or multilateral, such as a UN Council of Human Rights exhortation to a particular state to comply with certain rights. The means available to pursue a HRFP may also vary. At one extreme, a HRFP can be advanced through diplomacy and international law. At the other end, and under certain circumstances, human rights can be enforced through the use of military force.

preferences. Yes, a state may claim that the grammar of human rights constitutes the starting point of its foreign policy. Yet, this preference alone cannot be an effective guide on how it will behave, for instance, if its largest trading partner becomes the subject of complaints by international human rights bodies.

In this light, human rights have been long considered to be at odds with the moral dilemmas of foreign policy. Integrating human rights into foreign affairs brings to the surface the interplay of competing values, tradeoffs and consistency problems. Typically, politics involves concessions and therefore a human rights foreign policy may at times be compromised. Trade interests, historic ties, geopolitical location, or convergent ideology can all trump human rights principles.

Morgenthau (1979) depicted the relation between moral principles and foreign policy as being fundamentally crossed by relativism. First, moral codes are relative to time. History shows how ethics and morality are subject to an ever evolving sense of rights and wrongs. Second, moral values are relative to people and cultures. Moral truths can vary from one culture to the next and thus different communities may develop their own moral judgments. Third, as we observed above, moral principles in foreign policy are relative to other aspects of interstate relations which may be more crucial than human rights. When combined, Morgenthau concluded that “the principle of the defense of human rights cannot be consistently applied in foreign policy because it can and it must come in conflict with other interests that may be more important than the defense of human rights in a particular instance” (1979, p. 7).

Morgenthau suggested that this conflict of interests was more apparent in the case of great powers. He observed that the USA was “a great power with manifold interests throughout the world, of which human rights is only one and not the most important one” (1979, p. 6). As a great power, the USA “is incapable of consistently follow the path of the defense of human rights [through its foreign policy] without maneuvering itself into a Quixotic position” (p. 6). And yet great powers can still play a significant role in “restraining other countries from human rights violations and stimulating respect for human rights” when interests dictate so (Baehr and Castemans-Holleman 2004, p. 21). It follows, therefore, that power seems to be a double-edged sword when directed towards human rights principles, on the one hand allowing greater human rights activism yet on the other hand making moral choices much more difficult to discern.

If the stakes are high, what makes a state has a human rights foreign policy? This has been a challenging question in the last decade or so. International Relation theory has been exploring the shifting dynamics between human rights and foreign policy from different perspectives. The conclusions are still open to debate, with realists playing down the impact of norms and values in foreign policy making, on the one hand, and the liberal/constructivist synthesis emphasizing the importance of norms and values in how states define their status and identities.

The central realist expectation is that the fundamental purpose of the state's foreign policy is to protect its national interest. Building from this standpoint, Egeland (1984) analyzes state commitments to international human rights as a function of relative power. His work explores in particular the selective US involvement in the promotion human rights and contends that the multiple and conflictive interests of powerful states make difficult the possibility for behaving upon a logic of appropriateness. Apodaca (2005) continues this argument and suggests that US foreign policy in

human rights is a function of its relative position in the international system, and therefore human rights parlance is mainly a cloak to advance US national interests.

Yet there is more than this in the realist thinking on human rights. States violate human rights simply because they can. Realists reason that states violating human rights will not suffer significant costs for their behavior and, therefore, can freely abuse individuals and groups. Said otherwise, realists underplay the normative power of international human rights regimes and so compliance and enforcement will be mainly a function of domestic concerns and not of international incentives. If coercion is too low and double standards are too high then violator states will have no difficulty in signing human rights treaties. Empirical evidence seems to confirm some of these realist predictions. As Hafner-Burton (2012, p. 280) clearly states, “there is a troubling and recurrent finding that participation in some treaties correlates with worse human rights behavior.”

However, the insights realism has to offer, states sign human rights agreements for other reasons than mere repression. Many states enter into international agreements to lock in their new domestic institutions. This is the argument of Moravcsik (2000) in his analysis of democratizing states. Simply put, newly democratized states produce credible commitments in order to gain reputation and to guarantee external costs in the case human rights are again violated by successive governments. Reversing the causal logic, Pevehouse (2002a, b) studies how membership to international organizations promotes democratization (as a facilitator process for obtaining political rights) of its authoritarian members. The author concludes that this change takes place mainly through diplomatic and political pressures exerted by liberal countries in these organizations. Established democracies, instead, may also ratify international agreements not to bind themselves but to constrain the human rights practices of the other. Building on this idea, Greenhill (2010, p. 128) suggests that a “greater degree of interconnectedness can significantly improve the ability of states to influence the human rights performance of others.”

In an attempt to open the state into investigation, David Forsythe studies how domestic factors can also lead to a HRFP. First, he includes the lobby exerted by civil society organizations (CSOs) to the states (Forsythe 1989). Second, he considers the role of public opinion in supporting a HRFP yet he also highlights the public's aversion to engagement when this involves costs in terms of material and human resources (Forsythe 2000). Finally, he introduces the role that history and national identity can play and how these are combined with national interests in determining the level of activity that will acquire a HRFP (Forsythe 2006).

These observations lead us to a third, more social approach to human rights, namely constructivism. Constructivism focuses on a wide variety of actors and believes that international regimes can be effective, even transformative. Ideas, culture, and norms can be powerful drivers in altering how states define their interest and therefore how states behave in world politics. In this light, constructivism emphasizes the social construction of human rights norms, the importance of existing international norms and how states are socialized in these norms through globalization, transnational networks and international organizations. States can redefine their state identity and come to see themselves as global citizens committed to build global norms on human rights.

Working from a constructivist standpoint, Alison Brysk defines a HRFP as a “constructive form of identity politics” (2009, p. 4). This understanding, according

to Brysk, “defies the realist prediction of untrammelled pursuit of national interest, and suggests the utility of constructivist approaches that investigate the role of ideas, identities, and roles as influences on state action” (2009, p. 4). Building on the idea of socialization, Greenhill (2010) analyzes the role of international organizations as socializing bodies of norms and ideas. Through membership in these organizations and through interaction between violator and liberal states the former are exposed to the arguments, ideas, and pressures of the latter in order to alter state practices regarding human rights violations.

Also from this perspective, Keck and Sikkink (1998) analyze the role of transnational networks as transmission belts of ideas and international standards in human rights issues. Moreover, Risse et al. (1999) argue that networks of human rights promotion are crucial factors in the change of policy on human rights. These networks expose the violator states to the international agenda in terms of moral consciousness. They also help in giving voice and discursive power to domestic opposition against violator governments.

