

THE POLITICAL CHRONICLE

The Journal of the Florida Political Science Association

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Liberalism Rethought: The Content and Status of Neoliberalism
Leonard Williams (Manchester College)

The Notion of Group Rights in the Nicaraguan Constitution
G. Lane Van Tassell and David M. Speak (Georgia Southern College)

Conflict, Consensus, and Confusion: The United States and Unstable Clients
David T. Jervis (Washburn University, Kansas)

The New York Times and the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1978-1988
Brian Schriener (Florida International University)

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Introduction

Concluding Volume Two (1990) are four diversified essays from scholars across the United States. The initial essay by Professor Williams deals with neoliberalism. It represents some reflections on recent trends in liberalism, including its impact on the 1988 presidential election. But it also raises some pertinent questions about the prospects of such views for the up and coming 1990 off-year elections and further into the future, the 1992 presidential elections.

The second essay, co-authored by Professors Van Tassell and Speak, dwells upon the concept of "group rights," an aspect of human rights that receives insufficient attention. Using a Nicaraguan case study under the recent Sandinista regime, the concept and its application (or degree of it) vis-a-vis Miskito and Creole populations are explored. With the explosions of ethnonationalisms around the globe, an examination of this question is both timely and urgent.

The third essay, by Professor Jervis, enjoins a significant United States foreign policy debate in a novel fashion. By using case studies and events analysis, the author identifies a consistent struggle among divided policy-makers and scholars over "the succession pattern of friendly or allied regimes" in the past. The case studies run the gamut of various post-war U.S. clients and demonstrate the intellectual splits in America during these crises. Some crucial assumptions and expectations emerge from these debates that provide both historical understanding and projective insights for future analogies.

The final essay, by Professor Schriener, raises and responds to several important questions about the world of political communication. The power of the national press, especially the *New York Times*, is subject to constant dispute. But especially does this become contentious in its analysis and response to such an emotionally-laden controversy as the "Arab-Israeli Conflict." Building on previous studies and methodology, the author comes up with some surprising results for the years 1978-1988.

This productive year and this issue were made possible by the publishing skills of Professor Joe Cernik (Managing Editor) and the resourcefulness of Esperanza Silvestre (University of Miami). With completion of this issue the managerial function passes on to Professor John (Jack) McTague of Saint Leo College. Thank you all and thanks to the editorial reviewers as well as the wonderful response from academicians and libraries around the nation and globe.

Belatedly we note that the essay by Professor Alfred Cuzan on Latin American political party systems in the February 1990 issue was the recipient of the first Manning Dauer Award for the best paper presented at the 1989 Florida Political Science Association annual meeting.

Bernard Schechterman
Editor

Liberalism Rethought: The Content and Status of Neoliberalism

Leonard Williams

Liberalism is in crisis. The stark factuality of that statement shows how much it has become part of our conventional wisdom. In the 1960s God had died; in the 1980s liberalism has suffered nearly the same fate. As a result, the most enduring public philosophy of our age has been criticized, defended, reconsidered, and by some, dismissed. New ideological movements have emerged in the course of this reexamination of liberalism; movements that have offered new visions of society and politics, that have sought to provide a reconstituted public philosophy.

Most of these movements have been examined in detail by political theorists in recent years. Because of its recency, however, the ideological movement known as neoliberalism has not yet received full philosophical examination. There have, of course, been more journalistic and political treatments. For example, though Randall Rothenberg (1984) gave us the first extensive exploration of neoliberalism, he primarily provided a who's who and what's what perspective on the movement and its ideology.

More recently, two discussions of neoliberalism appeared in leftist journals as activists prepared for the 1988 presidential election. David Plotke (1986), for instance, authored a provocative analysis of neoliberal positions and electoral prospects. He concluded that the left's best hope for the future was to link its fortunes to those of the neoliberals. Robert Lekachman (1987), too, presented these "chilly thoughts" on the future of the American political economy. In that article, he guardedly concluded that neoliberalism offered "a recipe for uneasy sleep, an interlude between right-wing activism, Reagan style, and, just possibly, revival on the political left" (Lekachman, 1987, p. 45).

Only now, though, are political theorists beginning to come to terms with neoliberalism. A study by Morton Schoolman (1987) situated neoliberalism in the context of the debate between liberalism's individualist and communitarian strains. Schoolman's article represents a significant example of how the crisis of liberal political thought should stimulate investigations into potentially innovative political thinking. Despite this example, however, much remains to be done in putting neoliberalism into its proper philosophical and ideological context.

Given the long-lamented crisis of liberalism, and given the ambiguous legacy of another conservative president, it's clear that we need to deepen the analysis of neoliberalism begun by these social and political observers. We need to explore any number of questions, but chief among them are: (1) How do neoliberals view themselves and their project?; (2) What are the chief values underlying neoliberal policy positions and proposals?; (3) What political prospects do neoliberals have?; and, (4) How should we respond to neoliberalism both as an ideology and as an electoral force?

Neoliberal Self-Perceptions

For the most part, neoliberalism is little more than a label for a "collection of journalists, academics, politicians, government officials, and concerned citizens, linked together by a common belief in the growing obsolescence of conventional politics" (Peters and Keisling, 1985, p. 3). But neoliberalism is not simply an elite political fad, nor is it merely the widely held view that contemporary liberalism is bankrupt. It is rather an attempt to rejuvenate liberalism by discarding outmoded features and accentuating new values. The classic statement is that of Peters:

If neoconservatives are liberals who took a critical look at liberalism and decided to become conservatives, we (neoliberals) are liberals who took the same look and decided to retain our goals but to abandon some of our prejudices. We still believe in liberty and justice and a fair chance for all, in mercy for the afflicted, and help for the down and out. But we no longer automatically favor unions and big government or oppose the military and big business. Indeed, in our search for solutions that work, we have come to distrust all automatic responses, liberal or conservative. (Peters and Keisling, 1985, p. 189).

While it pursues traditionally liberal goals, neoliberalism argues that the means to those goals must be adjusted to fit the new realities of the 1980s. In short, neoliberals temper their pursuit of liberal values with the skepticism suited to a conservative era.

Appropriately, neoliberals offer several indictments of contemporary liberalism. One such indictment is leveled against a political pluralism in which organized interest groups place increasing demands upon government, without considering whether or not their demands are in the public interest. This politics of selfishness has fostered single-issue groups; an adversarial approach to government, industry, and law; and a society where the primary motivation is greed and where special privilege and influence are the norm. According to neoliberals, then, we need a renewed awareness of the limits to governmental largesse, a revitalized sense of the public good (Peters and Keisling, 1985, p. 15; Hart, 1983, pp. 9-10; Tsongas, 1981, p. 158).

Neoliberals also assert that liberalism has failed as a coherent guide to policy-making, especially in the economic realm. Rather than providing us with a lasting and significant example of affirmative government, it has instead evolved into a case study in the evils of big government. We have lost our com-

petitive position in the world economy, say neoliberals, partly because big government has robbed people of the incentives to work creatively and effectively. It has thereby hindered the proper functioning of our most vital economic sectors.

Though government is part of the problem, other parts include both managers who espouse an ethic that emphasizes short-term profits over long-term competitiveness and workers who demand excessive wages and benefits without also increasing their productivity. Economic revitalization thus requires a balance between a pure welfare state which ensures justice, but bureaucratically destroys incentive, and a pure free enterprise system which provides incentive, but lacks a commitment to justice. Thus, neoliberalism presents itself as a third way between the bureaucratic good intentions of Great Society-era liberalism and the laissez-faire cold-heartedness of Reaganite conservatism (Hart, 1983, pp. 54-59; Rothenberg, 1984, pp. 147-59; Tsongas, 1981, pp. 135-53).

Values and Policies

Above all, the major indictment against contemporary liberalism is this: its policies have undermined traditional American values, and they have created a situation where the preeminent liberal goal is to maintain public support and funding for existing government programs. In short, liberalism has abandoned the values of patriotism and progress for those of selfishness and stagnation. Personal sacrifice and commitment to the common good have been jettisoned for narcissism and self-interest. Revitalizing liberalism necessitates recapturing the best of what the American liberal tradition has to offer. It requires, in other words, a return to a value-oriented politics.

But what values should be pursued by this reconstituted politics? A study of neoliberal writings suggests, I believe, that the basic assumptions of neoliberalism are rooted in such values as community, prosperity, rationalism, and pragmatism (Hart, 1983, p. 14; Schurmann, 1983, p. 48; Tsongas, 1981, pp. 238-39).

Community involves, at bottom, a compassionate, humane concern for others. Neoliberals often reaffirm that, despite their critique of liberal policies and programs, they remain liberals in spirit. They maintain their strong opposition to economic exploitation, racism and sexism, and political repression. The goal remains a society in which the individual's dignity is respected, and his or her talents and capacities are nurtured.

But compassion or mutuality alone is not all that neoliberals mean when they invoke the value of community. Respect for others also brings a preference for social relations based on civility. Society cannot operate well if self-interest represents the only motivation for individual and collective behavior. The current politics of selfishness must therefore be replaced by a politics of responsibility that has abandoned the adversarial approach to social relations and that has rejuvenated a sense of national purpose. Neoliberals thus seek a society where people are bound by a universal code of conduct and where citizens consider the common good before they act politically or economically.

The value of community also includes a rejuvenated sense of national purpose. Prominent neoliberals like Tsongas, Hart, and Babbitt often express a deep nostalgia for the glory days of the Kennedy administration when they served in the Peace Corps, participated in political life for the first time, or left behind Republican origins and became Democrats. At that time, the nation seemed to have a sense of mission — it would bear the burdens of the struggle for freedom and justice at home and abroad. People were attuned to the national interest as they responded to the call to ask what they could do for their country.

Today, that sense of commitment is sadly lacking and neoliberals seek to restore it. For some, as Rothenberg (1984, p. 210) notes, national service programs are seen as "the most effective way to create, or re-create, that missing sense of community in American life." Through national service, with a resumed draft, the nation would be repaid for its contributions to individual

development by committed service and renewed patriotism. The armed services would see an increase in the number and quality of new recruits, and the military would no longer be populated only by minorities and the poor. And with a civilian component modeled on the Civilian Conservation Corps, needed work on rebuilding our economic infrastructure could be accomplished. In short, people would develop the sense that they owe something to the larger community, that they are a part of the nation and not simply a member of a special interest group making demands upon the government.

Neoliberalism thus offers us the characteristically liberal vision of a society marked by social justice and equal opportunity. However, since in practice justice and opportunity both have been dependent upon improved standards of living, economic growth and prosperity easily become the most highly regarded values of neoliberalism. And since prosperity and equity can only be achieved through policies promoting long-term economic advances, we need an industrial base that can produce manufactured goods competitively and that can keep the economic pie growing over the long haul.

This means developing "a coherent and coordinated industrial policy whose aim is to raise the real income of our citizens by improving the pattern of our investments rather than by focusing only on aggregate investment levels" (Magaziner and Reich, 1982, p. 4). Such a policy will permit the kinds of choices that need to be made in order to make the U.S. economy both productive and competitive. And, as various observers have suggested, that policy need only pursue these objectives: building healthy and competitive industries; creating a coherent framework for government policies and programs affecting those industries; establishing a system of cooperative relations between business, labor, and government; and, maintaining (to the extent possible) a high standard of living for U.S. citizens (Hart, 1983, pp. 47-48; Magaziner and Reich, 1982, pp. 341-62; Rothenberg, 1984, pp. 221-22).

Although the precise details of a rational industrial policy may vary, the

basic outlines of the neoliberal approach can be sketched (Dukakis and Kanter, 1988; Hart 1983; Magaziner and Reich, 1982; Tsongas, 1981). First, there is the standard neoliberal theme that government taxing and spending policies should work to stimulate savings and investment. Neoliberals thus offer the usual litany of proposals such as IRAs, reduced capital gains taxes, accelerated depreciation, overseas market stimulation, and support for small and medium-sized business. But neoliberals diverge from the supply-side path by stressing that the location and purposes of investment are more important than its total amount and that the existing incentive structures for management should be changed rather than simply throwing money at businesses.

Second, neoliberals believe that economic growth is compatible with various programs designed to ease the social dislocations accompanying economic change. Hence, a proper industrial policy should include mechanisms for assisting displaced workers with job retraining and relocation, as well as targeting economic development efforts to needy areas. And to help individuals prepare for an economic world in flux, neoliberals favor substantial programs in education; programs viewed as an investment in the development of human capital, in America's economic future.

Finally, a long-term, coherent industrial policy must involve substantial cooperation among business, labor, and government. Business needs to permit more employee participation in management and production decisions and to give more consideration to its impact on communities than to its short-term profits. Labor needs to moderate its demands for excessive wages and benefits and restrictive work rules, in exchange for greater involvement in the enterprise. And government needs to forge public sector/private sector alliances in order to help decaying communities rebuild as well as direct programs to where they will do the most good. Above all, cooperation should not result in centralized governmental control of the economy; government will instead be a facilitator for the invest-

ment initiatives coming from industry itself.

In many ways, then, industrial policy serves as a prime example of the neoliberal approach to problem-solving. Traditionally, one of the hallmarks of the liberal tradition has been its preference for the rule of reason. And, as discussion of such issues as industrial policy and international economic competitiveness indicates, neoliberalism has not abandoned this decidedly rationalist orientation. Indeed, neoliberals frequently express the belief that although the country faces serious problems, and although there is little time left to solve them, we can and will overcome our difficulties if only we think clearly about them.

