

The Impact of Human Rights Organizations on Naming and Shaming Campaigns

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Abstract

Given the myriad of human rights abuses that occur globally and daily, why are some nations on the receiving end of a substantial amount of international opprobrium, while others receive far less attention and condemnation? The authors contend that the increasing presence of human rights organizations in such states is the critical link between the local and the international. Increases in the number of such groups contributes significantly to the generation of Amnesty International urgent actions, one of the most-often-utilized tools in naming and shaming campaigns against human rights abusing regimes. The authors find strong support for nearly all their hypotheses.

Keywords

human rights, naming and shaming, Amnesty International urgent actions

The principal weapon of choice among many international organizations and governments to improve states' human rights is the naming and shaming campaign. United Nations-affiliated organizations, such as the Human Rights Council and High Commissioner for Human Rights; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch; and individual

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governments target some nations for particular attention and condemnation in the hope that through such publicity, these governments will be pressured into changing their abusive practices. Given the myriad of human rights abuses that occur globally and daily, why are some nations on the receiving end of a substantial amount of such international attention? How do some nations come to occupy a prominent or infamous place on the international human rights agenda? Hafner-Burton (2008, 4) points out that “organizations—whether NGOs, news media, or the UN—shine the spotlight selectively. Some countries guilty of many and horrible abuses never draw much publicity, while others responsible for few abuses, draw much attention.”

These are critically important, political questions scholars should address. Even though naming and shaming campaigns and other forms of publicity directed against abusive regimes may not always cause government leaders to cease their offending behaviors, they often precede more costly, long-term and far-reaching international efforts to address human rights violations. When words have failed to persuade, states acting unilaterally or multilaterally have authorized sanctions (e.g., South Africa), military intervention (e.g., Bosnia, Darfur), the establishment of international criminal tribunals (e.g., the Special Court for Sierra Leone), and a variety of other tools whose impact on the target and the international community can last for years. There is also growing evidence that naming and shaming campaigns have a significant impact on their target states. Hafner-Burton (2008) examines the effects of these campaigns on the human rights practices of 145 countries between 1975 and 2000 and finds that states’ political rights generally improve after being publically shamed. Franklin (2008) shows that human rights criticism leads to decreased repression in states that have strong economic ties with other countries, though this finding is time bound. Certainly not all states become embroiled in controversy over human rights abuses, but this merely begs the question: why are some states roundly condemned and not others? Indeed, given the finite attention and resources of governmental and nongovernmental actors, we must ask what factors explain the choice of targets.

With the increasing attention devoted to human rights concerns in the international environment, scholars have taken up the challenge of analyzing this question (Lebovic and Voeten 2005; Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007; Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). From this research, we learn that media attention, state power, and the actual level of human rights abuses play a significant role in determining, for example, which nations AI singles out for press releases and reports (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). We seek to build upon this research by focusing on the importance of human rights organizations in elevating the attention directed at some human rights-abusing states, and thus their prominence on the international human rights agenda. We contend that the presence of human rights organizations provides the requisite information needed by the international community to engage in naming and shaming campaigns. We develop a theoretical model premised on a nonlinear relationship between these human rights organizations and the attention directed at regimes by the international human rights community. As the number of human rights

organizations increase in states, we expect to find their governments increasingly targeted by AI urgent action (UA) campaigns. However, after nations reach a high level of political, economic, and social openness, human rights protection becomes increasingly embedded in government policy. Thereafter, we expect to find that further increases in the number of such groups are associated with few or decreasing numbers of UA campaigns as human rights abuses become less frequent.

Our article is organized as follows. First, we discuss the burgeoning research on human rights organizations, human rights, naming and shaming campaigns, and their linkages. Next, we note that while scholars have identified a number of key, causal factors that explain the level of attention directed at human rights-abusing regimes, as of yet there is no theoretical framework within which to understand and locate these relationships. Hence, the third section of our article provides this framework and posits a human rights organization theory of state placement on the international human rights agenda. We test our hypotheses with new data on one of the most often utilized, but not yet studied components of naming and shaming campaigns—UA campaigns generated by AI. UAs are international, letter-writing campaigns directed against particular governments to improve human rights conditions in specific cases and facilitated by information disseminated by local actors. These naming and shaming campaigns, in contrast to many other such tools, begin in the states where abuses are taking place. Thus, they provide us with a rich and more locally inspired type of naming and shaming. In the fourth section of the article, we provide analyses of the determinants of AI UAs, as well as other measures of naming and shaming activities. The last portion of the article assesses our findings and the development of further research on the international human rights agenda.

Human Rights Organizations and the Human Rights Agenda

In recent years, the literature on the international human rights agenda has taken sizable steps forward. In particular, the literature has highlighted several factors that explain why states become the target of international campaigns against their human rights practices. Scholars have focused their attention on the presence of local and global networks of organizations, which combined “with financial resources, popular backing/membership, societal diversity and political space available” (Welch 2001, 9) have changed the way information about human rights violations is utilized and acted upon. Yet, scholars of human rights organizations’ campaigns have not yet developed a systematic theoretical model of the process that leads some states to become the target of international attention. We find several issues regarding current research regarding how and why some states are targeted with international human rights campaigns that we seek to incorporate and improve upon in our research.

Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999) analyzed the effect of local protests and rebellions on attracting the scrutiny of international actors investigating human rights

violations. According to their *spiral model*, a country's human rights issues are more likely to become part of an NGO's agenda when protests and rebellions undermine a repressive regime whose leaders, in turn, begin responding to public demands for openness and human rights protection. At the same time, this newfound freedom allows for the creation of local movements, which reach out to transnational NGOs and give resonance to the interests of organizations operating locally. This indicates that a government rises to the attention of the international community through a multistep process that may ultimately gain traction when the information gathered is transmitted to international organizations in a timely and compelling manner.

