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Source: *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), pp. 733-749

Published by: [Midwest Political Science Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2669278>

Accessed: 14/08/2013 09:29

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Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy

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There are several mechanisms through which ideas are supposed to influence preferences and outcomes, but one of the most important is that ideas are embedded into institutions. This presumes that once idea-infused institutions are created, they will survive and thrive. Bureaucratic politics suggests this outcome is far from certain. This article takes a first cut at examining how idea-infused, or “missionary” institutions, survive and thrive in a world of bureaucratic politics. It suggests that missionary institutions face a tradeoff between surviving and thriving. Agencies that are insulated from other bureaucracies have a better chance of surviving, but are unlikely to influence the broad contours of policy. The reverse is also true; embedded agencies have a much lower chance of keeping their ideational mission intact, but if they do survive, their odds of thriving are greater. These hypotheses are examined by comparing the evolution of the Peace Corps and the State Department Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

Ideas have taken on a renewed prominence in the international relations literature. There are several mechanisms through which ideas are supposed to influence preferences and outcomes, but one of the most important is that they are implanted into institutions. Scholars that emphasize constructivism (Finnemore 1996; Checkel 1997), epistemic communities (Hall 1989; Haas 1992), or other approaches (Goldstein 1993; Goldstein and Keohane 1993) have highlighted the role of institutions in pursuing ideational agendas.

While this is a plausible explanation for how ideas persist and determine foreign policy, it is incomplete. Nothing is said about the strategies these institutions must pursue in order to survive and thrive in a world of competing ideas and institutions. Such an explanation assumes that once idea-infused institutions are created, the story is over. The bureaucratic-politics paradigm suggests that the story is just starting. Bloomfield notes, “For it is then that an idea, however morally powerful and however authentically grounded in the national political epistemology, encounters the instruments, the forces, and the fallible (or obstreperous) human beings who implement (or thwart) . . . foreign policy programs” (1982, 2).

How do idea-infused institutions survive and thrive? How successful are they at promoting their ideas after their political sponsors pass from the scene? This article will argue that the placement of institutions in the foreign-policy structure helps to determine their ability to survive and thrive, but in contradictory ways. Idea-infused or “missionary” institutions possessing structural insulation from the influence of other organizations are more likely to survive in a manner consistent with their founding ideas. Insulation permits the agency to develop an organizational culture dedicated to the founding idea, preventing the introduction of competing ideas or tactics. However, this insulation also lessens the missionary institution’s influence over the crafting of foreign policy. Preexisting bureaucracies will automatically resist the introduction of new actors into the policy mix and

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Previous versions of this article were presented at the 1999 International Studies Association annual meeting, Washington, D.C. and at the PIPES workshop at the University of Chicago. I am grateful to Jenny Kehl and especially Melanie Kay Anderson for their research assistance. I thank Delia Boylan, Don Moon, Roland Paris, James M. Scott, Amy Searight, Sven Steinmo, Alexander Wendt, Greg Caldeira, and three anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions. The usual caveat applies.

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 44, No. 4, October 2000, Pp. 733–749

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impose constraints. The development of a strong organizational culture will prevent the new missionary institution from compromising with other agencies. An insulated institution will be hard-pressed to overcome bureaucratic divisions in spreading its ideas.

In contrast, idea-infused institutions embedded within a more powerful bureaucracy have a lower probability of survival in their original form. They must cope with greater pressures than insulated agencies and are prevented from developing a strong organizational culture. Embedded institutions are less immune to competing ideas. However, if they do survive, embedded institutions have a greater chance of thriving over time. Close interaction with other bureaucracies can lead to an increase in shared ideas and shared understandings. This may alter the goals of the institution, but it also transforms the identity of the other bureaucratic units by converting them to their founding idea. Ideational entrepreneurs thus face a tradeoff in establishing institutions that embody dearly held ideas. They can increase the odds for survival at the cost of greater influence, or they can gamble at enhancing their influence but risk extinction.

To test this modified ideational approach, I develop two case studies of missionary institutions with different placements in the federal government. Both institutions are imbued with a set of ideas distinct from the rest of the foreign policy bureaucracy: the United States Peace Corps and the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (HA).¹

This article is intended to contribute and critique both the ideas and the bureaucratic politics literature and to begin a dialogue between the two. The ideas literature has been unable to disentangle the effect of ideas from the effect of material interests (Jacobsen 1995). Previous studies of foreign policy ideas, such as the cult of the offensive (Van Evera 1984) or strategic trade theory (Goldstein 1993), have been unable to separate the intrinsic effect of new ideas from the influence of interest groups that materially benefited from those ideas. The cases presented here are selected to separate those effects.

Another problem with the ideas literature has been its failure to examine how foreign policy is crafted when competing ideas coexist. Too often in this literature, cases are presented where powerful ideas simply overwhelm preexisting beliefs or values, leading to a change in policy (Rohrlich 1987). Common sense suggests that new ideas

will meet cognitive resistance from long-held beliefs (Jervis 1976; Lebow 1981). One of the issues this article can address is how missionary institutions survive in a bureaucratic jungle where other actors will resist the injection of new ideas.

This article also fills several gaps in the bureaucratic politics literature. Since Allison's (1971) *Essence of Decision*, the study of bureaucratic politics literature has focused on the description of organizational interaction as a separate level of analysis (Welch 1992; Hudson and Vose 1995; Stern and Verbeek 1998) rather than developing positive theories of action. The result has been an endless series of debates about the salience of bureaucratic politics in contrast to the power of shared images (Krasner 1972; Art 1973; Khong 1992; Rhodes 1994), presidential dominance (Moe 1985; Bendor and Hammond 1992), legislative dominance (Weingast and Moran 1983), or all of the above (Hammond and Knott 1996). The modified ideational approach developed here is not a general theory of bureaucratic politics. However, it does suggest the origins of bureaucratic preferences, strategies to maximize organizational utility, and likely outcomes. In particular, the ability of bureaucracies to use organizational culture as a means of propagating ideas is crucial to determining outcomes. The approach used here is consistent with recent rationalist (Bendor, Taylor, and Van Gaalen 1987; Brehm and Gates 1997) and constructivist work (Legro 1996) emphasizing the role of organizational culture as an important factor in bureaucratic politics.

The cases presented here also correct some empirical deficiencies. The bureaucratic politics approach has focused exclusively on crisis decision making in security bureaucracies (Allison 1971; Lebow 1981) at the expense of longitudinal analyses of "routine" foreign policy, which is odd since this is the policy category that bureaucratic politics should matter most (Rosati 1981). Other foreign policy agencies have been neglected. Expanding the range of cases can help to broaden the explanatory power of bureaucratic politics in foreign policy.

The rest of this article is organized as follows. The next section surveys the obstacles missionary institutions face in pursuing their agendas. Section two develops hypotheses on the likelihood of these institutions surviving and thriving. The third section motivates the case selection of the Peace Corps and the HA Bureau. The fourth section looks at the performance of the Peace Corps from its origins in the Kennedy administration to the end of the Ford administration. The following section looks at the HA's performance under the Carter and Reagan administrations. The final section concludes.

¹In 1994 the HA bureau was renamed the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to reflect the Clinton administration's expanded definition of human rights.

Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and Foreign Policy

An ideational approach to foreign policy argues that ideas can be sustained through their institutionalization and the organizational culture bred within the institution. Once established, missionary institutions are an important causal mechanism for the conversion of ideas into policies. Sikink observes: "Rarely do new ideas thrive in the modern world outside of institutional networks. Ideas within an institution become embodied in its statement of purpose, its self-definition, and its research or training program, which in turn tends to perpetuate and extend the ideas" (1991, 2). (See also Goldstein and Keohane 1993, 13.)

All institutions have some founding idea or ideas. However, the "missionary" institutions described in the ideational literature are distinct in two ways. First, missionary institutions have a coherent set of preferences over means and ends. In a missionary institution, there is little disagreement within the agency over the desired goal or the ways in which that goal is achieved.² Second, missionary institutions try to prevent the introduction of additional normative or material goals in order to avoid value conflicts or tradeoffs (Bendor, Taylor, and Van Gaalen 1987). This allows members of a missionary institution to maintain their intensity of preferences over means and ends; it also prevents the organization from engaging in tradeoffs over competing goals.³

Implicit in the ideas literature are the reasons missionary institutions are likely to survive and thrive. Powerful ideas can create a set of compelling beliefs that fuse together the preferences of managers (agency heads) and operators (lower-level bureaucrats). If these ideas are embraced by operators, the preferences of this group of individuals will more closely match those of managers, reducing the need for monitoring. Idea-infused organizations develop a unique sense of organizational mission, overcoming intraorganizational principal-agent difficulties (Wilson 1989).

While intuitively appealing, this causal mechanism is highly problematic when applied to foreign-policy bureaucracies. The new institutionalist approach to politi-

² This distinguishes missionary institutions from organizations like the Central Intelligence Agency, for example, which is an institution that has a clearly defined end (to acquire as much significant information about other countries as possible) but multiple methods of achieving that end.

³ I am talking here about ideal types. All political institutions embody this missionary zeal to some extent, and as will be shown, all missionary institutions must cope with the prospect of new ideas.

cal organizations, the bureaucratic politics paradigm, and studies of organizational culture suggest that the insertion of ideas into institutions is not that simple.⁴

Scholars of political organizations note the difficulty of embedding ideas into institutions. Agencies that prefer the status quo or fear losing power will resist the introduction of any new ideas into the policy mix and use any means at their disposal to avoid unpalatable ideas. These means could include agenda manipulation, withholding information, excluding new agencies from consultation, or psychological pressure to conform. Politicians will often structure organizations so that they can retain their influence even after losing office (Moe 1990). Established bureaucracies may sabotage the new institutions by lobbying overtly political agents, such as legislators or interest groups. A bureaucracy with many masters could find it difficult to carry out its mission without outside interference.

In foreign affairs, bureaucratic politics is particularly salient for two reasons. First, actors important to domestic politics have less power and influence in foreign affairs. Foreign policy is a thin interest-group environment. While interest groups are an important actor in most models of domestic policy making, foreign policy interest groups are smaller, less organized, less wealthy, and by extension less influential (Zegart 1999, chapter 1). Similarly, Congress and congressmen have little electoral incentive to take an interest in foreign affairs and have less information and few tools with which to influence most arenas of foreign affairs. This raises the profile of other actors, including other bureaucracies. Second, in contrast to many arenas of domestic policy making, foreign policy institutions rarely have monopoly control over an issue. Agencies must cooperate with each other in order to implement policy (Zegart 1999). Classic works on bureaucratic politics (Allison 1971; Destler 1972; Allison and Halperin 1972; Halperin 1974) have modeled foreign policy as the outcome of bargaining among multiple organizations with different agendas. Any new missionary institution must negotiate with preexisting bureaucratic actors.

Established agencies have an advantage over newly created institutions. Older agencies will possess more resources, information, skill, and expertise in the bureaucratic trenches. Newly established missionary institutions will certainly possess a strong sense of organizational

⁴ Structural realism has also critiqued the ideational approach, but these critiques are somewhat tangential to the cases discussed in this article. See Posen (1984) and Krasner (1993) for the realist take.

mission, but may lack the other resources necessary to achieve their policies. When created, these institutions might have the backing of more powerful actors that can shepherd the bureaucratic unit through its infancy. However, as political fortunes change, these protectors can fall from power.

The existence of strong organizational cultures can further impede the implementation of ideas in foreign policy. Foreign-policy agencies are likely to have strong organizational cultures because they fall into the category of “procedural” organizations (Wilson 1989, 164), in which outputs can be observed but outcomes cannot. In these types of bureaucracies, strong organizational cultures focus less on ends and more on means. In foreign affairs, the link between the outputs of foreign policy agencies—*démarches*, treaties, sanctions, inducements, diplomatic entreaties, and so on—and the outcomes those outputs are designed to influence is vague or indirect. Frequently the outcome is not even observable. Strong organizational cultures have been observed in diplomatic corps (Destler 1972) as well as the U.S. military (Wilson 1989).

Procedural organizations produce cultures that socially construct an ethos focusing on methods linked to founding ideals. If these organizations are constrained by new tasks that require different skills, an existing culture can be diluted with the influx of new personnel or new tasks. Established organizational cultures will resist or subvert new tasks that are assigned them, for fear that they will lose their cohesion and ability to function (Derthick 1990). This problem will be particularly acute with foreign-policy bureaucracies.

The politics of bureaucratic structure can blunt the ability of an institution to propagate its founding idea. However, the ideational entrepreneurs that create and staff new missionary institutions are not oblivious to these pitfalls. What strategies can the leaders of missionary institutions use to survive and thrive?

When Will Missionary Institutions Survive and Thrive?

For the purposes of this article, a missionary institution *survives* if it maintains its organizational integrity and continues to advance its initial set of ideas even after its political patrons lose power. For example, the U.S. Council on Competitiveness, created by the Bush administration to advance the goal of government promotion of high-tech sectors of the U.S. economy, did not survive; it

was dissolved on the first day of the Clinton administration. A missionary institution *thrives* if the agency’s espoused norms and principles closely correlate with the state’s observed policy outcomes.⁵ For example, in the late forties the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff effectively pushed U.S. foreign policy towards a grand strategy of containment. Both surviving and thriving are continuous variables. An agency can partially survive if it retains its organizational form but has some of its founding ideas altered over time.

There are multiple causes of surviving and thriving, including the balance of material interests, the preferences of political leaders, and feedback by external actors to policy outcomes. However, the placement of missionary institutions also matters because it constrains the strategy set of the new agency. Missionary institutions can be created as autonomous agencies that are horizontally equivalent to established institutions. Such agencies have independent access to resources such as staff and equipment. These institutions develop their own hierarchical structure as well as criteria for promotion within the ranks. The U.S. Trade Representative is an example of this kind of placement. New missionary institutions can also be established as a subunit of a larger organization. These agencies have a clear mission but rely on the larger bureaucracy for rules and resources. As such, these institutions have less choice over personnel, promotion criteria, and hierarchical structure. An example of this kind of agency is the Bureau of Refugee Affairs, which is located within the larger organizational unit of the State Department. I will call the former *insulated agencies* and the latter *embedded agencies*.⁶

At first glance, it would appear that insulated agencies would have a higher probability of surviving and thriving. Insulated agencies have the advantages of autonomy and resource allocation. An insulated agency has greater control over its own staff and budget, preventing other agencies from manipulating those resources. This increases the ability of a missionary institution to fend off efforts to constrain its activities.