According to the neoliberals, then, American society has yet to come to terms intellectually with the new realities and major social trends of the 1980s and the 1990s to come. For example, there have been important changes in the structures and outcomes of the domestic and global economies — the rise of the service and information sectors and the loss of the U.S.'s dominant position in world markets, among them. Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States changed as the Nixon era's detente gave way to new concerns about Soviet foreign and military policy, not to mention the more recent hopes for positive change with Gorbachev's reform efforts. Unfortunately, ideological habits of thought and action have all too often limited the ability of American policymakers to respond to change and to fashion policies that would solve, rather than create or exacerbate, problems (Reich, 1983; Thurow, 1980).

Neoliberals thus believe that once we truly appreciate these new realities, once we think carefully about the policy difficulties they present, then we can begin to solve our serious economic and political problems in a rational manner. Preferring the dictates of reason over ideology, neoliberals greatly distrust the automatic responses of traditional liberals and conservatives. Their ideological approaches to public problems prevent us from fully appreciating the nature of the situations we face, from understanding what the national interest may require. Only when we take a

fresh look at our difficulties, examine them in the light of reason and common sense, can we begin to offer solutions that work. Neoliberals tend to favor systematic policy and program proposals, and they expect to debate the merits of those proposals in rational and dispassionate terms. Nevertheless, they want to avoid the stigma of appearing to justify some form of technocratic rule, of centralized decision-making by an expert oligarchy. But given various challenges to rational planning, from both the left and the right, what middle ground can be found? Generally, neoliberals argue that, while planning has to be done because problems are systemic in their causes and effects, the point is to do it with a proper concern for individual autonomy, as well as a healthy regard for the complications introduced by uncertainty and unintended consequences (Magaziner and Reich, 1982; Michael, 1983; Rothenberg, 1984). The planner's political task, then, is to choose which risks to take, given a rational appreciation for the situation.

This approach to policymaking does not seem to be all that different from the bureaucratic approach characteristic of contemporary liberalism. Yet, despite the apparent failures of rationalistic approaches to policymaking, neoliberalism remains optimistic about our ability to confront the problems posed by new realities. Such failures are usually attributed not to rationalism itself, but instead to a lack of political will. We lack the will to jettison the automatic responses our ideological dogmas and commitments provide. We lack the will to evaluate government programs and elected representatives on their overall contribution to our community's standard of living, rather than on their fit with our ideological expectations.

While neoliberalism searches for rational problem-solving, it aims to avoid liberalism's narrow focus on simply maintaining New Deal and Great Society programs. Liberalism has stagnated because it now seeks to live off its legacy and to rekindle from time to time the faith of a disintegrating political coalition. Indeed, the crisis of liberal thought and action arises, say the neoliberals, because we simply have turned our backs on liberalism's tradi-

tional pragmatic spirit, on its early preference for bold and persistent experimentation.

Recapturing that pragmatic idealism, that combination of commitment and experimentalism, represents a major neoliberal goal. Hence, neoliberals see the necessity of "making trade-offs between the practical and the visionary, mustering support for more enlightened possibilities on a case-to-case basis: (Falk, 1983, p. 194). But this does not mean that neoliberals believe they must make trade-offs in the ordinary sense of the word. Some (like Thurow) do emphasize the need to make hard choices, the need to benefit some groups of people while burdening others. And others (like Tsongas or Hart) argue that government cannot deliver all it may promise, that one cannot have it all. Still, neoliberals by and large believe that the concept of a trade-off per se permits only false choices, that social justice and economic growth (for example) do not need to be traded-off, but can instead (indeed, must necessarily) be realized in tandem.

How is this to be done? From the environmentalist concept of the soft path, neoliberalism has developed a preference for "appropriate scale": or "appropriate technology." This simply means that neoliberals seek to gear their policies to the requirements of specific situations. Magaziner and Reich (1982, p. 369) suggest, for example, that their industrial policy represents the use of "a variety of policy mechanisms, intelligently applied." In other words, they seek to differentiate among business and political situations even as they offer a systematic approach to our economic problems.

Regardless of what policies are advocated, neoliberals repeatedly emphasize a preference for what works: "We live in an era when pragmatism is vital, when a commitment to whatever policy has the best chance of working is essential, regardless of ideology" (Tsongas, 1981, p. 232). This pragmatism, with an accompanying focus on policy details, has led some observers to conclude that neoliberalism lacks any real set of values. But, while neoliberalism embodies the tradition of American "givenness" (Boorstin, 1953), which suggests

that we need no political theory because our institution and practices already embody the good life, it nevertheless contains a number of principles and values — some uniquely its own, some shared with traditional liberalism and conservatism — that guide its policy choices. Although pragmatism and givenness have been most characteristic of neoliberal politics, it remains to be seen which aspect will ultimately emerge as the dominant one as neoliberalism continues to develop.

Political Prospects for the 1990s

In sum, then, the outlines of the neoliberal ideal would likely appear as something like the United States during the Kennedy years. Neoliberalism seeks a patriotic society of people committed to national service and the public interest. It would be altruistic without too many explicitly redistributive social welfare programs. It would be a society characterized by tough-minded, realistic policymaking to solve contemporary social and economic problems. Given such concerns, can neoliberalism emerge as a new public philosophy for a nation soured on New Deal and Great Society liberalism?

In practice, this question became: What political prospects did the neoliberals have? And since the 1988 Democratic presidential field was predominantly a neoliberal one, a further question presented itself: Could the Democrats sell a neoliberal program to the voters? That is, was there a constituency for neoliberal ideas beyond the slogans of competence, conscience, and competitiveness?

Answers to these questions presume, first, an understanding of the failure of Michael Dukakis' 1988 presidential campaign. Why was such a prominent neoliberal unable to win a victory against an apparently easy target in then-Vice President Bush?

These questions become particularly poignant when one realizes that neoliberalism seemed to be almost tailor-made for the white middle class, often identified as the key voting bloc in 1988. Its managerial ethos, entrepreneurialism, and pragmatic spirit could have tapped the American can-do attitude, the feeling that we can solve our

problems if we face them squarely and apply ourselves. Its stress upon education, investment, and competitiveness similarly should have resonated with traditional American values such as patriotism and optimism for the future. And to top it all, neoliberalism tried to maintain a dose of compassion for the poor and downtrodden.

Indeed, it appeared that the country as a whole was ready for activist government in the wake of Reaganism. Dukakis' Kennedy-style call for neoliberalism should have had widespread appeal. But it didn't happen that way. Why not? One answer points to Bush's harsh campaign against big-spending liberals and card-carrying members of the ACLU who would dare to take away everything from economic opportunity to handguns, from traditional American values to personal security in an age of violent crime.

Another answer points to problems with Dukakis' campaign and with his personality. The campaign clearly degenerated from the well-organized and focused character it had during the nomination battle. After carefully targeting its efforts to win decisive primary victories at key times, it seemed woefully unprepared to develop and implement an equally focused general election campaign. Added to these strategic and organizational problems was the famous "passion gap" — the fact that Dukakis himself stirred no fires in either the hearts of voters or the souls of political activists.

Although he proclaimed the election to be about competence rather than ideology, Dukakis could not call anyone to any kind of banner at all. Few voters were willing to flock to a candidate stressing his or her competence alone, and technocratic discussions of a "leveraged liberalism" did not resonate with voters seeking leaders with both vision and ability. Complex messages suitable for seminars in policy analysis just simply have not engaged people yearning for direct statements of beliefs and values. In short, the "passion gap" enabled Bush to seem both warmer, and paradoxically, more competent than Dukakis.

Despite the plausibility of these answers, I believe a more revealing

answer would put the blame on neoliberalism itself. Avowing a commitment to liberal values, neoliberalism has nevertheless sought to distance itself from the governmental activism and social liberalism of the 1960s. It shares this critical stance toward the Great Society and McGovernite era with conservatives of all sorts — from blue-collar Reagan Democrats to neoconservative intellectuals to New Right religious activists. As such, neoliberal candidates cannot wave the banner of social justice and individual freedom without seeming to fall into the very snobbishness, radicalism and secularism they disdain. And since liberalism has not been supported by a cogent advocacy of social justice and economic compassion, the Republicans have been able to appeal to voters as the party of opportunity. So long as Dukakis spoke of competence rather than compassion, Bush could appropriate for himself the traditionally liberal spirit of a “kinder, gentler nation.”

The difficulty has been that neoliberalism has appeared at once too radical and too reformist to bring about the political, economic, and social transformations it has desired. When neoliberalism was first identified as an ideological tendency five years ago, it seemed to be outside the mainstream of American political thought and practice. Neoliberals' advocacy of an idealistic concept of the national interest, as well as their support for affirmative government and a mild form of economic planning, appeared out of step with the country's mood. In the “new Reagan morning,” neoliberalism first appeared as the previous day's sunset of taxing, spending, and technocratic managing.

Yet in many ways, the broad outlines of neoliberal thought have been accepted by Democrats and Republicans alike. Various neoliberal proposals for military reform, tax reform, arms control, economic competitiveness, and investment in education now fall well within the current political consensus. There is hardly an elected official or candidate at any level of government who has not spoken of the need for more economic growth, and internationally competitive economy, an educational

system and a military second to none, and a more efficient and effective government. Indeed, President Bush has adopted as his own many proposals first advanced by neoliberals in areas such as national service, child care, air quality, arms control, and even economic policy. For example, the spring of 1989 saw Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher eschewing the label “industrial policy” simultaneously touting an economic policy rooted in an “industry-led, business-government partnership” (Blustein and Richards, 1989, p. 31).

In short, neoliberalism to date has offered nothing especially distinctive in its search for pragmatic, workable solutions to public problems. Neoliberals thus fit all too well the portrait of President Kennedy painted by Bruce Miroff (1976, p. 10): “Having nothing new to teach, nothing fresh to offer in the way of social change, Kennedy could only present the existing corporate world in more fashionable garb.” It stands to reason, then, that if neoliberals do not present any unique message to the voters, the electorate will have no reason to choose a neoliberal over a neoconservative. Indeed, the electorate will be increasingly unable to tell the difference.

What, then, should be done? As they were after the defeats of Carter in 1980 and Mondale in 1984 (both of whom ran essentially visionless campaigns), Democrats have been urged to focus on winning the votes of moderates and independents through a telegenic candidate and pragmatic rhetoric. David Hill's (1985, p. 179) recent analysis of public opinion polls suggests that liberals could rebuild an electoral constituency, but only if they advance a “new conceptualization of liberalism which is based on popular opinion, pragmatic in its appeals and narrow enough to support a broad, potentially winning coalition.” The recent formation of the Progressive Policy Institute as a voice for moderate, pragmatic liberals represents a step in this direction.

But another Joe Biden with Kennedyesque flair or another Gary Hart with new ideas, let alone another Michael Dukakis or Bruce Babbitt stressing managerial competence, clear-

ly will not suffice. And contrary to their desired image of open-ended pragmatism and New Frontier optimism, today's neoliberals often appear as aloof intellectuals, at best, or as elitist social engineers, at worst. For even when they do speak the language of commitment and idealism, neoliberals are known more for sleep-inducing policy discussions than for stirring rhetorical flourishes.

How Should They Respond?

Neoliberalism faces a political quandary. While its pragmatic approach to policy problems has intrinsic appeal, and hence wins adherents among both Democrats and Republicans, it simultaneously lacks the electoral base necessary for getting a chance to implement its reformist program. But at the root of that political quandary lies a deeper, ideological or philosophical problem. As we have seen, neoliberalism can be summarized as an attempt to replace the New Deal and Great Society with the New Frontier. If so, the question remains: If the solutions of the 1930s no longer suit contemporary problems, will solutions of the early 1960s be that much better?

At first glance, the answer would seem to be yes. Neoliberals have helped focus attention on the excesses of big government and interest group politics. And they have focused on new realities such as the United States' lessened economic, political, and military position in the world; the rise of a post-industrial global economy; and the choices required by such trade-offs as that between social justice and economic growth.

However, neoliberals have tended to downplay the likely difficulties created by their own policy proposals. For example, neoliberal discussions of industrial policy all too frequently stresses the importance of the entrepreneur rather than the worker; the national contributions of business rather than its privileged position; and the special interests of labor rather than its progressive role as a defender of liberal values. Moreover, a business-labor-government partnership is likely to result in a strengthened broker state; in policy-

making that protects powerful constituencies and not the public interest.

All in all, neoliberals seem more interested in creating a mood than in fashioning a public philosophy to guide American politics in the foreseeable future. But a pragmatic idealism alone will not bring a sense of priorities, a sense of where to go and what ends to pursue. Indeed, neoliberal pragmatism is more likely to repeat the past than to transcend it. As Theda Skocpol (1983) has noted, the problem with the New Deal was its failure to create a lasting farmer/worker coalition; to lay the groundwork for national economic planning; and to legitimize welfare programs in communal terms. These failings left New Deal liberalism unable to move beyond reformism. Given neoliberalism's own pragmatism and its preference for keeping more radical social movements at arm's length, we can expect little more than a farcical repeat of that same failure to enact structural reforms of the system.

Liberals today thus face a situation similar to that of liberals in the 1930s. A generation-long era of significant social change required (as John Dewey frequently observed) that liberalism change too. But while neoliberalism shares Dewey's emphasis on intelligence, democracy, and experimentalism, it neglects his conviction that "there is no opposition in principle between liberalism as social philosophy and radicalism in action, if by radicalism is signified the adoption of policies that bring about drastic instead of piecemeal social changes" (Dewey, 1977, p. 206).

Neoliberals also deviate from Dewey's path when they fail to come to terms, both historically and philosophically, with the liberal tradition. Where Dewey reexamined the basic concepts of political theory, neoliberals have merely studied the details of specific policies. And where Dewey rigorously analyzed vast social changes and sought to philosophically reconstruct liberal thought, neoliberals have merely observed equally vast social changes and simply invoked new formulas to counter old dogmas. As a result of such theoretical failings, neoliberalism has frequently settled for a facile grasp of "new realities" rather than a deeper under-

standing of human needs and aspirations.