Carpenter (2007) uses a domestic-based theoretical framework, the "issue emergence" model, to explain why certain issues (e.g., child soldiers and girls at war) enter the agenda of human rights organizations while other issues (e.g., children born as a result of wartime rape) have not. Carpenter suggests a two-step process of *issue definition* and *issue adoption* that allows the problem to enter the NGO's agenda. Issue definition implies that a certain state of affairs "is considered neither natural nor accidental" and "... responsible party or parties are identified [together] with credible solutions" (Carpenter 2007, 103). Issue adoption implies that the "issue is then championed by one major player in the broader network" (Carpenter 2007, 103). Additionally, Schmitz (2007) suggests that some countries may end up high on an NGO's agenda because the prevalent violations are of particular importance for human rights organizations. They embody a set of issues on which advocacy networks have concentrated their work. This may explain why, for example, the United States attracts substantial attention for the death penalty, as it is one of AI's areas of concern.

Tarrow and McAdam (2005) focus on the domestic level when describing how local social movements become relevant at the transnational level through the process of scale shift. This process contains two paths information may take to access the transnational level: brokerage and relational diffusion. Brokerage occurs when "two or more previously unconnected social sites" share information, and is predicted to result in a more encompassing network and quicker route to scale shift (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 127). The more common path, relational diffusion, or "the transfer of information along established lines of interaction," is valuable for quickly relaying information, but has a narrow scope and, as a result, is not as likely to lead to transnationalism (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 127). Welch (2001) shows that a particular set of permissive conditions has allowed for information to flow from specific regions of the world. The global revolution in communication and the wide presence of fax machines and electronic mail have permitted a fairly extensive dissemination of information from places where such capabilities are in place.

Keck and Sikkink (1998, 6) indicate that AI focuses on "Information politics" and that state power, media exposure, and foreign aid levels determine international attention. Ron, Ramos, and Rogers (2005) point out that these factors are able to affect the human rights agenda of AI due to the organizational need for exposure.

Human rights groups operate with very limited resources. The need for funding and widespread support leads them to tackle those situations that are “high-visibility,” which in turn will help them “gain momentum to protest violations elsewhere” (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005, 576). Schmitz (2007, 17) suggests that we should expect AI to be strategic in the choice of targets given a limited budget, which would direct its agenda “where [its] limited resources will make the largest difference.” This implies that AI may focus on those places where information is readily available or where a domestic supportive organization (AI’s offices or local activists) facilitates the gathering of information about human rights violations. Bob (2005) suggests that the drive for media attention, as a factor shaping the agenda of NGOs, is more strictly correlated with the limited resources NGOs have at their disposal. Their ability to create resonance for an issue means more funding, greater impact and sustenance of the organization. On this point, scholars (Mihir and Schmitz 2007, 986; Cooley and Ron 2002) imply that recently the human rights agenda has been dictated by the necessity of organizations to maintain their “market share.” Human rights NGOs have relied on their ability to create publicity that would attract donors’ attention.

In sum, current research on human rights organizations has found varying factors that shape NGOs’ choices of targets, as well as several routes of information flow. The importance of funding and market share for human rights NGOs would seem to indicate that the quest for resources and for gaining widespread support significantly determines which states will come to the attention of human rights organizations. Yet, it is also apparent that while human rights organizations operating locally may not be as powerful in determining the selection of issues international groups focus on, their efforts to collect, disseminate, and frame information on local conditions is a critical determinant in deciding which countries to single out for attention at the international level. Similar to the *boomerang model* elaborated by Keck and Sikkink (1998) and the process of scale shift described by Tarrow and McAdam (2005), we suggest that the presence of local human rights groups is critical to the elevation of states to the international human rights agenda. Yet, while previous studies have looked at this mobilization process as a function of governments’ policies to recognize specific rights, we contend that the work of human rights groups operating locally to publicize poor human rights practices mobilizes their international counterparts to target repressive governments. We also argue that while governments’ abusive human rights practices will propel these human rights groups to collect, disseminate, and publicize information pertaining to specific abuses, other permissive conditions must be present for these groups to mobilize. More specifically, in accord with those who highlight the importance of what we term “openness” (Keck and Sikkink 1998), there should generally be sufficient political freedom, economic development, and exposure to the international community to enable the activation of human rights organizations operating locally. In the following we describe the critical role played by these human rights groups in the generation of naming and shaming campaigns and how such efforts are facilitated.

The Path to Resonance: AI Human Rights Agenda

To better understand naming and shaming campaigns, we propose a theoretical framework that organizes and explains the conditions needed to encourage NGOs to target regimes for campaigns against their human rights policies. We suggest that to explain the human rights agenda of international organizations, such as AI, and the determinants of its activity, it is essential to assess the prevalence of human rights groups and the openness of a given society. Toward this end, we examine the issuance of UAs by AI as a rich indicator of the attention accorded a regime.

The Generation and Significance of UAs

The UA is one of the principal tools AI uses to spread information regarding human rights violations and to place pressure on governments in the hope that they will improve their human rights policies. Specifically, a UA is a notice sent out to AI members regarding specific violation of individuals' human rights to persuade these members to write letters to foreign governments seeking corrective action.¹ The first step in the issuance of a UA notice occurs when local AI offices, NGOs, and individuals send information via fax, e-mail, letters, or phone regarding specific, alleged human rights violations in a nation to AI. Next, AI's offices investigate the allegations/information they receive and evaluate its reliability. AI may then contact its local affiliates around the world to alert them to the human rights violations. This is the actual step that initiates an international campaign to raise awareness about the case at hand. The UA notice is intended to provide information and emphasize the "urgency" of the situation to prevent further human rights abuses. Individuals and groups who receive the UA notices are encouraged to write letters on behalf of the individual whose human rights have been violated. Hence, the issuance of UAs is intended to result in a massive correspondence campaign designed to correct the abuses.