The most important advantage to an insulated missionary institution is the agency head’s ability to use the founding ideas to generate a strong and cohesive organization culture. Organizational culture, as defined in the rational choice literature (Kreps 1990; Miller 1992), consists of the method through which desired ends and

⁵ This does not mean that the policy succeeds, just that it is implemented. This goes to the distinction between policy outputs and outcomes.

⁶ These definitions correspond closely to Kaarbo’s (1998) terminology of vertical agencies and horizontal agencies.

means are communicated from managers to operators and outsiders. Establishing a clear set of decision rules empowers bureaucrats to act under uncertainty. Under such conditions, ideas can provide a road map to solutions (Garrett and Weingast 1993). Furthermore, establishing an organizational culture based upon founding ideas makes it easier to solve adverse selection problems in hiring. New hires are quicker to conform to the norms and practices of the rest of the bureaucracy if there is little variation among the preferences of individual operators (Brehm and Gates 1997; Carpenter 1998). Founding ideas help to narrow that variance. Culture ensures that the desired principles and causal beliefs sustain themselves over time.

Despite these apparent advantages, there are reasons to believe that insulated agencies face tougher odds of thriving. The very strategies that increase the likelihood of surviving reduce the chances of thriving. Insulation and the concomitant development of a strong organizational culture limit the influence of new ideas upon the other bureaucratic actors in foreign policy. Insulation is analogous to quarantine; it makes it difficult for other ideas to “infect” a missionary institution, but it also makes it more difficult for the missionary institution to spread its ideas to other agencies. The existence of different organizational cultures will further impede the exchange of different ideas. Just as separate political entities will quickly establish within-group and without-group identities, so will bureaucratic units (Mercer 1995; Kaarbo and Gruenfeld 1998). Sufficient differences in bureaucratic culture lead agencies to distrust the ability of other institutions to make any contribution to foreign policy. It also encourages existing bureaucracies to act like competitors, providing alternative policy outputs as a way of limiting the missionary institution’s influence.⁷

A missionary institution’s organizational culture also makes logrolling difficult. Compromise implies the acceptance of other beliefs and values, which can prove anathema to bureaucrats who genuinely believe that their ideas are superior. Agency heads must weigh the benefits of any policy compromise against the costs to morale if such a compromise violates the agency’s norms and beliefs. Operators may shirk and/or sabotage compromises they dislike (Brehm and Gates 1997). The distrust between agencies with different organizational cultures raises the transaction costs of reaching a compromise, impairing insulated agencies’ ability to logroll. The development of a unifying organizational culture can increase an insulated

agency’s chances for survival while decreasing its chances of thriving.⁸

Embedded agencies possess a different set of disadvantages and advantages in propagating ideas. Embedded agencies are located within a larger and more powerful bureaucracy. This type of agency should, potentially, have greater access to the information and resources of the larger entity. A new agency can manipulate agendas and routines to harness the power of the whole organization by introducing new practices and procedures. Kaarbo (1998, 81) notes that if a minority faction can secure a decision rule of unanimity instead of majority rule, it can use its veto power to block initiatives.

The most important tool of an embedded agency, however, is its ability to proselytize its norms and values, initiating others in the larger organization to its point of view over time. This is perhaps the most distinct advantage of an idea-based bureaucracy over an interest-based bureaucracy. Interest-based bureaucracies can push their ends through bargaining and the accumulation of power. Idea-based bureaucracies can push their ends through the persuasion of other groups to their principled beliefs, particularly if they communicate the psychic or material benefits of using their ideas. Both constructivists and rational-choice theorists argue that if staffers are capable of expressing their principled beliefs in a way that is conceptually amenable to other individuals’ roles and beliefs, their ability to mingle with other bureaucrats encourages a broader shift in preferences (Brehm and Gates 1997; Johnston 1999). In Rhodes’ (1994) study of the U.S. Navy, he found that Alfred Thayer Mahan’s ideas of naval warfare trumped the narrower parochial interests among the submariners, airmen, and surface sailors in explaining weapons procurement. Ideas that resonate with broader values or goals can spread across the larger organizational entity.

Of course, embedded agencies also face significant problems in their ability to spread their ideas. Unlike an insulated agency, embedded agencies are unable to fashion a separate organizational culture. They must draw their personnel from the larger organizational entity, one that has a previously established bureaucratic culture. This puts the new missionary institution at a significant disadvantage; agency heads cannot create an organizational culture consistent with their founding ideas if a strong culture already exists within the larger bureaucracy. The absence of a distinctive organizational culture increases the likelihood of an embedded agency thriving,

⁷See Bendor, Taylor, and Van Gaalen (1987) on the effect of outside competition on bureaucratic outcomes.

⁸Ironically, this external conflict will often serve to strengthen intra-group cohesion through a reinforced organizational culture. See ‘t Hart (1994).

but it simultaneously reduces the chances of the agency surviving skirmishes with other subunits.

Embedded agencies must also cope with less control over resources than insulated agencies. Superiors can choose to deny material, informational, or human resources to the new agency, cut it out from organizational decision making, or simply coerce bureaucrats into conforming with the organizations' status quo ante goals. Embedded agencies also face an acute problem of adverse selection; they cannot be sure if new staff will act in a manner consistent with the founding ideas. Over time, this can lead to an absorption into the larger entity, extinguishing (or at the very least, mutating) the founding ideas.

Insulated and embedded agencies face a tradeoff. Embedded agencies have the better chance of spreading their ideas over time across a significant section of the foreign policy bureaucracy, but they also have a better chance of being ideologically absorbed by the larger organizational unit. Insulated agencies have a better chance of implementing their desired policies, but over time must cope with countervailing policies established by other agencies and hostile executives.

Given these tradeoffs, how should missionary institutions be expected to perform? Insulated agencies that maximize the advantages of autonomy ensure survival. This means establishing a strong bureaucratic culture that can sustain the founding ideals of the institution. A strong culture can also thwart hostile executives or legislatures. Although politicians can weaken agencies through budget cuts and personnel shifts, a strong bureaucratic culture can encourage operators to pursue goals that might run contrary to a hostile monitor. Such a strong culture will also make it more difficult for that agency to convert other parts of the foreign policy machinery to its set of principled beliefs, or to logroll other bureaucracies. Thus, an insulated agency should succeed in implanting strong norms within its staff, sustaining its organizational mission. On the other hand, it should be expected to have less influence over the broader contours of foreign policy, and its policy outputs will be diluted by the policies of other agencies.

Embedded agencies face a different set of incentives to propagate their ideas. They will be unable to develop a strong organizational culture, making them more vulnerable to absorption by the larger organizational entity. These agencies face an immediate threat to their survival from hostile bureaucrats and superiors. Their overriding goal must be to encourage practices and routines that spread ideas to the rest of the larger organization. This could be done through training regimens or new standard operating procedures that expose others to the ideas the

missionary institution is supposed to encourage. Only when these principled beliefs are accepted by the larger organizational unit does the embedded agency have a chance of influencing the larger contours of policy. The problem, of course, is that the act of persuasion takes time, during which an embedded agency could face extinction. Even if successful, the result is likely to be a hybrid of the entrenched ideas of the preexisting organization and the new ideas of the missionary institution.

