



THE STRAUS INSTITUTE
for the ADVANCED STUDY
OF LAW & JUSTICE

The NYU Institutes on the Park

THE JOSEPH AND GWENDOLYN STRAUS INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF LAW & JUSTICE

*Professor J.H.H. Weiler
Director of The Straus Institute*

Straus Working Paper 08/13

Jack Snyder

**The Lessons of Abolitionism for Human Rights Strategy:
Zealots, Brokers, and the Rhetoric of Coalition Politics**

NYU School of Law • New York, NY 10011
The Straus Institute Working Paper Series can be found at
<http://nyustraus.org/index.html>

All rights reserved.
No part of this paper may be reproduced in any form
without permission of the author.

ISSN 2160-827X (online)
Copy Editor: Danielle Leeds Kim
© Jack Snyder 2013
New York University School of Law
New York, NY 10011
USA

Publications in the Series should be cited as:
AUTHOR, TITLE, STRAUS INSTITUTE WORKING PAPER NO./YEAR [URL]

**THE LESSONS OF ABOLITIONISM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY:
ZEALOTS, BROKERS, AND THE RHETORIC OF COALITION POLITICS**

By Jack Snyder*

Abstract

The history of the British and US abolitionist movements sheds light on the origins and consequences of moral absolutism as a style of rights activism. Moralistic denunciation can direct a spotlight's glare onto an abuse, but also alienate fence-sitters and play into the hand of polarizing perpetrators. Once abuses have been brought to light, success depends on uncompromising shaming strategies giving way to expedient methods of winning allies in support of an achievable goal, either through an evolution in the approach of the initial activists or through the rise of new leadership. The history of anti-slavery suggests that effective strategies of persuasion must be tailored to fit economic, social, and political facts that activists have to take as given, at least in the short run. Successful persuasion requires an ideology that motivates and consolidates a dominant political coalition through a compelling principled claim that also addresses the pragmatic concerns of its supporters.

* Columbia University, jls6@columbia.edu

Aryeh Neier, the founder of the contemporary human rights movement, portrays the British and American abolitionists as heroes whose relentless energy against the injustice of slavery should serve as the model for today's struggles for human rights.¹ Scholars sympathetic to the movement agree: the abolitionists prefigured contemporary rights activists in their uncompromisingly principled stance, their mobilization of civil society through moral rhetoric, and their tireless use of publicity to shame perpetrators and those who abetted them.²

Others are not so sure. An ambivalent essay by Andrew Delbanco, a student of anxiety-ridden Puritan moralizing and Herman Melville's single-minded Captain Ahab, has provoked a debate on whether the abolitionists were polarizing zealots who provoked a mirror-image radicalization in the South, pushed the country into its bloodiest war, and left African Americans in a condition barely a step up from slavery.³ Delbanco contrasts the rigidity of many abolitionists with Abraham Lincoln's measured expediency, calibrated to maintain the support of northern and border-state whites for Republican antislavery measures.⁴ The eminent historian Eric Foner, however, sees these two approaches as complementary, the abolitionists preparing the climate of opinion to resist slavery and Lincoln maneuvering to forge a political majority that could accomplish that goal.⁵ Delbanco suggests that, for better or worse, the abolitionists' moralizing style is a recurring feature of American public life that entails risks as well as advantages.

The debate over antebellum moralizing is timely in the wake of disappointments of US rhetoric about promoting freedom and punishing evil-doers abroad. The American public has become wary of the crusading approach to global reform. While polls show that 70% of Americans favor the idea of using U.S. troops abroad to stop genocide, the proportion of Americans who say that promoting human rights is "very important" has slipped to 28%, in tenth place

¹ Neier 2012, 33-37.

² Keck and Sikkink 1998, 41-51.

³ Delbanco 2012.

⁴ Delbanco 2012, 15.

⁵ Foner 2010, xviii-xix.

behind “strengthening the UN” and “limiting climate change” on a list of eleven major public issues. Promoting democracy abroad is dead last at 14%.⁶

Historical reassessment by the public and by public intellectuals is playing a role in this resetting of America’s moral compass. Doris Kearns Goodwin made a huge hit with *Team of Rivals*, her portrayal of Lincoln’s pragmatic navigation through moral and political minefields.⁷ The Hollywood movie adaptation’s somewhat fictionalized depiction of Lincoln’s ability to play politics to get his antislavery agenda through Congress, yet simultaneously to transcend politics with his evangelizing rhetoric, engrossed audiences. Meanwhile, historian Samuel Moyn provoked widespread comment among the literati with *The Last Utopia*, which claimed that today’s international human rights movement has shallow roots dating back only to the 1970s.⁸ Moyn warned, for example, against overrating the parallels between Britain’s coercive suppression of the international slave trade in the early 19th century and contemporary efforts to spread rights by international law.⁹ The prominent human rights lawyer Philip Alston concludes that “there is a struggle for the soul of the human rights movement, and it is being waged in large part through the proxy of genealogy.”¹⁰

To evaluate the debate, let’s look first at the general approach of orthodox human rights activists today as well as the doubts of their critics, and then turn to the lessons that can be learned from an historical assessment of antislavery activism. Although today’s circumstances differ from those that the abolitionists faced, this history sheds light on the still-relevant questions of the origins and consequences of moral absolutism as a style of rights activism. Moralistic denunciation can direct a spotlight’s glare onto an abuse, but also alienate fence-sitters and play into the hand of polarizing perpetrators. Once abuses have been brought to light, success depends on uncompromising shaming strategies giving way to expedient methods of winning allies in support of an achievable goal, either through an evolution in the approach of the initial activists or through the

⁶ Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2012, 14, 17.

⁷ Kearns Goodwin 2005.

⁸ Moyn 2010.

⁹ Moyn 2012.

¹⁰ Alston 2013, 35.

rise of new leadership. The history of anti-slavery suggests that effective strategies of persuasion must be tailored to fit economic, social, and political facts that activists have to take as given, at least in the short run. Successful persuasion requires an ideology that motivates and consolidates a dominant political coalition through a compelling principled claim that also addresses the pragmatic concerns of its supporters.

Principle and expediency in human rights thinking

Over the past four decades, the international human rights movement has captured the imagination of progressives in the developed democracies. Sometimes called a secular replacement for religion,¹¹ the movement has succeeded dramatically in mobilizing the enthusiasm of its committed cadres.¹² It is less clear whether the movement's typical advocacy strategies are succeeding in significantly improving rights outcomes in the countries where abuses are worst.¹³ Arguably, strategies that have helped the movement to mobilize adherents in parts of the world where rights are esteemed are becoming a hindrance in parts of the world where rights are most at risk.

In general, the rhetorical stance of the human rights movement has been legalistic, moralistic, and universalistic. Organizations anchored in the developed world such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, working in tandem with international organizations and international lawyers, have promoted declarations, treaties, and laws to define international rights aspirations and standards.¹⁴ Non-governmental organizations have created transnational networks with partners in the developing world to document and publicize abuses, and to shame perpetrators and the states that fail to punish them.¹⁵ The human rights enterprise has also come to encompass a service-delivery component, especially through humanitarian assistance organizations

¹¹ Hopgood forthcoming; Ignatieff 2001.

¹² Sikkink 2011.

¹³ Hafner-Burton 2013, 1-14.

¹⁴ Hopgood 2006; Simmons 2009.