We utilize AI UAs as a measure of the attention given by the international human rights community to various regimes for several reasons. First, given our theoretical interest in the development of a model of the role of human rights organizations in generating this attention, it is essential to focus on those actions for which they are most responsible. As we describe in the following, the origins of UAs generally reside in the work of local human rights groups. Their frequency helps us determine the extent to which local, that is national, conditions contribute to the international community's efforts to publicize human rights abuses in some states and not others. Second, we note the existence of prior research on the other two, principal forms of attention given by AI in its naming and shaming campaigns—background reports on specific countries and press releases (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). Ron, Ramos, and Rogers (2005) focus on efforts driven primarily by the strategies and actions of the international office of AI and thus reflect global, political interests in these campaigns. We believe that local conditions play a critical role in the attention accorded

Table 1. Urgent Actions by Region, 1998–2007

Region	Number	Percentage
Western Hemisphere	1,506	38.23
Europe	81	2.06
Sub-Saharan Africa	452	11.47
Middle East	965	24.50
Central and South Asia	616	15.64
East Asia	319	8.10
Total	3,939	

Table 2. Nations Targeted with the Most Urgent Actions, 1998–2007

Country	Number	Percentage of All Urgent Actions
United States	477	12.11
Colombia	317	8.05
Nepal	204	5.18
Indonesia	191	4.85
Mexico	190	4.82
Iran	189	4.80
Guatemala	133	3.38
Sudan	116	2.94
Turkey	98	2.49
China	93	2.36

to various regimes, and that a measure of local human rights activity is needed to assess their impact. However, we also test our model on background reports and press releases.

We collected data on the issuance of all AI UAs from January 1, 1998, through December 31, 2007. Specifically, we gathered information on, *inter alia*, the country targeted, date of the UA, and the specific reason for the UA. We sum all UAs generated for each country for every year in our sample. Below, Table 1 lists the number of UAs issued for the major regions of the world, while Table 2 lists the ten nations that have been the subject of the most UAs from 1998 through 2007.

The regional distribution of UAs in Table 1 is quite revealing. We see that the Western Hemisphere, especially the United States, is targeted with the most UAs, and that Europe is hit with very few such campaigns. Thus, while the open societies of Europe with their numerous human rights groups are given scant attention, the United States, despite many similarities, is on the receiving end of many UAs, principally because of its death penalty. Despite the size of Africa, the continent receives a relatively small number of UAs. This may be explained by the technological remoteness of many nations in sub-Saharan Africa. The Middle East and the combined

Asian regions receive roughly the same number, but when one considers the size and populations of the two regions, it is clear that the Middle East is on the receiving end of UAs much more frequently. Table 2 demonstrates that the specific nations targeted by AI often do not always involve those regimes that we might consider some of the more repressive, such as North Korea, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Libya, and others. Rather, the United States is the highest-ranked target, almost entirely because of its death penalty. Colombia and Nepal are singled out as well, typically because of the violence associated with their civil wars.

Explaining UAs

States whose human rights practices tend to mobilize human rights organizations typically garner such attention because of (1) the presence of what some (Carpenter 2007) call local political entrepreneurs, local organizations specifically working for the protection of human rights; (2) the ability of these organizations to mobilize to reach an international audience regarding their grievances (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999); and (3) the level of openness of a state's political, economic, and social systems that facilitates the ability of these organizations to exist, and that may contribute to a regime's sense of threat and perceived need to repress human rights to maintain power (Tilly 1978).

Human Rights Organizations

Human rights organizations are the critical link between a government's violation of human rights and the activation of international pressure on the government to cease its practices. Local activists seek to publicize these abuses to inspire larger, international organizations to then pressure the government, and thus begin the boomerang process. Based on the work of Bob (2002, 2005); Keck and Sikkink (1998); and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999), we contend that local human rights organizations engage in several functions that are critical in generating these naming and shaming campaigns in general and AI UAs in particular.

Local offices of human rights organizations are repositories of information on human rights abuses that is collected through investigations, received from journalists, whistleblowers, victims, other organizations and individuals, and through personal experience. They collect, investigate, analyze, and disseminate information to advance the cause of human rights in their locale by calling attention to human rights violations (to the extent possible given local conditions). They pressure governments to cease particular abuses and on a deeper level, work to change laws to improve human rights conditions. As such groups increase in number, so does the likelihood that information will reach the intended international audiences. As Keck and Sikkink (1998, 22) point out, "most international organizations cannot afford to maintain staff people in a variety of countries [. . .] forging links with local organizations allows groups to receive and monitor information from many countries at a

low cost.” Through interviews and evidence gathering, local activists are able to collect information that may not be otherwise available to international NGOs.

As many have argued, however, this data collection effort is only the initial step. Local groups must also analyze the information, frame it, and communicate to the larger, international audience. Those human rights groups that are more adept at communicating information about abuses in a manner that resonates with the international organizations are much better able to attract attention (Bob 2002; Carpenter 2007). International organizations, like AI, must work with finite resources and attention that serve to limit their ability to act upon all incoming reports of human rights abuses (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). In order for the information to reach and resonate with its intended audience, the local groups’ efforts are significantly facilitated by the extent to which the information is framed in a manner that accords with the issue priorities of the group. Framing involves “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collection action” (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 6).

Collection of information and successful communication of this information to larger international organizations are both necessary steps in the ultimate generation of UAs. We contend that the presence of local human rights groups that perform this work is critical in the initiation of these campaigns. While an organization like AI does possess its own independent ability to investigate and report on human rights abuses, groups working in country are the vital link between local abuse and international attention. It is our central contention that UAs are issued with the greatest frequency to target states in which there are active human rights groups that can begin the boomerang process and engage in increased communication with international organizations. In turn, these more frequent communications should lead to an increase in UA campaigns.

