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Media Coverage of Human Rights in the US and UK: The Violations Still Won't be Televised (or Published)

Shawna M. Brandle¹

Abstract: This article analyzes American television and American and British print news coverage of human rights using a combination of manual and machine coding. The data reveal that television and print news cover very few human rights stories, that these stories are mostly international and not domestic, that even when human rights are covered, they are not covered in detail, and that human rights issues are more likely to be covered when they are not framed as human rights. This suggests that human rights is simply not a frame that journalists employ, and provides support for government-leading-media theories of newsworthiness.

Keywords: human rights, media, television news, print news

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Introduction

The international human rights framework has been codified as part of international law for over 60 years; however, human rights framing has yet to break into the discourse of domestic politics in the US and UK. Part of the problem may be a lack of media coverage of human rights, but this becomes cyclical logic: politicians do not frame issues in terms of human rights because the media does not do so, while the media does not frame stories as human rights terms because politicians do not do so. This article conducts content analyses of US broadcast television news and print news in the US and UK to show that US and UK media outlets rarely cover human rights, which provides support to the government-leading-media side of who determines what news to cover and how to cover it. This lack of coverage is present both in the very small number of stories that mention human rights and in the very small amount of human rights information that those stories provide. The lack of coverage of human rights is significant because while international law and organizations consider human rights to belong to all people everywhere, in matters both international and domestic, the official US position has always been to focus on civil rights and political rights domestically and on human rights only when dealing with foreign populations. The American government's approach to human rights as purely applicable overseas prevents human rights from being a meaningful mechanism for enhancing human rights protections at the domestic level, and this approach is echoed by American news media coverage of human rights as almost exclusively foreign affairs. British print news mentioned human rights even less than its American counterpart, which is somewhat surprising, given the UK's greater integration into human rights regimes, but may be indicative of the growing backlash against supranational authority that resulted in Leave Campaign's success in the Brexit referendum in 2016. Among the outlets compared, *The New York Times* is the clear leader for both amount of human rights stories and human rights content of stories, but those amounts are still quite limited.

Human Rights in the Media

In the last decade, research on media and human rights has proliferated. A brief review of the most recent work on human rights and media follows, with specific focus on the role of the news media, the American definition of human rights as solely foreign affairs, the effect of different types of NGOs on media coverage, and discriminatory coverage of marginalized groups.

Freedom of the press and media, aside from itself being a human right, has long been lauded as an essential tool for the promotion of human rights. A free and independent press is seen as essential to human rights and democracy because it is supposed to serve as a check on the power of governments by informing citizens about the actions of government. Whitten-Woodring (2016), for example, finds statistical evidence to support the association of media freedom with improved women's rights, particularly women's physical security and political rights, but only in places with increasing Internet access.

But what if the press is simply following government cues on what to cover instead of making their own independent decisions? While Entman (2003) offers a cascade model to show how executive-branch preference for the framing of foreign policy news can sometimes be challenged, Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston (2008) are less optimistic about the possibility of the press to push past official government sources' priorities: "Instead of careful and continuous scrutiny, the press shows moments of critical independence within an overall pattern of dependence on government for the raw materials of news and the legitimization of 'acceptable' viewpoints" (p189). Reviewing the research on bias specifically in British print and television journalism, McNair (2009) concludes that "the news media of a particular society- press and broadcasting- tend to construct accounts of events that are structured and framed by the dominant values and interests of society of that society" (p46). Kuhn (2007) also echoes this point, arguing that British news is the result of a "process of selection and construction" where the news agenda is "constructed through the use of dominant frames of reference, with alternative frameworks being excluded or marginalized." (p174).

To examine whether media outlets are reflecting government cues, we first must explore how the US and UK governments define human rights. The definition of human rights is well-established in several widely accepted declarations and treaties, but as Blau (2016) points out, even when the US has signed those treaties, they either have not ratified them or have declared them non-self-executing and then failed to pass any implementing legislation for domestic applicability. As Kenneth Roth (2008) put it, "Washington pretends to join the international human rights system, but it refuses to permit this system to improve the rights of US citizens" (p347). US officials see human rights as something to be promoted or protected overseas, not as relevant and actionable domestically, even when considering issues that could easily be framed as human rights such as racial discrimination, women's rights, rights of children or economic rights.

This failure to domestically codify human rights language in legislation allows the official framing of domestic rights issues in the US as anything other than human rights, which is then followed by the media instead of challenged by it, leaving citizens with no other way of thinking about those topics. Or as Jenkins and Hsu (2008) put it:

Although the United States played a leading role in the creation of the international human rights system and its specific protections, most Americans are unaware of that system and discuss many societal justice issues solely in terms of civil rights, constitutional rights, and civil liberties. Many economic or social justice issues, such as poverty, education, or health care, are not discussed as rights issues at all but, rather, as matters of charity, good government, or consumer choice. p440

In contrast to the US, the UK is more integrated into the human rights framework. First, the UK has a much better signature and ratification rate of international human rights treaties, including two regional treaties, the Council of Europe's Convention of Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These treaty commitments have been further enshrined in domestic law by the Human Rights Act (HRA) of 1998's promise to "bring rights home." The UK's better human rights ratification and incorporation record demonstrate a higher level of official state commitment to human rights *qua* human rights in both the foreign and domestic spheres, which leads one to expect a higher level of human rights coverage by news media.

The Pew Research Center's data shows that television news still has the highest percentage of news consumers of any type of news source in the US ("In Changing News Landscape, Even Television is Vulnerable"); the same report shows how newspaper readership continues to decline over time but still 29% of Americans say they read a newspaper yesterday as of 2012. While social media is undoubtedly an essential part of the media ecosystem in general and on human rights specifically,² it is not the only part; in terms of news sources for both American and British audiences, it is also not the most important. From 2012 to 2015, broadcast television news evening reports actually increased its ratings across all three networks ("State of the News Media 2015: Network News Factsheet"). In the UK, the Reuters Institute survey found television news as a more popular news source than online sources for every year until 2016, when online sources took a slight lead (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen 2017 p55). In a survey of news consumption and trust in ten countries, Globescan found that in both the US and UK, television news and newspapers ranked first and second as the most important news sources in a week; the survey also found high levels of trust in the media in both the US and UK (BBC/Reuters/Media Center Poll 2006).

NGOs have been put forward as a way to gain media attention for human rights even when governments do not actively seek coverage. They can provide information and access without having to go through state-based gatekeepers, but not all NGOs are created equal, nor are they all effective in obtaining media coverage. Thrall, Stecula, and Sweet (2014) analyze traditional global media outlets as well as web and social media impact for NGO coverage, finding "global attention is heavily skewed toward a few large and well-funded NGOs regardless of the venue" (148). Powers (2016) also conducts cross-platform research, comparing print and television

² For recent scholarship on social media coverage of human rights-related topics, see Chilwa and Ifukor's (2015) tracing of #BringBackOurGirls; Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark (2016) and Bonilla and Rosa (2015) on #Ferguson and #BlackLivesMatter; Devriese (2013), Cattle (2016), and Joseph (2012) on media and social media during the Arab Spring; and Brooten, Ashraf, and Akinro (2015) on print and Facebook group coverage of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

news coverage from 1990-2010, concluding that large NGOs get more coverage than small ones, especially by outlets that have fewer resources devoted to international news gathering (327). Additionally, NGO representatives are cited in all outlets after government and official sources; NGO representatives do not drive coverage, but merely supply information “where the media spotlight already shines” (Powers 327). This point is echoed in van der Graaf, Otjes, and Rasmussen (2016), whose study of interest groups active in Europe shows that Internet and social media access do not necessarily level the playing field for NGOs and interest groups of varying sizes; big organizations still have serious resource advantages that allow them to more effectively make use of new free/low-cost technology and platforms. Overall, human rights NGOs cannot compete with states for driving media coverage, and it is only the largest organizations who even come close; states are the gatekeepers to media coverage on human rights.