Table 1 summarizes the contrast between the successful strategies and outcomes pursued by the different types of missionary institutions. The placement of the missionary institution within the larger bureaucracy is the independent variable, because it strongly affects the intervening variable, organizational strategy. It should be stressed that this modified ideational approach is far from a complete theory of ideas and bureaucratic politics; it ignores the role of material interests as well as other factors. However, its parsimony has advantages. As Lijphart (1971) observes, parsimonious theories permit scholars to draw causal inferences from fewer observations. The next section explains the case selection and testing methodology.

Case Selection and Prediction

Because of the difficulty in quantifying the independent and dependent variables, case studies will be used. The subsequent sections conduct a plausibility probe (Eckstein 1974) of the hypotheses delineated in the previous section by examining the Peace Corps under the Kennedy/Johnson and Nixon/Ford administrations, and the State Department Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (HA) under the Carter and Reagan administrations. These cases were selected on the independent variable to allow variation in agency placement.⁹ Such an approach reduces the chance of selection bias that is ever present in qualitative research (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, chapter 4).

The Peace Corps is nominally under the control of the State Department, but it has much greater institutional autonomy than the HA Bureau. The Corps' budget is a separate line item from the State Department; its staff does not come from the Foreign Service. The Peace Corps Act of 1961 explicitly stated that its operators were not obligated to agree with or defend U.S. foreign policy (Schwartz 1991, 19). It meets the definition of an insu-

⁹Since the modified ideational approach has only one independent variable, two cases generates sufficient degrees of freedom to prevent underdetermination.

TABLE 1 A Comparison of Insulated and Embedded Agencies

Type of Agency	Resources at Disposal	Predicted Organizational Strategy	Predicted Outcome
Insulated agency	Control over personnel, budget, promotion criteria	Generation of a strong organizational culture to ensure survival	Survival likely; not likely to thrive
Embedded agency	Greater access to other bureaucracies	Attempt to change practices and procedures to persuade other bureaucrats	Survival less likely; if survival, then thriving likely

lated agency. The Humanitarian Affairs Bureau, in contrast, was established within the State Department bureaucracy. Nonpolitical staff came from the Foreign Service. The head of HA was an Assistant Secretary in the State Department bureaucracy. In contrast to the Peace Corps, HA had to operate within the confines of a preexisting bureaucracy and organizational culture. It meets the definition of an embedded agency.

The cases have the added advantage of holding constant variables important in alternative explanations. First, the effect of material interests on policy outcomes is controlled for in that no domestic interests materially benefited from either the Peace Corps or the HA bureau. Histories of these organizations demonstrate that these agencies embody principled beliefs—ideas that determine which policy ends are right and which are wrong (Goldstein and Keohane 1993).¹⁰ Although it is impossible (and undesirable) to separate completely the effect of ideas from the effect of interests, these two agencies come very close.

Second, the international distribution of power remained reasonably constant throughout the time period studied. Systemic theorists (Waltz 1979) argue that changes in the external policy environment are the principal cause of any changes in foreign policy. The bipolarity of the Cold War remained essentially unchanged throughout both cases. Structural realism would therefore be unable to explain any variation in U.S. foreign policy towards global development or human rights. Thus, both systemic and pluralist approaches would predict that the new missionary institutions should have no effect on foreign policy. Any observed variation in policy outputs would have to come from the conscious effort of these institutions.

From the arguments made in the previous section, we should expect to see the Peace Corps successfully develop a strong organizational culture in order to resist ef-

forts to control or alter its mission. At the same time, however, the ideas that prompted its creation should be limited in their effect on American foreign policy. With the HA bureau, we should expect any attempt to forge a separate bureaucratic culture fail, due to the inevitable clash with the bureaucratic culture of the Foreign Service. Over time, however, one would expect to see HA either co-opted by the State Department, or, if it survives, converting the Foreign Service to its founding ideas.

Although the case selection controls for some alternative explanations, other approaches would produce a set of predictions contrasting with the modified ideational approach, as Table 2 demonstrates. A presidential dominance approach (Moe 1985; Bendor and Hammond 1992, 313–317) argues that the chief executive, through appointment and selective incentives, can overcome any bureaucratic resistance to his preferred outcomes. This approach would predict the missionary institutions to survive and thrive in supportive administrations, but wither and die in unfriendly administrations. In both of the cases, an administration with ideologies hostile to these institutions' founding ideas came to power within ten years of their creation. Furthermore, both the Nixon and Reagan administrations placed a great deal of emphasis on political control over the bureaucracy and were thus quite conscious of the need to control organizations with views antithetical to their ideas (Reeves 1988; Nathan 1983).¹¹ Predicting outcomes based solely on material resource allocations would predict a better chance for the Peace Corps to survive and thrive than the HA bureau, as its initial staff size (250 to 20 initial staffers) and budget were much larger.

¹¹An approach based on the *individual* presidential style of management (Rosati 1981; Hermann and Preston 1994) would predict neither agency to survive or thrive in all periods. The missionary institutions would face the difficulties of being minority voices in administrations (Johnson and Carter) that valued bureaucratic consensus. With presidents that preferred more centralized decision-making (Nixon and Reagan), they would lose out because they were promoting ideas that differed from presidential preferences.

¹⁰For HA, see Bloomfield (1982), Drew (1977), and Sikkink (1993); on the Peace Corps, see Hoopes 1965, Rice (1985), Reeves (1988), and Schwartz (1991).

TABLE 2 Predicted Outcomes

Approach	Predicted performance of Peace Corps under Kennedy/ Johnson	Predicted performance of Peace Corps under Nixon	Predicted performance of HA under Carter	Predicted performance of HA under Reagan
Modified ideational	High probability of surviving; low probability of thriving	High probability of surviving; low probability of thriving	Low probability of surviving and thriving	Low probability of surviving; if survival, high probability of thriving
Presidential dominance	High probability of surviving and thriving	Low probability of surviving or thriving	High probability of surviving and thriving	Low probability of surviving or thriving
Material resources	High probability of surviving and thriving	High probability of surviving and thriving	Low probability of surviving or thriving	Low probability of surviving or thriving

Because of the acute interest in both the Peace Corps and human rights in general, I rely on secondary sources in building the case studies. This inevitably leads to questions of coding reliability of qualitative variables. Space constraints prevent an exhaustive detailing of minute disagreements among the sources about the outcomes in each case. However, a review of the literature has revealed a surprising degree of consensus on most of the points covered in the case studies. In each case, plausible alternative explanations are discussed, and significant disagreements among secondary sources are also noted.