But constructivist interpretations take also an inside-out perspective, namely examining the domestic construction of identity and how this shape normative behavior. Wheeler and Dunne (1998), for instance, study Britain’s change in its foreign policy on human rights that occurred when the Labor Party took power in 1997. The authors observe that this change was tied to a new international identity that Tony Blair was trying to project. Wheeler and Dunne (2001) also study the motivations of Australia to lead the intervention in East Timor and the pressure put on Western states to follow suit. The authors conclude that this Australian move was not based on sole Australian national interests but had to do with Australia’s national identity as a performer and a carrier of Western beliefs in Southeast Asia. Working on a comparative basis, Donnelly (2007) examines the human rights foreign policy of the USA, the Netherlands and Norway. He concludes that national political culture, which in turn shapes the definition of national interests and geo-strategic competition, is the central variable to explain the divergent foreign policies of these three countries.

A complete review of the literature, however, is beyond the scope of this article. There is in fact a growing stock of research studying why states participate in human rights regimes (participation), how these regimes work (process) and how they relate to actual human rights behavior in state members (influence). What follows instead is a number of preliminary observations drawn from this review.

First, a selection bias still exists in the sample states considered for investigation. Most of the studies reviewed here focus their attention on the foreign policies of industrialized, liberal democracies. This inclination, with notable exceptions (Anaya Muñoz 2009; Brysk 2009) leaves developing states out of the radar, which come to be seen, in the worst case, as objects of intervention or, at best, as passive, irrelevant states.

Second, few works have studied foreign policy and human rights from a comparative perspective. Even more so, few comparative studies have combined qualitative and quantitative methods to observe and measure what states *actually do* in their HRF.

Third, liberal and constructivist theories tend to converge on similar explanations, namely the independent effects international socialization, norm diffusion, public advocacy and shaming. The empirical implications of liberal and constructivist studies are therefore difficult to disentangle. Despite their counterpoints along epistemological and ontological lines, both traditions emphasize the role that norms, non-

state actors and socialization milieus can play in how governments deal with human rights. As consequence, liberalism and constructivism could be treated as complementary rather than competitive explanations (Lebovic and Voeten 2006, p. 869).

Fourth, the most analyzed dependent variables have been compliance, enforcement, and identity change. Yet states do not necessarily have the same interests in promoting the same rights to the same extent. States may have interests in supporting rights they already respect at home and in contesting other rights that they see as costly to care for. If these observations are sound, it follows therefore that the level of activism and the ideological orientation are two central dimensions in any human rights foreign policy which need further investigation. From different angles, realism, liberalism, and constructivism may account for these shifting states preferences.

Next section builds up two dependent variables which have so far received little scholarly attention, namely activism and ideological content. It also makes the case to study these variables from a comparative perspective which may include both developed and developing states.

The Dependent Variables: Activism and Content

We seek to study two aspects relatively unexplored in the HRFP literature. On the one hand, we examine the level of activism, or intensity, in terms of defending and promoting human rights. On the other hand, we explore the substantive orientation in defining what kind of human rights will be supported. While “activism” is a dimension that can take different values along a continuum (from least to most active), we contend that “content” may take at least three positions. On the one hand, it is possible to have a HRFP based on the defense and promotion of human rights as defined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The content of this covenant is mentioned as hosting rights of first generation and have essentially to do with respect for life, civil and political liberties such as freedom of thought, expression, political association, and so on. On the other hand, it is possible to have a HRFP based on the defense and promotion of human rights as defined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as collective rights. Thus, in theory, we can have a group of countries promoting mainly civil and political rights; another set of countries promoting ESC and solidarity rights and another set of countries at an intermediate position, promoting both types of rights in a rather balanced manner.

Why studying activism and content in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa? Why these countries are relevant to say something meaningful about activism and content? There are at least three reasons to group these countries together and study them comparatively.

To start with, these states have successfully carved out a niche for themselves as norm entrepreneurs. Argentina ceased to be a “pariah state” and turned into a “global protagonist” helping to develop new regional and international instruments to protect human rights (Sikkink 2008). Australia is a globalized, multicultural wealthy state. Its *Human Rights Framework* (2010) sets out a range of Australia’s key measures to enhance its domestic and regional engagement on human rights issues, including bilateral dialogues with China, Vietnam and Laos. A staunch defender of sovereignty

and non-intervention, Brazil is more inclined to support economic and social rights rather than civil and political ones, and it has contested the meaning and nature of democracy and human rights. It has thus questioned the “Responsibility to Protect” norm and suggested instead the attitude of “non-indifference” or even the “Responsibility while Protecting” concept (Spektor 2012). During Mandela’s tenure, observation and promotion of human rights became the hallmark of South African foreign policy. Yet Mandela’s successor, Thabo Mbeki, moved towards a more African nationalism through the African Renaissance agenda and instrumented a quiet diplomacy on human rights violation in Zimbabwe. Jacob Zuma, in turn, supported UN Security Council resolution to intervene in Muammar Gaddafi’s Libya, suggesting that activism in human rights is closely related to ideological orientations.

Second, Argentina, Australia, Brazil and South Africa are intermediate states and thus are well placed to pursue a human rights agenda. Defining an intermediate state is still a contested terrain. The most obvious starting point is that of Chapnick’s when he says that a middle power “is a state which is neither a great power nor a small power” (1999, p. 73). Traditional definitions have to do with size, power or geographic location. Cooper et al. eschew definitions anchored in these criteria and define middle power by its role, technical competence, and coalition building (Cooper et al. 1993, p. 7). According to Ravenhill (1998, p. 310), for a country to fit into a middle power status, it should exhibit a sound record in the five “Cs”: capacity, concentration, creativity, coalition-building, and credibility. Brysk observes that a typical country advocating human rights internationally is a globalized, democratic, moderately developed, and secure middle or regional power (Brysk 2009, p. 5). Simply put, big powers are too compromised and small states are too weak. If this observation is sound, then our four countries are crucial cases to test Brysk’s findings.

Last, these four countries exhibit different attributes in terms of material power, economic growth, geographic location, democracy level and civil society strengths. Australia is a wealthy developed middle power; Argentina and South Africa are developing regional powers, and Brazil is a developing middle power which is also an emerging global power. We believe that this selection exhibits important variation across the four states and therefore distinct patterns of activism and contents should be expected. Yet in order to anchor our comparison on a sound basis, we have included Norway as a baseline country when measuring the two dependent variables. This country, together with Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands, constitute the “gold standard” (Brysk 2009) in human rights and thus constitutes an apt case to compare with.