Not all events are considered equally newsworthy, and discrimination is as big a challenge for media coverage of human rights as it is for the rest of the news. Even when human rights get media attention, the ways different groups are covered is related less to the severity of the human rights issues being covered and more to the relative socio-economic privilege of those involved. Two deep analyses of the differential coverage marginalized groups receive are Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti (2006) and Gilchrist (2010). Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti (2006) explore how entertainment and news coverage of crime differ across race, ethnicity, and gender lines, finding “if it bleeds it leads” is not entirely truthful, “as it really depends on who is bleeding” (841). Gilchrist (2010) demonstrates this difference using Canadian media coverage of two different groups of missing women -- one group was comprised of three Aboriginal women, while the other was three white Canadian women. The missing Aboriginal women were covered less frequently, less prominently, and in less depth by the Canadian media (Gilchrist 2010).

In her examination of television news coverage of human rights from 1990-2009, Brandle (2015) found very little coverage of human rights in television news in the US, and that even those topics that received coverage were usually international, not domestic, and almost never covered in-depth. It is possible that different world events, or a different presidential administration, especially one assumed to be much more progressive on human rights than its predecessor, would lead to more or more in-depth coverage of human rights in the media, although the human rights record of the Obama administration is not uniformly positive,³ so a follow up study is very

³ The early high hopes for Obama as a defender of human rights, exemplified by his second day Executive Order to close Guantanamo Bay or his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize during the first year of his presidency, are muddled by his actual record in office. For further details, see Brigitte Nacos and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon’s contribution to this issue on torture and drone usage as well as Roth, Kenneth. “Barack Obama’s Shaky Legacy on Human Rights.” *Foreign Policy*, January 4, 2017.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/04/barack-obamas-shaky-legacy-on-human-rights/>

much due. This paper begins as a follow-up study to Brandle (2015) but adds in more text-mining methods to evaluate the human rights content of print and television news stories that contain the phrase *human right*, and finds that not only do news outlets generally still not cover human rights, even when they do, it's almost exclusively as foreign news. Human rights is overall not a frame that journalists reach for, especially for domestic issues, which provides more evidence for the government-leading-the-journalists side of the question of who determines newsworthiness.

Methodology

ABC *World News* evening news broadcast transcripts were collected from Lexis-Nexis using the search function "BODY("human right!")." 133 stories were collected, of which one was discarded for not actually including the phrase *human right*,⁴ leaving a total of 132 stories from 2010-2016. These stories were coded for whether they covered a domestic story, an international story, or a story that was both international and domestic, such as a US military engagement abroad, or a visit to the US by the President of China, as well as for whether the story was primarily about human rights, whether any description or example of human rights was given in the story,, and whether the story included human rights exclusively as part of an official or unofficial title for a person, place, or organization,⁵ whether it was part of a title as well as being used in another way in the story, or whether the phrase was not used as part of a title at all.⁶

For comparison to print outlet coverage of human rights, stories were also collected from *The New York Times* from 2010-2016 that included the phrase "human right!" in either the headline or the body of the story. After removing duplicates and web blog-only stories, there were 11,771 *New York Times* stories that included the phrase "human right!" *The Times* and its Sunday edition, *The Sunday Times*, was selected for comparison to *The New York Times* even though *The New York Times* has a reputation of leaning center-left, while *The Times* has a reputation for leaning center-right because they are both long-standing English-language papers with large circulations and long publication histories, and because as McNair (2009) argues, increasing commercial pressures on the press are reducing the impact and redefining traditional notions of

⁴ The October 17, 2013 story about 15 year old boy's plea for a family to adopt him out of foster care that went viral was discarded because it did not fulfill the search parameters; it included the phrase "human's right" instead of "human rights." Even though it is not a human rights story as defined by this methodology, the story merits a brief discussion. The caseworker used something close to human rights language, as opposed to basic right, civil right, or right as an American to describe the desire for family, "I think it's a human's right to be loved and wanted. And when you don't feel that you are, it's hard to succeed in life."

⁵ Examples of official titles include "Human Rights Watch issued the report, the State's Office of Human Rights was attacked," while examples of unofficial titles would include "Kerry Kennedy, human rights activist," or "pressure from human rights groups."

⁶ Coding sheet available from the author; it is largely duplicative of the methodology and coding sheets used in Brandle (2015).

left- and right-leaning (102).⁷ After duplicates were removed and 6649 regional edition stories were excluded, 9226 stories from *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* that included the phrase “human right!” in either the body or the headline of stories from 2010-2016 were collected. Stories containing the phrase “human right!” were also collected from *World News*, *The Times*, and *The New York Times* for the first quarter of 2017. Two individual days were selected for more in-depth analysis based on having the highest number of human rights stories in the first quarter of 2017. January 19, 2017 was selected for analysis because it had the highest number of human rights stories in *The New York Times* for the first quarter of 2017, and January 29, 2017 because it had the highest number of stories for *The Times*.⁸

Provalis’s Wordstat program was used in two ways in this research. First, the human rights-containing stories from *World News*, *The New York Times*, and *The Times* were loaded into WordStat and processed to find phrases of between two and five words,⁹ whose frequencies were then calculated per story and overall. Second, a categorization dictionary based on the words and phrases used in the major human rights treaties was created to analyze both human rights-containing stories and non-human rights containing stories.¹⁰

Overview of Media Coverage of Human Rights 2010-2016

The results of applying the same search methodology to television news transcripts from 2010-2016 as Brandle (2015) used on 1990-2009 are consistent with the earlier findings. Overall, there continues to be very little coverage that includes the phrase *human rights* on American broadcast television news, as shown in Figure 1.

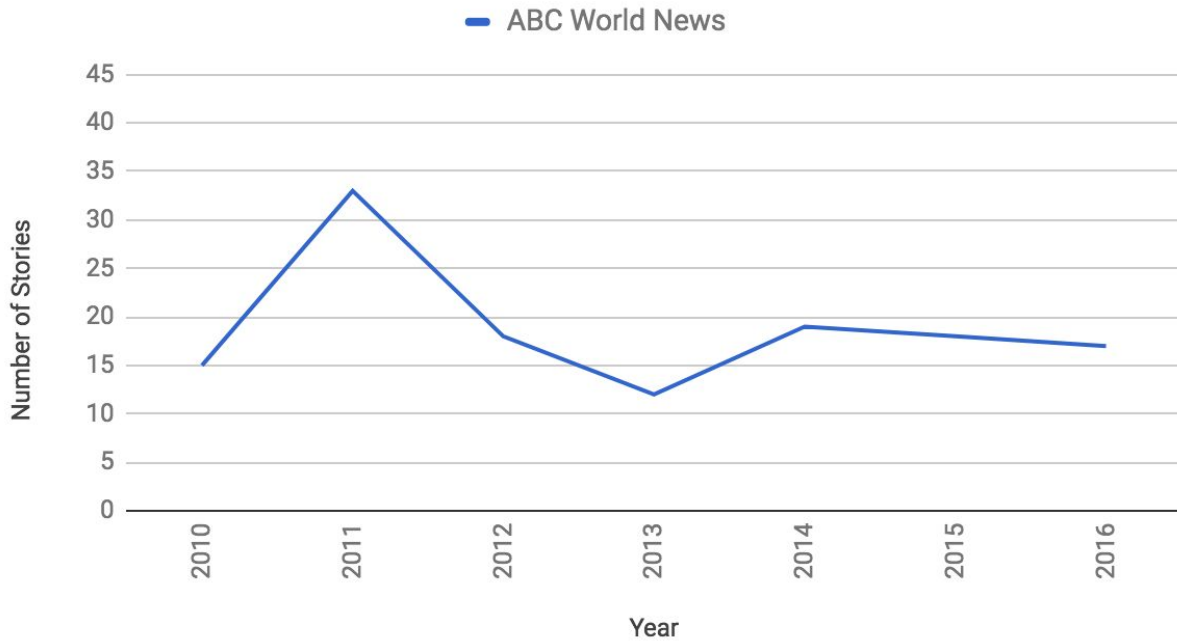
⁷ The Times was selected for analysis because of its status as a high-circulation quality paper, and because the stories were available for research. Of the five quality British papers listed in Kuhn (2007), *The Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times*, The Times was the top brand for weekly usage of the quality papers (Newman et al 2017 p54) with the highest circulation in 2017 (Ponsford 2017).