The Peace Corps: 1961–1976

There were two founding ideas of the Peace Corps. First, the way to alleviate poverty and promote development was through the direct action of the Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs). This was the quality through which the Peace Corps distinguished itself from more technical U.S. aid organizations such as the Agency for International Development or Point Four. Unlike those agencies, which dispatched aid, the Peace Corps was designed to put a human face to that aid (Anderson 1998; Shriver 1964, 71–72; Ashabranner 1971, 44–45). One quasi-official guide to the Peace Corps observed in 1965: “the Peace Corps says to the world as no private agency or technical assistance organization could say it, that the American people themselves want to help the people of the emerging nations fight the poverty, disease, and ignorance which are the greatest obstacles to progress This concept of the doer, as opposed to the advisor or teacher, is the distinguishing feature of the Peace Corps” (Hoopes 1965, 82, 100).

Second, the Peace Corps was designed to reorient U.S. foreign policy in the third world towards problems of de-

velopment and in the process create allies among the mass of newly decolonized states. Memos between Kennedy and the first Peace Corps director, R. Sargent Shriver, in 1961 stressed the foreign-policy advantages that would accrue to the United States from the goodwill generated by the Peace Corps, particularly with respect to the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union (Cobbs 1996, 90–94; Cobbs Hoffman 1998, 29). Shriver’s first trip abroad to sell the Peace Corps to host countries specifically targeted strategic third-world countries, including Nigeria, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines (Amin 1992, 40).¹² However, the Peace Corps’ creators were also aware of the fact that the only way to obtain that advantage was to denude U.S. policy of blatant anti-communism, since this would conflict with the revolutionary ideology of these new countries. In short, the founders of the Peace Corps had a causal belief that by focusing on development, the U.S. would build up goodwill among the decolonized states. Through such *idealpolitik*, the United States would help stem communism (Shriver 1964, 72).

Despite pressure from AID to place the new missionary institution within its organizational purview, Kennedy established the Peace Corps as an insulated agency.¹³ The first Peace Corps staffers were conscious that their autonomous status permitted a strong organizational culture that would perpetuate the founding ideals. Shriver observed, “The organizational charts would have looked better if we had become a box in a single foreign aid agency. But the thrust of a new idea would have been lost.

¹²After a June 1961 trip to Guinea, Shriver wrote in a memorandum: “Here we have an opportunity to move a country from an apparently clear Bloc orientation to a position of neutrality or even one of orientation to the West. This is the first such opportunity I know of in the developing world” (quoted in Amin 1992, 44).

¹³See Ashabranner (1971, 44–47) for more on this decision.

The new wine needed a new bottle" (1964, 15). Vice President Johnson warned Shriver, "this town is full of folks who believe the only way to do something is their way. That's especially true in diplomacy and things like that, because they work with foreign governments.... You put the Peace Corps into the Foreign Service and they'll put striped pants on your people" (quoted in Rice 1985, 67).

The staff and volunteers quickly acquired the culture of a missionary institution. The number of applications to be Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in 1961 outnumbered applications to all other departments of the federal government. The first few cohorts of PCVs consisted primarily of BA generalists who signed up because of Kennedy's call for service. Once placed in the field, they established a strong subculture that reflected the founding ideals of the agency: independence from other foreign policy agencies, a sensitivity to other cultures, and a desire to be "doers."¹⁴ The organizational culture was so strong that longitudinal studies of PCVs indicate that their career paths were dramatically affected by their service in the Peace Corps (Starr 1994).

The exceptional *esprit de corps* of the Peace Corps administrators has also been documented in organizational histories (Ashabranner 1971; Rice 1985; Schwartz 1991; Cobbs Hoffman 1998). The amount of overtime hours they were willing to devote to the cause reflected their commitment to the mission of the Peace Corps. The forty-hour workweek did not exist for the staff any more than it did for the volunteers in the field (Clute 1962, 165). Ashabranner observed: "Almost everyone who serves for any length of time in the Peace Corps . . . develops an emotional attachment to the Peace Corps, or at least to the Peace Corps idea, that I cannot conceive of anyone developing for the Commerce Department, the Bureau of Standards, or the Agency for International Development" (1971, 3).¹⁵

The Peace Corps' emphasis on fostering a strong organizational culture led to some foreign-policy successes in the sixties. Shriver and his staff decided at the outset to place as many volunteers as possible in the field. The growth of the program was impressive. In 1961 there were 750 PCVs; by 1966 there were 15,556 in more than fifty countries, including nations traditionally aligned with the Soviet Union such as Tanzania and India. Shriver's success at creating a large, insulated agency also

led to the spread of the founding ideas of development, direct action, and person-to-person diplomacy. More favorable attitudes towards the U.S. by third-world elites were reported throughout Africa and Asia (Amin 1992, 163–178; Cobbs Hoffman 1998, 157–182; Rice 1985, 280; Searles 1997, 12).

The Peace Corps was also successful in encouraging policy emulation among other countries in the West. In October 1962, the Peace Corps held an "International Conference on Middle-Level Manpower" in Puerto Rico to encourage other countries in the west to establish Peace-Corps-type programs. At the conference, twelve countries announced plans to establish similar programs, and the number increased in the years thereafter. By 1965, sixteen western countries including France, Germany, and Great Britain had started similar volunteer programs.

These initial successes occurred without much support from the rest of the foreign-policy bureaucracy. There were repeated clashes with the State Department. Relations between the Peace Corps and AID were described as "dismal." Relations with the Department of the Interior "nearly regressed into a brawl" (Carey 1970, 180–185). The Civil Service Commission was reluctant to work with the new missionary institution. As a way of exerting power, other foreign policy bureaucrats refrained from transmitting information to the Peace Corps Staff. Rice quotes one official complaining, "Can anyone explain to me why we never appear to see State or AID messages involving major decisions on issues involving countries in which we have programs?" (1985, 130).

Part of this tension was due to differences in organizational culture that developed between the Peace Corps and other organizations. More established departments thought the PCVs were naïve, untrained, and an impediment to the conduct of foreign policy. Wofford quotes a career diplomat in the State department disparagingly describing the Peace Corps motto as: "Yoo-hoo, yoo-hoo. Let's go out and wreak some good on the natives" (1980, 274). The Peace Corps was partly responsible for these conflicts because of their strategy of developing a distinct organizational culture. In one memorandum, Shriver ordered that PCVs refrain from spending time at U.S. embassy compounds or consort with the embassy staff. He noted, "Separateness from other overseas operations of the U.S. is important to achieving the desired image" (Rice 1985, 130; see also Carey 1970, chapter nine).

The differences in organizational culture were exacerbated by the perceived loss of power felt by other foreign policy agencies. Rice quotes Bill Moyers observing: "The old-line employees of State and AID coveted the Peace Corps greedily. It was a natural instinct; established bureaucracies do not like competition from new people"

¹⁴See in particular Schwartz (1991), chapter one; Rice (1985), chapter ten.

¹⁵This does not mean that there were not conflicts within the organization. Rice notes "Once overseas, the Volunteers formed their own exclusive 'subculture' and most preferred to have as little to do with Peace Corps/Washington as possible" (1985, 221–222).