¹⁵ Keck and Sikkink 1998.

that adopt a “human rights approach.”¹⁶ While these grass-roots activities have made field workers more aware of the need to pragmatically tailor programs to achieve desired outcomes on the ground, at the rhetorical and conceptual level, the movement remains anchored by the assumption that social reality is ultimately constructed through discourse about what ought to be.¹⁷

This approach has worked well to mobilize the idealistic, moralistic human rights troops, but empirical social scientists are increasingly questioning whether it is an effective guide for improving human rights outcomes.¹⁸ Although case studies of human rights “success stories” are not in short supply, systematic studies of change over time and variation across countries often come to more skeptical conclusions.¹⁹ The most sophisticated study of the impact of legal commitments shows that signing treaties leads to improved rights outcomes only in transitional states that already have a somewhat independent legal system and an active civil society. Treaties can provide legal leverage and political protection to rights activists in states of that kind, but treaty-signing does nothing for compliance in states where the worst abuses take place.²⁰ The effects of shaming tactics are harder to assess, since disproportionate publicity may be aimed at the actors that are hardest to change. Some studies conclude that denunciations have at best a “whack-a-mole” effect, leading the abuser to shift from more visible repression to other forms, but other studies report more positive findings.²¹

If the tactics of legalism and moralism have limited impact, what *does* determine human rights outcomes in a country? Systematic statistical studies find that the strongest correlates of human rights compliance are whether the country is at peace, whether it is a democracy, and (somewhat less powerfully) whether it has a fairly high per capita income. Other factors include whether the colonial legacy installed a professional civil service and whether the ruling

¹⁶ On the increasing consequentialism of humanitarian organizations and on the human rights approach, see Barnett 2011; also Kindornay, Ron, and Carpenter 2012.

¹⁷ Finnemore and Sikkink 1998.

¹⁸ Hafner-Burton 2013, 12-17, and the literature cited on pp. 202-3, notes 34, 40, and 44; Snyder and Vinjamuri 2003/04.

¹⁹ See the literature summarized in Hafner-Burton and Ron 2009.

²⁰ Simmons 2009.

²¹ Hafner-Burton 2008; Krain 2012; Clark 2013.

coalition is on the left.²² Even longstanding supporters of orthodox human rights activism are increasingly recognizing that good outcomes depend on favorable conditions, such as some degree of democracy, the state's institutional capacity to implement reforms, whether abusive practices are embedded in popular culture, and the material and social vulnerability of perpetrators to outside pressure.²³

When facilitating conditions for reform are largely absent, a strategy based on legalism, moralism, and universalism is likely to be ineffective or even counterproductive. In these conditions, perpetrators typically have the motive and the means to resist. They profit from their ruthlessness and fear that they will fall from power if they stop repressing. As an antebellum Governor of Georgia put it, "the moment we cease to be masters, we shall be slaves."²⁴

Moral appeals are especially unlikely to succeed when rights violators can call upon the normative resources of their own culture to enlist nationalism or religion to justify resistance against pressure from outsiders. Indeed, shaming from abroad may play into rights violators' hands. This happened, for example, when Kenyan nationalists in the 1920s used a British campaign against female genital cutting to mobilize support for independence.²⁵ A similar backlash happened there again in 2013 when Uhuru Kenyatta, the indicted son of the nationalist hero of Kenyan independence, ran successfully for President against what he portrayed as the neo-imperialist International Criminal Court.²⁶

Activists often hope that moral and legal persuasion, backed by threat of sanctions, will sway perpetrators' loosely committed allies, potential backers, and watchful fence-sitters, isolating the abusers. But these swing groups have their own self-interested agendas and prior normative beliefs. They ask whether the bandwagon of the reform movement is sturdy enough to carry them to their own

²² Literature cited in Hafner-Burton and Ron 2009; also, the well structured early study by Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999.

²³ Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 2013.

²⁴ Bonner 2009, 53, quoting an 1823 statement by George Troup.

²⁵ Keck and Sikkink 1998.

²⁶ BBC News Africa 2013.

destinations, and whether the rights agenda can be explained in the normative vernacular of their own constituencies.²⁷

The history of the anti-slavery movement suggests that when constituencies for rights reform are weak, a sequence of well-timed expedients can strengthen them. First, where background conditions facilitating rights improvements are inadequate, successful movements begin by investing resources in creating the ideas, institutions, capacities, and support networks that will be needed to sustain the reform coalition in the political struggle to enforce rights. Second, after gaining some momentum, they bargain to form a powerful coalition with potential allies, including those who may be wary of rights reform but whose concerns may be compatible with it. At a more advanced stage, they may also try to bargain with rights abusers or tolerators of abuse, demonstrating credibly that they can be effectively opposed, but also that they will be better off if they switch to practices that conform to rights standards. And at every stage in the process, they appeal in the cultural vernacular to a potentially winning coalition's principled and self-interested concerns.

British and US Antislavery Movements

The historical examples of antislavery movements in Britain and the United States can shed light on the value of principled and expedient mechanisms for promoting rights, including the tradeoffs and interactions between them. These test cases are appropriate because the activists themselves never tire of invoking them as models. Moreover, these should be relatively easy cases for proponents of the shaming strategy, since the abuses took place in liberal states with strong civil societies. That said, any lessons need to take into account the difference in circumstances between these historical movements and today's rights campaigns, which often feature efforts by liberals in wealthy states to change behavior in faraway states that are legally sovereign, underdeveloped, authoritarian, and illiberal.

²⁷ Acharya 2004; also Merry Engle and Levitt 2009. Contrast these with Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999.

The British and American antislavery movements share some commonalities. Both were initially spurred by highly principled religious and civic reformers. Both shifted to a phase that featured expedient bargaining with fence-sitters to forge dominant coalitions for reform that forced abolition on recalcitrant slaveholders. Both invoked law not only to expand rights but also to reassure fence-sitters about the limits of rights claims. Both articulated ideologies that fused moral principles with appeals to the practical concerns of the heterogeneous constituencies that backed the reform coalition. Success in abolishing slavery and suppressing the slave trade would have been impossible in either country without the combination of principled activism and coalition bargaining with groups that were not mainly concerned with the slavery issue. Success was costly for both, though nearly catastrophic only for the US: the US lost over 600,000 dead in the Civil War; Britain sacrificed a slave-based sugar industry that generated about 4% of its national income, and it devoted nearly 2% of its national income every year for decades to the naval suppression of the Atlantic slave trade.²⁸

These two cases also reflect important differences. British abolitionists confronted an easier problem after Britain lost its largest slaveholdings through the American Revolution. In the United States, principled activism met fiercer resistance from more powerful slaveholders and also from many Northerners. While some claim that the uncompromising intensity of abolitionist propaganda exacerbated this resistance, the far greater power of the slaveholding interest in the US than in Britain is probably sufficient to explain much of this. In Britain, mobilization of mass support through principled activism meshed seamlessly with practical bargaining in the corridors of power, whereas the US antislavery movement was sharply split between a minority who favored maximal goals and no compromises and a majority who favored bargaining to achieve whatever was feasible at the moment. Whether the more extreme abolitionists' tactics hindered

²⁸ Kaufmann and Pape 1999, 631, 637.

or complemented pragmatic antislavery efforts remains a debated historical question.²⁹

Britain's abolition of slavery

Great Britain presided over the largest expansion of slavery the world has ever seen, transporting millions of Africans to the Caribbean and British North America in the 17th and 18th centuries to fuel economic growth and empire.³⁰ At the same time, Britain embarked on monumental reforms that laid the groundwork for Anglo-Saxon liberal society: the consolidation of the power of Parliament over the monarchy after 1688, the ending of press censorship in 1695, enhancements of legal due process for common citizens, and the amalgamation of the hereditary peerage with the financial oligarchy through imperial projects that encompassed middle class trading and seafaring interests. Britain's elites rationalized this paradoxical mix of slave-supported liberalizing capitalism with an ideology that centered on the "English liberties" of "free-born Englishmen."³¹

Some historians have argued that the normative contradictions in such a system were so unstable that it couldn't last, yet hardly anyone commented on the contradiction until the 1760s.³² Even then it took another half century to end Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, still longer to adopt in 1833 a program of compensated "apprenticeship" phasing out slavery in British colonies and to complete the abolition process in 1837.³³

Historians' proposed explanations for this curious trajectory cover the full range of causal mechanisms that can be found in contemporary debates about methods for promoting human rights. Some highlight the internal logic of Christian and liberal secular normative discourse, and on activists' ability to mobilize civil society to set in motion a norms cascade.³⁴ Some explore a changing array of background conditions, including economic incentives,

²⁹ Kraditor 1989.

³⁰ Lovejoy 1982, 483, reports that British ships carried over 2.5 million African slaves to the new world during the 18th century.

³¹ Colley 1992; Blackburn 1988, ch. 2.

³² Blackburn 1988, esp. 524, but also 76-77, 93, 521-2, 533; see also Davis 2006.

³³ Kaufmann and Pape 1999.