However, we also contend that in the most open societies, there will be fewer UA campaigns. When a nation has reached the highest levels of political, economic, and social openness—at which point human rights organizations can freely organize and proliferate as much as they wish—the need for such organizations to call upon AI to initiate UA campaigns begins to decline (see also Tilly 1978). At this point in the political development of nations, human rights protection takes place largely through legally guaranteed rights found in national constitutions, government policies, and international treaties.² Judicial institutions and human rights monitoring agencies actively work to prevent abuses from occurring or can take action to halt violations if they do occur. Government thus assumes responsibility for many of the (previous) activities of human rights organizations, and human rights protection becomes the embedded political and social norm. Such groups may continue to exist and expand, although their focus may shift to related issues, other types of rights and human rights conditions in other nations. In summation, as the number of human rights organizations increases, so should the number of UAs. But, as nations become more open, human rights protections become more accepted and protected. At this

stage, there should be fewer human rights abuses that would require these organizations to pressure AI.

Hypothesis 1: The greater the number of human rights organizations operating within a nation, the greater the frequency of UAs targeting that country. In the most open states, greater numbers of such organizations will be associated with fewer UAs targeting that state.

We utilize data from Tsutsui (2006) to count the number of international governmental and nongovernmental human rights organizations that have offices or headquarters in all nations for the year 1998. We collected these data for the years 2000, 2003, and 2006 using information provided by Tsutsui (2006). Because the number of such organizations tends to change at a gradual rather than dramatic rate in any given period of time, like Tsutsui (who gathered information on organizations every ten years), we did not collect these data for all years in our sample. Instead, we interpolate the values of this measure for those years in which we did not collect data by taking the weighted average values of the data for the years in which we have data.³ To test the second half of this hypothesis, we create an interaction term to measure the impact of the number of human rights groups in the most open societies. We define the most open societies as those that reach at least the 90th percentile on each of the three openness measures described in the next section.

Political, Economic, and Societal Openness

We also contend that the level of political, economic, and social openness of a state is a critical factor in affecting the frequency of UAs and facilitating the mobilization of human rights organizations that generate UAs. The extent of national political freedom strongly influences the ability of human rights groups to exist, mobilize, and act collectively to transmit information regarding local conditions to international organizations. Regime transitions and openings are particularly opportune moments for these groups to form and mobilize because, as noted by Keck and Sikkink (1998, 21), organizations are able to develop a Web of information exchange, and because governments “can no longer monopolize information flows” (see also Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Tilly 1978). At the same time, this newfound freedom allows for the mobilization of local actors, who reach out to transnational NGOs and give resonance to the interests of local human rights issues (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The prospects for democratic elections or political openings are all exploitable opportunities for local organizations to build informational bridges with international NGOs.

The very same openings that allow for human rights organizations to emerge, however, may also threaten regimes. The initial openness of the system gives rise to political demands by opposing factions, while the lack of well-established institutional channels creates insecurities and “systemic incoherence” (Davenport and

Armstrong 1999, 9). Furthermore, when governments are in a weakened condition, local human rights organizations can be seen as contenders for power because of their demands regarding the manner in which the government responds to grievances and threats (Tilly 1978). As suggested by Mitchell (2004), regime leaders that are likely to be subjected to international condemnation are apt to feel threatened by such attention, and thus become more likely to commit human rights violations. The critical relationship between regime openness and repression has been extensively debated. Some scholars have found that democracies are less likely to pursue a policy of repression, especially because of the institutional inclusion of political opposition. Others (Davenport and Armstrong 1999), on the contrary, have found a threshold effect, wherein only higher levels of democracy exercise a positive impact on human rights. Other scholars find a curvilinear relationship (Fein 1995).

Additionally, we contend that as economic and social conditions improve, we should find increasing numbers of human rights groups and ultimately UAs. Economic openness and development generates greater awareness, skill development, and access to important technology that facilitate the emergence of organizations, but may also threaten regime power. Economic development brings with it goods such as phones, computers, and fax machines, and helps create the physical infrastructure (e.g., a power grid, satellite technology) to enable the use of these communication tools. Thus, we should find that economic development facilitates the development of human rights groups and ultimately the likelihood a state will be targeted by UA campaigns.

Similarly, greater societal openness facilitates exposure to international human rights norms and mobilization strategies and increased interactions with human rights organizations. As communication with the outside world through the Internet, television, and travel increase, awareness of positive human rights ideas and practices occurs as well (Keck and Sikkink 1998). While governments may seek to limit some forms of communication, their ability to prevent all such methods may be quite difficult if they also seek to develop economically and engage with trading partners. Economic development and societal openness, however, also facilitate the emergence of alternative centers of power and ideologies that threaten the dominance of the regime. Economic growth and social awareness of the outside world help bring about the mobilization of the human rights community but may serve to undermine the legitimacy of an evolving political system and its leadership.

In sum, we contend that the extent to which a regime becomes the target of the international human rights community is also a function of the level of political, economic, and social openness. This openness facilitates the creation and mobilization of human rights groups. Simultaneously, this openness may pose a threat to the regime's control of society and lead to repression and human rights abuses as a means of maintaining power. We expect to find a nonlinear relationship between openness and UAs. In the most closed societies, we expect the greatest levels of government repression, which prevents the emergence of most human rights organizations. In such situations, we should find that the ability of any such human rights

group to communicate the information needed for the issuance of a UA would be limited. As such regimes open up and allow for some degree of human rights activity, we expect to find the frequency of UAs increasing. In those societies with the greatest degree of openness, we should also find the most extensive protection of human rights and thus the least need for UAs. Therefore, we hypothesize that there is an inverted *U*-shaped relationship between openness and UAs and that at the inflection point in this relationship, greater openness will lead to fewer UAs.⁴

We have selected three indicators of openness: political freedom, economic development, and the overall level of globalization in a society. We utilize the Freedom House measure of political rights⁵; per capita gross domestic product (GDP)⁶; and the KOF (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) measure of the overall level of globalization in a society (Dreher 2006).⁷ Each variable and its squared term are utilized to capture the inverted *U*-shaped relationship we expect to find.