Measuring HRFP Activism

What is an *active* foreign policy and how can it be measured? The level of activity of a HRFP can be understood as the number of state actions signaling willingness to develop, promote, or advance certain principles and policies related to human rights. These actions can be taken unilaterally, bilaterally or through multilateral agencies. Further, activism involves normative commitments and diplomatic gestures. Last,

activism needs the necessary wherewithal to match words with deeds. As a result, a comprehensive measurement of activism as a variable should take into account all these normative, material, bilateral and multilateral dimensions. As these dimensions cannot be grasped through a single indicator, we propose four interrelated indicators which combined produce a comprehensive index of activism in HRFP.

The first indicator is the state of signing and ratification of international human rights treaties.² Some authors (Sikkink 2005) have seen in the signing and ratification of international instruments a clear signal of an active foreign policy on human rights. Signing and ratifying treaties, however, is not the same as complying with them. There is compelling evidence that repressive states adhere to international human rights treaties at least at the same level as non-repressive states (Hafner-Burton et al. 2008).

The second indicator is the level of participation in the UN Commission of Human Rights (CHR), renamed in 2006 as the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). As the Commission and the Council are the most important international organizations on human rights issues within the UN system, the behavior of states in these agencies becomes an important site of the HRFP at the multilateral level. In order to appreciate the level of activity each country had in the Commission or the Council we analyzed the number of participations (as recorded in the reports) in the various discussions that took place in the 18 sessions between 2003 and 2010, with one session per year in the Human Rights Commission and three sessions per year in the successor body.³ We also included presentation and sponsoring of projects by Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa.⁴

The third indicator is bilateral foreign aid in human rights issues. This indicator has to do with the importance states assign to human rights in their foreign aid programs. What is at stake here is the promotion or strengthening of certain areas that intermediate states can offer to other states in similar circumstances. For example, Argentina

² The level of adherence to international human rights treaties has been calculated taking into account the signing and ratification of treaties (included in the database of the Human Rights Library of the University of Minnesota) that Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa conducted between 2003 and 2010. In each year under study, each country was assigned a value of 1 (one) to each treaty signed plus a value of 1 (one) if the treaty was then ratified. This sum was then divided by the number of international treaties open for signature for each state during that year multiplied by 2. The formula used was:

$$\lambda_{it} = \frac{F_{it} + R_{it}}{T_{it} + 2}$$

where λ is the ratio of ratification and signing of international human rights treaties, F is the number of international human rights treaties that the country i has signed up to the year t , R the number of treaties ratified, and T the number of international human rights treaties open for signature.

³ We took into account the discussions on all topics covered. The number of participations of each country in the sessions was divided by the number of instances in which countries could make comments, observations or questions. In this way, we got the participation ratio, where higher ratios represent increased activity of the country within the Council's activities.

⁴ To calculate the level of activity of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa in the presentation or sponsorship of projects, we proceeded to give a score of 2 (two) for each project presented and a score of 1 (one) per each project sponsored, being the submission of a project more activism than sponsor an already presented project. The total score received by each country in each Commission or Council meeting was divided by the total number of projects submitted in the same session to reach the ratio of participation in projects within the Commission and the Council.

has promoted human rights abroad through cooperation programs related to forced disappearance. Brazil, on the other hand, has funded human rights projects to promote economic, social, and cultural rights.⁵

The fourth indicator concerns the number of accepted refugees as the yearly ratio of the total number of decisions on acceptance or rejection. According to Brysk (2009), hosting refugees is the most direct and immediate action states can take to assist victims of human rights abuses.⁶ Indeed, the ability of states to grant refugee status to a person would prevent the violation of human rights on him or her (Goodwin-Gill 1989). Thus, a concrete example of how a country is sensitive to foreigners' suffering is how likely it is to accept refugees given the large number of people in situations of having to leave their country.

Index of Human Rights Foreign Policy Activism

With these four indicators we are able to propose an index of human rights activism. The next step is to consider the weight assigned to each indicator. Each indicator can be weighted in terms of the material cost it represents for the country, and the impact it has on the protection and promotion of human rights abroad. First, although the signing and ratification of treaties may reveal the commitment of a country towards human rights, it is also necessary to note that this indicator remains relatively stable over time.⁷ Since it is a cumulative collection, by definition it is difficult to lower the stock of treaties (unless a country denounces them). Further, the literature indicates that there is not an overwhelming difference in ratifications between states that respect human rights and states that violate them. For this reason, this indicator will receive a value of 25 points out of 100.

Second, UN discussions on human rights remain relatively unknown to the attentive public. Moreover, most of UN projects and decisions still have a rather low impact on the international society. Thus, the relative weight of these activities

⁵ Obtaining data on the weight of human rights in international cooperation between 2003 and 2010 of the cases under study was based on information provided by the reports of the Argentine Fund for Horizontal Cooperation (FO.AR) in the case of Argentina, and the AidData database for the cases of Australia, Brazil and South Africa. It should be noted that obtaining this data presents major obstacles to perform large N comparative studies, especially when it is about analyzing intermediate countries that do not always provide this information in a consistent manner. Of all the projects offered by each country and each year, we classified those human rights projects. We considered a project as a human rights project when its title or description referred to human rights, discrimination, truth and justice, minority or vulnerable groups, conflict prevention, peace building or support to refugees abroad. Once classified, we proceeded to calculate the ratio of human rights projects per year (number of human rights projects divided by the total of projects offered each year).

⁶ Data on number of resolutions in favor in relation of total decisions made by one country in each year were extracted from the UNHCR Statistical Yearbook of each year within the period 2003–2010. Formally, the refugee acceptance rate was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Ref}_{it} = \frac{A_{it}}{D_{it}}$$

where A refers to the number of people with refugee status accepted for country i in year t , and D the number of decisions taken by the country i at t , both favorable or negative.

⁷ The Human Rights Library's database at the University of Minnesota provides data of the date of signature and ratification of 68 international and 13 regional (nine of America and four from Africa) treaties of human rights.

within the overall HRFP index must also be low and thus we will grant 10 points for the participation in the discussions plus 10 points for the participation in projects.

Third, bilateral foreign aid seems to be an instrument more amenable to fit national interests. States still enjoy a wide margin to decide terms of reference, deadlines, and the amount of money or technical cooperation they have to offer. Moreover, foreign aid involves more than signaling or diplomatic statements. It has to do with the economic effort states make for advancing human rights abroad. For this reason, we will give foreign aid a value of 30 points.

Lastly, accepting refugees at home has an explicit economic (and sometimes political) cost for the host country. It also entails an action to avoid potential human rights abuses. We will give to it a value of 25 points. We arrive, thus, at a rate ranging from 0 to 100. Granted these weights, we get the following formula:

$$I_{it}(x) = (D_{it} \times 10) + (P_{it} \times 10) + (T_{it} \times 25) + (C_{it} \times 30) + (R_{it} \times 25)$$

where the index I is composed of D , which is the ratio of participation in discussions of the CHR and HRC; P , which is the ratio of presentation and sponsorship of projects within CHR and HRC; T , which is the ratio of signature and ratification of international human rights treaties; C , which is the ratio of development cooperation projects in the field of human rights; and R , which is the ratio of acceptance of refugees in the country i and year t .