⁸ There were four days that tied for the highest number of stories containing the phrase human right in the *The Times* for the first quarter of 2017: January 29, February 5, February 14, and February 25. To break the tie, the day that had the highest number of human rights-containing stories in *The New York Times* was selected.

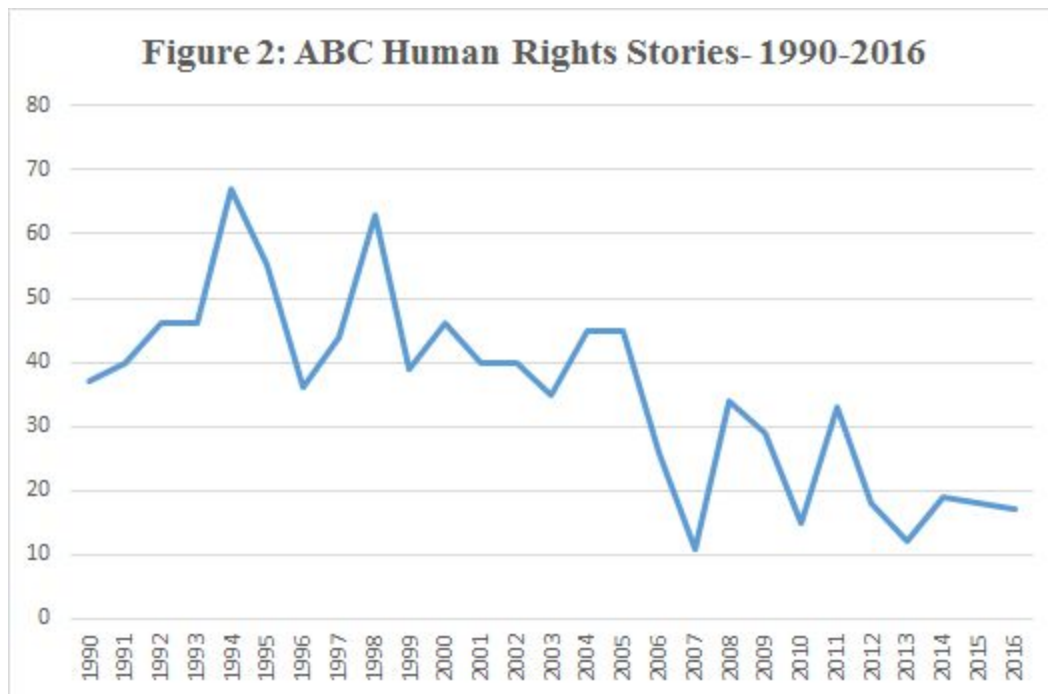
⁹ Commonly used words (a, and, the, etc.) and words commonly used in news stories, such as anchor’s names and broadcast titles, were excluded from analysis to get a clearer picture of the content of the stories.

¹⁰ The treaties obtained were the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A category was also added for LGBT rights, although no explicit human rights treaty exists to protect LGBT persons. Treaty texts obtained from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx> and the categorization keywords are listed in Appendix II of the Online Appendix at <https://goo.gl/2e4o1f>.

Figure 1: ABC World News Human Rights Stories, 2010-2016



This is an extremely low number and actually represents a decrease in the already-low number of human rights stories broadcast from 1990-2009, as shown in Figure 2. The earlier period averages 41.2 stories per year while 2010-2016 averages only 18.8 stories per year.



Looking more closely at the *World News* stories containing the phrase *human right* provides details about what kind of human rights information was delivered via television news in the US

from 2010-2016. Table 1 lists the results from the 2010-2016 human rights story analysis about whether stories were primarily covering a domestic, international, or both a domestic and international story, along with the results from 1990-2009 from Brandle (2015). When calculated together from 1990-2016, the percentage of stories coded as domestic, international, or both domestic and international changes only minimally, and the annual average of domestic human rights stories from 1990-2009 is actually higher (5.7/year) than for 2010-2016 (3.5/year). From 2010-2016 the percentage of exclusively domestic stories mentioning the phrase “human right” increased over the 1990-2009 percentage, but this is likely the result of fewer human rights stories during the earlier time period than an increased attention paid to domestic issues as human rights stories in later years. Overall the findings from Brandle (2015) are confirmed; not only are there very few human rights stories covered in television news, but they are mostly international in nature and provide little information about human rights to viewers, even in stories that mention human rights.

Table 1: Human Rights Stories Topics: Domestic, International, or Both

	Number of Stories 2010-2016	2010-2016 Percentage	Number of Stories 1990-2009	1990-2009 Percentage	1990-2016 Percentage
Domestic	25	18.9%	115	14%	14.6%
International	58	43.9%	315	38%	39.0%
Both	49	37.1%	394	48%	46.3%
Total	132		824		

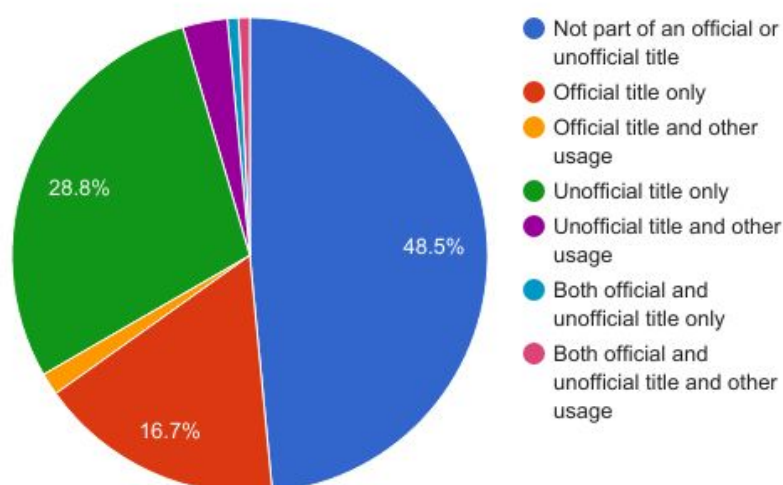
A more thorough analysis of the stories containing the phrase *human right* reveals that few contain significant human rights information, which is again consistent with the findings in Brandle (2015) about the overall lack of human rights information in US television news. Very few stories from 2010-2016 include any explanation of human rights. One story out of 132 stands out: the March 21, 2016 story about President Obama’s visit to Cuba, which provides a significant amount of information about human rights through its treatment of the differences between Western and Communist countries on civil and political rights versus economic, social, and cultural rights. However, this story is an exception to the norm in human rights coverage on television news. From 1990-2009, Brandle (2015) found 32% of stories containing the phrase had a clear description of human rights, while 31% had some description, but lacked details or explicit human rights relations, and 37% had no description of human rights at all. Of the 132 stories from 2010-2016, only six had a clear description of human rights, while an additional 26 (19.7%) had some description, though it was not explicit, specific, detailed, or directly related to

human rights. 100 out of 132 human rights stories (75% of the total stories from 2010-2016) included no description of human rights issues at all. Looking at the 25 domestic stories, the results are even more stark: none of the domestic stories included a clear description of human rights; two included some description; and 23 stories (92%) had no description of human rights.

Another way of measuring human rights information in the stories that include the phrase *human rights* was how the phrase was used- was it used substantively or only as part of an official or unofficial title? From 1990-2009, 43% of all stories that included the phrase *human right* did so only in the formal or informal title of a person, place, or organization, without using the phrase in any additional manner, indicating a low level of human rights information in those stories.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of *World News* stories from 2010-2016 that included human rights as part of a formal or informal title. 61 of 132 stories, or 46% used human rights as only a formal or informal title and not in any other way in the story. That means 46% of stories that used the phrase *human rights* from 2010-2016 did not have much information about human rights in the story.