³⁴ Clarkson 1808; Anstey 1975.

imperial circumstances, and domestic social evolution.³⁵ Some focus on the opportunities for the success of heterogeneous antislavery coalitions to come together at fortuitous historical conjunctures.³⁶ Finally, accounts based on the logic of liberal coalition ideology pull together several of these strands.³⁷ By juxtaposing some of these arguments and their supporting evidence, much can be learned about the moralizing mode of persuasion, how it interacts with political expediency, and how normative successes depend on finding an ideological formula that unites the two.

Normative explanations.

Some human rights advocates argue that effective persuasion to adopt a new norm depends on invoking a more general principle that is already an accepted part of the target's normative system. For example, the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines invoked the widely accepted general rule that weapons whose main consequence is to harm non-combatants should be illegal.³⁸ The very first book explaining the success of the British campaign to ban the slave trade, written by one of its main protagonists, Thomas Clarkson, makes this kind of argument. Clarkson claimed that the self-evidently true teachings of prominent Christian authorities—Methodists, Quakers, Anglicans, and others—gradually persuaded Englishmen over the last third of the 18th century that slavery was sinfully incompatible with the basic precepts of Christian charity and love.³⁹

This thought had previously occurred even to slave-owners, who in the 17th century had refused to Christianize their slaves for fear that enslaving Christians would be a sin. Later, though, many changed their minds, deciding that Christianity would make the slaves docile.⁴⁰ No one tried to push Christian qualms toward their supposedly logical abolitionist conclusion until after the Seven Years War, when reformers among Philadelphia's Quakers pointed out the

³⁵ Drescher 1987.

³⁶ Kaufmann and Pape 1999.

³⁷ Blackburn 1988.

³⁸ Price 1998.

³⁹ For commentary, see Temperley 1980, 338.

⁴⁰ Mintz 1995, 30.

gross contradiction between Quaker principles and their abetting the abuses of the Indian wars and slave-trading.⁴¹ By the 1770s, Quaker communities began to outlaw slave-trading among their members. In 1774 John Wesley, the Tory founder of Methodism in Britain, published his blistering, theologically eclectic *Thoughts on Slavery*, shaming slaveholders for their hard, un-Christian hearts.⁴² While nonconformist sects provided most of the energy behind the British antislavery campaign, religiously inspired Anglican Tories such as William Wilberforce also played a key role in successful public and behind-the-scenes efforts to persuade Parliament to end the slave trade in 1807.

Running in tandem with religious discourse on the sinfulness of slavery was a liberal political and legal discourse on its incompatibility with English freedoms. The great Whig statesman of the first half of the 18th century Horace Walpole privately confided his disgust at the slavery system as an affront to liberty.⁴³ Such arguments went public in a prominent 1769 pamphlet by Granville Sharp, a minor official and scion of prominent Anglican clerics. Sharp arranged for Britain's most august judge, Lord William Mansfield, to hear in 1771-72 the case of James Somerset, a black slave brought to England from the colonies who refused to return with his owner. In a finding later invoked by US antislavery advocates, Mansfield held that the common law on property was insufficient to support a claim of ownership of a slave in the absence of an explicit establishment of slavery in positive law, which was lacking in Britain.⁴⁴ Legal assertions that slavery was contrary to British conceptions of equitable exchange and contract were used by Wesley to supplement his religious arguments.⁴⁵

Although these examples show how the internal logic of a normative discourse can exert rhetorical power to effect change, this explanation seems insufficient to account for the success of universalistic antislavery appeals. Christianity and proto-liberal capitalism had lived for some time with their apparent contradiction with slavery. Sharp and Mansfield had the limited

⁴¹ Marietta 1984, 121.

⁴² Hurwitz 1973, 23; Blackburn 1988, 96, 102; Drescher 1987, ch. 6.

⁴³ Blackburn 1988, 95.

⁴⁴ Blackburn 1988, 99-100.

⁴⁵ Blackburn 1988, 102.

concern to defend English liberties on English soil from the potentially corrupting effects of the presence of arbitrary authority, coerced labor, and an alien racial presence in their midst.⁴⁶ Generalizing this to the abolition of slavery abroad required a further step in logic, which was slow to emerge. More is needed to explain why antislavery evolved from a minority view to national policy.

Explanations based on slave economics, empire, and social change.

Several attempts to explain the success of antislavery campaigns have explored changing background conditions in the economy, empire, and society that affected the costs and benefits of slavery to important social groups. While some of these are undoubtedly important, their impact seems indeterminate without taking into account their impact on normative discourse.

Abolitionists often added Adam Smith's theoretical arguments about the greater productivity of free labor to their ethical arguments against slavery.⁴⁷ At least with respect to Britain's colonial plantations, these economic arguments do not hold up to scrutiny. Slaved-based sugar production was still near its peak in 1807 when Britain abolished the slave trade upon which it depended. In Britain's harsh sugar cane colonies, slave mortality exceeded fertility, so transatlantic transport of new slaves seemed necessary and profitable. Free-labor sources of sugar were at this time virtually non-existent. Even abolitionists argued that if Britain ended its own slave trade, it would have to suppress competitors' slave imports to stay competitive.⁴⁸ After the abolition of slavery, Britain's sugar plantations failed to operate successfully with free labor, in part because the former slaves preferred subsistence agriculture.

A lively literature also addresses the question of whether the West Indian slave revolts in Haiti in 1791, Barbados in 1816, Demerara (in South America) in 1823, and Jamaica in 1831 sped antislavery measures. The claim that these revolts made slavery appear unsustainable or too costly is unpersuasive. After the success of the Haitian revolution took Haitian sugar off the market, British

⁴⁶ Brown 2006, 96-97.

⁴⁷ Turley 1991, 31.

⁴⁸ Drescher 2010, 124.

investors rushed to expand production on Jamaica to take up the slack. Far from fearing slave revolts, the British government bought and armed new African slaves in 1806, just before the ban on the transatlantic slave trade, to aid in expanding and defending plantation holdings in the Indies.

More convincing is the claim that the later slave revolts led the British public to see slavery as immoral. Whereas the anti-white atrocities in Haiti had fed a general resistance to both reform and revolution, the careful treatment of white captives in Demarara made the slaves seem like civilized victims of unjust oppression. Jamaican slaveholders' brutalization of slaves and burning of the churches of English missionaries, who slave owners blamed for fomenting the 1831 revolt, outraged nonconformist opinion and spurred the passage of the emancipation act of 1833.⁴⁹ Slave economics and slave resistance in British colonies mattered less as direct constraints on the slavery system than through the moral and practical arguments that these conditions allowed antislavery activists to make.

Another important background factor that operated in part through its effect on discourse was imperial competition. The French Revolution temporarily slowed the progress of antislavery mobilization in Britain by creating a political climate of reactionary patriotism that saw all reform as a slippery slope leading to revolution. Less obvious is the effect of the American Revolution, which freed Britain from direct responsibility for Southern slavery. This had the direct consequence of weakening Britain's economic interest in slavery and undermining the political power in Britain of the colonial slaveholding interest. It also had an indirect effect on the rhetoric of politics, freeing both British and Americans to play the slavery card in propaganda against the other. Samuel Johnson, for example, noted in 1775 that one hears "the loudest yelps for liberty among drivers of negroes."⁵⁰ In turn, Thomas Jefferson's antislavery paragraph that the Continental Congress deleted from the Declaration of Independence denounced Britain's double game in importing slaves to America in the first place

⁴⁹ Drescher 2010, 125-9.

⁵⁰ Brown 2006, 94.

and then playing divide and rule by pitting slaves and colonists against each other.