In sum, neoliberalism represents a step away from New Deal and Great Society liberalism and from Reaganite conservatism. Its values of community, prosperity, rationalism, and pragmatism are values nearly all Americans endorse, values embraced by policymakers across the political spectrum. Given this level of agreement, we could begin to welcome the prospects of a neoliberal era in American politics. But we should instead realize that, because it has been inattentive to the requisites of ideological change within the liberal tradition, and because it lacks a more or less complete theory of human nature and politics which accords with its perception of new realities, neoliberalism remains an underdeveloped public philosophy. What must be done, then, is to supply the theoretical perspective that this visionless pragmatism, and the country, needs.

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The Notion of Group Rights in the Nicaraguan Constitution

G. Lane Van Tassell and David M. Speak

One of the difficulties and one of the strengths of legal philosophy in our common law system is that it is largely impacted by non-philosophical judgments. The creation of law is often in the hands of legislators and judges whose training is political or legal, perhaps, but rarely philosophical. We can hope that rigorous philosophy will trickle down from the groves of academe to courtrooms and legislative halls, but its progress is slow and uncertain. The advantage of this is that legal philosophers are forced to listen to the non-academic genitors of the law, and to a certain extent to accommodate our messages to the cadences of political push and shove. Both the law and philosophy benefit from this interaction. This paper attempts an initial exploration of a small part of that terrain which sits on the boundary between politics and philosophy — the domain of human rights.

One of the continuing problems of dealing with notions of human rights is the tendency to prematurely and improperly concretize rights. It's wrong to look for the source of rights as if one were exploring the source of the White Nile (e.g. human rights come from God or from the law or from human nature). To march rigorously, step by step, from God or from established law or from human nature to any set of rights, leaves one with propositions so general that they don't offer much protection to real persons, or so specific that they must continually be revised, and are thus constantly at risk of irrelevance.

Rights claims have an intertwined existence both in philosophy and in mundane political operations. The easiest way to characterize their nature across this divide is to think of a rights claim as a trump card in an argument. A claim to a right is a special claim that ought to be recognized by all reasonable persons, as distinct from claims of less force

which are more amenable to compromise and negotiation.

The liberal tradition, which has so heavily influenced political systems in the West, makes individuals the exclusive vehicles of rights. Critiques and defenses of liberalism are common matters of debate in the last ten years, and needn't distract us here. We wish simply to note that group rights are frequently assumed to be antagonistic to individual rights and incompatible with fundamental tenets of our political beliefs. If groups had rights, the story goes, they would impinge on individual rights (how do you balance the rights of a group against the rights of any particular individual?); if some groups were granted recognized rights, then other groups would want rights *ad infinitum* (the rights of blue-eyed persons, or lapidopterists?); if groups had rights, individual initiative would be destroyed (rights imply responsibilities, responsibility within a group is diffuse, diffuse responsibility reduces individual responsiveness). Group rights, according to these views, would threaten our fundamental attachment to equal treatment for individuals (notice this argument in the resistance to affirmative action programs).

But, in fact, what we want in most instances is not equal treatment, but rather treatment as equals, as Donald Dworkin has shown eloquently in *Taking Rights Seriously*.¹ Two children, both dependent upon us for care, are sick. One is dangerously ill, the other only slightly ill with the same ailment. Only a single dose of medicine is available. Without one full dose of medication, the first child will almost certainly die, while the second child, although discomforted, will almost certainly regain full health. Surely it would be cruelly wrong to divide the medication in half, giving each child equal treatment, but producing very different outcomes for

them. Fairness in this situation demands treatment as equals — that means with equal respect for the well-being of each — even though that entails unequal treatment. The slightly ill child might complain, but does she have a right to a half-dose of medicine which might relieve her discomfort? Surely not.

We have a right to treatment as equals in many circumstances. In some circumstances, we have a right to equal treatment — either because equality is the correct response to the situation at hand (e.g., in voting), or because no better response can be found. When a system of individualized draft deferments in the 1960s led to unacceptable proportions of poor, black men being drafted and killed in Vietnam, equal treatment in the form of a draft lottery was instituted, not because a lottery was rational or particularly fair, but at least it was less unfair than the prior arrangement. Particular circumstances will determine when treatment as equals means equal treatment and when it means unequal treatment.

If we give up an over-concretized notion of the source and nature of rights, and recognize that rights are claims that could, under different circumstances, attach to groups as well as to individuals, we open up new questions about rights that must be addressed with the materials of political experience. The matter is really one of generalization. Across what diversity of circumstances and persons can a single claim be made that will have the extra force that denotes a rights claim? As the breadth of the claim increases, taking in more and more individuals who fit less and less well under the generalized description, the force of the claim decreases. As the specificity of the claim increases providing a more and more accurate description of fewer and fewer persons, the significance of the claim decreases.

These tensions reflect the nature of political accommodation and compromise.

To understand the process of rights (and particularly the notion of group rights) more fully, we contend that it is necessary to gather materials directly from political experience. It is not difficult to cite several concrete cases where the treatment of indigenous peoples includes some type of legal and constitutional recognition of group rights. Almost all countries have one or more indigenous populations within their boundaries. General agreement, grounded in the language of the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention,² asserts that indigenous populations should get differential and even protective treatment.

The Genocide Convention adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1948 also includes special language in Article II which recognizes the special status of national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups "as such." Protection against acts of genocide which if committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such," is specifically called for by the convention.³

Pertinent examples of contemporary societies formally recognizing rights of indigenous peoples within their borders include New Zealand, Fiji, Malaysia, Samoa and Nicaragua. In New Zealand, the Maoris are permitted to register separately on electoral rolls. Those that choose to can then fill four of the 83 seats in the New Zealand parliament. In Fiji there were similar arrangements. There were three voting rolls — one for indigenous Fijians, one for Indians (descended from immigrants from the subcontinent of India), and one for Europeans and others. Each group was assured a certain representation in parliament.

In Malaysia, the Malays are generally treated as the indigenous people, the Bumiputra. The Chinese and Indian populations are regarded as immigrants, or at least of immigrant ancestry. As a preliminary to getting independence from Great Britain, the various populations of the Malay peninsula worked out an agreement which

recognizes the special position of the Malays. Under the provisions, the Malays are assured that one of them will always be designated as head of state. Similar provisions also exist at the sub-national level reserving certain offices to the Malays. Political parties also divide along the population of Malays, Chinese, and Indians, and a majority of the civil service appointments must be reserved to the indigenous Malays. The native population of Samoa are also recognized by their constitution as indigenous and are provided special protection against traditional land-ownership patterns. Land owned by individual Samoans can be sold only to other native Samoans.

Turning to Latin America, the historical process of national independence provides substantial examples of the tension between national states and indigenous populations. For virtually every case of national independence, the consolidation of a national state from the fragments of a colonial power reinforced a sense of nationhood that disregarded indigenous peoples. In many cases, subjugation entailed the use of military force. Contemporary Nicaragua provides a provocative example to reexamine these issues of political conflict in the acknowledgement and affirmation of indigenous populations.

From a broad historical view, the persistent pattern characterizing Nicaragua's most visible indigenous population has been external domination.⁴

To speak of the potential claims on behalf of indigenous peoples in Nicaragua is to address a whole range of issues that divide the population of the Atlantic coast from that of the Pacific. By comparison with many other Latin American societies, Nicaragua is a relatively integrated nation. The most obvious dimensions of political distinction relate to region, ethnic origin, sex, and class.

The major ethnic problem of the nation of Nicaragua relates to the issues which divide the Atlantic region from the Pacific. This ethnic gulf has deep historical roots. As the Spanish colonial system gained control over the western part of Nicaragua, the British and area pirates controlled much of the Atlantic region. Many of the local native populations on the Atlantic coast allied them-

selves with the British and British allies against the "Spaniards" — a term which is used even today to describe (often in derisive terms) western Nicaraguans. Indeed, many "costenos" harbor deep feelings of resentment towards the original political movement of Sandino for having disrupted foreign-owned extractive industries located in the Atlantic region during the early decades of this century.⁵

The Atlantic coast of Nicaragua is separated from the Pacific side of the country by geographic barriers. The Atlantic region constitutes more than half of the national territory with slightly less than ten percent of the total population. This geographically-based separation has been reinforced by the practices of competing colonial powers — the Spanish on the Pacific and the British on the Atlantic, holdings of foreign commercial interests, and the actions of the formal Nicaraguan state. In the century since Nicaraguan independence, there has been little penetration among the population of the Atlantic coast by Catholicism, the Spanish bureaucracy, or the Spanish language. The Atlantic coast has remained a frontier.

Other than the Spanish-speaking *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and indigenous population), five major groups dominate the census of the Atlantic region: the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indian populations, and the Garifuno and Creole populations.⁶ These last two groups owe their respective origins in this part of the world to the legacy of the African slave trade and subsequent intermixing with local populations dating at least to the 17th century. Through subsequent migration from English-speaking islands, many of these two groups employ English as their principal language. The dominant group in the region's history has been the Miskitos. They established a working relationship with the British and often engaged in efforts to dominate the other groups of the region.

An especially important external influence begins to shape the region during the 19th century. Beginning in the 1840s with the arrival of German-speaking missionaries, the Moravian church quickly became a very important source of influence in the Atlantic

region. The influence of the Moravian school, seminaries, clergy, and habits of dress and community organization began to take hold throughout much of the region populated by the Miskitos. Today, virtually every Miskito village has a resident Moravian pastor.⁷ Politically, this influence presented an important challenge to any governmental edict emanating from Managua. The decentralized organizational structure of the Moravians, combined with an emphasis on values of self-reliance, provided a near-ideal base for political communities which did not link their destiny to the fortunes of a national government in the Nicaraguan capital — regardless of what political factions may have controlled the organs of power there. Early in the period following the victory over the old Somoza regime, the new Sandinistas had to confront this painful dilemma.

In short, the indigenous populations of the Atlantic coast were distinct in many ways from their compatriots on the Pacific side of Nicaragua. The two regions came from different colonial experiences, were separated by natural geographical barriers, had experienced somewhat different patterns of population migration, were linked to different economic and administrative systems, and had experienced for the most part quite different religious heritages — one being predominantly Catholic and the other Protestant.

The triumph of the Sandinista Revolution brought to many on the Pacific side a natural wave of optimism. Many of the dominant rules about who gets what, when and where were changing. Clearly, the expectation of many was that large numbers of Nicaraguans who had not benefitted from national resources would now begin to do so. The overwhelming assumption seemed to have been that the populations of the Atlantic coast would join with their compatriots of Western Nicaragua to welcome in the new era of a liberated nation.

In retrospect, the more politically astute of the new Sandinista elites seemed to be of two minds concerning the Atlantic coast. On the one hand, many were suspicious and even resentful of the peoples of the Atlantic coast because the latter had not participated widely or

actively in the anti-Somoza insurrection. This concern helped to foster suspicions soon after 1979 among some revolutionary supporters that the Atlantic region was a prime threat for counter-revolutionary sentiment. On the other hand, an even larger number of Sandinistas felt certain that the policies of the new revolutionary government would serve to mobilize the sentiments of all oppressed peoples within Nicaragua, regardless of previous divisions or ethnic differences, to rally behind the new government and its programs. It was partly in this spirit of expectation that the National Literacy Crusade was launched in 1980 with a major commitment of resources to the populations of the Atlantic coast.

In this historical and cultural context, it is, perhaps, not too difficult to understand why many of the residents of the Atlantic coast saw the revolutionary government in Nicaragua as merely another Mestizo regime. For many, the events of 1979-80 had only changed one Mestizo face for another.⁸ At the same time, many of those involved in the revolution itself did not understand or appreciate the very important nuances of the Atlantic coast populations.

Continued tensions between the two regions of Nicaragua were inevitable. To many on the Pacific side, the revolutionary triumph brought with it a wave of optimism which assumed that the benefits of the "new order" would go to the most dispossessed groups first. Many such groups on the Pacific side were recipients of the revolutionary logic and early governmental public policies. When the Sandinistas first came to power, they sought to extend revolutionary institutions and programs to the Atlantic coast as well. The goal of the new regime was to integrate the various traditional communities into the mainstream of Nicaraguan society and create a unified, viable and just Nicaraguan nation. Under the leadership of a key FSLN leader, the effort was intended to overcome the record of neglect during the Somoza era as well as to build a broad base of support for the new revolutionary order in an area that had not experienced the insurrection itself. The FSLN attempted to organize local Committees for the Defense of the

Revolution, to carry out programs of agrarian reform and to implement the National Literacy Crusade — in Spanish, of course.⁹

Initial resistance came principally from the Miskitos. Like the other Atlantic coast groups, they felt no compunction to defend a revolution in which they had not participated.¹⁰ Many of the land reform measures also ran counter to their time-honored customs of communal land-holding. The most immediately contentious issue was that the Miskitos resented being educated in a foreign language. For the Sandinistas, such resistance to programs and policies often served to reinforce the suspicions of many that the Miskitos in particular, and the Atlantic coast populations in general, were a bastion of counter-revolutionary activity.

Early in November 1979 barely four months after the triumph of the revolution, FSLN leader Daniel Ortega attended a meeting in Puerto Cabezas, a principal community in the northern part of the Atlantic coast. The agenda for the meeting was to settle differences between the Miskito leadership and the FSLN cadre over the proposed extension of Sandinista mass organizations among indigenous populations of the Atlantic region. The Miskitos pushed for their own indigenous organization. As a result of these negotiations, MISURASATA was formed. The new organization was declared to be a "mass organization" of Miskito, Sumo, Rama and Sandinista working together. The newly-formed body was also given representation in a recently created national body, the Council of State. The organizational link for nominal representation of certain Atlantic coast indigenous populations had been made.