(1985, 61). Searles quotes a USAID bureaucrat grouching to a Peace Corps volunteer, "Peace Corps is afraid that someone else might get a little credit for trying to help people, too" (1997, 98). In one interagency meeting, State department officials expressed bitterness with the Peace Corps for muscling in on educational aid policies. Other officials at State felt that Shriver needed "a gentle straightening out" so that the Peace Corps could better serve State. They opposed the 1962 international conference held by the Peace Corps, fearing that Shriver would unwittingly deliver the Soviets a propaganda coup (Cobbs 1996). There was particular resentment that Shriver refused to send PCVs to unstable but strategic countries such as Vietnam or Algeria (Schwartz 1991, 74). Despite this antagonism, the Peace Corps partially thrived during the Kennedy/Johnson years. Its status as President Kennedy's pet project protected it from threats to its survival, lending some support to the presidential-dominance thesis.

After its promising start, other outputs of U.S. foreign policy began to overwhelm the Peace Corps' successes. Shriver's strategy of focusing on development in order to woo third-world countries was overshadowed by the policy externalities of Vietnam. The strident anti-communism of the war effort led several countries to expel the Peace Corps; some nations claimed it was simply a cover for U.S. intelligence (Schwartz 1991). Differences in organizational culture made any attempt to influence other agencies futile. Rice notes, "the power brokers surrounding Kennedy regarded the Peace Corps' leaders as 'boy scouts,' and the geopoliticians of the National Security Council viewed them and the Peace Corps as peripheral at best" (1985, 302). Simply put, the Peace Corps' ability to promote the ideas of development and cultural exchange was drowned out by the foreign-policy implications of Vietnam.

It could be argued that the Peace Corps was simply too small and narrow an institution to affect Vietnam. However, the evidence suggests that the Peace Corps was also unable to alter U.S. policy on developmental aid, an issue area firmly within its bailiwick. In the first ten years of the Peace Corps' existence, development aid was uncorrelated with the degree of poverty in recipient countries, a prime consideration for the Peace Corps (Lumsdaine 1993, 91–92). This occurred at a time when demand outstripped supply in extremely poor countries for Peace Corps education programs (Rice 1981, 13). Furthermore, the general trend was one of professionalization of aid provision, eschewing the philosophy of direct action embodied by the Peace Corps (Lumsdaine 1993, 232). Consistent with the theory developed here, the Peace Corps was able to carve out a separate auto-

nous niche, but as a result it had little to no influence over other foreign-policy agencies.

The Peace Corps faced a hostile President in Richard Nixon. Nixon embraced a *realpolitik* foreign policy. The ideals and the independence of the Peace Corps clashed with Nixon's preferences on foreign policy. Cobbs Hoffman notes, "Richard Nixon . . . saw little place in his plans for a warm and fuzzy Peace Corps spreading goodwill throughout the world. If it could not fulfill a specific foreign policy function that gained the United States an advantage in the world, it should be 'chopped'" (1998, 222–223). This was also emblematic of Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national security advisor and foreign policy architect.

After consultations with his staff, Nixon concluded that abolishing the agency outright would be too politically costly. He decided instead on a stealth campaign to destroy it. In March 1970, a White House staff memo to John Erlichman and Henry Kissinger argued for "a quiet phasing out of the Peace Corps," through appropriations cuts (Schwartz 1991, 161). In July of that year, Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. Halderman, recorded in his diary that the president wanted to cut the Peace Corps budget, "far enough to decimate them" (Halderman 1994, 191). He was reasonably successful in this goal, as Table 3 demonstrates.

Joseph Blatchford, Nixon's first Peace Corps director, launched a set of policies, called New Directions, which placed greater emphasis on meeting the specific development needs of the host countries (Blatchford 1970). The

TABLE 3 Appropriations and Staff of the Peace Corps

Year	Appropriations (in 1963 dollars)	Number of Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees
1963	59,000,000	6,646
1964	94,552,000	10,078
1965	100,596,000	13,248
1966	107,116,000	15,556
1967	100,159,000	14,698
1968	93,810,000	13,823
1969	85,012,000	12,131
1970	77,907,000	9,513
1971	67,711,000	7,066
1972	52,325,000	6,894
1973	55,346,000	7,341
1974	48,278,000	8,044
1975	44,519,000	7,015
1976	43,999,000	5,752
2000	51,850,000	7,000

Source: Cobbs Hoffman (1998, 262); <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/facts/index.html>.

main thrust of New Directions was the recruiting of older, more skilled personnel as opposed to the BA generalists that dominated the Peace Corps during the sixties. There were intrinsically sound reasons for this shift, but Blatchford justified it in a memo to Henry Kissinger by saying that these new personnel would “emphasize technical assistance more than simply good will” (quoted in Cobbs Hoffman 1998, 222–223). This emphasis contradicted the founding ideals of the Peace Corps, clashing with the causal beliefs of direct action and moving the Peace Corps mission closer to AID. Several staffers concluded that Blatchford’s actions were designed to transform the Peace Corps from a missionary institution to a junior USAID (Schwartz 1991; Reeves 1988).

Blatchford took other steps to alter the agency’s organizational culture. He cut the amount of training and indoctrination PCVs received before going into the field, reducing the socialization component of the Peace Corps (Cobbs Hoffman 1998, 223). He also altered the mix of roles PCVs played in the field. In the Kennedy/Johnson years, 25 percent of all PCVs were devoted to “community development” as a way of placing volunteers directly into communities. Blatchford phased this out; by 1972, only 4.2 percent of PCVs engaged in community development. Instead, large numbers of PCVs were placed directly in host country bureaucracies, another move that tried to push the Peace Corps towards the AID format. However, his most serious organizational move was the strict enforcement of the “five-year rule.” This barred any Peace Corps staffer from serving in the agency for more than five years.¹⁶ In 1971, Blatchford used this rule to flush out 10 percent of the Washington staff, and 49 percent of the overseas country directors (Schwartz 1991; Cobbs Hoffman 1998).

These steps were insufficient for Nixon, and he soon took more drastic action. In 1971, Nixon consolidated the Peace Corps and other volunteer agencies into a single bureaucratic unit called ACTION. As part of the bureaucratic shake-up, the Peace Corps was renamed; it was now the International Operations Division of ACTION. To head the agency, Nixon told his chief of staff he wanted a “tough guy” who would could clamp down on the agency. Finding Blatchford unsatisfactory, in 1972 Nixon appointed Michael Balzano to be the head of ACTION.¹⁷ Balzano was publicly quoted as vowing to change the direction of the Peace Corps and other agencies within ACTION, even if it meant “bringing tanks right up to the agency’s front door” (Searles 1997, 168).

¹⁶Ironically, Shriver proposed this 1965 amendment to the Peace Corps Act as a way of preventing bureaucratic sclerosis.

¹⁷Balzano’s previous position was as an aide to Charles Colson.

Balzano took steps to alter the organizational culture. He removed the Peace Corps’ recruitment bureau and placed it in ACTION. He was determined to eradicate the Peace Corps’ culture of direct action; he described the existing Peace Corps programming as “totally inadequate” (Balzano 1978, 3). To change it, he set up six programming institutes designed to convince Peace Corps staffers that community action was outdated and different methods had to be promulgated. Attendance at these institutes was mandatory for staffers.