Measuring HRFP Content

State activism tells us important things about how seriously a state takes human rights, but this tells us nothing about which way it does. A state may be very active, for instance, in the United Nations, but this activism could be oriented to the blocking of resolutions in favor of mainstream understandings of human rights. This may be the case of Brazil. From another standpoint, a state can be highly active in promoting civil and political rights yet reluctant to promote social or cultural rights. This is probably the case of Australia. These observations suggest that different states may interpret human rights in diverse ways and, therefore, the analysis should go beyond activism to examine orientation as well. We contend that the most efficient way to evaluate orientation is to calculate the level of support towards different human rights resolutions emanating from the United Nations General Assembly.

The level of support can be calculated through the ratio of voting in favor vis-à-vis the abstentions or negative votes a country has made over a year. The calculation of the level of support for a generation of rights (either first or second and third generation) or a set of condemnatory resolutions (to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict or human rights violations in other countries) was performed using the following equation:

$$\text{Support}_{\text{Git}} = \frac{[(N_{\text{Git}} \times (-1))] + [A_{\text{Git}} \times 0] + Y_{\text{Git}}}{N + A + Y} \times 100$$

where N is the number of negative votes of G -type resolutions of country i in year t , A the number of abstentions, and Y the amount of positive votes. Resolutions were classified from an open, inductive coding. It was found that voted resolutions typically fell into four categories: (a) rights under the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights, (b) rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (c) resolutions condemning violations of Palestinian human rights or promoting greater respect for them and, finally, (d) resolutions condemning human rights violations in other countries (except for the region of Israel-Palestine). In the period 2003–2010, we processed 33 first generation resolutions; 51 second generation resolutions; 31 on Israel and Palestine, and 26 on other countries.

Explaining Activism and Orientation in HRFP

Hypotheses on the Level of Activism

Realism and Material Capacities

Realist thinking has a long tradition of speculation about how power is central in foreign policy-making and how it constraints normative considerations. This restriction appears to be stronger as state power increases. According to Egeland (1984), one would expect larger states in the international system to have a more extensive network of interests than smaller states, and thus their HRFP would maintain a low profile so as not to conflict with other interests, typically linked to economic prosperity and national security.

While we agree with this observation, our interest is on intermediate states. Realists may be correct when it comes to major powers, but its explanatory power wanes when we move down towards intermediate states. Brysk (2009) provided compelling evidence to show that those states located in the middle of the curve of power are actually the most active states in human rights in the international society. Our work aims precisely to put the focus on these intermediate states and to assess variation within this group observing, for instance, how the relative power of these states affects their activity level. Thus, contrary to what happens with the global powers, we suggest that power in the intermediate states works precisely in favor of greater human rights activism. States that are more than intermediate states (those, for example, being emerging powers), would see in an active HRFP a non-material tool from where discuss global issues and increase its soft-power. Our hypothesis is thus as follows:

H1: The greater the relative power of an intermediate state, the greater its level of activism in its HRFP.

For data on the relative power of a state in the international system, we used the national material capabilities index of the Correlates of War database. The composed index contains the annual values of six indicators that reflect the power of a state.⁸

⁸ This database has information until 2007, so data will be used only for the period 2003–2007. The data for 3 years will not be a major problem for the present analysis, as the first 5 years of the period analyzed show some stability in the relative power because power shifts in the international system occurs in longer periods of time. For this reason, the last 3 years will be taken as a replica of the last year for which data are available.

Liberalism and Domestic Demands of Civil Society

Liberalism has long pointed out to the domestic factors as shaping foreign policy. This scholarship has argued that domestic actors can be key elements in the state's preferences formation. From the perspective of a domestic model of preferences formation, liberalism understands activism as something related to social identities, material interests, and the ways in which both are linked in a play of political representation (Moravcsik 1997). Regarding the particular issue of human rights, the liberal literature has given prominence to the role of civil society advocates in demanding a more human rights based foreign policy (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Berkovitch and Gordon 2008).

This perspective emphasizes the liberal character of foreign policy whereas the preferences of civil society actors can come to be represented and added to the agenda of the government especially if the country has a democratic aggregation of preferences. We can assume that the weight of civil society organizations working in a specific issue from a particular country can account for the strength of civil society in that issue. Thus, observing civil society allows us to consider and measure the number of actors involved in the advocacy of human rights. Inquiring about the specific interests of each human rights organization and how they interact with foreign policy is a task beyond the scope of this work. As a fairly direct way to overcome this obstacle, we considered only the human rights organizations in each country that are internationalized, i.e., with formal ties with international organizations.⁹ We assume that a high ratio of internationalized NGOs translates into a high pressure on the state's human rights foreign policy. Our second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: The greater the internationalization of human rights organizations, the higher the level of HRFPA activism.

Constructivism and the Internalization of Norms

Complementing liberal theories on human rights, constructivists argue that political change arises not only from shifting material interests but also from changing intersubjective understandings. The constructivist literature in IR has made central the role of ideas and the socialization of practices between international actors. In the human rights field, it claims that states are undergoing a growing process of socialization into international standards, including those related to human rights.

⁹ This variable describes the ratio of human rights organizations from a specific country that have some sort of status at the UN in relation to the total of CSOs with some sort of status from that same country in each of the years between 2003 and 2010. In formal terms, if a country has a number N of CSOs registered in the UN, and n of them are CSOs of human rights, then the ratio of CSOs on human rights would be n/N , where $n \leq N$. To calculate this variable, all CSOs with some sort of consultative status in the UN system and based in Argentina, Australia, Brazil and South Africa were categorized according to their main action area. If the mission of the organization refers to human rights as a core activity, it was classified as a CSO on human rights. Human rights as a main activity was understood as if the mission, vision or main activities mentioned the promotion, protection and/or dissemination of human rights, minority, indigenous peoples, gender or children rights, combating racism, xenophobia, and/or the promotion of cultural rights.

Constructivists analyze in particular how states internalize norms and how these norms shape foreign policy. The hypothesis here is as follows:

H3: The more human rights norms are internalized, the greater the level of activism in its HRFP.