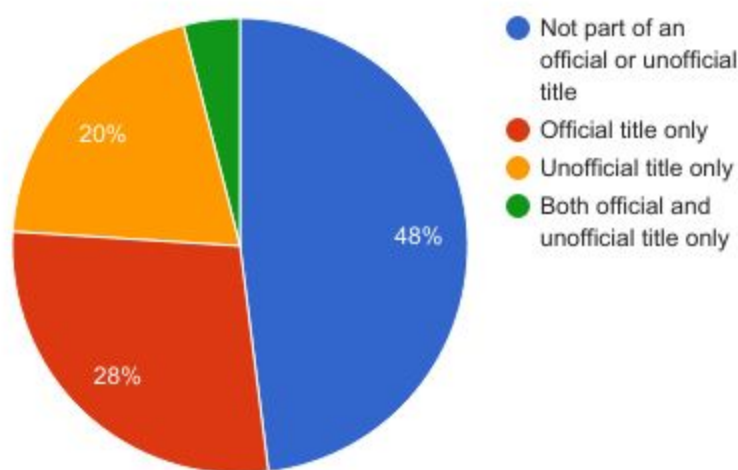
Figure 3: 2010-2016 World News Stories that Include "Human Right!"



An analysis of the domestic stories that included the phrase *human rights* shows results even more stark, as shown in Figure 3. 13 of 25 stories (52%) about domestic issues use the phrase *human rights* only in an official or unofficial title, meaning a majority of the small number of domestic human rights stories contain little human rights information. Four of the domestic human rights stories only included the phrase “human rights lawyer” to describe Amal Clooney, and included no other reference to human rights. Seven of the total stories, including 4 of the

domestic human rights stories do not actually include the audible use of the phrase *human right* at all; “human right” is included only in the lower third graphic while the person speaks, as in the April 24, 2016 story about Beyoncé’s visual album *Lemonade*, which includes “MALCOLM X (HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST)” as a title graphic or the January 23, 2014 story about Kerry Kennedy’s driving while drugged trial that includes “KERRY KENNEDY (HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST)” as a title graphic.

Figure 4: 2010-2016 Domestic World News Stories that Include "Human Right!"



The Clooney Effect

Media attention, especially where media outlets operate on a profit-driven, instead of a publicly-funded model, is particularly susceptible to covering celebrity news. Human rights NGOs are no stranger to this phenomenon, and in fact seek to use it to their advantage by using celebrity ambassadors to bring media and public attention to human rights issues; celebrity representatives may help draw the attention of the media for a human rights issue even when the government is not focused on that topic. For example, the American actor George Clooney has lent his celebrity to several human rights-related causes, travelling the world on fact-finding and awareness-raising missions, even going so far as getting arrested while protesting outside the Sudanese Embassy in Washington D.C. in March 2012. He came up twice in the search for human rights stories due to his political activism: first in the January 2, 2011 story covering the launch of his “anti-genocide paparazzi” initiative that uses satellite imagery to track the movement of people and armed forces in politically at-risk areas such as Sudan prior to the referendum on South Sudan’s independence, and second, as a passing reference in the March 8, 2012 story about the Kony 2012 viral video’s strategy to gain wider attention. Five other human rights stories from 2010-2016 were uncovered that featured a Clooney; however, these stories

were not about human rights advocacy done by George. Instead, these stories covered George Clooney's engagement and marriage to Amal Alamuddin, a human rights lawyer, a joke made at George's expense at the Golden Globes about his new wife's accomplishments, and her accepting a teaching position at Columbia University. That human rights was mentioned in at least four more American television news stories than it would have been otherwise because of Mrs. Clooney's celebrity status is interesting to note, but those four stories about her engagement, wedding celebration, and new teaching position did not include any information or description about human rights. Media coverage of those "human rights" stories are, therefore, not adding to the overall human rights knowledge of viewers. Even when the events themselves lend themselves to coverage of human rights issues, such as when Mrs. Clooney went to the UN in her capacity as a human rights lawyer to speak on the need for accountability for the atrocities committed by Da'esh/ISIS, many media outlets covered the story from the angle of Mrs. Clooney's "baby bump" and fashion choices, instead of the human rights violations that she was discussing (Gaber 2017). As Whitten-Woodring (2016) points out though, even in cases where small amounts of information are available, "... consistent use of Facebook, Twitter, and old fashioned print and broadcast media may help to build awareness and potentially to shift cultural attitudes over time."(403) It is thus possible that, over time, news coverage of a human rights lawyer who became a celebrity through marriage may lead to more substantial interest and resulting coverage of human rights information than the coverage about celebrities who become interested in human rights issues after they were famous. But as of now, though the number of stories has increased, the amount of human rights information in those stories has not.

Domestic Human Rights Stories, 2010-2016

Table 2 lists what was covered in the 25 domestic human rights stories broadcast on *World News* from 2010 to 2016, as well as whether the phrase was used in an official or unofficial title, whether a description of human rights was included, whether human rights was the focus of the story, and if terrorism was mentioned during the story.

Table 2: *World News* Domestic Human Rights Stories, 2010-2016

Date	Topic	Human Rights in Title	Human Rights Description	Human Rights Focus	Terrorism mentioned
7/13/10	NAACP criticizes Tea Party for racist behavior of its members	Neither	No	No	No
8/10/10	Craigslist being used by human traffickers	Official Title Only	Some	No	No
1/20/11	Remembering JFK's inauguration	Neither	No	No	No
1/30/11	Chik-fil-A faces backlash for anti-LGBT stances	Official Title Only	No	No	No

2/23/11	Obama orders DOJ to stop defending Defense of Marriage Act	Official Title Only	No	No	No
8/11/11	Young children picking fruit on corporate farms in the US	Both Official and Unofficial Title	Some	Prominent but not primary focus of story	No
10/2/11	Obama criticizes Republican candidates for not defending a gay soldier who was booed at a recent Republican debate	Official Title Only	No	No	No
2/10/12	Conflict over whether birth control should be paid for by employers	Neither	No	No	No
3/26/12	SCOTUS case on healthcare plan begins	Neither	No	No	No
12/19/13	Controversy over Duck Dynasty patriarch's anti-LGBT and racist remarks	Official Title Only	No	No	Yes
1/23/14	Kerry Kennedy back in court for drugged driving charges	Official Title Only	No	No	No
2/14/14	Sister Wives family wins federal court decision allowing husband to cohabitate with all of his wives	Neither	No	No	No
2/23/14	Kerry Kennedy's trial for drugged driving is about to begin	Unofficial Title Only	No	No	No
4/26/14	George Clooney may be engaged to human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin	Neither	No	No	No
6/10/14	Hillary Clinton's book release and reaction to her comment that she was broke after leaving the White House	Neither	No	No	No
10/26/14	Kaci Hickox, nurse who was treating Ebola patients, quarantined against her will in New Jersey	Neither	No	No	No
10/27/14	Kaci Hickox allowed to go home to Maine	Neither	No	No	No
1/12/15	George Clooney receives lifetime achievement award at Golden Globes	Unofficial Title Only	No	No	No
1/25/15	American woman sentenced for trying to join ISIS	Official Title Only	No	No	Yes
3/7/15	Amal Clooney will teach at Columbia University	Neither	No	No	No
1/7/16	Trump campaigning against Hillary Clinton by attacking her stance on women's rights	Neither	No	No	No
4/24/16	Beyoncé's Lemonade album released	Unofficial Title Only	No	No	No
4/27/16	Donald Trump accuses Hillary Clinton of playing the woman card	Unofficial Title Only	No	No	No

6/4/16	Muhammad Ali remembered after his death	Unofficial Title Only	No	No	No
7/3/16	Funeral of Elie Wiesel	Neither	No	No	No