Hypotheses 2(a–c): As the level of (a) political openness, (b) per capita GDP, (c) globalization in a country increases, the number of UAs targeted at that country will increase. At the inflection point at the top of the *U*-shaped curve, the relationship will change and greater levels of openness will lead to a declining number of UAs targeting that country.

Political Instability and Human Rights Abuses

Human rights abuses are the initial link in the causal chain that leads to UAs. The causes of these violations are crucial to understanding when, how, and why UAs are generated. When a regime is unable to maintain control of society and faces challenges to its authority and legitimacy, it becomes more likely to repress regime opponents (Poe and Tate 1994). These threats or instances of domestic unrest typically provide an opportunity for government crackdowns as regime leaders may believe their best option is to inspire fear and (hopefully) silence critics (Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999). Such repression may then lead to an influx of information about governmental violations of human rights and ultimately the production of UAs.⁸ In order to determine when governments are most likely to perceive threats to their security, we utilize the Banks Cross-National Time Series Data Archive composite index of political instability, which encompasses multiple indicators including riots, antigovernment protests, guerilla attacks, general strikes, purges, government crises, and assassinations. These data are measured on an annual basis for all countries of the world and are weighted according to criteria from the Banks data.⁹ Higher values on this scale denote greater levels of political unrest and violence, and hence greater likelihood of government repression.

Hypothesis 3: The higher the level of political instability in a country, the greater the number of UAs targeting that country.

Human Rights Records

We argue that a regime's overall human rights record is an important indicator of the likelihood that a regime will be targeted by UAs. As state abuse of human rights increases, we expect there will be a greater probability of international condemnation of such practices. We recognize that some of the regimes with the very worst records may also be fairly closed regimes, and hence will have few human rights groups that can facilitate the reporting necessary for the generation of UAs. Human rights organizations may focus their efforts on some countries where such scrutiny is feasible and generates positive media attention, while providing less attention to states with more serious human rights violations because of reporting difficulties. Generally, however, we expect that naming and shaming will be strongly influenced by the level of human rights abuses. In our study, we utilize a country's human rights record for the previous year using the Political Terror scale. The Political Terror scale ranges from one to five, where '1' is the best and 5 the worst level of human rights protections (Gibney, Cornett, and Wood 2008).

Hypothesis 4: The worse a country's human rights record, the greater the number of UAs targeted at that country.

Media Coverage

Following Ron, Ramos, and Rogers (2005), we expect a positive relationship between the number of news reports issued concerning human rights infractions in a country and the number of UAs. There are several likely explanations for this. Because AI depends upon communication (phones, Internet, fax machines, etc.) to report human rights infractions, news coverage may provide a means of information gathering in countries where AI does not have these opportunities. Press coverage of human rights abuses in a particular nation will encourage AI's supporters to focus their energies there, and will increase AI's willingness to condemn such violations in order to garner more attention, and ultimately support for its efforts (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005, 576). In the quest for scarce resources and in an environment of intense competition with other human rights organizations and NGOs, AI cannot afford to be seen as unresponsive to high-visibility media coverage. In order to test this proposition, we updated the data gathered by Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005) through 2004. Strictly following the same collection procedures, we used LexisNexis to count the number of news reports involving a country per month in *The Economist* and *Newsweek* concerning human rights infractions.¹⁰

Hypothesis 5: As a country's media coverage concerning human rights increases, the number of UAs will also increase.¹¹

Population

Finally, we include a measure for a nation's population. Greater numbers of people present increased opportunity, *ceteris paribus*, for human rights violations, and thus the initiation of UA campaigns. Greater population levels also would tend to create more opportunity for human rights organizations to form, all else being equal. Thus, it is important to include population as a control measure to be certain that more populous nations are not biasing the estimates.¹²

Hypothesis 6: As a country's population increases, the number of UAs will also increase.

Analysis

The dependent variable is a count of UAs for all nations for each year from 1998 to 2007, and thus the unit of analysis is the state-year. There are several methodological concerns that we must address. First, these are count data, and hence ordinary least squares (OLS) techniques are not appropriate because such estimates tend to be inefficient, inconsistent, and biased (Li 2005). Additionally, OLS models may predict negative values of the dependent variable. The variance of the event count-dependent variable (32.4), however, exceeds substantially its mean (1.8), which violates standard Poisson model assumptions (see Lubell et al. 2002, 154). As well, the dominant modality for most nations across time is no UA, and thus, there is a preponderance of zeroes in the data. A model that accounts for the prevalence of zeroes is more appropriate. Clark (2003) and Lubell et al. (2002) demonstrate that zero-inflated Poisson (ZIP) models are well equipped to deal with precisely this type of data and are preferable to Poisson models. The ZIP procedure provides estimates for a logit model predicting the probability of a nation remaining in the pool of states that never experience an UA as well as the counts of the number of UAs among those nations that do break out of this group of quiescent states. It assumes that there is an underlying process that accounts for the population of nonevent states that is equally important to model and is separable from the process that generates the positive counts of UAs. Note that in the zero-inflation set of estimates, one is predicting "0," and thus a negative coefficient means that a "0" is less likely and that a positive occurrence (being targeted with an UA) is more likely.

Second, given that we have reason to believe the observations for each country are correlated across time and space, we use the negative binomial, zero-inflation model with robust standard errors. All variables in the model are lagged one year to allow for sufficient time to pass before the independent variables exercise their impact. The one exception is the Banks data, which measure the level of political instability that is contemporaneous with and, we hypothesize, should directly influence the number of UAs. Relatedly, we must also address the possibility that UAs

exhibit temporal dependence. There may be some nations that, once targeted and in the international spotlight, are confronted with subsequent naming and shaming campaigns. Whether this is due to the relative efficiency of conducting campaigns in states where initial information and personnel costs have been met, or because the importance of a particular cause continues (e.g., election-related violence), such targeting can persist over time. To account for this possibility, we include a lagged endogenous variable in both stages of the model.