Despite Nixon’s preferences, the budget cuts, the bureaucratic shake-up, and the Balzano appointment, the founding ideas of the Peace Corps did not disappear. Surveys taken of staffers before and after Balzano’s programming institutes showed no real change in the ideas held by Peace Corps staffers. Bureaucrats who tried to implement the new programs found themselves ostracized (Balzano 1977, 12–22; Reeves 1988, 83–85). Balzano’s inability to alter the founding ideals of the institution was largely due to the robust organizational culture of the Peace Corps. All of the Peace Corps directors under Balzano were socialized into the agency’s culture and refused to alter it. For example, John Dellenback, who became the Peace Corps director in 1975, commented: “I helped write the legislation that created ACTION . . . when I became Peace Corps Director I changed my mind and concluded that we . . . had made a legislative mistake . . . I became absolutely convinced of the uniqueness of the Peace Corps’ mission” (Searles 1997, 166). Balzano, rather bitterly, came to the same conclusion: “There are many people employed by the Peace Corps at present who have been with the Peace Corps since its inception. Such revolving-door employment fosters intellectual in-breeding: all new ideas are juxtaposed against the standard of the past. This is perhaps at the root of Peace Corps programming inflexibility” (1978, 16).

The ideals implanted in 1961 remained firmly in place in 1976; the Peace Corps survived. As Table 3 shows, budgetary authority and manpower have risen from the mid-seventies nadir. President Clinton expressed a goal of raising the number of PCVs to 10,000, a level not seen since the sixties. However, the Peace Corps did not thrive; as an insulated agency, it could not influence other agencies crafting foreign policy or even the subset of foreign policy dealing with development issues.

The HA Bureau, 1976–1988

In October 1977, the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs was established. Created by congress-

sional mandate, the new bureau was embraced by President Carter, who had pledged in his inaugural address: "Our commitment to human rights must be absolute." Carter's political appointees to the bureau came from civil rights backgrounds; the nonpolitical appointees were Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). The first assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, Patricia Derian, was the founder of the Mississippi Civil Liberties Union. Derian tried to foster a bureaucratic culture that valued human rights above standard diplomatic practices (Warshawsky 1980, 198–205; Morrison 1987, 82; Drezner 1999, 88–89).

HA's relationships with the other bureaus of the State Department were highly conflictual. The strain was caused by two factors. First, FSOs bitterly resisted the introduction of a new and inherently confrontational mission. Confronting states on their human rights practices cut against the grain of an organizational culture that stressed the smoothing over of conflict. Second, Carter's political appointees, coming from civil rights backgrounds, were used to organizational cultures of confrontation and public protest. Derian was unsuccessful in implanting this culture in HA, as it was alien to a State Department bureaucracy that valued comity (Morrison 1987, 54).

FSOs in the regional bureaus reacted to the introduction of HA by protecting their turf. The regional bureaus possessed significant assets, in the form of information, control over promotion, and access to overseas staff. They used their control over resources to block any HA initiative. Cable traffic and classified information were withheld from Humanitarian Affairs (Maynard 1989, 187). When information was transmitted, it was often distorted. The East Asian bureau downplayed Indonesia's abuses in East Timor despite reputable reports to the contrary. The Near East bureau exaggerated the Shah's program of liberalization in Iran (Cohen 1982, 261–262). The inability of FSOs serving in Humanitarian Affairs to receive promotions drove away capable bureaucrats worried about their careers. The denial of resources and elite bureaucrats led to a vicious circle. One regional bureau desk officer described the problem: "It's [HA] not directly in the policy loop, so they don't get the best people, and the fact that they don't get the best people means that the work they do isn't top notch either, which means that they are less in the policy loop which means that they get less good people" (quoted in Morrison 1987, 76).

Humanitarian Affairs had few weapons to combat this kind of bureaucratic conflict. In 1979, two years after its creation, HA was still tiny by State Department standards, with only twenty people on its staff. Its Office

of Human Rights had only thirteen FSOs, and each bureaucrat had both regional and functional duties. There was only one official in charge of all HA policy towards bilateral and multilateral economic assistance, in addition to the Latin American region. HA faced chronic manpower shortages and high turnover rates (Maynard 1989, 182, 193).

The best way to measure whether HA's ideas thrived would be whether government aid was withheld from countries thought to be human rights violators, as this was mandated by HA's enacting legislation (Drezner 1999, 88). An interagency group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance (called the Christopher Committee because it was headed by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher) consisted of participants from Humanitarian Affairs, the regional bureaus, AID, the Export-Import Bank, Treasury, Defense, and the National Security Council. This was a venue where HA was able to influence foreign policy.

By all accounts, HA had minimal influence in the Christopher Committee. The Carter administration never declared anyone a gross violator of human rights, which would have mandated sanctions. Other bureaucratic actors, including the Agriculture Department and the Export-Import Bank, succeeded in getting their programs exempted from any aid cutoff. The biggest conflict within the Christopher Committee was between HA and the other State department bureaus, in particular the regional desks. Drew quotes one State Department official on the decision-making process: "What happened was that if anyone, including one of the regional Assistant Secretaries . . . put up a strong argument against zapping any of these countries, he won" (1977, 43).¹⁸ The Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance threatened to resign unless military aid and other security support were exempted from human rights sanctions. The threat succeeded. Multiple econometric studies show no correlation between American aid and the human rights regimes in recipient countries during this time period (Hofrenning 1990; Poe 1991; Stohl, Carleton, and Johnson 1984; Apodaca and Stohl 1999). Expectations of survival past 1980 were minimal.

The Reagan administration came into power trumpeting a different set of ideas regarding the relationship between human rights and foreign policy (Kirkpatrick 1979). Reagan's approach to human rights was predominantly shaped by the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union; he expected U.S. policy on human rights to be subordinated to that struggle.

¹⁸ See also Cohen (1982) and Mower (1987, 72–82, 103–106).

Reagan took a number of steps to weaken the HA bureau and modify its founding ideas to suit his foreign policy preferences. Reagan's first nominee to head HA, Ernest Lefever, had previously argued that the human rights reports be eliminated and that all legislation tying aid to human rights be revoked. The Senate rejected Lefever's nomination, but the signal of disdain for HA was evident. Until Elliot Abrams was nominated in Lefever's place, HA was looked at as the "laughing stock" of State, according to one FSO (Maynard 1989, 182–183). Secretary of State Alexander Haig pointedly excluded the acting HA director from staff meetings.

The Reagan administration successfully altered the definition of human rights established under Carter. The previous administration had established three broad categories of human rights: freedom from torture and other personal violations, civil and political liberties, and economic rights to food, shelter, and health care. Under Reagan, the State Department harmonized the definition to be consistent with overall foreign policy by eliminating the economic rights category. Communist countries had used the economic component of the definition as a way of deflecting criticism. This change permitted using the human rights agenda against communist countries.¹⁹

Finally, there were several high profile cases, such as El Salvador, where the Reagan administration ignored blatant human rights violations and increased aid; by 1982, El Salvador was receiving 27 percent of all U.S. bilateral aid to Latin America (Donnelly 1998, 99; Cingranelli and Pasquarello 1985, 544). Most commentators then and now declared that human rights concerns were moribund under the Reagan administration, in large part because "HA has been co-opted into the bureaucratic milieu of the State Department" (Morrison 1987, 219).