Early demands from MISURASATA called for the literacy campaign to be conducted in Miskito and English as well as Spanish. The leadership drawn from the Atlantic region was, however, almost exclusively Miskito. There was virtually no group representation for the large and growing Mestizo population of the region. The Creoles of the southern sectors never became a significant voice in MISURASATA.¹¹

Dissension between the Miskito-dominated groups and the Sandinistas

was virtually inevitable. The FSLN did not understand the motivation for the demands for autonomy. Would similar demands for regional autonomy also come from other regions, such as Leon and Masaya on the Pacific side? These areas also included small populations with deep-seated claims to indigenous status.

The record between the Miskitos and the FSLN from late 1979 through the first third of the 1980s was one of mutual suspicion, arrests, massacres, murders, the removal of villages and extensive, inflammatory rhetoric. Aside from the direct effect which all of this had on the emerging military conflict between the government in Managua and the counter-revolutionaries, who became extensively attached to an umbilical cord of support from the U.S. government, the climate was still favorable for further progress on regional claims of autonomy for the various populations of the Atlantic coast.

The Nicaraguan government formed a new agency, INNICA, charged with coordination of communications with the Atlantic coast region. In 1982, CIDCA (Centro de Investigacion y Documentacion de la Costa Atlantica) was created to engage in research about the region and provide information to the government in Managua for future policy choices. Beyond the literacy campaign, several other demands were made of the national government by the indigenous groups. Among these demands were road construction, health care centers, agricultural technical assistance and further education.

Furthermore, the Sandinista leadership, in later years, took the painful step of openly acknowledging its earlier mistakes in initial policies towards the Atlantic coast and, accordingly, made some direct changes. Extensive support was provided to assist many Miskitos to return to their homes. Considerable attention was paid to measures designed to prevent abuses of prisoners taken by government forces in the military conflict with the counter-revolutionaries.

Following a speech given by Daniel Ortega at the United Nations in September 1984 in which an open invitation was issued to key Miskito political leaders to enter into dialogue with the government,

several efforts were made to establish a framework for reviewing the status of autonomy for the Atlantic region. Several rounds of meetings and negotiations resulted in a draft treaty being submitted in December 1984. The government's position was underscored by the language of the proposed agreement. It reiterated "recognition that the ethnic groups of the Atlantic coast must enjoy special rights of autonomy that guarantee their ethnic identity and that must be consigned in the law of the republic with constitutional rank."¹²

At the same meeting, MISURASATA issued a document calling for the government to recognize "the Miskito, Sumo, and Rama populations as sovereign indigenous peoples." Amid subsequent negotiations that lasted until May 1985, the parties continued to pursue elusive agreement on autonomy for indigenous populations.

The Nicaraguan government, however, did name a national commission in December 1985 to work on an autonomy statute. A draft document was submitted to a national conference held in Managua in July 1985 with over 120 representatives from Atlantic coast ethnic communities. This assembly, after considerable discussion, ratified the document, called "Principles and Policies for the Exercise of Autonomy Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Communities of the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua." The document represented the most comprehensive steps taken on the issue of rights of indigenous populations on the Atlantic coast.

The document stressed three fundamental principles. First, it clearly offered language which recognized the unique characteristics and conditions of the Atlantic coast populations. Second, the document asserted the unity of the national state in Nicaragua. Diversity and regional autonomy were couched in terms of national unity — one state. Finally, all of the above were linked to the guiding principles of the Revolution. These three provisions clearly guided the language and the structure of the widely-proclaimed agreement. Formal recognition of group rights within the framework and philosophy of the Nicaraguan revolution were now a legal and political reality.

The next step was the writing of the new constitution. The initial drafting of the constitution was the responsibility of the Special Constitutional Commission, appointed in April 1985 by the National Constituent Assembly which had been elected in November 1984. The Commission had broad representation from across the political spectrum. Following extensive study, travel, consultation, and review, the Commission presented a draft for public review and debate. Beginning in February 1986, some 150,000 copies of the initial draft were distributed. In addition to a series of 12 televised debates, over 70 town-meeting style open forums were held throughout the country, attended by an estimated 100,000 Nicaraguan citizens.

The final version of the constitution devoted an entire section to "Rights of the Indigenous Populations and Communities of the Atlantic Coast." The language of this section made clear reference to the constitutional claim that "the communities of the Atlantic coast are an indissoluble part of the Nicaraguan people." It also established the constitutional claim for "their right to preserve and develop their cultural identity within the framework of national unity, to choose their own forms of social organization, and to administer local affairs in conformity with their traditions." Article 180 stated that "the state guarantees employment by these communities of their natural resources, enforcement of their communal forms of property, and free election by the same of their authorities and representatives." Article 91 also forbade discrimination by anyone on the basis of ethnic identity. Further constitutional provisions set aside four of the seats in the National Assembly to be specifically reserved for representatives of the indigenous groups from the Atlantic coast.

Two sets of questions arise from the Nicaraguan experience. First, were groups' rights claims more than political rhetoric here? Had the notion of group rights actually been established in a way that had concrete political results for the treatment of persons? Second, if groups' rights were genuinely recognized in Nicaragua, what combination of factors had brought this about? What

characteristics of impacted groups proved definitive?

In response to the first set of questions, Vernon Van Dyke's work on group rights is helpful. Van Dyke lists four measures significant in these considerations: (1) the granting of self-determination, (2) the acceptance of some form of political communalism, (3) the adoption of arrangements enabling distinct communities to preserve their identity, and (4) affirmative action. Using these measures as guidelines, it was too early to judge the Nicaraguan case. Clearly some steps had been taken to provide for representation along group lines. Local political organization had been offered some protection. But just how all of this fit into the pattern of a unified state — a single revolutionary society — had still to be worked out in the ongoing political accommodations. The nature of autonomy for the Atlantic coast under the sovereignty of Nicaragua Libre was problematical at best (though perhaps no more so than the notion of sovereign states within a larger federal system which grounded our own Constitutional arrangements). The ability of smaller Atlantic groups to prosper in distinct identities alongside the Miskitos was also an open question. The Atlantic region was itself a complicated set of internal conflicts. The record of the Sandinista Nicaraguan government's dealing with the Atlantic coast communities reflected an explicit acknowledgment of each of Van Dyke's measures within the framework of the Constitutional structure that had been evolving since 1979. The difficult search for future peace and stability was to be shaped and perhaps even decided by how well the new political order was able to bridge the gap between the constitutional principles on one side, and political reality on the other.

As for the second set of questions, more research is required. In terms of establishing a claim for recognition of group rights, the Nicaraguan experience was useful because, in the case of the Atlantic coast, so many factors worked toward group political identity and distinct treatment — history, geography language, religion, commercial patterns and revolutionary experience. If a genuine notion of groups rights didn't

take root here, that would say something interesting about the viability of the concept itself. At the same time, indigenous peoples concentrated in and around Masaya and Leon, sharing some of these characteristics but not others, had been put in a very different position as the debate about internal autonomy progressed. Is it feasible to identify core characteristics — geographical isolation, for instance, without which group identity and limited autonomy are impossible? Whatever the final answer on that question, our primary contention here remains the same. These notions of human rights, and particularly group rights, cannot be explored in isolation from the actual experience of particular societies. That may seem a nominal sort of claim, but it has important epistemological implications. The nature of human rights themselves is such that their existence implies the confluence of philosophy and politics. The working out of the epistemological question cannot proceed apart from the exploration of the historical-political matrix. The continuing efforts of the Nicaraguan nation to define itself provide fertile ground for some small part of that philosophical problem.

Notes

1. Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977.
2. International Labor Organization, *Conventions and Recommendations Adopted by the International Labor Conference, 1919-1966*, Geneva: International Labor Office, 901 Convention No. 107. See also the useful commentary provided by Vernon Van Dyke, "Collective Entities and Moral Rights: Problems in Liberal-Democratic Thought," *The Journal of Politics*, 44 (1982), p. 30; and also Vernon Van Dyke, "The Cultural Rights of Peoples." *Universal Human Rights*, 2 (April-June, 1980), p. 15.
3. Noyes E. Leech, Covey T. Oliver, and Joseph Modest Sweeney, *Documentary Supplement to Cases and Materials on the International Legal System*, Mineola, NY: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1973, p. 89.
4. Charles R. Hale, "Inter-Ethnic Relations and Class Structure in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast: An Historical Overview," in CIDCA, (eds.) *Ethnic Groups and the Nation State: The Case of the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua*, Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1987, pp. 35-57.
5. Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua, Land of Sandino*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986, pp. 80-83.
6. Two excellent surveys of the demography of this area are Charles R. Hale and Edmund T. Gordon, "Costeno Demography" in CIDCA (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 7-32, and Martin Diskin, Thomas Bossert, and Stefano Varese, *Peace and Autonomy on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua*, Pittsburgh: Latin American Studies Association, 1986, pp. 3-8. Useful background was also provided to the authors of this paper by Amalya Dixon, Delegate to the Autonomy Commission, in a lecture delivered in Managua, Nicaragua, July 24, 1986.
7. Diskin, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 6. Material also collected by authors of this paper in dialogue with Norman Bent, Moravian Pastor, Managua, Nicaragua, December 15, 1987.
8. Carlos Vilas, lecture presented at Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, GA, February 24, 1988.
9. Diskin, *et. al.*, pp. 8-15.
10. Charles R. Hale, "Institutional Struggle, Conflict and Reconciliation: Miskito Indians and the Nicaraguan State (1979-1985)" in CIDCA, (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 101-28.
11. Diskin, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-15.
12. Galio Gurdian, "Autonomy Rights, National Unity and National Liberation: The Autonomy Project of the Sandinista Popular Revolution on the Atlantic Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua" in CIDCA, (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 171-89.
13. Manuel Ortega, "The Ethnic Question and the Autonomy Project," *Annual Review of Nicaraguan Sociology*, vol. 1 (1988), pp. 35-9.
14. See the useful summary and commentary provided by Andrew Reding, "Nicaragua's New Constitution," *World Policy Review*, vol. IV, no. 2 (Spring 1987), pp. 257-94.
15. Vernon Van Dyke, "Collective Entities and Moral Rights: Problems in Liberal Democratic Thought," *Journal of Politics*, 44 (1982), pp. 37-8.

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Conflict, Consensus, and Confusion: The United States and Unstable Clients

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Abstract

This study reviews the policy debates which occurred at the time a major American client was besieged. It examines four cases: China in the 1940s, Cuba in the 1950s, and Iran and Nicaragua in the 1970s. Analysts advanced two general policy prescriptions in each of these cases. One group of observers, "Defenders," argued that the United States should strongly support the embattled client. A second group of analysts, "Replacers," believed that the U.S. should promote the transition from the client regime to a moderate successor. While these analysts disagreed on many issues, they shared a number of important assumptions. This study reviews the points of disagreement between the two groups of analysts as well as the assumptions they share. The concluding portion of the manuscript evaluates those assumptions.

The impending or actual collapse of a major American client has stimulated some of the most contentious foreign policy debates in the United States since World War II. Robert Pastor has argued that the "problem of political succession has been one of the most difficult recurring crises faced by U.S. policy makers." (Pastor, 1987, p. 297) This study considers the themes raised in those debates. It examines the views of participating governmental officials as well as prominent observers outside of government. Four cases are considered: China in the 1940s, Cuba in the latter 1950s, and Iran and Nicaragua in the latter 1970s. These cases share a number of common elements. Each of the threatened governments was headed by a rightist, pro-American leader. The challenge to that leader stimulated a significant debate in the United States — before and after the client's fall — about the appropriate remedy to that challenge. A final similarity is that Amer-

ican policy failed in each case; in none of them did the United States attain its goal, whether that goal was the preservation of the client in power or the creation of a moderate successor regime.

Not surprisingly, several different prescriptions for American policy were articulated in these debates. Some analysts, called "Defenders" here, argued that the United States should strongly support the threatened client. Others, called "Replacers," recommended that the U.S. ease the client from power as a means of establishing a more moderate successor regime. In some ways, these prescriptions and the analysis which led to them are very different. Pastor argues, for instance, that these two alternatives "contradict each other in their description, interpretation, and judgement." (Pastor, 1987, pp. 5-6) The first portion of this study details those differences.

While the proposed policies were very different, Defenders and Replacers nonetheless share several important assumptions regarding the power and purposes of the United States. Both groups of analysts believed that the United States could and should prevent the emergence of a radical regime in the client state. The second portion of this study will illustrate these common assumptions.

A consequence of the prevailing consensus was the limited scope of policy debates in these cases. If that consensus accurately depicted American power and interests, then the failure to consider alternative policies was not significant. The third portion of this article considers this issue by evaluating the consensus.

Conflict

Defenders and Replacers disagreed strenuously in their characterizations of the contending parties in the client state.