A final contextual factor is the growth of civil society in Britain. Well into the commercial phase of the capitalist revolution and on the brink of industrialization, British society was rapidly developing all of the elements needed to sustain a politics of mass pressure for social reform: high levels of literacy, urbanization, a growing middle class, an independent commercial class, a useable legal system, well developed media of news and communication, rights of assembly and petition, and competitive representative government that enfranchised some of the rising classes. Between 1787 and 1792 these capacities came together in a lively campaign of antislavery petitions, media outcry, and sugar boycotts, which included the growing manufacturing and mercantile cities of northern England.⁵¹

Slavery was the earliest reform issue that civil society activists took up, but a host of other causes soon followed in its wake. Urban middle class groups formed on behalf of Sunday schools, missionary work, public morality, abolition of capital punishment, regulation of child labor, better public health and medical facilities, the protection of aborigines, the enhanced status of women, the reform of Parliament, and in due course the repeal of tariffs on imported grain (the corn laws).⁵² This implies that the explanation for success of the antislavery movement does not lie in the narrow specifics of the slavery issue alone, but in the capacity of the rising British middle class for social action and their general commitment to the idea of progress.⁵³

Complicating the causal picture, however, is the dramatic growth of nonconformist and evangelical religious sects, such as the Methodists and Baptists, among the middle class during the second half of the 18th century at the same time as the social changes that were facilitating mass civic activity. This makes it difficult to disentangle whether religious belief forged the political consciousness of civil society on slavery and other reform issues (a norms-first

⁵¹ Drescher 1987, ch. 4; Turley 1991, ch. 3.

⁵² Turley 1991, ch. 5; Ditchfield 1980; Harrison 1980.

⁵³ Temperley 1980, 345.

explanation) or whether the structural interest of the middle class to replace corrupt elite institutions with popular, rights-oriented arrangements led to changes in both religion and public affairs (a power-and-interest-first explanation). Even the 1840s movement to repeal agricultural tariffs, which on first inspection looks like a self-interested rather than principled effort to get cheaper food for the industrialists' labor force, turns out to have had a moralistic spin: cheap grain imports would keep the Irish from starving, and universal free trade would lead to world peace, according to the Quaker leader of the repeal effort, Richard Cobden. As with the other material background causal factors, social change intertwined with normative change in shaping outcomes for slavery in particular and reform in general. Coalition politics was the medium that tied these strands together.

Coalition politics and ideology.

Coalition politics in Parliament is the crucial element that explains Britain's two landmark antislavery actions, the outlawing of Britain's transatlantic slave trade in 1806-07 and the 1833 law leading to the emancipation of the British empire's slaves. Since only a small minority of the members of Parliament were deeply committed to the antislavery cause, these outcomes can be understood only in terms of the incentives for this minority's coalition partners to support them.

Prior to 1806-07 the leader of the abolitionists in Parliament, William Wilberforce, could count only about thirty supporters who were committed to antislavery out of religious conviction, including Whigs and Tories, while hard-core Parliamentary supporters of West Indian slave interests were of comparable strength. The rhetoric of aristocratic Whigs echoed middle class reformers in defense of "English liberties," but they defined the scope of appropriate liberties more narrowly. Tories were divided between "ultras" who opposed all reform and "pragmatic" conservatives who were willing to consider very minor reforms in Parliamentary representation and had mixed views on slavery. From 1793 to 1805, Wilberforce's bills to abolish the slave trade were narrowly defeated six times despite limited support from the pragmatist Tory Prime Minister William Pitt. In the course of these legislative battles, Wilberforce and his religiously

motivated allies “confined their piety to the most private modes of expression, became seasoned experts at political maneuver,” and readily invoked whatever economic or Realpolitik arguments served their cause.⁵⁴

Following Britain’s naval victory over France at Trafalgar in November 1805, the atmosphere of military threat that sustained Tory rule eased. Pitt’s death in January 1806 led to a Whig-organized “ministry of all the talents” which also included moderate and ultra conservatives. Following years of stonewalling popular demands for reforms of Parliamentary representation, reduction of royal prerogatives, civic emancipation of non-Anglican religious groups, working class relief, and abolition of the slave trade, pragmatic Tories had come to agree with Whigs that token reforms were needed to appease the populace. Among the issues on the reform agenda, slavery was the only one that was widely popular and could command agreement among the members of the heterogeneous Whig-Tory coalition. The coalition fell shortly after passing a bill banning the slave trade, since no further reforms were then politically possible.⁵⁵

During the 1820s in the wake of the Demarara revolt, middle class organizations, fueled by social change and the success of mass-based evangelical sects, mobilized to abolish slavery entirely. Tory governments withstood these demands until the economic depression of 1829-31, which ushered in a Whig government in 1830. With rioting in the streets and reactionary strategies now discredited across the board, reform projects moved forward on a broad front, including a major reform of Parliamentary representation and religious tests for civic participation. The reform act of 1832 dramatically increased the enfranchisement of urban areas and middle class voters, creating an electorate that was 21% nonconformist, including more than 8% Wesleyan Methodists, who based their vote choice heavily on the antislavery issue. Antislavery activists extracted pledges from Parliamentary candidates to support abolition, and succeeded in electing more than 140 members. After the 1832 election, Whigs, reformers, and radicals formed an overwhelming ruling coalition in which antislavery voters accounted for the margin of victory. Whig elements of the

⁵⁴ Davis 1980, 15; Blackburn 1988, 310-1.

⁵⁵ Kaufmann and Pape 1999, 651-54; Blackburn 1988, 307-315.

coalition insured, however, that abolition would be carried out in a measured way that respected the property rights of the slave owners, who were compensated financially and granted the slaves' services during a transitional "apprentice" period of five to seven years.⁵⁶

In short, the success of British antislavery activism derived from broader political circumstances that worked in favor of antislavery coalitions in 1806-07 and 1832-33. These included social change that strengthened reform constituencies, the availability of willing elite allies, policy failures of opponents that left them politically isolated and vulnerable to pressure, the reinforcement of the antislavery effort by broader interests in reform, and an institutional setting that facilitated mass mobilization by pressure groups, propaganda, and political bargaining. Also important were the abolitionists' use of pragmatic tactics in the game of coalition politics: expediency in the choice of timing and tactics, prudence in seeking feasible intermediate objectives while ultimate objectives remained out of reach, and astuteness in choosing policy arguments that potential coalition partners would find persuasive. That said, coalition politics also involved a normative, ideological element that could not be simply reduced to mechanical calculations of power, interest, and bargaining.

Antislavery prevailed in part because it worked well as a linchpin of the ideology of the British reform coalition. The old regime was vulnerable because of the rhetorical contradiction between its ideology of "English liberty" and the reality that England routinely violated the liberty of its subjects through limitations on the franchise, rotten boroughs, discrimination against non-Anglican religions, impressment of seamen, and its gigantic slave empire. Although even the Tories tried to "flatter the common people with the compliment of freedom," the flattery too often rang hollow.⁵⁷ In the context of 18th century social change, the contradiction became harder to sustain as religious dissenters like the Quakers grew wealthy and the Methodists and Baptists grew numerous. These socially consequential groups had both principled and self-interested reasons to distance themselves from the old regime

⁵⁶ Kaufmann and Pape 1999, 654-7; Hurwitz 1973, 49-54.

⁵⁷ Blackburn 1988, 76-77.

that impinged on their liberties. Getting the regime to acknowledge that slavery violated basic liberties helped to protect their own liberty without having to appear self-interested.

An ideological linkage between English liberties and the threat of enslavement worked perfectly to solidify the emerging reform coalition. Liberty was an issue not only for religious dissenters. Whigs, too, had made a commitment to the liberties of Englishmen the chief distinction between themselves and the Tories. For the lower classes, the threat of bondage was far from hypothetical at a time of unpaid apprenticeships, transportation abroad of convicts, and indentured servitude.

For these various reform constituencies, many issues could be boiled down rhetorically to questions of “tyranny” and “enslavement.” Literal slavery posed the issue of liberty in a stark way that crossed the line separating profane matters of policy from sacred prohibitions against sin. This afforded advantageous rhetorical terrain that allowed nonconformists and evangelicals to mobilize mass support on grounds that were both moral and political.⁵⁸ The diverse reform coalition worked in large part because its core ideology was politically inclusive, authentically grounded, viscerally convincing, and intellectually cohesive.

Antislavery and abolitionism in the United States

Those who see the abolitionists as model rights activists argue that the movement’s insistent idealism succeeded in calling attention to injustice and motivated the North to pursue an unavoidable civil war to a decisive conclusion.⁵⁹ Skeptics argue, however, that the moralistic crusaders who dominated the abolition movement in the 1830s exacerbated a polarizing backlash in the South, and perhaps more important, alienated potential allies in the North whose support was essential to the success of antislavery efforts. In this view, antislavery forces were rescued from permanent minority status by a split between zealots and pragmatists in abolitionist ranks and by the incorporation of pragmatic

⁵⁸ Davis 1980, 13.