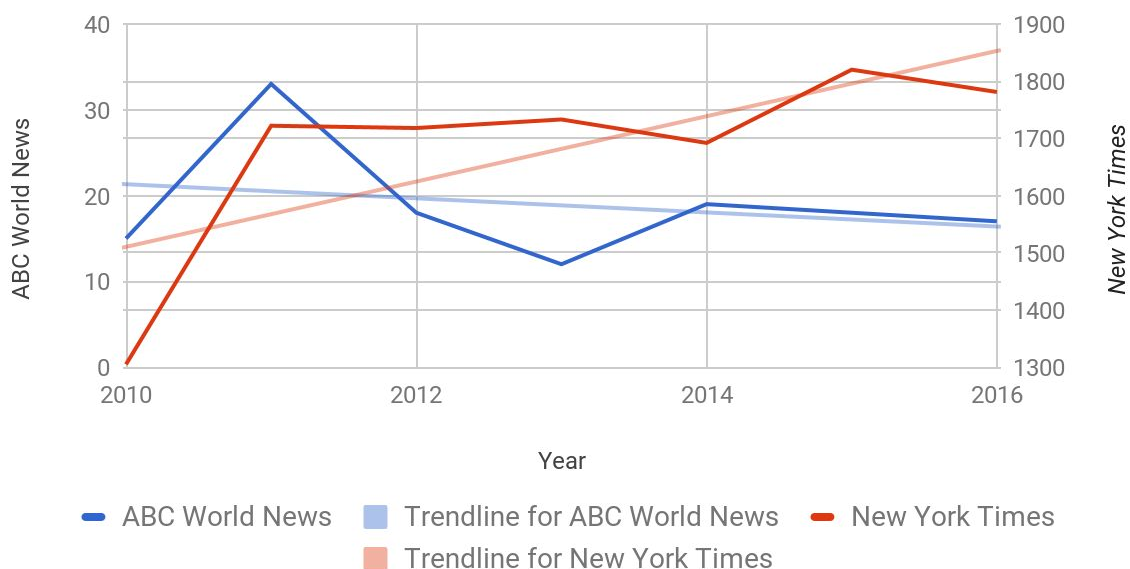
Only two of the 25 domestic stories that include the phrase *human right* actually include even some description of human rights; none of the 25 have human rights as the primary focus of the story; and only one has human rights issues as a prominent, though not the sole, focus of the story. This lack of human rights information is confirmed by running these 25 stories through the Wordstat human rights categorization dictionary discussed in the methodology section. Only 3 of the 25 stories contained enough human rights-related words to be categorized, and all were LGBT rights stories: the January 30, 2011 Chik-fil-A anti-LGBT story, the February 23, 2011 story on the Obama administration ceasing defense of the Defense of Marriage Act and the December 19, 2013 story about the Duck Dynasty patriarch's anti-LGBT and racist remarks. By lowering the bar for categorization from what is used elsewhere in this article,¹¹ one additional story was categorized as civil and political rights -- the January 23, 2014 story about Kerry Kennedy's drugged driving case. But this story had little human rights content, and it was only categorized as a human rights story because of one line unrelated to the central topic: "Kennedy waived her right to attend jury selection because she would be out of the country, continuing her late father's efforts to "fight child labor and try to end child slavery."” Stories about domestic issues that included the phrase human rights had even less human rights content than the already limited amount included in international and both international and domestic human rights stories.

From 2010-2016, “human rights” was not a prominent topic on American television news. Even when it was mentioned, there was not a lot of information provided. Although television news is still the most common source of news for Americans, it is far from the only source, so human rights stories from the same time period were collected from *The New York Times*; the results are shown in Figure 5. Of course, a daily printed newspaper contains many thousands more words than an evening news broadcast, so comparing the one to the other in terms of sheer numbers is somewhat unfair: that ABC averaged 18.9 “human right” containing stories per year from 2010-2016 while *The New York Times* averaged 1681 stories per year could be attributed to the fact that there are many more stories in a year's worth of printed newspapers as compared to a year's worth of evening news broadcasts. Comparing their trends over time is more fitting, and here it seems that from 2010-2016, *The New York Times* has maintained and even increased its use of human rights in its stories compared to *World News*. The trendlines in Figure 5 illustrate this point. Whereas human rights stories on ABC declined after a highpoint in 2011, *The New*

¹¹ The bar for categorization was lowered by eliminating the requirement that phrases or words with a case frequency of less than 2 be eliminated. It is maintained in all other dictionary categorizations in this article.

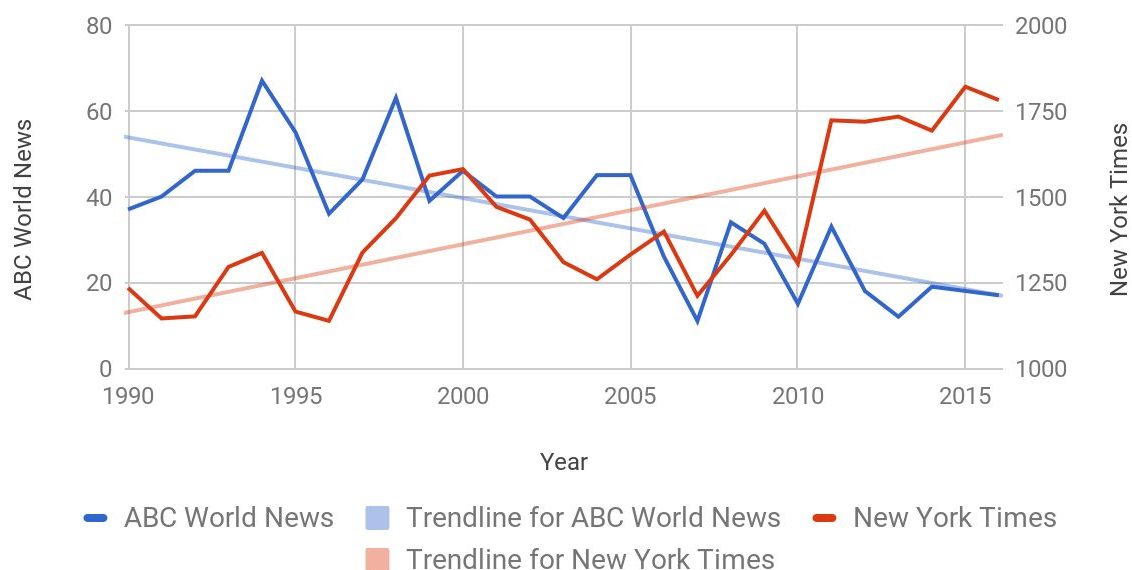
York Times human rights stories increased in 2011, and then stayed at or close to the 2011 level through 2016.

Figure 5: Human Rights Stories, ABC World News & New York Times 2010-2016



This trend is more starkly displayed when examining data from 1990 to 2016, as shown in Figure 6. While human rights stories on *World News* show a steadily declining trend line, *The New York Times* trendline shows the opposite: a year-on-year increase in the number of stories that contain the phrase *human rights*.

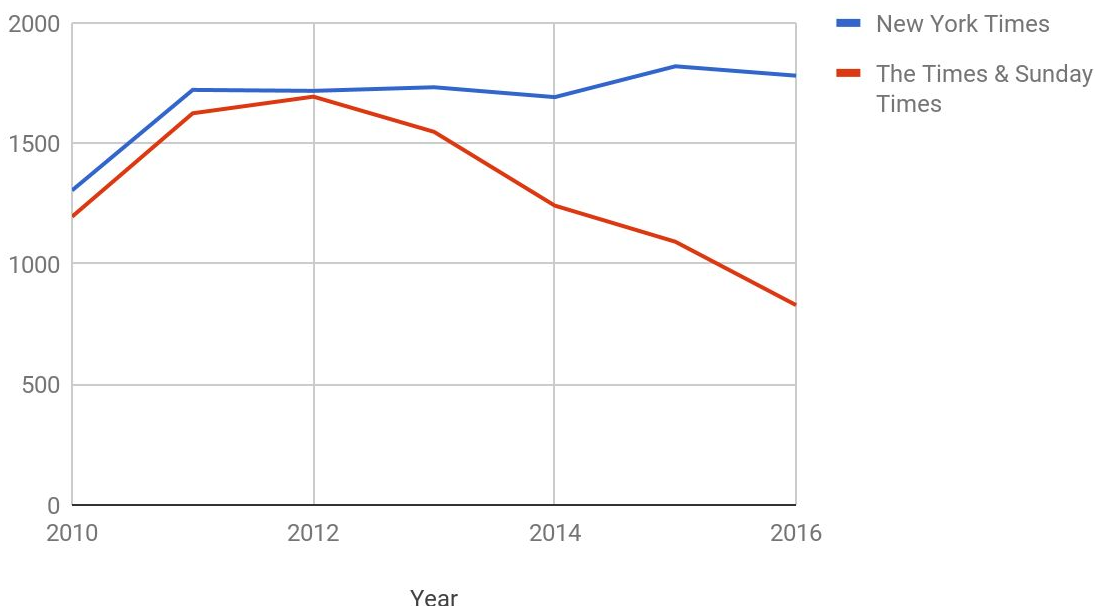
Figure 6: ABC World News and New York Times Human Rights Stories, 1990-2016