Nature of the Client Regime

Defenders believed that American strategic interests in the target state and the client's promotion of those interests necessitated strong U.S. support for his regime. With respect to China, Nathan Leites and David Rowe contended that the American success in stopping Soviet advances in Western Europe would "prove illusory if we fail to contain (the Soviet advance) in the Far East." (Leites and Rowe, 1949, p. 277) The fall of China to Communist forces would lead to a "rapid increase in the military potential in East Asia during the third quarter of the century, and of the alignment of this potential on the side of the Soviet Union," which would "greatly affect the American position in the world balance of power." (Leites and Rowe, 1949, pp. 285-292, 294-295) Similarly, William Johnson asserted in 1947 that events in China "may well be of greater importance for the future of peace" than contemporary events in Western Europe, because the loss of an "independent China" would "completely upset the world balance of power." (W. Johnson, 1947, pp. 412-427) Defenders writing about later cases also emphasized the strategic importance of the target state. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Advisor during the Carter administration and one of the Shah of Iran's strongest supporters, believed that America's "central interest" in that country was the "importance of Iran to the safeguarding of the American and, more generally, Western interest in the oil region and of the Persian Gulf." Iran was part of the "strategic pivot of a protected tier shielding the crucial oil-rich region of the Persian Gulf from possible Soviet intrusion." (Brzezinski, 1983, pp. 354-356) Jeanne Kirkpatrick argued that the failure to support the government of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua had contributed to a "deterioration of the

U.S. position in the hemisphere," which had "already created serious vulnerabilities where none previously existed, and threaten(ed)...to confront (the United States) with the unprecedented need to defend itself against a ring of Soviet bases on and around our southern and eastern borders." Kirkpatrick, 1981, p. 29) In another article Kirkpatrick listed the adverse consequences of the collapse of the Shah as well as Somoza: "[a]t best we will have lost access to friendly territory....[a]t worst, the Soviets will have gained a new base....and everywhere our friends will have noted that the U.S. cannot be counted on in times of difficulty...." (Kirkpatrick, 1979, p. 36)

Defenders were likely to view the client regime favorably, and often did so because it promoted these American security interests. Chiang's government in China was described as reformist and popular. Johnson contended that "[t]here is no considerable organized opposition in China to the present Government other than that from the rebel Communists...." (W. Johnson, 1947, p. 415) He wrote on another occasion that "[i]n spite of the adversities of 12 years of foreign war and aggression..., President Chiang's administration ha[d] been amazingly successful in improving conditions throughout the vast country." (W. Johnson, 1949, p. 95) If Defenders did criticize the incumbent government, they did so on the basis of its domestic policies, while praising its foreign policy orientation. Earl Smith, the American ambassador to Cuba during the period of Fidel Castro's insurgency, acknowledged that Fulgencio Batista's government was corrupt, and that it was "disintegrating from within." Still, it had severed diplomatic relations within the Soviet Union, had established a Bureau for Repression of Communist Activities, and had protected American lives and property in Cuba. (E. Smith, 1962, pp. 13, 54-55, 124, 159) Kirkpatrick, describing both Somoza's Nicaragua and the Shah's Iran, acknowledged that neither ruler "attempted to alter significantly the distribution of goods, status or power" in their societies, and that they "relied for public order on police forces whose personnel were said to be too harsh, too arbitrary,

and too powerful." Nonetheless, these leaders should be supported by the U.S. because they were "not only anti-Communist, they were positively friendly to the U.S.,...regularly supporting American interests and positions even when these entailed personal and political cost." (Kirkpatrick, 1979, p. 35)

Replacers maintained a very different view of the client. They often depicted him as an impediment to the attainment of American aims. John Service described Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China in such terms as early as 1944: morale there was "low" and discouragement "widespread." The government and military were "permeated and demoralized from top to bottom by corruption, unprecedented in scale and openness." Moreover, the "Kuomintang (was) losing the respect and support of the people by its selfish policies and its refusal to heed progressive criticism." (Service, 1944b, pp. 138-40) In Cuba, the real problem, according to Wayne Smith, was "the corrupt and incompetent (Batista) regime itself." (W. Smith, 1987, p. 16) Of Iran, Richard Cottam has argued that the Shah was viewed by Iranians as the "symbol of American domination," and any regime "considered by its attentive public to be an American creation, or at least dependency, will be fundamentally fragile." (Cottam, 1979, pp. 7-11, 14) Of Nicaragua, Richard Fagan detailed the corruption and brutality of the Somoza regime and argued that "[w]isdom, real concern for the people of Nicaragua, and even self-interest would have dictated an acknowledgement...of the necessity to end Somoza's rule...." (Fagan, 1979, pp. 188-189)

Nature of the Opposition

Defenders and Replacers also differed in their assessments of the forces challenging the client. Defenders' security concerns were exacerbated by their view of the opposition forces, which they described in the most negative terms. One group of criticisms focussed on the opposition's presumed loyalty to the Soviet Union or, minimally, the complementarity of interests between the two. Leites and Rowe wrote of the "voluminous and unambiguous" evidence of the subordination of the

Chinese communists to Moscow as well as the "copious and obvious evidence (of) the ideological connection between the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union." (Leites and Rowe, 1949, pp. 279-284) Johnson contended that the "present and continuing expansion of Communist control in China are definitely Moscow's doings"; also, "the Kremlin controls Mao or he would not be in control of China." (W. Johnson, 1949, p. 92) Of Castro, Earl Smith wrote that his coming to power would benefit the Cuban Communist Party. This constituted a "dangerous gamble," since "each Communist Party, in whatever country, is a political arm of Soviet Russia." (E. Smith, 1962, p. 160) Kirkpatrick wrote of the "commitment to Marxist-Leninist principles and solidarity with Soviet/Cuban policies" of the new Nicaraguan government. (Kirkpatrick, 1981, p. 29)

Defenders also criticized the activities of the opposition forces. Johnson wrote that the Chinese communists were "fully as destructive as the Russians at their worst." (W. Johnson, 1949, p. 95) Smith described Castro as a "gun-toting terrorist," who had a "record of emotional instability, radical socialist political thinking, plus a deep-seated hatred for the United States." On other occasions, the ambassador described the Cuban rebel as a "dictatorial egomaniac," whose coming to power would serve the interests of neither the Cuban people nor the U.S. (E. Smith, 1962, pp. 30, 37, 49) Kirkpatrick argued that the U.S. failed to recognize either the "strength and intransigence" of the Nicaraguan and Iranian oppositions or their "will to power." (Kirkpatrick, 1979, p. 38)

Replacers viewed the opposition in less unfavorable terms. They tended to believe that the U.S. could establish at least tolerable relations with an opposition-headed successor government. For instance, certain observers of the Chinese Communist Party did not believe that it was controlled by the USSR. John Service wrote in 1944 that "[p]olitically, any orientation which the Chinese Communists may once have had toward the Soviet Union seems to be a thing of the past...." (Service, 1944a, p. 308) Similarly, another China hand,

John Paton Davies, wrote retrospectively that “[c]ontrary to Washington’s assumptions...Stalin did not control the Chinese Communist Party and its army....[B]oth the Party and the Army...were intensely nationalistic.” (Davies, 1972, p. 425) In the Nicaraguan case, William LeoGrande proposed that the United States accept the revolution, because “[i]f the United States responds to change in Nicaragua with support, or at least tolerance, we can still avoid repeating the sorts of errors that proved so strategically costly...” after the Cuban revolution. (LeoGrande, 1979, p. 50) Secretary of State Cyrus Vance expected that the U.S. could maintain a “cooperative, if far less intimate, relationship” with Iran because of mutual interests in a “strong, stable, non-Communist Iran.” (Vance, 1983, p. 343) He also believed that the fall of the Shah “produced no new anti-Western, anti-Israeli, radical Islamic coalition” in the region. (Vance, 1983, p. 347) Richard Falk contended in early 1979 that it was “still entirely possible for the United States to have a healthy relationship with Iran based on mutual respect and understanding.” The new government had “an underlying interest in normal relations with the West, so as not to become unduly vulnerable to pressure from the Soviet Union.” An Islamic Republic would “not necessarily be inherently anti-American, let alone a fanatical theocracy.” (Falk, 1979, p. 31)

Consensus

Despite the many points of contention between Defenders and Replacers, they generally agreed on several crucial points. These relate to the power and purposes of the United States.

Unlimited American Power

One theme on which Defenders and Replacers are agreed is that the power of the United States was such that it could bring about a tolerable, if not positive, outcome as they defined it. Defenders, who foresaw grave consequences if the client fell, believed that the U.S. could prevent his collapse. As late as April 1949, Johnson was arguing that “much (in China) could yet be saved by prompt action.” (W. Johnson, 1949, p. 93) Leites and Rowe, writing in

February 1949, claimed that the provision of American military aid to Nationalist forces could “drastically change” attitudes on both sides of the Chinese conflict. They called for the provision of military supplies “[e]nough American personnel” to permit liaison at the strategic and tactical levels, and “overall military direction by a prominent American military personality with successful military experience in China.” The costs of such a program would only amount to “between one-half of one percent and one percent...of the American national income.” (Leites and Rowe, 1949, pp. 298-303) Earl Smith contended that, even as late as December 1985, “[w]ith United States support there was still hope, remote as it might seem,” that the “responsible opposition” could be enlisted to form an anti-Castro provisional government in Cuba. (E. Smith, 1962, pp. 181-183) As the Iranian instability progressed, Brzezinski believed that the Shah had to initiate some sort of military solution, and that the U.S. should encourage him to do so. After the Shah had left Iran, Brzezinski believed Iranian military leaders should initiate a coup. To do so, they had to be given a signal, and “with the Shah gone, only Washington could give the signal.” (Brzezinski, 1983, pp. 382, 394-395)

Defenders writing after the client’s fall manifest the notion of significant American influence in another way, arguing that the United States allowed opposition forces to assume power. For instance, Earl Smith was convinced that “our actions in the United States were responsible for the rise to power of Fidel Castro.” In addition to aiding Castro, the U.S. “intervened” on a number of occasions to harm the Batista regime, e.g., by halting military aid, publicly embarrassing the Cuban government, and through lax enforcement of the neutrality laws. (E. Smith, 1962, pp. 48, 115-118) Kirkpatrick, describing American policy toward Nicaragua in the late 1970s, made a similar assertion: the Carter administration “brought down the Somoza regime.” The “most important factor” contributing to Somoza’s demise was “the election of Jimmy Carter and the adoption of an all-new Latin American policy.” Since Somoza

possessed a “widespread degree of psychological dependency” on the United States, the action which most contributed to his down fall was the withdrawal of American support. (Kirkpatrick, 1981, pp. 34-36, emphasis in original)

While Defenders believed that the U.S. could use its power to maintain the client in power, Replacers — usually writing after the fall of the client — believed that the United States could have promoted a transition to a moderate successor regime, had it acted sooner. Thus, with respect to Iran, Vance has argued that “[a]s late as December (1978), the United States might still have been able to help the democratically inclined opposition and the military to play a more influential role in shaping the revolution.”

The U.S. had actually proposed transition plans in several of these cases, but Replacers ridiculed those efforts. They did so in such a way that indicated that a transition would have been successful had the U.S. advocated more realistic proposals. For instance, LeoGrande and Fagan mock the proposals advanced by the Carter administration in the Nicaraguan case. LeoGrande argued that there was “nothing inevitable about the final outcome in Nicaragua;...when U.S. policy became fully geared to preventing an FSLN victory, the FSLN was by no means the dominant element in the anti-Somoza opposition.” American policy had “failed dismally,” because it “consistently tried to fit a square peg into the round hole of reality.” (LeoGrande, 1979, pp. 36-37) Similarly, Fagan detailed the “unerring capacity of the U.S. government to be months and even years late in recognizing Nicaraguan realities.” The United States possessed a “seemingly infinite capacity...to misread and mismanage” the Nicaraguan situation. Consequently, American-proposed transition proposals were nothing but “crude stratagems.” (Fagan, 1979, pp. 179, 186-188)

Replacers analyzing other cases reached similar conclusions. Wayne Smith asserts that as early as March 1958, Batista’s collapse was “only a matter of time,” yet the United States failed to support any sort of transition proposal until it was too late. Not until

December 1958 did the U.S. ask Batista to leave the country, but by that time, "there was no longer any chance for a moderate government." (W. Smith, 1987, pp. 20-22, 34-37) Of Iran, Richard Falk argued that the United States had "demonstrated a fundamental failure to understand what (was) happening." Consequently, "Washington ha[d] managed always to stay several steps behind events on the ground, thus appearing...clumsy and hamhanded...." (Falk, 1979, p. 28)

Opposition to Radicals

These authors also share assumptions about the purposes of American policy. While they disagreed about the means of policy, both Defenders and Replacers believed that the United States should seek to prevent the emergence of a radical regime in the target state. "Radical regimes" have typically been defined primarily in terms of their presumed anti-Americanism. Defenders hoped to prevent the emergence of a radical regime through strong American backing for the embattled client. They always portrayed the opposition as radical and pro-Soviet and argued, consequently, that the U.S. had to work actively to prevent its accession to power. Moreover, they believed that American action could prevent such an outcome. Replacers recommended different policies. However, while they sought to replace the client, the result of that transition invariably described as establishing a moderate successor. As noted above, Replacers often maintained a different view of the opposition than Defenders, i.e., that the U.S. could establish workable ties with it. Consequently, there was less risk in promoting the opposition than in continuing to support the client. Wayne Smith describes what Replacers see as the "wise course": in situations such as these: "encourage the moderate forces available to fill the power vacuum before the situation becomes so polarized that one extreme replaces the other." (W. Smith, 1987, p. 281) Applying this prescription to Cuba, Smith believes that the United States should have sought a "middle way," "encouraging Batista to leave and responsible moderates to step in before it was too late." (W. Smith, 1987, p. 20)

William Sullivan, the American ambassador in Tehran, made a similar point with respect to the Shah. He argued as early as November 1978 that the United States should begin to "[think] the unthinkable," i.e., that the Shah might be forced to relinquish power. (Sullivan, 1981, pp. 200-203) In a report sent to Washington, the ambassador predicted that Khomeini would perform a "Ghandi-like" role in the post-Shah government and choose a moderate candidate acceptable to the military for political leadership. The result would be a non-Communist, non-fanatic Islamic Republic with pro-Western moderates holding considerable influence. (Sick, 1985, pp. 81-82) Illustrating the criticisms present in the writing of many Replacers, Smith notes that the United States has "[r]arely" followed such a policy; typically, it had "done the exact opposite." (W. Smith, 1987, pp. 280-281) In the Nicaraguan case, LeoGrande has argued that the U.S. did seek to promote a transition to a moderate successor regime after the fall of 1978. However, such a strategy was adopted belatedly; it "might have had some chance of success in January 1978," but by 1979 it was "hopelessly unrealistic." (LeoGrande, 1979, p. 34)

Reasons for American Failures

Both Defenders and Replacers believed that American policy failed in these cases because their prescriptions were not followed. It is in their assessments of the reasons for that failure that the widespread consensus between the two groups of observers is best illustrated. Both Defenders and Replacers contended that the reasons for American failures lay in the United States rather than within the client state.