⁵⁹ Delbanco 2012, commentaries by John Stauffer and Manisha Sinha; Neier 2012, 35-36; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 41-51.

antislavery activism into mainstream party politics. This required a decisive shift to a party system based on the sectional division between North and South, which was made possible by a tidal wave of European immigration to the North and the political expediency of antislavery Republicans such as Abraham Lincoln.⁶⁰ This coalition shift was consolidated with the help of the Republican ideology of “free soil for free men,” which appealed to Northern whites who did not share the abolitionists’ commitment to racial equality.⁶¹

Religious normative explanations.

American abolitionism was overwhelmingly a phenomenon of religiously motivated actors using rhetoric anchored in religious concepts. Abolitionism also drew support from secular liberals in the tradition of Tom Paine, some white artisans, and free or escaped blacks such as Frederick Douglass, but religion was abolitionism’s keystone.

Before 1830, three-fourths of the members of antislavery organizations were Quakers, who were also prominent in other reform movements.⁶² Unlike the populist evangelical groups who energized later abolitionist efforts, many Quakers were prosperous capitalists who felt that their wealth risked putting them in the path of sin and consequently imposed on them a special obligation of service. In the 1820s, the antislavery movement was more active in the South than in the North, and Quakers played a big role in it.⁶³

In this early period, the Quakers’ style of activism was elitist, moderate, and legalistic. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society, supported by wealthy Quaker philanthropists, businessmen, political figures, and lawyers, advocated gradual abolition through painstaking legal work and legislative action. Its president proudly described its approach as “dispassionate.”⁶⁴ It represented African Americans in court, litigated against slave masters, pressed state and federal courts to hand down anti-slavery decisions, lobbied against the domestic and

⁶⁰ Weingast 1998; Carwardine 2003.

⁶¹ Foner 1970.

⁶² Mintz 1995, 21.

⁶³ Mintz 1995, 122.

⁶⁴ Newman 2002, 4.

overseas slave trade and against slavery's westward expansion.⁶⁵ Between 1777 and 1804 every Northern state adopted antislavery laws or constitutions, most of them providing for gradual emancipation as children grew to adulthood, with slavery finally ending in New York in 1829, Pennsylvania in 1847, and Connecticut in 1848.

After 1830, however, the initiative shifted to a new generation of abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, who shunned working through legal and political institutions, instead reaching out to the mass of Americans with emotional, moralistic, evangelical appeals for immediate abolition based not on constitutional principles but on the appeal to a "higher authority." The Pennsylvania Abolition Society deplored this new abolitionism, fearing that the Massachusetts radicals would destroy the republic before they destroyed slavery.⁶⁶

The new abolitionism arose in the context of the Second Great Awakening, a rapid growth in evangelical Protestantism and revivalism that spun off countless millennialist sects, Mormonism, and a host of social activist movements promoting temperance, Sabbath observance, Bible reading, antimasonry, antiprostitution, and feminism as well as humanitarian reform movements on public health, prison reform, disabilities, and education. These movements were heavily concentrated in New England and in communities that migrated from New England to northern New York upon completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, to the northern Ohio "Western Reserve" (formerly owned by Connecticut), and nearby states. The "awakening" appealed especially to transplanted Congregationalists, suddenly freed from the tutelage of their Yale-educated, predestinarian Calvinist ministers, but still in the grip of Puritan angst over the fate of their immortal souls. Their settlement zones in western New York are called the "burned-over district" in analogy to repeated scorched-earth campaigns by armies of revivalists and activists. Nearby areas of Episcopal

⁶⁵ Newman 2002, 5.

⁶⁶ Newman 2002, 6-7.

immigration from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New York City remained untouched by these enthusiasms.⁶⁷

Enthusiasts for the awakening tended to be at least average in prosperity, superior in education, and rural, but not frontiersmen. These were people who were anti-elitist, raised in a hyper-disciplined religious hothouse, and wanting to interpret the Bible for themselves.⁶⁸ Socially in flux but seeking respectable social stability, they sought order in freedom. For this, their background and situation led them to seek solutions in religion and self-organized community action, rather than through government.⁶⁹ Women were disproportionately active, especially in the temperance movement. Consumption of hard spirits was rampant in these new communities of people who had escaped from Calvinist discipline and were struggling to establish new methods of social control. Their peak of enthusiasm for revivalism, antislavery, and other reform causes crested in 1836 and then collapsed when a severe economic depression hit western New York.⁷⁰

The pattern of their political enthusiasms makes sense theologically as well as sociologically. Their distinctive brand of zealotry, mixing high moral principle with intolerance of difference, echoes themes from Calvinist history. During the Reformation, this religion was eloquent about its own rights to religious freedom, yet burned heetics at the stake.⁷¹ Calvinism produced Milton's *Areopagitica*, the ur-text on freedom of speech and the press, and Roger Williams, one of the earliest exponents of principled religious toleration, yet Calvinists demanded strict ideological conformity in their communities in Geneva, England, and Massachusetts.⁷²

Evangelicals of the Second Great Awakening shared with their Calvinist forbears a theological need for naming and shaming, grounded in the concept of second-hand sin: "if he failed to reprove others' faults, their guilt became his

⁶⁷ Cross 1950, 55, 67, 76.

⁶⁸ Cross 1950, 226.

⁶⁹ Hatch 1989, 14.

⁷⁰ Cross 1950, 268-74.

⁷¹ Witte 2007, ch. 1-2.

⁷² Witte 2007, ch. 4; Zagorin 2003, ch. 6.

also.”⁷³ The new evangelicals added millennialism and perfectionism to this theological mix, believing that the Second Coming could occur only when sin had been banished. This was the perfect religion for shamers of drunks and slaveholders.⁷⁴

Since religious doctrine and practice was in flux at this time, it is fair to ask whether doctrine was shaping political attitudes or vice versa. One contemporary argued that the theology of Mormonism appealed to the residents of the burned-over district precisely because its tenets were a compendium of every theological and political fad of the day for western New York evangelicals, answering their questions about infant baptism, the trinity, transubstantiation, the fall of man, fasting, repentance, church governance, freemasonry, republican government, and “the rights of man.” In his view, Joseph Smith was a product of his social environment, and he knew how to push all of its buttons.⁷⁵

One test for the autonomy of normative discourse in Christian debates over slavery is provided by the problem of Biblical interpretation. Virtually all Protestants in America, North and South, relied on each believer’s use of common sense in carrying out a fairly literal reading of the Bible.⁷⁶ This presented a problem for the abolitionists, since the Bible includes many references that take slavery for granted, discuss who can be enslaved, and discuss appropriate social rules governing slaves. Jesus refers to slavery but neglects to condemn it. References criticizing slavery are far fewer. As a result, antislavery textual analysis had to fall back on “the spirit” of the gospels as opposed to “the letter”: slavery is surely a sin, since the whole message of the New Testament is to love thy neighbor as thyself. Garrison was, not surprisingly, a skeptic about textual literalism.⁷⁷ A more subtle argument that failed to catch on was that the Bible was only conditionally accepting of slavery, and that the South did not meet Biblical standards. According to scripture, Jews can only buy slaves from

⁷³ Cross 1950, 208, paraphrasing the revivalist Charles Grandison Finney’s *Lectures to Christians*.

⁷⁴ Cross 1950, 211-2; Howe 1996, 275.

⁷⁵ Cross 1950, 145, citing Campbell 1832, 13.

⁷⁶ Noll 2006, ch. 2.

⁷⁷ Noll 2006, 31.

heathen, who would only mistreat them, and Jews must treat their slaves well and cannot sell them.⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, these kinds of arguments failed to persuade audiences in the South, but more revealingly, they also encountered stiff resistance in the North because they were seen as violating appropriate rules of textual interpretation. People could see that interpreting “the spirit” of the Bible was a slippery slope down which would slide the indispensable principle of literalism that prevented the priesthood of all believers from degenerating into spiritual anarchy.⁷⁹ Once you allowed that, all hell would break loose, and the priests would have to come back to put things in order. No Protestant wanted that.