Finally, there is the issue of selection effects. While some states are targets of UAs, many others receive no attention at all in most years. Thus, we must consider whether there are any systematic processes at work and not accounted for in our model—selection effects—that are germane in determining when states are targeted. To address this issue, one might utilize a Heckman selection model as it is designed to predict an outcome of interest that is predicated upon the occurrence of a prior event. We tested our model using the Heckman selection procedure, but found the Mills ratio and correlation between the selection and substantive models were not statistically significant. As well, the Heckman model does not generate unbiased estimates, given the event count nature of the data. Hence, we use the zero-inflation stage to explain why states break out of the population of nations that never are targeted with UAs.

The zero-inflation stage of our model is premised on our theory that as states become more open, there is a greater likelihood that they will be targeted with UAs. Openness facilitates the formation of human rights organizations and may also pose a threat to regimes. While we would expect that the most totalitarian societies with almost no human rights groups (e.g., North Korea) would be exposed to few if any UAs, such states are relatively rare. Thus, we expect that those states that are the least open will still be targeted by at least one UA and thus break out of the population of state years in which there are no UAs. Conversely, we contend that those states that are the most open will be less likely to be targeted by a UA as there is a diminished likelihood of human rights abuse taking place. We also include the Banks instability index to incorporate the impact of the root causes of repression and UAs—threats to government power. Finally, we include a variable for those states that have the death penalty in order to control for the importance of this issue in AI's agenda. We would suspect that such nations would garner a significant amount of attention.

The results of our model estimation in Table 3 provide clear and convincing support for nearly all our hypotheses, but most especially our expectation that human rights organizations are a critical component in the generation of UAs by AI. The greater the number of human rights groups operating in a state, the more UAs that target that nation. Such groups both produce and disseminate the vital information upon which UAs and other naming and shaming campaigns are premised. Where previously much of the research on human rights organizations tended to focus on illustrating the means by which such organizations furthered the international human rights agenda, we now have evidence demonstrating how this aspect of human rights

Table 3. Zero-inflated Negative Binomial Regression Estimates of Amnesty International Urgent Actions 1998–2007

Variable	Coefficient	SE	T statistic	p-value	χ^2 test	p-value
Lagged urgent actions	0.060	.009	6.340	.000		
Human rights groups	0.003	.001	1.800	.072		
Human rights groups and openness	-0.007	.003	-2.850	.004	9.180	.010
Political rights	0.043	.134	0.320	.747		
Political rights ²	-0.015	.017	-0.890	.374	6.060	.048
Gross domestic product per capita	0.000	.000	2.590	.010		
Gross domestic product per capita ²	0.000	.000	-1.220	.221	9.600	.008
Globalization	0.031	.019	1.630	.103		
Globalization ²	0.000	.000	-1.540	.124	2.670	.264
Political terror scale	0.490	.074	6.600	.000		
Banks instability index	0.000	.000	1.840	.066		
Human rights news	0.083	.051	1.640	.101		
Population	0.000	.000	2.190	.029		
Constant	-1.867	.543	-3.440	.001		
Inflation Stage						
Lagged urgent actions	-1.353	.209	-6.480	.000		
Most politically open	0.746	.300	2.490	.013		
Least politically open	-1.287	.555	-2.320	.020		
Banks instability index	0.000	.000	-2.230	.026		
Death penalty state	-0.247	.233	-1.060	.288		
Constant	0.561	.232	2.420	.016		
N = 1,496						
Nonzero observations = 494						

promotion occurs. Human rights groups provide information (Bob 2002, 2005), which is then interpreted within the context of the strategies and mission of international organizations like AI (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). Since UAs depend upon the timely communication of information, only those states with groups that are numerous and sufficiently skilled to disseminate their stories are likely to arouse the interest of an organization like AI.

We also find evidence of an inflection point in the relationship between human rights groups and UAs as the relationship takes on an inverted *U*-shaped form as evidenced by the negative coefficient for the interaction term. We argued that in those states with the highest levels of political, economic, and societal openness, there would be a negative relationship between the number of human rights organizations and UAs. Among such states, human rights concerns and interest groups have become sufficiently established such that, even though such organizations exist in large numbers, government policy and personnel now protect rather than abuse human rights. As protections become even

more embedded within the law, the need to publicize abuses to instigate the UA process drops considerably and such groups can, presumably, direct their energies elsewhere.

Nearly all the other coefficients are statistically significant and in the predicted direction in the second stage of the model predicting the frequency of UAs. We hypothesized that a key determinant of the likelihood a nation would be targeted with UAs was its level of openness and that we should model the relationship between openness and the generation of UAs as an inverted *U*-shaped one. We find that as political and economic openness increase, human rights activists are provided with greater opportunities to press their cause and react to government abuses of human rights. In those states with the most open systems, further increases in these variables are associated with decreasing levels of UAs, as demonstrated by the negative coefficients for their squared terms. The joint statistical significance of the political and economic openness variables reaches the .05 level. This supports conclusions reached by others regarding the importance of the political and economic development of a nation and the role openness in these systems plays in allowing human rights groups to form and act (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). At the same time, however, we also know that such openings are associated with increased opportunities for repression by governments whose grip on power is being wrested away (Mitchell 2004; Tilly 1978; Tarrow and Tilly 2007). As well, these findings support the notion that governments that are neither entirely dictatorial nor free are more likely to commit human rights abuses that often result in the generation of UAs (Fein, 1995; Davenport and Armstrong 1999).