Defenders condemned American policy precisely because it had allowed radicals to come to power. That the United States did not intervene to support the client was often attributed to communists or to policymakers who maintained a naive or unrealistic view of the world. That is, the failure to prevent radical forces from coming to power in the client state was attributed not to realities there, but rather to domestic factors in the United States. The claim about the presence of communist in-

fluence was, of course, most prominent in the Chinese case. Johnson, after noting that American policy toward China was "completely reversed" in the mid-1940s, attributed that change, in part, to a "coterie of the Communist front stealthily working within the Department of State...." (W. Johnson, 1947, p. 425) After World War II the State Department "nursed a China policy pro-Soviet in its major features." (W. Johnson, 1949, p. 93) Earl Smith argued that Castro was allowed to come to power in Cuba, because "many in critical positions in the State Department (believed) that a Leftist dictator was better than a Rightist dictator, even though the Rightist dictator may be friendly to the United States and the Leftist dictator our enemy." Persons in the State Department also believed, erroneously, that "[b]ecause democracy is successful in the United States," the U.S. "must transplant and implant our ideas and our form of democracy to other nations, many of whom [sic] are not suited for our form of government and do not like it." (E. Smith, 1962, pp. 125-127) Kirkpatrick, analyzing the fall of both Somoza and the Shah, made similar arguments. The Carter Administration "not only failed to prevent the undesired outcome, it actively collaborated in the replacement of moderate autocrats friendly to American interests with less friendly autocrats of extremist persuasion." These failures were a consequence of the Administration's flawed mindset, which believed, erroneously, that "there existed at the moment of crisis a democratic alternative to the incumbent government," that "the continuation of the status quo was not possible," and that "any change, including the establishment of a government headed by self-styled Marxist revolutionaries, was preferable to the present government." (Kirkpatrick, 1981, pp. 29-40)

Like Defenders, Replacers attributed failed policies to domestic American factors rather than to the realities within the client state. Specifically, Replacers point to the persistence of Cold War attitudes and policies in the United States, which led the U.S. to support the most conservative, anti-communist forces when it should have promoted a

moderate alternative to the client. That is, while Defenders condemned what they perceived to be recent changes in American policy, Replacers claimed that there had been few changes in policy, and that those which did occur came much too late. Wayne Smith, for instance, noted that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles cared little about Cuba or other Latin American countries, except "to assure himself that their governments were anti-Communist, no matter what else they might be." As a result, the United States, "in the name of democracy and liberty," had "warmly supported brutal dictatorships." Enunciating the Replacers' critique of American policy, Smith asserts that any but "the most superficial analysis" would question how "one could further democracy by backing repressive regimes that created the conditions for revolution and the rise of dictatorships of the left." (W. Smith, 1987, p. 37) LeoGrande argued that the United States provided strong support to the Somozas because of their "strong anti-communism and their ability to maintain order." (LeoGrande, 1979, p. 29) Replacers examining American relations with Iran made similar points. Thus, "Iran is a dramatic example of the fruits of cold war interventionist policies in strategically vital Third World countries." Intervention there, e.g., in 1953, was motivated by the American belief that "destabilization in any country bordering the Soviet Union was thought to be the first step toward Communist subversion." (Cottam, 1979, pp. 14-16) Anti-communist fears were exacerbated by the presence of communists within the opposition forces in these countries. As Fagan argued with respect to Nicaragua, "[w]hat gave bite to Washington's Cold War fears...was the increasing importance of the Sandinista movement in the anti-Somoza struggle." (Fagan, 1979, p. 182)

Impact of Consensus

The existence of this consensus between Defenders and Replacers helps to clarify a number of issues about the content of these debates. For instance, there is a significant degree of continuity of issues and proposed remedies over time. The Iranian debate of the 1970s

parallels the Chinese debate of 30 years earlier. Prior failures did not influence later debates, because the goal of American policy remained constant. Those prior failures were not attributed to an unrealizable goal, but rather to inadequacies in American policy.

Furthermore, the prevailing consensus helps to explain the remarkably narrow nature of the debates. Major issues were not addressed. That the United States should not interfere in the domestic affairs of the client state, or that there might be significant impediments to the attainment of American objectives, was rarely considered. Moreover, these analysts did not consider the possibility that certain radical regimes might not be incompatible with American interests.

This failure, over a 30-year period, to consider such questions or to evaluate the components of the prevailing consensus constitutes an indictment of those participating in these debates. That indictment might be dismissed if the components of the prevailing consensus were correct. The concluding portion of this study considers that question.

Confusion

In a word, the points of agreement between Replacers and Defenders can be characterized as "hegemony." Most of these analysts believed that the United States could prevent an unwanted outcome in the target state, and that it should do so to protect its own security interests. Abraham Lowenthal's depiction of traditional American attitudes toward Latin America could be applied to each of the countries considered in this study: U.S. officials regarded as "unacceptable the emergence of any anti-American political group." Moreover, it was believed that "overwhelming U.S. power made it feasible for [the United States] to involve itself deeply in internal politics...in order to ensure that any group which challenged U.S. domination did not come to power..." (Lowenthal, 1976, p. 201, Blachman, 1986b, pp. 329-50) Each of those assumptions—that hegemony is attainable and that it is necessary—can be questioned.

In each of these cases, analysts believed that the United States could

promote a desirable outcome while, ironically, condemning their predecessors for failing to do so. Those prior failures should have alerted policy-makers to the limited influence of the United States. Secretary of State Dean Acheson concluded after the fall of the Nationalist regime in China that the "unfortunate but inescapable fact," was that the outcome of the Chinese civil war was "beyond the control of the government of the United States." The war's outcome had been the "product of internal Chinese forces, forces which (the U.S.) tried to influence but could not." (Acheson, 1950, pp. 112-13) Thirty years later, a participant in the Nicaraguan case came to the same conclusion, arguing that it was an "illusion" to believe that the United States could control everyone else's behavior or that it was at the center of events. (Pastor, 1987, p. 14)

Unfortunately, such conclusions were reached after the American failure and were ignored by subsequent observers. What should not have been ignored, however, were changes in U.S. policy and international reality which rendered the belief in decisive American influence increasingly unrealistic. One of the lessons of the Vietnam experience was that the United States would have great difficulty in imposing its will upon Third World societies. In the aftermath of that conflict, the U.S. had come to rely increasingly upon the Shah of Iran precisely because it was unable to promote its own interests in southwest Asia. How, then, would the U.S. be able to prevent the Shah's collapse when he was confronted with a powerful and popular opposition? Similarly, Lowenthal and others had written about American "hegemony in decline" in Latin America as early as 1976. (Lowenthal, 1976, pp. 199-213; Blachman, 1986b, pp. 337-38)

Not only had American power declined in a relative sense, but the goal sought by Defenders and Replacers—the maintenance of a dominant American military and political role within the client state—was an increasingly difficult one. It had taken only a limited amount of CIA activity in 1953 to preserve the American position in Iran. Much greater effort would be required

in later cases. Third World societies have become increasingly complex and their populations increasingly aware and politicized. Moreover, Third World nationalism, the growing self-confidence of its leaders, unreliable local allies, and regional rivalries inhibit the ability of the United States to control client states. (Feinberg, 1983, pp. 31-81) The United States is not powerless in situations such as those detailed here, but its influence is hardly decisive.

The second aspect of the consensus regarding American hegemony is that the United States had to prevent the establishment of a radical regime in the target state. That presumed necessity derives from a number of assumptions about radical movements and the governments which they might come to head. One group of scholars has described traditional American thinking: "[l]eft (is) taken to mean Marxist and Marxist to mean Soviet communist, and communists, once in power, would inevitably establish a totalitarian system that would tyrannize its population and jeopardize U.S. economic, political, and military interests." Moreover, American observers typically broadened the notion of "leftist" or "radical" groups to encompass much more than the violent opposition. (Blachman, 1986b, p. 332)

These beliefs about radical movement are questionable. The practice of a number of revolutionary governments should lead one to question traditional American assumptions. Radical regimes do not necessarily threaten American interests nor are they necessarily hostile to capitalism. In fact, they have an interest in maintaining productive ties with the Western international economic and political order. (Walt, 1987, pp. 4-8; Feinberg and Oye, 1983, pp. 202-8) Moreover, as one scholar has noted with respect to the foreign policies of revolutionary governments, "despite over thirty years of talk about dominos, it is very difficult to identify a case in which the (domino theory) clearly operated to determine a political outcome." (R. Johnson, 1985, p. 40) This is not to say that certain radical governments do not pose a threat to American security. Some do establish close ties with the USSR or seek to destabilize their neighbors. However, the estab-

lishment of a radical regime does not necessarily threaten the United States, as was usually assumed in these debates.

Conclusion

History has documented that the United States attained its aims in none of the cases considered here. Defenders and Replacers would assert that the lack of success was due to a failure to implement their prescriptions. The argument advanced here, however, is that earlier policies failed because they were based upon an erroneous perspective. Accordingly, a successful approach required modifications not only in American policy but, more fundamentally, in its view of the Third World and the America role there. As Richard Feinberg has argued, America's setbacks in the Third World are "the consequences of policies based on false assumptions regarding American influence, the nature of Third World politics, and the imperatives of our national interest." (Feinberg, 1983, p. 17)

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The New York Times and the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1978-1988

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Abstract

There have been many charges made against the American media and their coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict accusing the media, especially the press, of being biased. This study examines the different accusations made by critics of the media, previous studies' attempts to answer the charges, and utilizes a content analysis of the *New York Times* unsigned editorial opinions from January 1, 1978 through December 31, 1988, to test the hypothesis that the *Times*' editorial opinion had been pro-Israeli.

Introduction

There has been considerable debate in recent years concerning the American press' coverage of the Middle East. Many concerned have questioned the media's objectivity. Referring to the media's handling of the Middle East, Curtiss has asked: "In short, if the media have inadequately or unfairly covered an area now generally agreed to be of vital importance to the western world and to Americans in particular, was it a sin of commission or of omission?" (Curtiss, 1982, p. 145). The debate has led to serious charges by both sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict that the press is biased, knowingly or not, in favor of the other side.

Proponents of Israel and independent researchers have contended the Western media are anti-Israeli (Muravchik, 1983; Podhoretz, 1982). Former Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was so outraged at *Time* magazine's critical coverage of the 1982 Lebanon War and his role in the war, that he sued former Jerusalem correspondent David Halevy for libel. Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, charged the American news media as not only being anti-Israeli, but also contained widespread anti-semitism. He cited examples of Jews being compared to Hitler in their

dealings with the PLO, the Star of David likened to the swastika, and comparisons of Israel to Sparta, Haiti, Vietnam, and Nazi Germany (Podhoretz, 1982).

Muravchik (1983) accused the *New York Times* of being anti-Israeli in its editorial pages concerning the Lebanon War and consistently confusing casualty figures. His findings supported an earlier study conducted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (Simon, 1983). Ironically, he commended the *Times*' coverage as a whole, commenting that it was of higher standard than other news outlets despite its biases. This commentary infers very little credibility for the other news outlets.

Proponents of the Arab cause and independent researchers have also contended the American media may be biased—in this case in favor of Israel (Wagner, 1973; Daugherty & Warden, 1979; Trice, 1979).

Political columnist Nicholas von Hoffman has written that the American media are riddled with "hardline Israeli propaganda," and accuses the press of subjecting "a generation and a half (of Americans to)...biased reporting and one-sided editing...making any other American policy but idiotic slavishness to Israeli warhawks unthinkable" (Daugherty & Warden, 1979, p. 776).

I.F. Stone, commenting on American media bias in favor of Israel, wrote: "Finding an American publishing house willing to publish a book that departs from the standard Israeli line is about as easy as selling a thoughtful exposition of atheism to the *Osservatore Romano* in Vatican City" (Daugherty & Warden, 1979, p. 776). Hudson (1980), and Ghareeb (1983) have criticized the media for stereotyping Arabs and taking a more "Western-Israeli" view of the Middle East and its conflicts. James McCartney of *Knight* newspapers went so far as to assert that if the media had

not been biased in favor of Israel, it would not have been necessary for the Palestinians to resort to violence to draw attention to their cause (Curtiss, 1982).

Cockburn (1988) singled out the *New York Times* editorial board as being especially pro-Israeli in its positions. "Without a qualm the *Times* accepts implicitly the right of Israel to exert violence in its illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but denies the Palestinians—indeed requires them formally to surrender—a principle recognized in international law and UN declaration: the right of any people to resist an occupier" (Cockburn, 1988, p. 18).

On the other hand, in relation to the 1982 Lebanon War, the *Columbia Journalism Review* commissioned a report on the coverage of Lebanon. It found the coverage to be accurate and balanced (Simon, 1983). Simon (1983) refuted Podhoretz's claim that there was widespread anti-semitism in the media. After conducting a study examining the media's coverage of the Middle East and the Lebanese War, Simon concluded the *New York Times* editorial coverage to be neutral; only the *Wall Street Journal* was consistently pro-Israeli in its editorial views.

The accusations that the American media are biased are important because of the vital role the media play in foreign policy formulation and analysis. The media are the primary impersonal channels used by opinion leaders and decision makers to garner support for a particular policy. The media are used as both transmitters of opinion and shapers of opinion on foreign policy issues (Cohen, 1962; Rosenau, 1964; Wagner, 1973; Trice, 1979). Bernard Cohen (1962) argued that the media can be either instruments of the government or critics of the government; they can inform, interpret, advocate, and on occasion they become active participants

in the policy-making process. It has been demonstrated that the elite press are the major points of contact between State Department officials and the external public (Trice, p. 306). The elite press, or the prestige press that Cohen speaks of, are important instruments of United States foreign policy decisions and formulation. It is a small group of newspapers that U.S. government officials and non-governmental leaders turn to regularly for not only information, but also analysis of existing or proposed foreign policy decisions (Cohen, 1962; Curtiss, 1982).