Both sides invoked divine providence to legitimate the preferred social order. Southern Presbyterian John Rice wrote, for example, that the invention of the cotton gin was an act of divine providence showing that God approved of chattel slavery.⁸⁰ Though religious discourse is sometimes constrained by its internal rulebook, arguments from providence sound like cooked up rationalizations.

Insofar as the abolitionists’ religious and moral discourse might have had some autonomous effect, did it serve or undermine the movements’ goals? Lincoln said in 1837 that “slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy; but the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils.”⁸¹ Mark Noll traces how the increasingly strident charges of the abolitionists after 1830 pushed defensive Southerners to elaborate a positive ethical case for slavery. He describes, blow by blow, debates between Northern and Southern public intellectuals on theological issues. George Fitzhugh and James Hammond developed extended arguments claiming the moral superiority of Southern chattel slavery over northern wage slavery.⁸² In reaction to abolitionist propaganda, the South after 1830 suppressed Quaker civil rights

⁷⁸ Noll 2006, 48.

⁷⁹ Noll 2006, 42, 49.

⁸⁰ Noll 2006, 5.

⁸¹ Winger 2003, 185.

⁸² Noll 2006, 6, 36-39, 54-56; Fitzhugh 1857. See also Frederickson 1989, 149. Finkelman 2007, 95-114, places religious and class conflict arguments for slavery in the context of historical, economic, cultural, political, and especially racial arguments.

activism, got the U.S. postmaster to ban delivery of abolitionist propaganda through the mail, and imposed a gag rule on discussion of antislavery petitions or resolutions in the U.S. House of Representatives.⁸³ That said, even before the rise of militant demands for immediate abolition, the gradualist antislavery efforts of Quakers and Moravians were collapsing in the Upper South by the late 1920s, vigilantes were flogging antislavery activists in Tennessee, Southerners were extolling the benefits of bondage for the slaves, and the Virginia legislature decisively defeated a gradual emancipation bill backed almost entirely by western Virginians.⁸⁴ Abolitionist pressure at most exacerbated trends that the lure of the cotton boom and the fear of partial reform had already set in motion.

Abolitionism provoked backlash even in the North. Mobs led by bankers, lawyers, merchants, and physicians attacked the homes and businesses of abolitionists, destroyed their printing presses, disrupted their meetings, and attacked black neighborhoods, for example, in Philadelphia and Boston. Steven Mintz argues that the abolitionists “represented a direct challenge to the authority of local elites, [by] appealing [directly] to the young, women, and free blacks.”⁸⁵

As a result of this pushback in the North and the South, “by the late 1830s,” says historian James Stewart, “with moral suasion in shambles, the continuous rounds of meetings, resolutions, appeals, and remonstrances now seemed soul-deadening and ineffectual.”⁸⁶ In 1840, the abolitionist movement split, with a pragmatist wing forming the antislavery Liberty Party. Antislavery advocates in the Liberty, Free Soil, and “conscience” factions of the Whig and Democratic parties increasingly focused on concrete objectives such as abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, due process in the implementation of fugitive slave laws, and the right of free blacks in the North to serve on juries or attend school. Abolitionist persuasion strategies shifted to targeting Northern audiences, stressing “hostility to Southern culture,” a theme that Stewart notes was easier to “harmonize with [the] race prejudice” of the typical Northern

⁸³ Mintz 1995, 130.

⁸⁴ Stewart 1996, 41, 61, 65.

⁸⁵ Mintz 1995, 130; Wilentz 1996, 202-212.

⁸⁶ Stewart 1996, 91.

voter.⁸⁷ Anti-abolitionist riots became less common after 1840, as the rabbleroxing, shaming activity of the abolitionists subsided.

Legal normative explanations.

Although some moralizing “immediatist” abolitionists like Garrison had little use for legal remedies, claiming to answer only to God’s law, other antislavery activists used litigation tactics similar to the repertoire of ACLU or human rights lawyers today. For example, abolitionists hired former President John Quincy Adams to represent mutinous Africans before the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1841 *Amistad* case. In a powerful example of law trumping political interest, a court in which seven of nine judges were slaveholders found the Africans to be illegally kidnapped, not slaves, on the undeniable grounds that international law forbade the African slave trade.⁸⁸

Lincoln and the Republicans placed great stock in the law. They took very seriously what the Constitution said, tried to argue from established legal precedent and principle, and used legal reasoning to try to establish extensions of those principles that they favored. However, they used the law in ways that differ in some respects from the approach of legal human rights activists today. Instead of always trying to argue against limitations on rights, Lincoln and the Republicans used law to argue for the legal interpretations that fit with their political strategy, which accepted some limitations on rights.⁸⁹ Political judgment was in the drivers’ seat, and legal argument was its tool.

The Republicans tried to use law to signal to key constituencies, especially northern Democrats and citizens in border states, the self-limitations that Republicans intended to impose on their moves against slavery. At the end of the war these limitations were lifted, but even then it was done in a rule-governed way. This approach did not succeed in averting the war, but it did succeed in

⁸⁷ Stewart 1996, 88-9.

⁸⁸ Oakes 2013, 41.

⁸⁹ Two examples of contemporary tactical limits on rights claims are the inclination of some pro-gay rights legalists to put off Supreme Court decisions until public opinion consolidated in their favor, and the limitations on the International Criminal Court sought by US negotiator David Scheffer, a human rights lawyer, for tactical political reasons. See Scheffer 2012.

getting Lincoln elected, helping him keep his coalition together during the war, winning the war, and ultimately abolishing slavery when the opportunity arose.

Lincoln's political strategy on the slavery issue focused on the objective of limiting slavery to the states in which slavery was already legal and thus over time whittling away at the slave system's political power and economic dynamism. This strategy depended on interpreting the U.S. Constitution as defining slavery as an institution established only by the individual states, whereas the national government was bound to act on the principle of freedom of persons.⁹⁰ This theory depended in turn on several textual and legal arguments.

According to this view, the Constitution made no reference to slaves per se and created no presumption that slaves were the personal property of their owners. The three-fifths clause for establishing representation in the House referred not to slaves, but "other persons" who were not "free." Likewise, what was informally called the "fugitive slave clause" actually applied to a "person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another."⁹¹ The Republicans' interpretation was directly opposed to the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, which held that slaves escaping to free states and federal territories, where slavery was not established, nonetheless had to be returned to their masters, who had a right to them as personal property. In the context of this constitutional dispute, Republicans considered the legal principle at stake to be so important that they were willing to surrender practical sources of leverage against slaveholding in order to protect it. For example, when some abolitionists advocated using the Constitution's commerce clause to prohibit or tax the sale of slaves between one slave state and another, Republicans demurred on the grounds that it would imply that slaves were property.⁹²

Lincoln also argued that the Constitution should be interpreted in light of the Declaration of Independence, the "law of nations," and precedents based in

⁹⁰ Oakes 2013, 42-46, 52-53.

⁹¹ The whole clause states that "No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." See discussion in Oakes 2013, 44-46.

⁹² Oakes 2013, 20-21, 63

common law, including the Somerset case.⁹³ All of these sources of law, he held, presumed the freedom of persons except in cases where positive legal acts were undertaken to abridge it. Since slavery was positively established only by states, freedom was the default assumption for actions of the federal government. Lincoln argued that this legal principle was adequate to insure the long run demise of slavery, and also that the slave states, including the strategically crucial border states, should be reassured that the constitution would bar the overthrow of slavery in states where it already existed.

This doctrine implied a deterrent aspect as well as reassurance. As an implied threat against Southern secession, Republicans pointed out that the votes of slave states in the U.S. Congress would limit legislation against slavery or prevent a constitutional amendment banning it.⁹⁴ Hard core secessionists were neither reassured nor deterred, but the border states, whose slavery got special protection until the decisive end of the war, stayed in the union.⁹⁵

Thus, the Republicans used law to calibrate incentives, reassurance, and threats in support of their larger political strategy.

Explanations based on background conditions shaping power and interest.