Examining the process by which norms and principles become internalized within domestic structures is not an easy task. We can assume, however, that these norms, once internalized, should produce concrete public policies. Upon this reasoning it is safe to concentrate our view on the financial efforts state commit to further human rights at home. Thus, greater relative spending on human rights domestic programs would represent greater importance of these within the state agenda. If a foreign policy, as constructivists remind us, is somehow the external projection of internal norms, this suggests that international human rights activism would be the external manifestation of a corresponding internal activism. This approach allows us to consider Donnelly's (2007) concept of political culture. A political culture is difficult to conceptualize and even more difficult to calculate. But restricting our analysis to state material efforts can be a useful shortcut to evaluate states priorities, including human rights. We considered the relative weight of human rights programs in each country yearly budget.¹⁰

Hypothesis on HRFP Orientation

Realism and Strategic Interactions

Realism's main critique of a preference based liberal approach is that the study of domestic preferences tends to omit international strategic interactions. Simply put, a strong realist argument is that foreign policy, including human rights, is closely related to the type of strategic interaction in play with relevant others. A global power, for instance, that has a strategic alliance with a leading state in a region, will be reluctant to condemn it mainly because other things considered more important (security being among the first) will trump normative considerations. Yet this global power can be very assertive in condemning practices of human rights abuses of other states confronted with its partner in the region. Put otherwise, realism cannot explain why a state can have a bias *per se* towards civil and political rights or social, economic, or cultural rights but it can predict that whatever the orientation a state possesses it will be always already restricted by the changing patterns of strategic interaction.

As noted above, of a total of 139 resolutions, 33 relate to the conflict between Israel and Palestine and 28 on other countries, typically Iran, Syria, and North Korea.

¹⁰ The relative amount of resources allocated to human rights programs was calculated by dividing the total resources devoted to human rights programs in a given year and country by the total state expenditure in that year and country. Human rights programs have been classified based on whatever the program specifies its orientation to: (a) disseminate, protect or promote human rights; (b) disseminate, protect, promote the rights of a disadvantaged group; (c) disseminate, protect or promote the quality of life, culture or rights of indigenous peoples; (d) disseminate, protect or promote gender rights or gender equality; (e) combating racism, xenophobia and related actions of discrimination. The search for human rights programs was made from the reports of the National Budget Office in the case of Argentina, the Brazilian Federal Senate website devoted to the Union Budget, the 2011–2012 Commonwealth Budget website on the case of Australia, and the website of the Department of National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa, in all cases for each of the years in the 2003–2010 period.

To analyze the bias in the voting of the four states, we contrasted the votes on these resolutions with the overall voting coincidence with the USA. A realist conjecture is that a close relationship with the USA (of which a high voting coincidence would be the evidence) will result in not accepting charges against Israel's abuses but condemning abuses in Iran, North Korea, Syria, or any other rival state to the USA.

- H4: The closer the relationship with the USA, the more likely to avoid condemning Israel.
- H5: The closer the relationship with the USA, the more likely to condemn the rest of the states.

To measure voting coincidence with the US, we relied on data provided by the reports of UN Voting Practices elaborated by the US State Department.

Liberalism and Political Regime Type

Briefly put, liberalism claims that regime type matters. One would expect, for instance, that a high degree of democracy should be correlated with the promotion of human rights associated with civil and political rights. Conversely, we could expect that a low degree of democracy should be correlated with the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. Since this article focuses on four democracies, we excluded the study of the relationship between authoritarian regimes and HRFP. These four democracies, however, have a different level of development of their political institutions and therefore also different variations should be expected in their HRFP content.¹¹

- H6: The greater the degree of democracy, the greater the orientation towards the promotion of civil and political rights.
- H7: The lesser the degree of democracy, the greater the orientation towards the promotion of economic, social, cultural and collective rights.

Liberalism and Economic Development

Closely related to the hypotheses concerning regime type, there are the hypotheses concerning the degree of economic development.¹² The basic idea is that a state with high levels of economic development will seek to defend human rights which are more connected with individual liberties than to economic conditions. By contrast, a developing state will support more second and third-generation rights (which include the very right to economic development) than first-generation rights.

- H8: The greater the degree of development, the more the orientation towards the promotion of civil and political rights.
- H9: The lesser the degree of development, the more the orientation towards the promotion of economic, social, cultural and collective rights.

¹¹ To measure the degree of democracy in the four countries we relied on the Polity IV Democracy Index.

¹² To estimate the level of development for the four countries, we used the UNDP's Human Development Index. We used the World Bank's database to access the country-year data.

Data Analysis

The Level of Activism

Table 1 and Fig. 1 below show the index of activism for each country from 2003 to 2010. Data suggest several observations. Until 2005, Argentina was the most active of the four. In 2006, however, Brazil then moved to the top until 2010, and Argentina took second place until 2009 when it was pushed into the third place. The second thing to note is the downward trend of South Africa in its activism. This reflects somehow Mbeki’s turn toward a more nationalist agenda. Since we have no data for the last 2 years, it is not possible to affirm whether this trend continues. The point to observe, however, is that from having a score of 35.73 in 2005, South Africa went down to have a score of 19.70 in 2008.

As said before, we included a baseline case, Norway, in order to compare the four states against a highly activist HRF. As expected, Norway was the most active country in 4 of the 7 years. In 2005 it was surpassed by Argentina (2005) and in 2006 and 2009 it was surpassed Brazil. In two of those years, the difference between the most active and the second was less than 0.5. An exceptional year was 2009, when Brazil had a score of 46.58, the highest in the whole period for all the cases, and Norway 38.00. Why Norway went down in 2005, 2006 and 2009? This question can be answered looking at the indicators that compose the index.

How this index is disaggregated into their indicators? Table 2 below presents the scores for the four countries in each of the indicators.

As the tables suggest, in terms of international treaties there are two distinctly different groups. On the one hand, Brazil and Argentina share similar ratios of ratification, being Brazil slightly above Argentina. On the other hand, Australia and South Africa also share similar ratios, almost twenty points below Brazil or Argentina. Norway belongs to the first group, having the highest ratification ratio in the first years and the third in the latest. This outcome is explained because Norway is extremely active in the ratification of civil and political rights instruments and not so much with economic, social and cultural rights treaties, where Argentina and Brazil have better standards.