The print media are the primary sources of information for American leaders — especially the editorial page which is of “great importance to decision-makers” (Curtiss, 1982, p. 146). The influence of print media, in this case the editorial page, on opinion leaders in turn has considerable influence on the general public’s opinion (Fitzgerald, 1986; Katz, 1957). The print media are more likely to be the “primary sources of opinion for the more interested and active members of the attentive and opinion making publics” (Trice, 1979, p. 307). Many researchers have concurred the editorial page is of great importance to decision makers (Rosenau, 1961; Wagner, 1973; Trice, 1979; Daugherty and Warden, 1979; Curtiss, 1982).

An indication as to the importance of the editorial page, a 1986 study revealed that 53% of men and 58% of women read the editorial page (Carle, 1986). Another study conducted in 1980, for the National Conference of Editorial Writers by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Co. by research analyst Elsa Mohn and professor Maxwell McCombs, found that 85% of persons who read a newspaper everyday read the editorial page as well (Fitzgerald, 1986).

Another exhaustive study done for the National Conference of Editorial Writers found most editorial pages are better read than sports pages; interestingly though, the Mohn and McCombs study could not find a consistent demographic variable for readership (Fitzgerald, 1986).

Literature Review

Wagner (1973), Daugherty and Warden (1973), and Trice (1979) have con-

ducted independent studies examining unsigned editorials of the elite press and their respective positions vis-a-vis the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Each found similar results.

Wagner’s sample included the June 1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel captured and began occupying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The sample period extended from 1967 through 1969, during which disengagement of the United States from the Middle East had become a well-established phenomenon (Wagner, 1973). Public opinion of the country was once again becoming neo-isolationist.

In contradiction of the prevailing isolationist mood, Wagner pointed out that during former President Nixon’s first term in office, the United States military aid to Israel averaged \$400 million per year, while during former President Johnson’s administration military aid averaged only \$100 million per year. He criticized the United States as being anything but “even-handed” and inconsistent with the new mood of disengagement in the United States (Wagner, 1973, p. 318).

This study’s population consisted of every editorial page of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* (except Saturdays). Each was reviewed for any unsigned editorials which carried opinions on the United States international involvement in the Middle East, East or West Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, or the world in general. Each was coded into one of four categories regarding disengagement/commitment categories: military commitment, military disengagement, non-military commitment, and non-military disengagement. Further analysis measured the intensity of a particular editorial opinion specifically with regards to the Middle East.

Wagner reached two general conclusions:

First, while the mood of disengagement is most pronounced regarding Asia, there does seem to be a degree of carry-over vis-a-vis the Middle East. Sympathy for the Israeli position was high, but the idea that the United States should seek an active role in negotiating a settlement was expressed much more often than any other theme....Second, the findings seem to suggest that newspaper opinion is very responsive to

specific situations (usually involving international crises). When Israel appeared to be in imminent danger (as of May 1967), newspaper opinion seemed heavily committed to Israel. After Israel’s swift victory, attention and opinion shifted toward advocating active United States action in providing a diplomatic settlement. Should Israel again find herself in a vulnerable position, it seems likely that opinion would again become more militant in her defense—particularly, if the Soviet Union becomes heavily involved (Wagner, 1973, p. 310).

Each of the three newspapers in Wagner’s study took somewhat of a different stance, but overall they all had a pro-Israeli tone.

Wagner’s findings indicated a change in intensity for support of Israel in the editorial opinions as circumstances in Israel’s security changed. There appeared to be a direct correlation with support and the threat of harm to Israel. Although he qualified this support,

“The conclusion of the logic contained in these findings (as long as Israel does not appear to be seriously threatened) suggests that the elite opinion base is such that American political leaders could embark, to a limited extent, on a multipronged diplomatic effort to break the deadlock in the Middle East.” (Wagner, 1973, p. 310).

Attempting to justify or explain his findings, Wagner asserted that the *New York Times* pro-Israel stand was at least partly reflective of a “large Jewish reading public sympathetic to Israel” (Wagner, 1973, p. 315).

Robert Trice (1979) conducted a much larger study. He reviewed the unsigned editorials of 11 major American newspapers — *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Denver Post*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and the *Dallas Morning News*. A total of 2,924 editorials were coded for the period of January 1, 1966, through December 31, 1974.

Three main relevant variables were coded for each editorial — “issues,” “policy stance,” and “intensity.” He divided the editorials pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict into 37 different

"issues": "political," "economic," "military," and "social," are just a few examples. An editorial was not limited to the number of categories, as often an editorial would discuss more than one issue.

Trice's conclusion concurred with Wagner's findings:

Support for Israel was the greatest in 1970 during the War of Attrition, and was particularly strong during the final third of that year in the wake of Egyptian-Soviet violations of the ceasefire agreement. However, the elite press was critical of a number of Israeli actions over the years, particularly those concerning the annexation of Jerusalem, policies toward the occupied territories and the Israeli retaliatory raid policy. The Arab governments were never able to elicit much sympathy from American newspapers (Trice, 1979, p. 314).

Trice did not find evidence though to support one of his two original propositions: that to the extent the press is a "captive" of any government or point of view, you would expect little variation across issues. Instead, he found that the prestige press is a "relatively independent source of opinion" (Trice, 1979, p. 315). While it was true the press was more supportive of the United States and Israel and less supportive of the Arab states and Palestinian issues, there was a mix of both positive and negative opinions expressed in the unsigned editorial page for both parties depending on the issue:

...while editorial coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict can hardly be characterized as "neutral," neither can it be said that the elite press was "totally supportive," or "totally critical" of any party to the conflict. Rather, the level of support for any party tended to vary according to the specific aspect of the conflict under consideration (Trice, 1979, p. 320).

When examining newspapers independently, he found that in relative terms the *Dallas Morning News*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Atlanta Constitution*, and the *Louisville Courier-Journal* were characterized as moderately supportive of Israel. The *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* were, overall, slightly supportive of Israel, while the *Denver Post* in its overall editorial opinion was neutral. On the other side, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the

Christian Science Monitor were slightly positive toward the Arab states and the Palestinian cause.

Daugherty and Warden (1979) conducted a study that reviewed unsigned editorials of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Wall Street Journal* between January 1, 1967, and December 31, 1977. A total of 1,288 unsigned editorials addressing the Middle East were located, and they coded one-half of the total number.

Eight topic areas were used for coding purposes: "Arab-United States Relations," "Israeli-United States Relations," "Arab-Israeli Relations," "Arab Domestic Affairs," "Israeli Domestic Affairs," "Arab Relations with Nations Other than the United States," "Israeli Relations with Nations Other than the United States," and "Miscellaneous."

The editorial position was then coded into one of five possible categories for directional analysis: "Supportive of Israel," "Critical of Israel," "Supportive of Arab Nations," "Critical of Arab Nations," or "Neutral."

Their findings mirrored both Wagner's and Trice's conclusions. They found that editorial comment increased during the 1967 Six-Day War; the death of Egyptian President Nasser; increased Russian involvement in the Middle East in 1970; the 1973 Yom Kippur War and resultant oil embargo; and the 1977 peace proposal initiated by Egyptian President Sadat. This concurs with the previous studies' findings that coverage intensification occurs at critical moments. Discussing this point, they make an interesting observation when they question if the editorial pages of the elite press function as opinion leaders or simply as followers of current events.

Daugherty and Warden's conclusions concur with the previous studies' findings:

...there is no evident partisanship on the part of the four papers studied. This finding is true of all newspapers, in all categories, through the 11-year study period and confirms Wagner's findings (Daugherty and Warden, 1979, p. 782).

Secondly:

...in an examination of the Arab-Israeli conflict during times of imminent danger or crisis leading to potential conflict, editorial support gravitates toward

Israel. As perceived danger of armed conflict materializes into actual warfare, the overwhelming theme is one of neutrality, taking no sides in the bearing of arms (Daugherty and Warden, 1979, p. 782).

As for claims that the American press presents a "monolith of opinion" slavishly devoted to any cause, empirical data prove otherwise (Daugherty and Warden, 1979, p. 782).

These three studies indicated that the elite press unsigned editorial views were vaguely pro-Israeli but do vary in intensity in accordance with perceived threats to Israel's security. They also found the quantity of editorials rises in time of conflict and turmoil, while negative editorials are directed at either party that is perceived by the elite press as belligerent.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following are research questions derived before this study began: (1) How has the subject matter of the *New York Times* editorial coverage of the Middle East changed from 1979 through 1988? (2) What is the predominant viewpoint of the *New York Times* editorial opinion? Is it pro-Israeli, pro-Arab, or neutral? Has the *Times*' intensity of advocacy changed from 1979 to 1988? (3) How has the predominant *New York Times* editorial viewpoint changed over the period of January 1, 1979, through December 31, 1988?

The following are hypotheses derived from the previous findings and suggestions of other studies conducted on the subject: (1) Overall, the *New York Times* unsigned editorial coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be more favorable towards Israel and their actions, than towards the Arab nations and the Palestinian's actions. (2) The editorial position of the *Times* will not be consistently pro-Israel throughout the ten-year period.

Method

The reasons for limiting the study to unsigned editorials were several. Editorials present themselves as natural and obvious devices for non-governmental opinion leaders who control the media, and if biases are present, the most probable place for them to appear would be

on the editorial page. It is also where they are most overt. Finally, previous studies have indicated there is virtually no difference in foreign policy news coverage among the three national television networks that dominate the electronic media (Trice, 1979). This situation tended to moot that medium as being as valuable a channel for exploration as a major American newspaper.

Between January 1, 1978, and December 31, 1988, 278 unsigned editorials addressing the Middle East were published in the *New York Times*. The *Times* is a member of the elite press that is among the "most quoted newspapers in the Western world" and an organ of "elite opinion and a major source of information for makers of foreign policy, their influence is pervasive, if not massive" (Stock, 1985, p. 319). These particular dates were chosen to be analyzed because they immediately follow Daugherty and Warden's sample of unsigned editorials between January 1, 1967 through December 31, 1977.

One-half of the 278 total unsigned editorials, ($n=139$), were content analyzed and coded according to the editorial position taken in the article. After randomly selecting a starting point, every second editorial was selected for analysis. Further analysis was conducted on the editorials pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict exclusively. This methodology mirrors the study conducted by Daugherty and Warden (Daugherty and Warden, 1979).

Unit of Analysis

The basic unit of analysis was the individual unsigned editorial of the *New York Times*.

Operational Definitions

Eight topic categories were employed for codification:

Arab-United States Relations

An unsigned editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with the United States' interactions or proposed interactions with an Arab nation or nations. Examples include U.S. or Arab governmental contacts with each other, or a group of nations. It would include U.S. contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization

(PLO). It also includes U.S. interactions with persons or groups inside Arab nations, such as Islamic Jihad, Muslem Brethren, or Abu Nidal. Terrorism and kidnapping directed against a member of the United States from an Arab country, sponsored by an Arab country, or by an Arab group is included in this topic area.

Israeli-United States Relations

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with the United States' interactions or proposed interactions with Israel. Examples would include U.S. Israeli governmental or non-governmental contacts.

Arab-Israeli Relations

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with the interactions or proposed interactions of an Arab nation or nations and Israel. Editorials included in this topic include governmental or non-governmental contacts, but it does not include private Israeli citizens or groups of citizens' contacts with the PLO.

Arab-Domestic Affairs

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with a domestic issue inside an Arab nation or within Arab nations. This would include topics such as hunger, drought, any violence contained within a society, and or internal PLO affairs. This would not include intergovernmental relations between countries.

Israeli-Domestic Affairs

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with a domestic issue inside Israel. It would include Palestinian-Israeli relations if they are specifically within Israel such as the Palestinian uprising that began in December, 1987. It would also include private Israeli citizens or non-governmental organizations' or groups' contacts with the PLO. It would not include U.S. citizens or U.S. Jewish organizations' contacts with the PLO.

Arab Relations with Nations Other than the U.S.

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with an Arab nation or Arab nations' relationship with nations other than the United States or Israel. Such relations are

usually governmental but not necessarily. This includes Arab nations' interactions with other Arab nations, and Arab governmental or private contacts with the PLO.

Israeli relations with Nations Other than the U.S.

An editorial in which the overall balance of the article deals with Israel's relations with nations other than the United States or Arab nations. Such relations are usually governmental but not necessarily. This does not include Israel's relations with the Palestinians.

Miscellaneous

An editorial that does not fit properly under the seven previous topic areas.

Because the "Arab-Israeli Relations" topic was judged to be the best measure of a newspaper's editorial position, the editorials that were coded under "Arab-Israeli Relations," were further analyzed for direction to determine if the *Times* advocated a particular side in the Arab-Israeli conflict (Daugherty & Warden, 1979). According to one study direction of content refers to "the attitude expressed toward any symbol by its user" (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

A model for the following directional definitions was adapted and modified from Budd, Thorp, and Donahew (1967). The following are the five directional definitions used in analyzing the editorials that were coded under the topic "Arab-Israeli Relations."