Our results also show that the greater the level of political unrest, the greater the likelihood a regime will be hit with a UA campaign. Such repression and abuse of human rights, in turn, increases the likelihood that AI will be called upon to issue UAs to protest these abuses. We also find that a nation's overall level of human rights practices, as measured by the Political Terror scale, is highly predictive of the number of UAs targeting that nation. The worse the level of human rights abuses, the greater the number of UAs (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). As hypothesized and found by others (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005), we find that greater levels of news coverage regarding human rights violations in a nation increase the number of UAs directed at that state by AI. Media coverage not only encourages attention by human rights organizations because often the media are the first to report such problems, but such press coverage also means that (potential) donors are more likely to notice organizations working in such environments. Human rights organizations can exploit the press coverage to call attention to issues of concern (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005). Human rights organizations are strategic in the concentration of their efforts on particular human rights-abusing states in order to maintain and expand their share in the human rights promotion community (Mihr and Schmitz 2007, 986; Cooley and Ron 2002). Thus, media coverage is important both for its communication function and as a leading indicator of the likelihood that other important constituencies will be engaged.

Finally, we find in the inflation, or first-stage, portion of the model that the most politically open states are more likely to remain in the pool of states that are not

Table 4. Zero-inflated Negative Binomial Regression Estimates of Amnesty International Press Releases 1998–2007

Variable	Coefficient	SE	T-statistic	p-value	χ^2 Test	p-value
Human rights groups	0.009	0.001	8.200	.000		
Human rights groups and openness	-0.004	0.002	-2.350	.019	67.680	.000
Political rights	-0.236	0.110	-2.140	.032		
Political rights ²	0.018	0.014	1.300	.193	17.700	.000
Gross domestic product per capita	0.000	0.000	3.970	.000		
Gross domestic product per capita ²	0.000	0.000	-3.290	.001	15.800	.000
Globalization	0.043	0.014	2.990	.003		
Globalization ²	0.000	0.000	-2.680	.007	9.350	.009
Political terror scale	0.588	0.055	10.590	.000		
Banks instability index	0.000	0.000	2.670	.008		
Human rights news	0.175	0.046	3.830	.000		
Population	0.000	0.000	3.470	.001		
Constant	-2.331	0.408	-5.710	.000		
Inflation stage						
Most politically open	0.363	0.409	0.890	.375		
Least politically open	-14.480	1.106	-13.090	.000		
Banks instability index	-0.002	0.002	-1.430	.153		
Death penalty state	-1.578	0.676	-2.330	.020		
Constant	-0.737	0.358	-2.060	.039		

N = 1,496

Nonzero observations = 822

targeted, while the least politically open states tend to be hit with UAs. The most closed societies are among the greatest human rights abusers and cannot entirely escape the attention of AI despite their best efforts to limit the flow of information regarding human rights violations. The most open states are much less likely to abuse human rights and hence, AI focuses its limited resources elsewhere. We also find that states that register the highest levels of political instability are more likely to rise out of the population of all states and be targeted with a UA. We see that nations with the death penalty are more likely to be on the receiving end of a UA campaign, although the coefficient for this variable is statistically insignificant. These results help demonstrate the complex relationships among openness, human rights groups, and UAs. As societies open their political, economic, and social systems, they facilitate the formation of human rights groups. At the same time, the governments of many such states may find openness and pluralism a threat to their power and repress these forces. The formation of human rights groups and repression then lead to UAs.

Table 5. Zero-inflated Negative Binomial Regression Estimates of Amnesty International Background Reports 1998–2007

Variable	Coefficient	SE	T-statistic	p-value	χ^2 Test	p-value
Human rights groups	0.004	0.001	3.840	.000		
Human rights groups and openness	-0.005	0.001	-3.300	.001	24.390	.000
Political rights	-0.309	0.115	-2.690	.007		
Political rights ²	0.033	0.014	2.280	.023	9.390	.009
Gross domestic product per capita	0.000	0.000	0.700	.485		
Gross domestic product per capita ²	0.000	0.000	0.090	.932	0.490	.485
Globalization	0.005	0.015	0.310	.754		
Globalization ²	0.000	0.000	0.200	.845	2.790	.247
Political terror scale	0.465	0.057	8.130	.000		
Banks instability index	0.000	0.000	2.290	.022		
Human rights news	0.188	0.044	4.240	.000		
Population	0.000	0.000	3.000	.003		
Constant	-0.970	0.404	-2.400	.016		
Inflation stage						
Most politically open	0.581	0.365	1.590	.112		
Least politically open	-2.290	2.637	-0.870	.385		
Banks Instability Index	-0.010	0.006	-1.870	.061		
Death penalty state	0.126	0.364	0.350	.729		
Constant	-1.240	0.362	-3.420	.001		

N = 1,496
Nonzero observations = 764

In order to assess our model's robustness across other measures of a nation's prominence on the international human rights agenda, we provide, like other researchers (Ron, Ramos, and Rogers 2005) estimates of AI's issuance of press releases in Table 4 and background reports in Table 5.¹³ We find that in both cases, albeit with some exceptions, our model is very generalizable to predict other dimensions of international human rights efforts, even though AI press releases and background papers are much more centrally controlled in the main office, while UAs are initiated in the field by human rights groups. Most importantly, we find that the coefficient for our measure of the number of human rights groups is positive and statistically significant in these models, while the interaction term that captures the conditional relationship between human rights groups and the highest levels of openness and UAs is also statistically significant in both tables. However, we do find in both Tables 4 and 5 that the coefficients for the Freedom House variables are in the direction opposite of our prediction. Press releases and background reports tend to decrease with initial, increasing protection of

political rights, but then later increase as these freedoms increase. We have no empirical basis on which to draw any inferences, but perhaps AI is acting strategically in eschewing such resource-intensive campaigns against states where conditions are improving in the hope that such progress will more likely continue with the glare of the international spotlight. While the individual and joint statistical significance of the economic and globalization coefficients fall out in Table 5, the coefficients of the other variables remain statistically significant across the two estimates.