States also vary regarding discussions at the UN. Brazil appears as the most participative state. Observing Brazil’s entire pattern, its augment has been significant. Argentina and Australia follow Brazil in a fairly similar way, although there are

Table 1 Index of activism 2003–2010

	Argentina	Brazil	Australia	South Africa	Norway
2003	ND	ND	23.22	ND	38.80
2004	38.23	34.68	27.80	ND	41.61
2005	39.68	34.55	28.08	35.73	39.31
2006	34.20	35.98	25.84	23.78	35.79
2007	32.60	35.33	30.73	29.03	41.05
2008	33.63	37.83	29.92	19.70	37.93
2009	32.83	46.58	34.74	ND	38.00
2010	31.53	39.83	ND	ND	ND

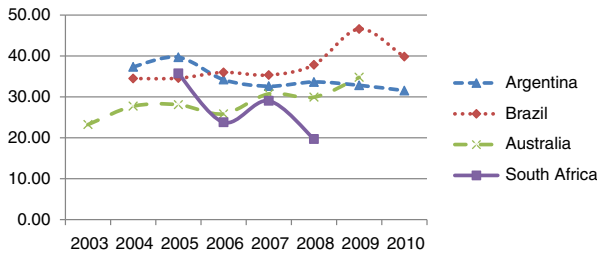


Fig. 1 Index of activism 2003–2010

variations from year to year. Finally, South Africa ranks fourth, with a level of participation that is less than half of Brazil's. As for presenting projects, Australia leads the group, followed very closely by Brazil and with Argentina in the third place. South Africa is again back in the fourth place. The point to note about South Africa is the fall of its activism in this area, with a ratio of 0.48 in 2003 but ending up in 2010 at 0.08. In these indicators, Norway ranks second in most years as the most participative state in the HRC and CHR, and first in most years as the country with the highest ratio of projects presented.

As for foreign aid in human rights, Argentina is the best placed of the four. Although these ratios are rather low (0.07 for the best year in Argentina), they are no less important when compared to the ratios of 0 of Brazil or South Africa. Thus, Argentina is the best positioned, followed by Australia, Brazil, and South Africa. Norway, as expected, is a golden standard in this indicator: its lowest ratio (0.10659) in the period is higher than any other ratio of the other four countries. In 2003, almost 19 % of its foreign aid was directed towards supporting human rights abroad.

As for the acceptance of refugees, Brazil is the country that has received more asylum seekers in relation to total decisions made. It should be noted that in two years, South Africa surpassed Brazil and indeed shows the highest ratios in the entire period (0.79 and 0.63 in 2004 and 2005, respectively) but then drops to 0.09 in 2009. Norway ranks first in 2 years and second in another two.

What these data suggest is that our proposal for measuring the level of activism in HRFP is sensitive to the fluctuations that occur every year. Of all the indicators, the more static is, as expected, the ratio of signing and ratification of international human rights treaties. And yet the rest of the indicators are altered in function, precisely, of an increased activity. Thus, a state participating at the UN with interventions and proposals, providing assistance to other countries on issues related to human rights, and accepting refugees will be more active than any other state with more treaties signed and ratified but with less diplomatic action oriented towards human rights.

How to explain this activism from our independent variables? Table 3 below presents data collected for the independent variables besides the index of activism.

As shown in the table, when it comes to power, Brazil is the most powerful of the four and also the most active of the four. Then, in terms of power, it follows Australia, South Africa, and Argentina. Had Argentina been excluded in the measurement, there would be a higher correlation between power and activism, and the order would have been this: Brazil, Australia, and then South Africa, which is exactly the same order of power. Although Argentina is a country with less relative power in relation to Australia and South Africa, it surpasses their levels of activism. Indeed, some recent

Table 2 Index indicators

	Argentina	Brazil	Australia	South Africa	Norway
International treaties					
2003	0.753	0.767	0.617	0.566	0.828
2004	0.767	0.801	0.641	0.603	0.83
2005	0.781	0.822	0.648	0.603	0.811
2006	0.776	0.789	0.642	0.585	0.786
2007	0.816	0.829	0.657	0.613	0.796
2008	0.831	0.831	0.654	0.604	0.788
2009	0.851	0.857	0.676	0.604	0.788
2010	0.851	0.877	0.676	0.604	0.788
Participation at UNCHR/UNHRC					
2003	0.12	0.05	0.10	0.22	0.16
2004	0.21	0.09	0.09	0.13	0.17
2005	0.09	0.02	0.11	0.09	0.23
2006	0.65	0.48	0.26	0.00	0.47
2007	0.33	0.44	0.35	0.22	0.37
2008	0.19	0.36	0.11	0.10	0.23
2009	0.18	0.45	0.24	0.12	0.24
2010	0.21	0.41	0.32	0.17	
Projects at UNCHR/UNHRC					
2003	0.3	0.43	0.47	0.48	0.63
2004	0.3	0.43	0.48	0.35	0.59
2005	0.46	0.38	0.37	0.40	0.51
2006	0.15	0.28	0.13	0.00	0.11
2007	0.21	0.27	0.23	0.16	0.31
2008	0.39	0.49	0.41	0.11	0.42
2009	0.29	0.54	0.32	0.22	0.54
2010	0.33	0.43	0.49	0.08	
Foreign aid					
2003	0.00	0.00	0.02816	0.00	0.18837
2004	0.01	0.00	0.02430	0.00	0.12018
2005	0.03	0.00	0.01924	0.00	0.12705
2006	0.06	0.03	0.02137	0.18	0.12871
2007	0.06	0.00	0.04172	0.08	0.10659
2008	0.06	0.01	0.03724	0.00	0.13345
2009	0.07	0.00	0.04983	0.00	0.13599
2010	0.07	0.00		0.00	
Refugee asylum					
2003	0.15	ND	0.05		0.182
2004	0.51	0.37	0.21	0.79	0.386
2005	0.55	0.4	0.26	0.63	0.313
2006	0.2	0.31	0.21	0.15	0.259
2007	0.2	0.3	0.29	0.3	0.446

Table 2 (continued)

	Argentina	Brazil	Australia	South Africa	Norway
2008	0.21	0.33	0.29	0.1	0.309
2009	0.19	0.61	0.43	0.09	0.257
2010	0.11	0.38	0.42	0.13	0.248

studies (Sikkink 2008; Chillier 2009) have pointed out the Argentina's leadership position on issues of international human rights and its growing symbolic power on this matter. This observation seems more apparent when we notice that in matters of state efforts Argentina is the best placed of the four. In other words, Argentina is the least powerful of the four but the one who makes more financial efforts in human rights programs. This effort is followed by Brazil, Australia and then South Africa. South Africa is the least active and the least endowed with financial efforts, suggesting at first sight a significant relationship between (domestic) state effort and (international) activism.¹³

Observing the civil society sector, there seems not to be a correlation between internationalization and HRFPP activism. In fact, the most active of the four countries (Brazil) has the least robust internationalized civil society in human rights. It is thus safe to say that Brazil's growing international activism in human rights seems not to be accompanied by an internationalization of Brazilian civil society. This growing activism seems to be the action of a rising state more committed to human rights globally. The reverse case is South Africa, which has an internationalized civil society similar to Australia's and yet this level of internationalization is not reflected in its level of activism.