Directional Operational Definitions

Supportive of Israel

Those items reflecting social cohesion and cooperation and political and economic stability and/or strength. Supportive will be judged on the basis of international cooperation (political, social, and economic) in which Israel, or any group or individual representing Israel, is depicted, right or cooperative. In internal affairs, supportive will be judged on the basis of persons cooperating in political, social, and economic affairs. For example, events and incidents which depict Israel or any group or individual within Israel (except the Palestine Liberation Organization) as progressive, successful, peace-loving, moral, intelligent, lawful, unified, or as ex-

exercising leadership will be considered supportive of Israel. This classification will not be assigned where Israel, or any group or individuals thereof, is depicted as exploiting its strength upon weaker nations, groups, or individuals. This would include terrorism, and repression of Palestinians (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

Critical of Israel

Those items which report social conflict and disorganization and political and economic instability and/or weakness. Critical will be judged on the basis of international tensions (political, social, economic) in which Israel, or any group or individuals representing Israel, is depicted as weak, wrong, or uncooperative. In internal affairs, unfavorability will be judged on the basis of civil disruption in which there is conflict between persons or groups of persons within Israel in political, economic or social affairs, which is being mishandled by the government. For example, events and incidents which depict Israel, or any group or individual within Israel, except the Palestinians, as backward, domineering, immoral, impractical, unlawful, disunified, violent, or lacking in leadership will be classified as critical (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

Neutral

Those items which reflect neither favorable or unfavorable conditions either through balance of content or a lack of controversial material (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

Supportive of Arab Nation(s) or the Palestinians

Those items reflecting social cohesion and economic stability and/or strength. Supportive will be judged on the basis of international cooperation (political, social, and economic) in which an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, or any group or individuals representing an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, is depicted as strong, right, or cooperative. In internal affairs, supportive will be judged on the basis of persons cooperating in political, social, and economic affairs. For example, events and incidents which depict an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, or any group or individuals within an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, as progres-

sive, successful, peace-loving, moral, intelligent, lawful, unified, or as exercising leadership will be considered supportive. This classification will not be assigned where an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, or any group or individual thereof, is depicted as exploiting its strength upon weaker nations, groups, or individuals. This would include terrorism (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

Critical of Arab Nation(s) or the Palestinians

Those items which report social conflict and disorganization and political and economic instability and/or weakness. Critical will be judged on the basis of international tensions (political, social, and economic) in which an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, or any group or individuals representing an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, is depicted as weak, wrong, or uncooperative. In internal affairs, critical will be judged on the basis of civil disruption in which there is a conflict between persons or groups of persons within an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians in political, economic, or social affairs. For example, events and incidents which depict an Arab nation(s) or the Palestinians, or any group or individual within an Arab country, or in this case the Palestinians inside Israel, as backward, domineering, immoral, impractical, unlawful, disunified, violent, or lacking in leadership, will be classified as critical (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

The *Times*' editorial positions were further analyzed by combining editorials that were coded as "Supportive of Israel," or "Critical of Arab Nation(s) or Palestinians" into a single category "Israeli Supportive." Those editorials coded as "Supportive of Arab Nation(s) or Palestinians," or "Critical of Israel" were combined into a single category called "Arab Supportive." Editorials that were analyzed as "Neutral" remained the same.

This created a new triangle of analysis — "Israeli Supportive," "Arab Supportive," and "Neutral." This breakdown of variables followed Daugherty's and Wagner's (1979) method, which they proposed would present a dichotomy indicating support for one side or the other in the conflict. This system was

applied again only to the editorials previously coded into the main topic of "Arab-Israeli Relations."

Pretesting Procedures, Coders, and Reliability

Four undergraduate students and the author coded 15 randomly selected editorials to test for intercoder reliability. Each coder had 20 decisions to make, thus a total of 100 decisions were made between the five coders. An intercoder reliability of 0.86 was recorded. Eliminating two undergraduate coders resulted in a 0.97 agreement among the remaining three coders. These coders were then used for the study. (Budd, Thorp, and Donahew, 1967).

Contingency tables and other statistical analyses operations were performed on the data by the Number Cruncher Statistical System, Version 5.0 - Student (Hintze, 1988).

Findings

The *Times* coverage of the eight categories designed for the study, in order of frequency, were as follows: "Arab-Israeli Relations" (38.8%); "Arab-US Relations" (19.4%); "Israel-US Relations" (15.8%); "Arab Domestic Affairs" (10.1%); "Israeli Domestic Affairs" (7.9%); "Miscellaneous" (4.3%); "Arab Relations With Nations Other Than the US" (3.6%); and "Israeli Relations With Nations Other Than the US" (0.0%). (See Tables 1 and 1a)

As indicated, surprisingly none of the editorials dealt with "Israeli Relations With Nations Other Than the US." This finding may be significant in itself.

The category of "Arab-Israeli Relations" received the most attention by the *Times*, and therefore was the most logical choice to look for advocacy on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The percentage of coverage by year devoted to "Arab-Israeli Relations" in comparison with the seven other categories was as follows: 1978 (68.8%); 1979 (42.9%); 1980 (20%); 1981 (38.5%); 1982 (33.3%); 1983 (38.5%); 1984 (25%); 1985 (12.5%); 1986 (50%); 1987 (22.2%); and 1988 (52.6%). (See Table 2). Therefore, between January 1, 1978 and December 31, 1988, the *Times* devoted

38% of their editorials pertaining to the Middle East to "Arab-Israeli Relations."

The findings of this study are significantly different than previous studies' findings and conclusions on the subject. This study found that the *Times'* editorial opinion was not pro-Israeli as expected, but rather the *Times'* editorial position appeared to be pro-Arab and Palestinian. A descriptive statistical analysis resulted in a -.241 mean average for the *Times'* editorial opinion from 1978 through 1988. A continuum had "Arab Supportive" as -1, "Israeli Supportive" as +1, and "Neutral" as 0. "Arab Supportive" consisted of editorials that were coded as either critical of Israel or supportive of Arabs. "Israeli Supportive" consisted of editorials that were critical of the Arab states or Palestinians and editorials that were supportive of Israel. Therefore, on a continuum of -1 to 1, a mean of -.241 indicated a position that was slightly supportive of the Arab states and the Palestinians.

Of the 54 editorials that were coded as "Arab-Israeli Relations" between January 1, 1978 and December 31, 1988, 24 were "Supportive of Arabs" (44.4%), 19 were "Neutral" (35.2%), and 11 were "Supportive of Israel" (20.4%). (See Figure 1).

This finding does not support my original stated hypothesis that the overall editorial position of the *Times* would be pro-Israeli.

To examine the *Times'* apparent support for Arab nations and the Palestinians in more detail, it is necessary to break "Arab Supportive" ("Critical of Israel" and "Supportive of Arab Nations or Palestinians") and "Israeli Supportive" ("Supportive of Israel" and "Critical of Arab Nations or Palestinians") into their respective components and examine each of the four categories individually.

The percentage of unsigned editorials that were "Supportive of Israel" and those that were "Supportive of Arabs or Palestinians" were relatively equal at 7% and 6% respectively. More importantly though, 15% of the unsigned editorials were "Critical of Arabs or Palestinians," as opposed to 37% of the editorials that were "Critical of Israel" (Figure 4). Therefore, for every

one unsigned editorial that was critical of the Arabs or Palestinians, there were more than two that criticized Israel.

It became obvious the *Times* was not necessarily pro-Arab in that its editorials were supportive of the Arab nations or Palestinians, but rather they were highly critical of Israel. This is quite evident in every year from 1979 through 1988, with the exceptions of 1985, 100% "Neutral," and 1986, 33.3% "Neutral," 33.3% "Critical of Arabs," and 33.3% "Supportive of Arabs" (Table 4).

Nevertheless, the original hypothesis that the *Times* would be pro-Israeli was not supported by the data. Instead it was found they were quite critical of Israel.

As expected in hypothesis two, there was not a constant point of view across the studied period, but rather, a change in intensity of support for an actor that varied by year. The percentage of support by year with "Arab Supportive" the first percentage cited followed by the percentage of editorials that were "Israeli Supportive" were as follows: 1978 (18.2%, 27.3%); 1979 (50%, 0%); 1980 (33.3%, 0%); 1981 (40%, 40%), 1982 (50%, 33.3%); 1983 (40%, 40%); 1984 (100%, 0%); 1985 (0%, 0%); 1986 (33.3%, 33.3%); 1987 (50%, 0%); and 1988 (70%, 10%). See Table 4.

Conclusion

It is important to realize this particular study is limited in its scope. It examined the contention that media are biased, but the population was restricted to the *New York Times'* unsigned editorial opinions from January 1, 1978, through December 31, 1988. Therefore, the findings above cannot be generalized for the entire media, nor even for the print media alone. What the study does accomplish though, is that it gives us an indication of the editorial coverage of a member of the elite press that is among the "most quoted newspapers in the Western world," and an organ of "elite opinion and a major source of information for makers of foreign policy, their influence is pervasive, if not massive" (Stock, 1985, p. 319). It therefore offers others a starting point for further research in this direction.

The unexpected findings of this study should encourage future research in the area of unsigned editorial opinions of the American media towards the Middle East. The overwhelming negative response towards Israel should not be taken lightly, but it should be measured against neutral editorials, as well as those that were critical of the Arabs. That 35% of the editorials were neutral, as opposed to 37% that were critical of Israel, and only 15% that were critical of the Arab states or Palestinians, is a clear indication of the *Times'* opinion towards Israel, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In response to Cockburn (1988), who singled out the *Times'* editorial board as being especially pro-Israeli, and other critics of the media who have charged biases in the American press, this study indicates that the *New York Times'* editorial opinions were neither pro-Israeli, nor were they necessarily pro-Arab. Instead, the data indicate the *Times'* opinions were more critical than supportive of both sides of the conflict. Israel or Israeli actions were criticized 37% of the time since 1978, while the Arabs' and or Palestinians' actions were criticized 14.8% of the total editorials pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the same time, the *Times* only gave approval or support of Israeli or Arab actions in the conflict a total of 13%, 7.4% for Israeli actions and 5.6% for Arab or Palestinian actions. Therefore, total unsigned editorial opinion of the *Times* regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict was 51.8% critical of either side, 35.2% neutral, and only 13% of the editorials actually were supportive of either side.

When one considers the great importance of the editorial page to decision makers (Rosenau, 1961; Trice, 1979; and Curtiss, 1982), and the influence of the editorial page on opinion leaders that have the ability to influence public opinion (Katz, 1957; Fitzgerald) the results of this study are a significant insight into public opinion formation regarding the conflict.

Table 1

	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
ARAB-US	2 12.5	3 21.4	5 33.5	2 15.4	2 11.1	3 23.1	3 37.5	2 25.0	2 33.3	2 22.2	1 5.3
ISR-US	1 6.3	2 14.3	2 13.3	3 23.1	4 22.2	1 7.7	1 12.5	1 12.5	0 0.0	1 11.1	6 31.6
ARAB-ISR	11 68.8	6 42.9	3 20.0	5 38.5	6 33.3	5 38.5	2 25.0	1 12.5	3 50.0	2 22.2	10 52.6
ARAB DOM.	0 0.0	1 7.1	3 20.0	2 15.4	2 11.1	2 15.4	0 0.0	3 37.5	0 0.0	1 11.1	0 0.0
ISR DOM.	0 0.0	0 0.0	1 6.7	0 0.0	2 11.1	1 7.7	1 12.5	0 0.0	1 16.7	3 33.3	2 10.5
ARAB REL NOT US	2 12.5	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	2 11.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	1 12.5	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0
ISR REL NOT US	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0
MISC	0 0.0	2 14.3	1 6.7	1 7.7	0 0.0	1 7.7	1 12.5	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0

N= 139

Figure 1a

n = 139

Category	Percentage
Arab-US Relations	19.4%
Israel-US Relations	15.8%
Arab-Israeli	38.8%
Arab Domestic	10.1%
Israeli Domestic	7.9%
Arab Rel. Not US	3.6%
Israeli Rel. Not US	0.0%
Miscellaneous	4.3%

Table 2
Percentage of "Arab-Israeli Relations" by Year

Year	# of Stories/Year	%/Year
1978	11	68.8
1979	6	42.9
1980	3	20.0
1981	5	38.5
1982	6	33.3
1983	5	38.5
1984	2	25.0
1985	1	12.5
1986	3	50.0
1987	2	22.2
1988	10	52.6

n = 38

Figure 1
Times Editorial Position 1978-1988

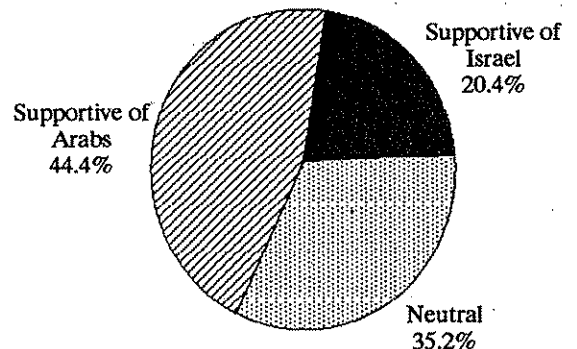


Table 3

Year	Support Israel	Critical Israel	Neutral	Support Arabs	Critical Arabs
1978	1 9.1%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	0 0.0%	2 18.2%
1979	0 0.0%	3 50.0%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1980	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1981	2 40.0%	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1982	1 16.7%	2 33.3%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%
1983	0 0.0%	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	2 40.0%
1984	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
1985	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1986	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	1 33.3%	1 33.3%
1987	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1988	0 0.0%	6 60.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	1 10.0%
Total	4 7.4%	20 37.0%	19 35.2%	3 5.6%	8 14.8%

n=54

Table 4

Year	Supportive Arabs	Neutral	Supportive Israel
1978	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	3 27.3%
1979	3 50.0%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%
1980	1 33.3%	2 66.7%	0 0.0%
1981	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	2 40.0%
1982	3 50.0%	1 16.7%	2 33.3%
1983	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	2 40.0%
1984	2 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
1985	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
1986	1 33.3%	1 33.3%	1 33.3%
1987	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
1988	7 70.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%
Total	24 44.4%	19 35.2%	11 20.4%

n=54

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