Skeptics of the centrality of these normative questions might argue that basic policy preferences and outcomes can be understood more simply by looking at demographic and economic trends.⁹⁶ Southerners after 1830 grew more adamant in their insistence on maintaining and expanding the scope of slavery because the cotton economy had made it increasingly lucrative. Northerners, meanwhile, saw less reason to compromise over slavery. In 1820, the North and the South each had roughly two million people; by 1860, massive immigration had increased the population of the North to 20 million, whereas the South had only 11 million, four million of whom were slaves. The interests of the Northeast were opposed to the interests of the South not only on slavery but also on tariffs,

⁹³ Oakes 2013, 7, 9, 11, 13.

⁹⁴ Oakes 2013, 72, 76-78.

⁹⁵ Oakes 2013, 59.

⁹⁶ Weingast 1998, 184-185; North 1961, 101-121.

public land policy in the West, and the role of the government in promoting economic development. Moreover, the interests of the Northeast and the Northwest were coming into closer alignment through the mutually beneficial exchange of manufactures for agricultural goods, and through migration patterns strengthening cultural ties between them. Governing through a hegemonic Northern party, the Republicans, had become feasible and attractive, so they did it.

What this simple account fails to explain, however, is why this political realignment could not happen without provoking the deadliest war in American history over an issue, the status of Africans in American society, on which many Northerners had mixed feelings. For decades, slavery had been relegated to a secondary or even tertiary status on the public agenda, behind questions like the national bank, the tariff, and the financing of public works. Even as late as the 1850s, Northern voters were not dramatically turning away from moderation. In Lincoln, the North found a political leader committed to gradualism on the slavery issue and focused on the bread and butter concerns of Northern labor. Moreover, the Democrat Stephen Douglas, who sought neutral compromises on slavery while promoting individual economic opportunity and territorial expansion, was a strong competitor for the North's median voter through the 1850s. Given the country's long track record of managing this potentially most explosive of public issues, how did things get out of hand? To understand that, it is necessary to delve further into the logic of coalition politics and ideology.

Coalition politics and ideology.

Under the so-called "second party system" from 1828 to 1854, Democrats and Whigs competed effectively for votes in both the North and the South, with Democrats having some advantage among poor farmers, immigrants, and "outsiders," and the Whigs having advantages among propertied classes. Sectional politics revolved not mainly around slavery, but around the position of the Midwest as a swing region occupying the pivot between the opposed interests

of the North and South on economic issues.⁹⁷ The Midwestern states, despite being free except for Missouri, typically aligned with the slave states on these economic issues via the Democratic party, which won the Presidency, the Senate, and the House more frequently than the Whigs during this period.

Slavery was kept off the political agenda by institutionalized compromises and guarantees that protected the core interests of both the slave and free states.⁹⁸ The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state, but left the more northern and western territories of the Louisiana Purchase, including what would become Kansas and Nebraska, as future free states, thus roughly maintaining an institutional balance of power in the Senate. At issue was not simply the economic opportunity to move lucrative slave operations west but also the institutional veto power to block threatening reforms. Southern institutional power in the Supreme Court, the Congress, and the post office kept slavery a secondary issue, allowing economic issues to define the main axis of party cleavage.

Disputes arising from the addition of territory won in the Mexican war destabilized this equilibrium. The Compromise of 1850 put off the question of extending slavery into the southwest, added California as a free state, and to balance that, enacted a new Fugitive Slave Act far more favorable to slaveholders, which outraged antislavery sentiment in the North. Centrist politicians like Lincoln and Douglas struggled to find formulas that would reestablish a tolerable balance, but these only sharpened the conflict. Douglas proposed that tensions over the status of impending states in the Kansas and Nebraska territories should be decided by those states' voters in accord with the precept of popular sovereignty. Lincoln challenged this on grounds of principle: "if the negro *is* a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern *himself*?"⁹⁹ He also predicted presciently that pro-slavery conspirators would find ways to manipulate the vote, which later happened, to

⁹⁷ Weingast 1998, 159-160.

⁹⁸ Weingast 1998, 165.

⁹⁹ Carwardine 2003, 26; also Foner 2010, 90.

Douglas's chagrin, in the scandal over Kansas's pro-slavery Lecompton constitution, which was supported by President Buchanan.¹⁰⁰

If the South had long worried that the North would try to overturn its fundamental institutions, now Northerners began to worry that the "slave power" would stop at nothing to spread its institutions throughout the territories and force the North, through ever-expanding fugitive slave requirements, to be complicit in the extension of slavery even to states long free. Lincoln began to make such arguments during the Nebraska controversy of 1854, and he made them even more explicitly after the Dred Scott decision of 1858 in the famous "house divided" speech: "this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free.... It will become all one thing, or all the other."¹⁰¹

By this time, each side had its own mirror image theory explaining why no equilibrium could be stable except one that created an imbalance in its favor. Southern expansionists parroted back the Free Soilers' plan to set up a "cordon" to strangle the slave states as a justification for the conviction that the South must "expand or die."¹⁰² In this way, differences of principle and of economic interest became supercharged by what might be called a security dilemma, in which each side came to believe that going on the offensive was its best form of self-defense.¹⁰³

A complicating aspect of this security dilemma was the collapse of the Whig Party, which split into Northern and Southern factions in the wake of the Compromise of 1850, opening the field for the victory of slavery-abetting Democrats. The most plausible move for former Whigs like Lincoln was to try to bring together Northern Whigs and constituencies of other minor parties such as the antislavery Free Soilers and the anti-immigrant American party (a.k.a. the Know Nothings) in a Northern catchall party that could also attract votes from antislavery Northern Democrats. This would not be easy, since Northern voting blocs were deeply divided along multiple lines of cleavage: Protestants versus Catholics, nativists versus immigrants, cultural elites versus the common folk,

¹⁰⁰ Carwardine 2003, 70-71.

¹⁰¹ Carwardine 2003, 27-28; Davis 2006, 289; Burt 2013, 95-104.

¹⁰² Bonner 2009, 35.

¹⁰³ Jervis 1978.

labor versus capital, rural versus urban, East versus West, and Southern-influenced border areas versus the New England-influenced Calvinist diaspora. All politics is local, and in many Northern localities one or another of these divisions was politically far more important than any commonalities that would bind them together on other issues. Indeed, one prominent interpretation of politics in the “second party system” holds that local issues and cultural identity politics were even more important than economics in determining voting allegiances. With respect to these local and secondary issues, Lincoln was adamant that the best policy for Republicans was in most cases to say as little about them as possible, since any position taken would alienate half of the Republicans’ necessary support base.¹⁰⁴

Lincoln’s insight was that the only issue that could bind together this motley crew into a cohesive Northern catchall party to rival Douglas’s Northern Democrats would be antislavery. This was the issue of the day, and one on which Douglas’s expedient “popular sovereignty” theme left him vulnerable to a staunchly principled, but moderate alternative.¹⁰⁵ After Douglas’s victory in the 1858 Illinois Senatorial election, Lincoln anticipated that Douglas would try to rally Republicans to his camp with the claim that only he could contain the “slave power” as he had done in masterminding the Congressional reversal of Buchanan’s endorsement of the Lecompton Constitution. Lincoln told his Republican colleagues that the best way to keep the Republican party from falling apart as the Whigs had was to stay steadfast to the principle of no extension of slavery to new territories. There must be no confusion about the Republican brand. At the same time, Lincoln warned against taking radical antislavery positions, insisting that the party’s stance on fugitive slave policy had to be strictly consistent with the US Constitution’s fugitive slave clause. Thus, Lincoln’s strategy, says his biographer Richard Carwardine, was to “sustain his party’s philosophical integrity while at the same time making it a broad enough church to win a national election.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Carwardine 2003, 104-105.

¹⁰⁵ Carwardine 2003, 93.

¹⁰⁶ Carwardine 2003, 92, also 94; Foner 2010, 90.