These preliminary observations allow us to suggest that a correlation exists, on one hand, between power and activism and, on the other, between state effort and activism. A strong civil society does not seem to have much impact on international activism. For a more accurate measurement of how these variables relate to each other, we made a linear correlation which yielded a positive coefficient between relative power and activism ($r=0.51$, $p=0.007$) and another, also positive coefficient between state effort and activism ($r=0.55$, $p=0.003$). Both coefficients not only rule out the null hypothesis of no relationship between these variables but also they help to support the hypotheses that relative power and state effort are closely linked with the activism of intermediate states. Although this is an exploratory study with a rather small N (25), both qualitative and statistic analyses suggest that the international activism of a state may well be explained by a combination of relative power and internalization of human rights norms domestically.

Table 4 shows the correlation between the Human Rights Foreign Policy Index and our three independent variables.

¹³ Although this observation may seem tautological, it is not. State effort is a domestic variable that has to do with the inward spending that makes a state in human rights programs and is a shortcut to account for how internalized a human rights culture is within the country. Activism is an external variable that has to do with the level of protection and promotion of human rights in international society.

Table 3 Power, state effort and civil society vis a vis activism

Year	Power				State effort				Civil society				Activism			
	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA
2003	0.0048	0.0236	0.0068	0.0064	0.09	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.27	0.17	0.41	0.40	ND	ND	23.22	ND
2004	0.0048	0.0242	0.0068	0.0068	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.27	0.21	0.39	0.50	37.33	34.48	27.70	ND
2005	0.0048	0.0244	0.0071	0.0067	0.09	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.31	0.21	0.38	0.43	39.68	34.55	28.08	35.73
2006	0.0048	0.0239	0.0070	0.0064	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.41	0.27	0.39	0.43	34.20	35.98	25.84	23.78
2007	0.0047	0.0246	0.0071	0.0063	0.12	0.08	0.04	0.02	0.45	0.25	0.44	0.38	32.60	35.33	30.73	29.03
2008	0.0047	0.0246	0.0071	0.0063	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.02	0.45	0.25	0.42	0.38	33.63	37.83	29.92	19.70
2009	0.0047	0.0246	0.0071	0.0063	0.16	0.12	0.02	0.02	0.45	0.29	0.41	0.38	32.83	46.58	34.74	ND
2010	0.0047	0.0246	0.0071	0.0063	0.16	0.12	ND	0.02	0.41	0.28	0.39	0.50	31.53	39.83	ND	ND

Table 4 Correlation between the Human Rights Foreign Policy Index and the independent variables

	HRFP
Power	0.5136
State effort	0.5535
Civil society	-0.4813

The Content

Table 5 shows how the four countries voted (measured in percentage of support for resolutions) in four groups of resolutions: (a) first generation rights, (b) second and third generation rights, (c) resolutions condemning Israel for human rights violations in the conflict with Palestine, and (d) other states.

Several observations can be made from these voting patterns. First, Argentina seems to be the most likely to vote in favor when it comes to human rights. It does not matter much if it is voting first- or second-generation rights or in the case of resolutions against Israel or other countries, Argentina votes in general in a positive way. Put otherwise, Argentina is the most unbiased state of the sample.

Different is the case of Australia. Counter-intuitively, Australia has the lowest percentage of support for resolutions of first generation. Australia has opposed resolutions related to the use of mercenaries and resolutions that urge states to comply with international law, human rights law and humanitarian law while fighting against terrorism. Australia also abstained in resolutions that urge states to revise their immigration laws and to recognize the importance of family reunification, and those that are concerned over the increased anti-Semitism, and the Nazi movement.

More expected, Australia has the lowest percentage of support for second and third generation resolutions. Also as expected, Australia shows the weakest support to resolutions condemning Israel. This trend is reversed when Australia must vote against human rights violations in other countries, with 100 % support in recent years. Brazil and South Africa show exactly the opposite trend, both with higher support for resolutions against Israel but rather reluctant to condemn other countries. Argentina is closer to Brazil and South Africa at the time of voting against Israel, but

Table 5 Votes at the UNHRC

Year	First generation				Second and third generation				Israel and Palestine				Other states			
	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA	AR	BR	AU	SA
2003	67	67	67	100	90	90	20	100	100	100	75	75	67	67	100	0
2004	75	100	50	100	86	57	14	100	100	100	25	100	33	33	67	33
2005	100	100	50	100	86	86	29	100	100	100	0	100	100	80	100	20
2006	100	100	0	100	88	75	25	100	100	100	0	100	100	50	100	0
2007	100	100	33	100	90	90	20	100	67	100	0	100	100	50	100	25
2008	100	100	33	100	100	83	33	100	75	100	0	100	100	33	100	0
2009	0	0	100	0	86	86	0	100	100	100	17	100	100	0	100	33
2010	S/D	S/D	S/D	S/D	100	100	0	100	67	100	33	100	100	33	100	33

closer to Australia when voting against other countries. This shows, again, that Argentina has a vote consistently in favor of human rights, regardless of whether it is against Israel or other states.

How to explain these trends from our independent variables? Recall that our independent variables used were the level of democracy, level of development and the percentage of agreement with the USA. To estimate their impact on the votes, we made four different logistic regressions. Table 6 below presents them together.

Hypotheses 6 and 8 linked higher levels of democracy and development with greater promotion of civil and political rights (model 1). The regression did not show a significant impact of democracy on the vote on first generation resolutions yet the level of development appears to be more significant. Surprisingly, the coefficients are negative, so if a relationship exists, this would be a negative one, meaning that greater democracy and greater development generate less support for first generation resolutions. We believe that this observation is questionable and has to do with the particular behavior of Australia. It is the most developed country (according to the UNDP) and the most democratic (according to Polity IV) in the sample and yet it has been a poor supporter of first generation resolutions.

Hypotheses 7 and 9 linked higher levels of democracy and development with lower support to resolutions of second and third generation rights (model 2). The results of this regression show more interesting data than the first model. Democracy has no statistical significance, but the level of development does appear as important, with a negative coefficient and a *p* value of 0.063. This suggests that an increase in the level of development decreases the chances of supporting second and third generation resolutions as our hypothesis 9 suggests. Besides this finding, in sum, the overall results do not support much of the liberal expectation that domestic economic and political factors may have an impact on human rights foreign policy.

Our third set of hypotheses had to do with the vote directed to particular states (models 3 and 4). As shown above, the decision to distinguish resolutions against Israel from resolutions against other countries proved successful. To analyze the relationship with the USA, we considered voting coincidence with Washington at the UN General Assembly.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of agreement with the US vote in the UN General Assembly. Australia is the closest country to US, followed by Argentina and then Brazil and South Africa, these two countries converging in 2010 with similar rates.