Although *ABC World News* used human rights in stories significantly less than *The New York Times* from 2010-2016, the two outlets both covered human rights in a primarily international, as opposed to domestic, context. While Table 1 shows the percentage of purely domestic stories mentioning human rights on *ABC News* from 2010-2016 at 18%, an analysis of the sections of the 11,771 *New York Times* stories show them as similarly international; 57% of the human rights stories were from the Foreign Desk, while only 6% of the stories were from the National desk.¹²

Comparing *The New York Times* to another paper of record from a different country provides further evidence that *The New York Times* may be a leader when it comes to media coverage of human rights. The number of stories containing the phrase human rights from both *The New York Times* and *The Times* and *Sunday Times* are shown in Figure 7.

¹² See Appendix I of the Online Appendix at <https://goo.gl/2e4o1f> for the complete list of *New York Times* sections for human rights stories from 2010-2016.

Figure 7: New York Times and Times Human Rights Stories, 2010-2016

From 2010-2016, *The Times* published an average of 1,318 stories per year that contained the phrase *human rights* against *The New York Times*' average of 1,681, which is somewhat surprising, given that compared to the US, the UK has ratified more human rights treaties, is more deeply integrated into transnational human rights structures, and has the HRA to incorporate human rights treaty law into domestic law. However, it must be pointed out that the UK's human rights commitments are not uncontested by members of government and the public. Petley (2009) traces the criticism the HRA has faced since its passage, while Pattinson (2015) illustrates the HRA's application has not been clear cut in the courts. Furthermore, supranational commitments to human rights formed a not insignificant part of the Leave Campaign in the Brexit referendum in 2016.¹³ While *The Times* was close to *The New York Times* for stories containing human rights from 2010-2012, *The Times* reduced the number of stories it published with the phrase human rights from 2013 on, while *The New York Times* maintained, and occasionally increased, the number of human rights stories it published. The number of stories per outlet per year is listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Stories Containing "Human Right!" 2010-2016

Year	ABC World News	New York Times	The Times
2010	15	1305	1196
2011	33	1722	1625

¹³ This is somewhat ironic, as leaving the EU would have no effect on the UK's obligations as a Council of Europe member for the European Convention on Human Rights or its subjection to the European Court of Human Rights, which is what the HRA incorporated into domestic law; leaving the EU would only allow the UK to no longer be bound by the EU Charter of Fundamental Freedoms and the European Court of Justice.

2012	18	1718	1694
2013	12	1733	1548
2014	19	1692	1242
2015	18	1820	1092
2016	17	1781	829
Total	132	11771	9226
Average/Year	18.9	1681.6	1318

Counting the number of stories that include the phrase *human right* is a useful gauge for how much attention different media outlets pay to human rights, but digging into the contents of the stories provides further insight. Table 4 lists the top 25 most frequently occurring phrases in human rights stories for all three outlets.

Table 4: Phrase Frequencies for *The Times*, *The New York Times*, & *World News* 2010-2016

	<i>The Times</i>	% CASES	<i>The New York Times</i>	% CASES	<i>World News</i>	% CASES
1	HUMAN RIGHTS	97.8%	HUMAN RIGHTS	98.6%	HUMAN RIGHTS	97.7%
2	PRIME MINISTER	16.8%	UNITED STATES	45.4%	UNITED STATES	28.0%
3	EUROPEAN COURT	11.1%	UNITED NATIONS	25.3%	WHITE HOUSE	22.7%
4	COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS	10.8%	PRIME MINISTER	15.2%	PRESIDENT OBAMA	20.5%
5	EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS	10.6%	HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH	15.1%	HILLARY CLINTON	12.1%
6	EUROPEAN CONVENTION	8.6%	RIGHTS GROUPS	14.1%	PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA	11.4%
7	CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS	7.8%	PRESIDENT OBAMA	14.1%	SECRETARY OF STATE	10.6%
8	EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS	7.7%	HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS	11.4%	HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS	9.9%
9	HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH	7.6%	SECURITY FORCES	10.5%	HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH	8.3%
10	RIGHTS GROUPS	7.5%	OBAMA ADMINISTRATION	9.8%	HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST	8.3%
11	UNITED STATES	7.4%	POLICE OFFICERS	9.4%	STATE DEPARTMENT	7.6%
12	HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS	6.8%	STATE DEPARTMENT	8.9%	HEALTH CARE	6.8%
13	RIGHTS ABUSES	6.4%	MIDDLE EAST	8.7%	HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES	6.1%
14	HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES	6.2%	RIGHTS ABUSES	8.4%	NORTH KOREA	6.1%

15	SUPREME COURT	6.2%	CIVIL WAR	8.2%	HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	5.3%
16	UNITED NATIONS	6.1%	SECRETARY OF STATE	8.1%	HOUSE ARREST	5.3%
17	RIGHTS ACT	6.1%	WHITE HOUSE	8.1%	NOBEL PEACE PRIZE	4.6%
18	HUMAN RIGHTS ACT	6.0%	HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES	7.9%	HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN	3.8%
19	HOME SECRETARY	5.8%	NATIONAL SECURITY	7.7%	FIDEL CASTRO	3.8%
20	SECURITY FORCES	5.7%	AL ASSAD	7.7%	DONALD TRUMP	3.8%
21	MIDDLE EAST	5.5%	BASHAR AL	7.6%	RAUL CASTRO	3.8%
22	HIGH COURT	5.5%	BASHAR AL ASSAD	7.6%	AIR FORCE	3.8%
23	AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	5.3%	RIGHTS ADVOCATES	7.4%	SUPREME COURT	3.8%
24	SECRETARY OF STATE	5.2%	EUROPEAN UNION	7.2%	CHINESE GOVERNMENT	3.8%
25	COURT OF APPEAL	4.8%	SUPREME COURT	6.8%	GEORGE CLOONEY	3.8%

That human rights tops the list for all three outlets is no surprise, as “human right!” was the search term. But some divergence across media systems is also apparent; while “United States” is the second most frequent phrase for the American newspaper and news broadcast, it ranks 11th in the British newspaper, demonstrating simultaneously American media outlets’ preference for covering news that centers on the US and the fact that non-American outlets cannot avoid covering the US. In contrast, neither American outlet has the United Kingdom (or any European country for that matter) listed in its most frequent phrases in human rights stories. “European Union” occurs 24th most frequently in stories containing “human right!” in *The New York Times*, but does not rank in the top 25 most frequent *World News* phrases, which is in contrast to *The Times* and its high frequencies for several European entities/documents, including the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

There does seem to be convergence across media systems in a few areas. First, both print outlets mention “Middle East” with a high degree of frequency in stories containing human rights (ranked 13th in *New York Times* stories and 21st in *The Times*). However, the broadcast outlet focuses more frequently on Asia; *World News* phrases include North Korea (14th) and Chinese Government (24th), but nothing related to the Middle East makes its list. The prominence of “Human Rights Watch” on all three outlets’ frequency list is consistent with Thrall et al’s (2014) and Powers’ (2016) findings that large NGOs have an advantage in frequently breaking through to mainstream media, though they are likely to be the only ones able to do so.