Conclusion

This article explains how states obtain a position on the international human rights agenda through the expansion of human rights groups. Our arguments are focused on explaining the conditions under which AI UAs, which target and seek to remedy human rights abuses committed by a state, are generated. Drawing upon previous literature (Keck and Sikkink 1998), our analyses show that the number of human rights organizations operating in a nation is a critical determinant of its likelihood of being targeted in naming and shaming campaigns by AI. Where previous research on human rights organizations tended to focus on describing and analyzing the manner in which they engaged in political activity (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Bob 2002) in the process of influencing the development of norms and state practices, we have shown in our analysis how such groups influence the behavior of larger international organizations. Further, we have provided evidence and demonstrated how one vital element of the boomerang model (Keck and Sikkink 1998) works in operation. Human rights organizations working locally act as the conduit of information that is transmitted to international organizations that then utilize this information to place pressure on the local governments to change their behavior.

We have provided a more comprehensive model that extends and amplifies upon the research by Ron, Ramos, and Rogers (2005). Where their research focused on explaining the use of AI news releases and background reports, we have developed a theory of naming and shaming campaigns that are initiated by organizations operating within states. Our model, however, can be utilized to explain all three types of naming and shaming campaigns. Even though AI press releases and background reports are under much more centralized control by the AI headquarters, we have shown that these naming and shaming tools are also significantly influenced by the number of human rights organization operating in a nation. We have also shown that the level of openness in a country, as well as its human rights record, media coverage and level of domestic unrest are all significant factors in determining which states AI targets with UAs (Bob 2002, 2005; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). Such openness encourages the formation of local groups that build links with international organizations to publicize and urge action by such organizations to provide redress for human rights abuses. As nations expand political freedoms, as economic conditions improve and exposure to globalization increases, AI is more likely to issue UAs, which draw attention to regime abuses.

Although the test of our theoretical model was fairly successful, there are still unanswered questions in need of examination. Most importantly, we contend that it is critical to further analyze the impact of these campaigns and whether the specific UA campaigns lead to the desired improvement. The tactics utilized by AI and other international human rights groups have been in existence for many years, but we find that research into their effectiveness is only just beginning (Hafner-Burton 2008). Impact research at both the macro-level examining states' overall human rights practices, as well as analysis of the impact of AI UA campaigns on the treatment and release of individuals whose suffering was the focus of these campaigns is also needed. We should also investigate whether such campaigns lead to further actions by other governments and international organizations, such as sanctions and military threats and deployments.

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Notes

1. AI USA's website contains more information regarding the background and use of UAs at www.amnestyusa.org/individuals-at-risk/urgent-action-network/about-the-urgentaction-network/page.do?id=1108053.
2. Recent research (B. King and Soule 2007) suggests that some types of human rights advocacy may be counterproductive in curbing questionable human rights practices.
3. For the year 1999, we take the average of the values for 1998 and 2000. For the year 2001, we count the value of the previous year (2000) twice and the value of the year 2003 once and take the average of the three. This weights the final number more closely to the value for the year 2000, which is closer to the year 2001 than 2003. For the year 2002, we count the value of the year 2000 once and the value of the year 2003 twice and take the average of the three. We follow the same set of procedures for calculating and weighting the values for the years 2004 and 2005.
4. We do not test here for a threshold effect, similar to the previous hypothesis and in accord with Davenport and Armstrong (1999), but rather analyze such relationships in future research.
5. Data are found at www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=5.
6. Data on GDP per capita are taken from the World Bank (2006).
7. Data can be found at <http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/>.
8. We note that some scholars have found a reciprocal relationship between political protest, a key form of instability and repression (Carey 2006). We do not test this hypothesis here,

but note that the next step in this research agenda is to identify the complex causal relationships existing among UAs, repression, and the reactions of human rights groups.

9. Data are available for purchase at <http://www.databanks.sitehosting.net/>.
10. For a more detailed explanation of how these data were collected please see the Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005) codebook.
11. There are several issues regarding the reporting of human rights violations by NGOs and the media of which we must take cognizance. Oliver and Maney (2000, 267) call attention to the biases associated with news reporting. They emphasize the need to recognize the complex, triadic, and interdependent relationship which exists between political processes, protest, and the news media and the resulting difficulty associated with disaggregation of these factors in analyses. In their study of Guatemala, Davenport and Ball (2002, 430) also raise a number of concerns associated with relying on second-hand information to report human rights abuses that are important for this study. First, they emphasize the need to utilize diverse sources of information for such reports. Second, they call attention to the specific circumstances under which the news media identify instances of contentious politics, such as the size of the event, proximity to a news agency, and the source's interests that will determine which events are covered. We are cognizant that such problems may be at issue in our analysis. We note that in our analyses, we follow Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005) in their measurement of media coverage as the method best suited to create a cross-national database of such reporting. While reliance on two Western news magazines, Newsweek and The Economist, may well lead to some of the reporting biases identified by Davenport and Ball (2002), we are most interested in explaining how a Western-based organization, AI, acts. Thus, reliance on Western sources that AI offices are most likely to be familiar with should not create a substantial degree of bias. It would also be very useful to analyze the relationship between all news coverage and the issuance of UAs to determine if AI focuses more attention on media "hot spots." Oliver and Maney (2000) emphasize the interdependent relationship that exists between political processes, protest, and the media (see also Davenport and Ball 2002). Some states may be targeted because media coverage and presence cause human rights organizations to focus their scarce resources where their efforts are likely to reach the widest audience. Media presence, in addition to the other factors in our model, may explain the prevalence of UAs directed at countries like the United States, Mexico, and other states that are in the news frequently and for various reasons, but whose human rights abuses are not of the scale or severity found in other less, visible states. Such media coverage may also lead to more and better efforts by human rights organizations to capture the attention of the media and human rights organizations. But while general media attention may be a sufficient condition leading to UAs in some cases, given the ever-shifting and Western focus of the media we would not expect a consistent relationship. As well, such data do not currently exist.
12. Data on population are taken from the World Bank (2010) World Development Indicators Data Base accessed on their website at <http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do>, last accessed on May 5, 2010.
13. AI press releases contain information about government human rights violations. Press releases target the general public audience and media outlets. Background reports provide

lengthy detailed information about governments' human rights violations that are the result of in-depth investigations.

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