Table 6 Impact of democracy, development and agreement with the USA on votes at the UNHRC

	(Model 1) 1st generation	(Model 2) 2nd generation	(Model 3) against Israel	(Model 4) against others
Democracy	-0.488 (0.252)	0.335 (0.271)		
HDI	-9.876** (0.021)	-4.637* (0.063)		
US coincidence			-0.0364*** (0.008)	0.0541*** (0.000)
_cons	14.48*** (0.000)	2.676 (0.220)	4.388*** (0.000)	-1.025** (0.019)
<i>N</i>	132	203	124	104

p values in parentheses

* *p*<0.1; ** *p*<0.05; *** *p*<0.01

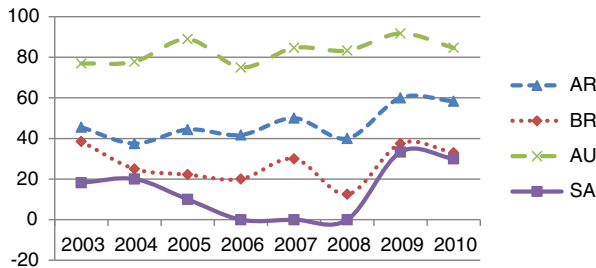


Fig. 2 Voting coincidence with USA at the UN General Assembly

The table of logistic regression (model 3) shows a statistically significant and negative relation ($p=0.008$) between US coincidence and the negative vote on Israel condemnation. In other words, voting coincidence with the USA can be a good predictor of how a country will vote against resolutions condemning Israel, namely that whenever the coincidence with USA increases, the vote condemning Israel decreases.

What happens when we do the same to explore the condemning vote to other states? To assess this, we made another logistic regression (model 4) where we linked the level of agreement with the US with the support for resolutions condemning other states. Unlike the previous regression, this regression shows a statistically significant and positive relations ($p=0.008$), which is to say that whenever the coincidence with the USA increases, the vote condemning other states increases as well. If these findings are correct, it follows therefore that strategic interactions may trump normative preferences.

This second part of the evidence suggests that realist explanations of the content of HRFP are much stronger than liberal ones. When it comes to decide what human rights are, which generation is more basic and which countries are violating them, realism seems to play a significant role. Countries decide to condemn or not violators according to their alignment with the global hegemon, thus privileging strategic over ideal or liberal considerations. However, the level of development seems to explain how countries orientate their HRFP and it should be more research on this topic to understand more the mechanisms that are interacting there.

Conclusions

This article examined the relation between foreign policy and human rights. It did this, first by studying the level of activism in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa, and, second, by exploring the ideological content these states exhibit in their human rights foreign agenda. To explain foreign activism, we explored its connections to relative power, state effort and civil society strength. To elucidate content, we related it to the quality of democracy, the level of development and the strategic engagement with the US. Table 7 presents a summary of the hypothesis tested by data in this study, and an indication for each hypothesis as being confirmed or not by the data.

Regarding activism, relative power and state efforts seem to be good candidates to predict the level of activism in intermediate states. The strength of civil society, by contrast, does not seem to account for greater foreign activism in human rights. A tentative explanation is that states have so far included human rights in their foreign

Table 7 Hypothesis tested by data

	HRFP style	Hypothesis	IR tradition	Supported by data?
1	Activism	The greater the relative power of an intermediate state, the greater their level of activism in its HRFP.	Realist	Yes
2		The greater the internationalization of human rights organizations, the higher the level of HRFP activism	Liberal	No
3		The more human rights norms are internalized, the greater the level of activism in its HRFP	Constructivist	Yes
4	Orientation	The closer the relationship with the USA, the more likely to avoid condemning Israel	Realist	Yes
5		The closer the relationship with the USA, the more likely to condemn the rest of the states	Realist	Yes
6		The greater the degree of development, the more the orientation towards the promotion of civil and political rights	Liberal	No
7		The lesser the degree of development, the more the orientation towards the promotion of economic, social, cultural, and collective rights	Liberal	Yes
8		The greater the degree of democracy, the greater the orientation towards the promotion of civil and political rights	Liberal	No
9		The lesser the degree of democracy, the greater the orientation towards the promotion of economic, social, cultural, and collective rights	Liberal	No

policy agenda yet at the expense of placing them in a broader canvass which includes more dominant strategic and economic interests.

As for the content in human rights foreign policy, democracy does not appear to have explanatory power. This suggests that democracy is too complex a regime to conceive a single model of domestic liberal organization. This observation is more apparent when we include intermediate developing countries with often contrasting views about democracy and human rights. Development, instead, appears to be positively connected with first generation rights and negatively connected with second and third generation rights. In other words, wealthy states may be more interested in securing individual property rights than in granting collective justice rights. This finding is closer to a class perspective than to a democratic standpoint on how to promote a more just international order. On the other hand, strategic interaction seems also to account for foreign orientation. In our sample, higher levels of coincidence with the US leads to less criticism against Israel. It also leads to higher censure towards North Korea or Iran. Again, realism seems to suggest that the cost of keeping up strategic alliances may well entail the reduction of normative considerations.

These observations, contentious and contestable as they surely are, nevertheless highlight a number of important points in our analytical understanding of foreign policy and human rights. First, we need to further specify the dependent variable in a human rights foreign policy. Our proposal consisted in working with activism and content yet we believe other variables may also shed light on how to understand the complex

interplay between human rights and foreign policy. Second, we need to advance a more complex, sophisticated dialogue among international relations theories. There can be no simple explanation on how human rights enter into the domain of foreign policy and thus more multivariate analyses are needed. Third, and related to this, our model identified realism as a powerful tradition to account for both activism and content. Simply put, relative power and strategic interaction matter. Liberalism failed to account for activism yet it showed a correlation between development and second and third generation human rights. Constructivism, in turn, seems to explain why a state increases its international human rights activism. The international projection would not be anything but the outward manifestation of an internalized norm within the state. Fourth, the comparative finding, including those of Norway, suggest that we need to revisit mainstream understandings of human rights and to move towards a more decentered view, namely a less Eurocentric standpoint on human rights.

To sum up, intermediate states here examined show important levels of activism. Empirical evidence suggests that these levels can be a function of relative power and state domestic efforts. Strategic alliances and development do their part in explaining content. More interesting, however, is that Argentina and Brazil exhibited, on and off, levels of activism close to Norway's level. This observation suggests the existence of a bias in how we understand activism itself. Beyond these findings, however, the systematic study of HRFP is just taking its first steps in international relations. This article proposed a robust way of measuring both activism and content and sought to find explanations for both, presenting results that motivate greater dialogue among theories.

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