There also appears to be cross-platform and cross-system agreement when it comes to not considering domestic issues through a human rights frame; almost none of the 25 most frequently occurring phrases in stories containing human rights in any of the three outlets had anything to do with human rights. Domestic-related phrases from *The Times* are limited to “Rights Act” and “Human Rights Act”, which refer to the Human Rights Act, a law that was specifically enacted in the UK to bring human rights home by making the European Convention on Human Rights part of UK domestic law and actionable in UK domestic courts. *World News* has even less explicitly domestic phrases occurring in human rights stories; “Human Rights Campaign” -- an organization that promotes LGBT rights in the US -- ranks 18th, occurring in 3.8% of stories containing human rights broadcast from 2010-2016. The closest *The New York Times* gets to an explicitly domestic, frequently used phrase is the 11th-ranked “Police Officers,” though even this is a stretch, as both American (domestic) police officers and the police officers of other countries would be caught by this method of looking at the contents of human rights stories.

It could be argued that the small amount of coverage of human rights generally and of domestic human rights issues is because there are simply no human rights problems to cover. The overall small number of stories covered across all three outlets seems even smaller when compared against the overall amount of human rights issues going on in the world from 2010 to 2016 as measured by the Political Terror Scale (Gibney, Cornett, Wood, Haschke, and Arnon 2017). Table 5 shows the average of PTS-A scores, which are derived from a coding of annual Amnesty International reports, for all countries for whom scores were available for each year 2010 to 2016; the PTS-A scores for the US and UK are also included. PTS-A scores are coded from 1 to 5 with 1 being the best human rights situation in a country, and 5 being the worst human rights violations possible.

Table 5: PTS-A Scores, World Average, US, and UK, 2010-2016

Year	PTS-A World Average	PTS-A-US	PTS-A-UK
2010	2.53	3	1
2011	2.56	3	1
2012	2.46	3	1
2013	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
2014	2.54	2	1

2015	2.59	2	1
2016	2.62	2	2
2010-2016	2.55	2.5	1.17

The world average of 2.55 from 2010-2016 puts an end to any speculation that there simply aren't human rights stories for media outlets to cover. There are 64 countries with 2010-2016 PTS-A averages of 3 or higher, with 24 of those countries having a PTS-A average of 4 or worse. PTS-A scores for the US and UK disprove any claim that the amount of media coverage of human rights in *The New York Times* or *The Times* is determined by the severity of human rights issues. As the UK's PTS-A score increased for 2016 indicating a worse human rights record, *The Times* continued its downward trend in covering fewer stories that include the phrase human rights; while the US PTS-A score improved indicating an improving human rights situation, *The New York Times* covered more stories that included the phrase human rights.

In order to dig deeper into the human rights content covered in stories that contain the phrase *human rights*, all three outlets' stories that contained the phrase *human rights* were run through the Wordstat categorization dictionary explained in the Methodology section. Table 6 lists the number of stories that contained enough human rights information to be categorized.

Table 6: Human Rights Covered in Human Rights Stories, *World News*, *The New York Times*, & *The Times*, 2010-2016

ABC 2010-2016			
Human Rights Category	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
TORTURE	10	8	6.06%
LGBT	5	4	3.03%
GENOCIDE	3	2	1.52%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	2	2	1.52%
Total		16	12%
NYT 2010-2016			
Human Rights Category	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
TORTURE	2738	1250	10.62%
LGBT	1435	424	3.60%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	1287	869	7.38%

GENOCIDE	860	396	3.36%
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	57	43	0.37%
RIGHTS OF CHILD	39	34	0.29%
ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE	26	21	0.18%
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	26	25	0.21%
RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	12	12	0.10%
MIGRANT WORKERS	5	4	0.03%
Total		3078	26%
The Times 2010-2016			
Human Rights Category	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
TORTURE	1591	842	9.13%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	896	606	6.57%
GENOCIDE	251	147	1.59%
LGBT	198	125	1.35%
RIGHTS OF CHILD	43	35	0.38%
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	26	23	0.25%
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	12	12	0.13%
ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE	9	8	0.09%
RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	7	6	0.07%
MIGRANT WORKERS	5	5	0.05%
Total		1809	20%

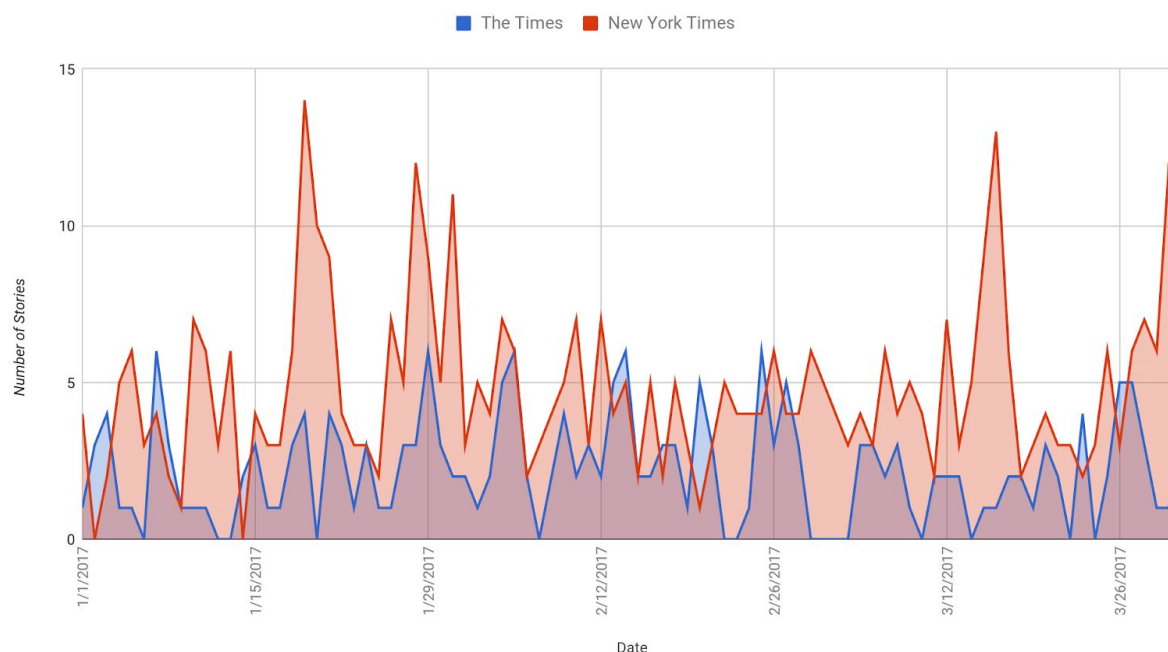
Across all three outlets, there are very few stories that contain human rights information. Not only are the percentages of categorizable stories small across all three outlets (12%, 26%, and 20%), the actual number of stories may be even lower than these numbers indicate in all three outlets, as a story could be counted as a case for more than one category simultaneously. The television outlet broadcast both the smallest number of stories that contain the phrase *human rights* as well as having the fewest stories that could be categorized, with only 16 out of 132 stories having enough human rights phrasing to be categorized. Moreover, only four categories were present in those 16 stories (torture, LGBT rights, genocide, and civil and political rights -- specifically slavery). This means that *World News* did not broadcast any stories from 2010-2016 that used the phrase *human rights* in covering racial discrimination, women's rights, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of migrant workers, economic, social, and cultural rights, and enforced disappearance. *The New York Times* published more stories that contained the phrase *human rights* than *The Times*, as well as more stories that contained enough human rights information to be categorized. Interestingly, none of the three outlets covered a single story that could be categorized as an economic, social, and cultural rights story. This is

unsurprising for the American outlets, given the US's long-standing preference for civil and political rights as opposed to economic, social, and cultural rights. Nevertheless, some coverage of that set of rights might have been expected given the UK's greater integration into regional human rights treaties and organizations that have been more open to economic, social, and cultural rights.