HA might not have survived in its original form, but there is significant evidence that it thrived in the Reagan years. First, there was a noticeable shift in human rights rhetoric after Reagan's first year in office. In 1981, U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, wrote, "not only should human rights play a central role in U.S. foreign policy, no U.S. foreign policy can possibly succeed that does not accord them a major role" (1981, 42). Haig also reversed course, declaring human rights would be a "major focus" of Reagan's foreign policy (Maynard 1989, 183).²⁰

¹⁹For example, the Carter administration used human rights to vote against multilateral development assistance to leftist countries 34 percent of the time and rightist countries 31 percent of the time. The Reagan administration figures were 31 percent and 4 percent, respectively (Maynard 1989, 214).

²⁰See also Mower (1987, 33–37).

Second, under the Reagan administration several studies have found a statistical correlation between the amount of U.S. aid and the human rights conditions within the potential recipient countries (Cingranelli and Pasquarello 1985; Poe and Sirirangsi 1993). Indeed, the majority of these studies find that the significance of the statistical relationship *increased* from Carter to Reagan (Hofrenning 1990; Poe 1991, 1992; Apodaca and Stohl 1999). Buttressing the statistical findings are clear cases, such as Haiti or Chile, where the State Department insisted on including human rights on the agenda in dealing with a particular country (Shultz 1993, 621, 971). Furthermore, the same human rights experts that argue HA was tamed under Reagan also acknowledged that the quality of the annual human rights reports significantly improved with each passing year of the administration. Indeed, statistical tests comparing the State Department's human rights reports with those of Amnesty International and Freedom House found a high degree of correlation (Cingranelli and Pasquarello 1985; Innes de Neufville 1986).

One possible explanation for this turnaround would be a sea change in American public opinion towards placing human rights at the top of the foreign-policy agenda. Commentators at the time suggested that the Reagan administration changed course because of rising public support for human rights (Jacoby 1986). However, polling data shows no increase in the salience of human rights from 1976 onwards and little change in public support for emphasizing human rights in bilateral relations (Geyer and Shapiro 1988, 392–393).²¹ Analyzing the data, Geyer and Shapiro conclude: "There has been little indication of change in public opinion toward human rights as a foreign policy goal during the Carter and Reagan years" (1988, 387).

There are three reasons for Reagan's reversal. First, the Assistant Secretaries for Human Rights under Reagan, Elliott Abrams and then Richard Schifter, were better at playing the game of bureaucratic politics than Derian and in so doing furthered HA's agenda. Abrams ensured that Foreign Service officers assigned to HA were not slighted for promotions in the future. As a result, the caliber of FSOs willing to work in HA improved, a fact acknowledged by the other bureaus (Morrison 1987, 89).

Second, the procedures of the Reagan administration's interagency working group differed from the Christopher Committee. Under Carter, the different bureaus

²¹The exception to unchanging attitudes was public opinion about apartheid in South Africa (Geyer and Shapiro 1988, 387). This exception proves the rule, however; Reagan resisted any change in his policy of constructive engagement until Congress overrode his veto of the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act.

argued the case out in the group; under Reagan, the State Department hashed out a common position prior to the working group meeting. State department bureaucrats disliked airing intradepartmental disputes in front of other departments, in part because such an approach clashed with State's organizational culture of comity. By working out a common position beforehand, HA did not always get its way, but when it did, it had the backing of the entire State department (Maynard 1989, 212–215). Under the Carter system HA was a persistent but small advocate. Under the Reagan system, HA's voice was less frequently heard but was considerably louder.

Third, as the clash of cultures diminished, FSO's proved more receptive to the idea of human rights. The primary mechanism through which this idea was transmitted was the human rights reports. The annual exercise to gauge human rights conditions forced embassy staffs to assign human rights officers to write the reports. To do this, the FSOs established contacts and networks among human rights activists in their country. The act of data collection and report writing socialized FSOs outside HA into the importance of human rights ideals. By the early eighties, a survey of FSO's in foreign postings revealed surprisingly strong support for the reporting exercise. As the reports circulated with the State department, awareness of human rights increased in official Washington as well (Innes de Neufville 1986, 689–693). Participants in the process have confirmed this effect. Richard Schifter, Reagan's second Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, noted after leaving office:

Diplomats are used to reporting promptly on developments in the areas of their responsibility, and human rights officers were not exceptions to this general rule. Thus, once embassies had been staffed with human rights officers, a flow of messages started notifying Washington of human rights conditions in problem countries. These messages began, in the first instance, to inform the State Department of human rights problems Thus, once Washington became aware of the details of human rights violations, we began to think of ways of dealing with those issues. (1992, 47–48)

The Reagan administration made significant changes to the Humanitarian Affairs bureau. These changes altered the founding ideas of the HA bureau, changing the very definition of human rights. In this altered form, however, the ideas promoted by HA spread to the rest of the State department bureaucracy. By the end of Reagan's second term, human rights were accepted as an important component of the American national interest.

Conclusions

The international relations literature has failed to examine the causal mechanisms through which ideas are converted into policies. It has been unclear how missionary institutions survive and thrive in a world of bureaucratic politics. This article argues that the placement of the missionary institution vis-à-vis the rest of the foreign policy organizations determines the ability of these institutions to survive and thrive. Insulated agencies can create organizational cultures wedded to their founding ideas. This makes insulated agencies robust to challenges from other organizations and increases the odds of survival. Such a strong culture decreases its ability to influence other agencies, restricting its ability to manipulate the broader foreign-policy agenda. Embedded agencies are constrained from crafting a separate organizational culture, making them more vulnerable to manipulation by the larger bureaucracy. If they do survive, however, they are more likely to thrive. Altering routines and practices becomes a way of spreading their ideas to the larger organization. Comparing the ability of the Peace Corps and the State Department's Humanitarian Affairs bureau to sustain their ideational agendas tested this hypothesis.

There are several limitations to this study. The cases were selected using a "most-similar systems" (Przeworski and Teune 1970) in order to show the existence of the causal mechanisms. These cases controlled for the effect of material interests and the structural distribution of power. Most missionary institutions will have sincere or strategic support from material interests; the relationship between the two needs to be explored further. Later work needs to use a most-different systems approach in order to estimate the relative explanatory power of the modified ideational approach. Other empirical avenues include potentially disconfirming cases, such as the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and non-American cases.

Theoretically, the results suggest a need for the bureaucratic politics paradigm to move beyond description towards positive theories of action. Organizational theories can borrow from the ideas approach in formulating the origins of bureaucratic preferences, as well as the strategy set available to organizations. Similarly, bureaucratic politics is a crucial intervening variable for the ideas approach and should be integrated into that research program. The results also suggest the fruitfulness of combining rationalist and constructivist modes of analysis. The cases demonstrate the effect of organizational norms as well as the strategic calculations made by actors to spread those norms.

Finally, this article suggests that ideational entrepreneurs face a tradeoff in institutionalizing ideas. An insulated agency has the advantage of making an immediate effect, but over time that effect is much less likely to grow. An embedded agency is much less likely to have an immediate impact and over time might not have any impact at all. However, it might also acquire much more influence than a horizontally autonomous agency. How entrepreneurs make this decision is a subject for future research.

Manuscript submitted June 16, 1999.

Final manuscript received April 17, 2000.

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