It is clear that the *World News*, *The Times*, or *The New York Times* did not seem to cover human rights often, in much depth, or with a focus on domestic human rights from 2010-2016. Looking closely at recent data provides more evidence of this point. Stories containing the phrase *human right* were collected from *World News*, *The Times*, and *The New York Times* for the first quarter of 2017. There were only two *World News* stories that contained the phrase *human rights* from January to March of 2017: a newsbrief on February 7 reporting on Russian President Putin signing a law making domestic violence a civil offense, which human rights group called "a dangerous step backwards," and a full package on January 16 about the feud between then President-Elect Trump and Congressman John Lewis, which did not include any audible statement of the phrase *human rights* and was only included because it was Martin Luther King III's visual title "(HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE)." Neither story included any significant information about human rights, though the newsbrief on Russia was focused on a human rights issue. That means that in three months of nightly viewing of *World News*, an audience member would only have heard the phrase *human rights* once, in a short newsbrief, about a foreign affair. There were undoubtedly human rights issues that could have been covered by *World News* during that time, as shown by the print news coverage of the phrase below, but even if those stories were covered by the television outlet, they were not covered using a human rights frame.

There were more human rights stories in both the American and British print outlets from January to March 2017, as shown in Figure 8. *The New York Times* printed 432 stories containing the phrase *human right* for an average of 4.8 *human rights*-containing stories per day for the first quarter of 2017, while *The Times* published only 201, or an average of 2.2 human rights stories per day during the same period.

Figure 8: Human Rights Stories, January-March 2017



Not only did *The New York Times* publish more stories containing the phrase during the first quarter of 2017 than *The Times* did, those stories also contained more human rights information, as more of the American outlet's stories were able to be placed in one or more human rights categories based on each story's contents when compared to the British paper, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Human Rights Covered in Human Rights Stories, *The New York Times* & *The Times*, January-March 2017

New York Times			
	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
TORTURE	136	49	11.37%
LGBT	63	23	5.34%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	44	33	7.66%
GENOCIDE	13	8	1.86%
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	5	4	0.93%
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	2	2	0.46%
Total		119	27.62%
The Times			
	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
TORTURE	23	17	8.46%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	12	7	3.48%

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	11	8	3.98%
Total		32	15.92%

More human rights information, as well as a wider range of human rights information, was present in *The New York Times* human rights stories, which included key phrases about torture, LGBT rights, civil and political rights, genocide, racial discrimination, and women's rights in its human rights stories, than in *The Times*, which only included torture, civil and political rights, and racial discrimination.

Whether either outlet was publishing domestic human rights stories requires deeper investigation still, as the categorization used cannot distinguish between domestic and international stories. Two days were selected for closer study, January 19, 2017 and January 29, 2017. *The New York Times* published 14 stories that contained the phrase *human rights* on January 19: 5 stories were coded as primarily about domestic affairs, 7 as purely international, and 2 covered both domestic and international affairs. The same day, *The Times* published only 4 stories containing the phrase *human rights*: 1 domestic and 1 both domestic and international. Both of these articles were from a special supplement from the Stonewall Organization and about LGBT issues, although neither article used rights framing. The solely international stories in *The Times* were an op-ed on the commutation of Chelsea Manning's sentence and intelligence leaks more broadly and a newsbrief about jailed Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik's claim that being kept in isolation is a violation of his human rights. Neither of these topics overlap with the international stories *The New York Times* published, which covered Gambia, Israel, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, China, and Myanmar. The January 29 human rights stories show similar trends. Again, *The New York Times* has a higher story count overall at 9 compared to six stories in *The Times*. And, *The New York Times* demonstrated wider international coverage with its international stories covering Egypt, the UK, and Chile, in contrast to the solely international story in *The Times*, which was a review of Richard Haass' book on world politics. *The New York Times* stories that contained the phrase *human rights* and covered domestic or both domestic and international issues were largely (5 out of 6) about President Trump's "Muslim Ban" Executive Order. The sixth story recapped Trump's first phone calls to world leaders as president. Across both days and both outlets, despite including the phrase *human rights* somewhere in each story, hardly any of the stories had any substantial human rights information, as shown in Table 8. None of the *human rights*-containing stories from *The Times* on these days, and only one day's stories from *The New York Times*, included enough human rights information to be sorted into any human rights category.

Table 8: Human Rights Covered in Human Rights Stories, *The New York Times* & *The Times*, January 19 and 29, 2017

The Times January 19, 2017: 4 Human Rights Stories, none categorized
The Times January 29, 2017: 6 Human Rights Stories, none categorized

New York Times January 29, 2017: 9 Human Rights Stories, none categorized			
New York Times January 19, 2017: 14 Human Rights Stories			
	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
GENOCIDE	6	2	14.29
LGBT RIGHTS	6	3	21.43%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	5	2	14.29%
Total Stories Categorized		7	

If stories containing the phrase *human rights* do not contain very much human rights information, as measured by the insufficient amount of information included for categorization, then the converse is theoretically possible: could there be stories about human rights but not include the phrase *human rights*? To test this theory, all stories published in *The New York Times* and *The Times* were collected for January 19 and January 29, 2017. The results of the categorization, featured in Table 9, lead to several conclusions: first, yet more evidence that print news doesn't really cover human rights, and second, print news outlets are more likely to cover human rights content without using human rights frames.

Table 9: Human Rights Covered in All Stories, *The New York Times* & *The Times*, January 19 and 29, 2017

Jan 19: New York Times Total	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
LGBT RIGHTS	13	7	3.83%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	8	5	2.73%
GENOCIDE	7	3	1.64%
Total		15	8.2%
Jan 29: New York Times Total	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	8	7	2.38%
TORTURE	7	6	2.04%
Total		13	4.4%
Jan 19: The Times Total. No Stories Categorizable.			
Jan 29: The Times Total	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES
GENOCIDE	3	3	0.81%
TORTURE	3	3	0.81%
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS	2	2	0.54%
Total		8	2.16%

In neither outlet on either day is there anything that could be called a large amount of human rights coverage, with 0% and 2% of each day's *Times* coverage being categorizable and 4% and 8% of each day's *New York Times* coverage. Categorization according to human rights content was possible for none of the 177 stories from *The Times* and only 15 out of 183 stories from *The New York Times* on January 19, and for 8 out of 369 stories from *The Times* and 13 out of 294 stories from *The New York Times* on January 29. Possibly equally noteworthy than the overall lack of human rights content covered in both outlets is that in both outlets, several more stories are categorizable as human rights stories when the entire corpus of the day's news is considered, as opposed to just those stories that contain the phrase *human rights*. This means that human rights issues actually get more coverage when they are not framed explicitly as human rights issues.

Conclusion

Human rights continue to receive extremely little coverage in both British and American news outlets. In the case of television news, coverage of human rights continues to decline in amount and depth, and demonstrates a significant tendency to only frame international affairs as human rights. Of the two print outlets, *The New York Times* shows increasing human rights coverage, albeit still at very low, overall levels. This research also indicates that even when a news story includes the phrase *human rights*, it does not provide very much substantive information about human rights. At the same time, some news stories actually include human rights information, but do not include the phrase *human right*, which means that even when journalists cover human rights stories, they do not use human rights frames. This study therefore provides further evidence of the government-leading-media perspective on who determines news coverage, making the press far less of an independent check on government when it comes to human rights in both the US and UK.

What can be done to bring more human rights coverage and human rights framing, of both domestic and international affairs, into news coverage in the US and UK? The essays in the rest of this special issue provide some answers to these questions, as well as raise many more interesting questions about domestic human rights and the media. Janet Reilly's piece is particularly relevant in that she shows that journalism students do not receive explicit human rights training at any large journalism program in the US. How are journalists to reach for a human rights frame if they are not familiar with human rights? George Andreopoulos' essay raises the question of whether the human rights framework itself is somewhat to blame for the lack of human rights coverage and framing in the media: the human rights framework is complicated, not easily digested into soundbites, and the ways it is conceptualized, implemented, and advanced by its advocates may make it harder for journalists to cover instead of easier.

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