In contrast, Douglas failed to construct a moderate coalition in part because he was tone deaf to the political role of principle. Prioritizing westward expansion above everything, Douglas destabilized his own hard-won Compromise of 1850 by pushing to legally organize Kansas and Nebraska as territories. He knew that Southern Senators would block their creation as non-slave territories under the terms of the Missouri Compromise, but calculated that the South would accept their free status if it were the result of a popular referendum. With settlers from free states vastly outnumbering slaveholders, Douglas saw the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise as merely a symbolic issue that the North would be too practical to care about, while the South would be satisfied with the recognition of the principle of popular sovereignty.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the South cared enough about the practical outcome to try to use force and fraud to hijack the process, while Lincoln persuaded the North to care deeply about the principle.

A key element that made Lincoln's strategy work was his ability to appropriate quasi-religious rhetoric in a secular political cause.¹⁰⁸ A quintessential instance of this was Lincoln's career-making, morally intransigent Cooper Union speech, which made him a leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination.¹⁰⁹ The Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural likewise employed the language of revivalist sermons, with its themes of sacrifice, rebirth, mission, and sanctification.¹¹⁰ Hitting the right tone in normative rhetoric was indispensable for the mundane work of political coalition making and for keeping that coalition together under the duress of war.

Abolitionism was of limited help to Lincoln in crafting and promoting his coalition ideology, notwithstanding his moralistic rhetoric on slavery. Abolitionist talk scared off moderates, and Lincoln wanted to avoid alienating the Northern Democrats and border states.¹¹¹ The most uncompromising forms of abolitionism were impatient with constitutional niceties, and Lincoln explicitly

¹⁰⁷ Burt 2013, 42, 46-7.

¹⁰⁸ Carwardine 2003, 28-40.

¹⁰⁹ Carwardine 2003, 97.

¹¹⁰ Winger 2003, 185-208; Mintz 1995, 28.

¹¹¹ Burt 2013, 225, 401, 403, 405-7.

disavowed Garrison's "higher law" doctrine.¹¹² Lincoln believed that even the more moderate, political abolitionists harmed their own cause by splitting the antislavery vote. Lincoln argued that the defection to the Liberty Party of antislavery "conscience Whigs" in the "burned-over district" had cost Henry Clay and the Whigs the election of 1844, electing the pro-slavery expansionist Democrat James K. Polk as President and thus setting the stage for the Mexican War and the destruction of the Missouri Compromise. "By the fruit the tree is to be known," Lincoln said.¹¹³

Moreover, abolitionism was suspect among the working class. Foner says that Lincoln derived his arguments about slavery depriving the worker of the fruits of his labor from abolitionist rhetoric.¹¹⁴ If so, the abolitionists failed to sell this point to the workingman's constituency. In the style of the Second Great Awakening, abolitionists saw slavery as a personal relationship, not as class relations.¹¹⁵ Moreover, many workingmen were outraged that the same wealthy capitalists who resisted paying them a living wage were generously bankrolling the abolitionists.¹¹⁶ Jacksonian Democrats had always claimed that abolitionism was a conservative plot to drive a wedge between Northern and Southern Democrats, which would allow Northern capitalists to ram through bank legislation and to bring free blacks to the North to depress wages.¹¹⁷ To combat this kind of canard, Lincoln made the concept of free labor a centerpiece of his coalition ideology.

According to Foner, the ideology of "free labor" emerged as a response to the Southern critique of capitalism as "wage slavery."¹¹⁸ Rhetorically, it brought together a condemnation of slave society for denying workers the fruits of their labor with the glorification of economic progress in a "free society" whose heroic figures were small, independent producers, including farmers and artisans, as

¹¹² Carwardine 2003, 104.

¹¹³ Winger 2003, 192.

¹¹⁴ Foner 2010, 20.

¹¹⁵ Foner 1980, 260.

¹¹⁶ Stewart 1996, 68.

¹¹⁷ Wilentz 1996, 207.

¹¹⁸ Foner 1996, 106.

well as freely contracting wage laborers.¹¹⁹ Republicans missed no chance to play up Lincoln's "rail splitter" image, which dovetailed so perfectly with the free labor ideology. Programmatically, Republicans featured the aspiration of "free soil for free men": by keeping slavery out of the territories, white farmers and laborers would be guaranteed a western safety valve to release them from the strictures of wage competition with immigrant labor.¹²⁰ The Republicans' platform in 1860 offered a "free homestead" pledge. In the 1860 election, Lincoln did best among skilled workingmen and market-oriented farmers.¹²¹

As Foner notes, there remained a "crucial ambiguity" in the "free soil, free labor" ideology. If slaves were to be kept out of the western territories, this would free up the land for free white labor only if slavery continued to keep black laborers chained in the slave states. If slavery were abolished, free black labor could show up in the West to compete with whites.¹²² But since white voters expected slavery to continue indefinitely in the South, this potential loophole did not keep Northern workers from voting in droves for Lincoln.

In short, with free soil ideology, a commitment to principled yet restrained constitutionalism, and an evangelical-sounding rhetorical style, Lincoln was able to realign the special-interest splinters of the shattered party system around a Northern sectional party to resist the encroachments of the Southern "slave power." Though the goals of averting war and opposing slavery remained incompatible, the pragmatist Lincoln accomplished what the abolitionists could not, uniting an effective majority around the cause of anti-slavery.

Conclusion: Integrating Principle and Pragmatism

The social movements that ended slavery in the United States and the British Empire faced different challenges than contemporary rights campaigns. Any lessons derived from their successes or shortcomings must be pitched at a sufficiently general level to span those differences. Notwithstanding that qualification, Aryeh Neier is right to suggest that we look back at the abolition of

¹¹⁹ Foner 1996, 110; Foner 1980, 267.

¹²⁰ Carwardine 2003, 127; Foner 1980, 267.

¹²¹ Carwardine 2003, 127.

¹²² Foner 1970, 266.

slavery for lessons about the promotion of human rights today, and he is right to stress the normative dimension of that process. However, the lessons turn out to be not quite what orthodox rights activists claim.

One lesson is that neither purely principled nor purely expedient strategies can, taken alone, solve the complex political problems confronting human rights movements. In both the US and Britain, the antislavery movement was embedded in broader processes of economic change and social reform that called into question the basic assumptions on which politics and ethics were established. Activists like the Garrisonian abolitionists of the 1830s, who approached these questions from a stance of uncompromising moralism, succeeded in highlighting controversial issues, but often alienated the very audiences that they needed to persuade. Conversely, politicians who made a fetish of tactical expediency, such as Stephen Douglas, succeeded for a time in balancing contradictory principles, but also failed to establish a basis for enduring consensus. In contrast, more successful reform efforts, such as those of the Whig and nonconformist reform coalition of 1832 and the Republican Party under Lincoln, were based on coalition ideologies that reflected tactical compromises of principles as well as interests, yet retained clarity in their long-term commitment to both the principles and the interests of their core constituencies.

A second set of lessons bears on tactical choices of sequencing and timing the push for reform. In both Britain and the US, success in abolishing slavery was preceded by decades of work in developing moral and legal ideas, mobilizing and sustaining civic activist networks, forming effective political parties linking elites and voters, striking bargains and developing relationships across diverse power centers, litigating cases, and harnessing the power of the state to implement the rights agenda. Naming and shaming was part of the process, but it was not a substitute for the process, and when it was done ineptly, it did more harm than good.

A crucial tactic in both Britain and the US involved credibly signaling the *limits* of the immediate reforms being sought. To reassure those who were wary of destabilizing change, slavery was constrained in stages, beginning with the

slave trade, then circumscribing slavery's geographical reach, and phasing it out with transitional arrangements. Cooperative slave-owners were often offered compensation rather than punished. Limits on the pace or scope of change were carefully inscribed in law to increase their credibility.

Bolder moves against slavery were taken only once the reform coalition had sufficient power and a well-timed justification for decisive action. Lincoln, still playing from a weak hand before the formation of the Republican Party, accepted the hateful Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Institutionally better armed by 1858 and justifiably provoked by the Dred Scott Decision, he seized the political opportunity to throw down the gantlet in his well-timed "house divided" speech. Similarly, British abolitionists accepted half a loaf until the favorable moment when their civil society organizations matured, a Tory government presided over an economic recession, and slaveholders attacked nonconformist missionaries.

A final lesson from the abolitionist experience is that the lodestar in confronting these challenges is a principled ideology that can serve pragmatically to forge dominant coalitions in the countries where abuses may occur, incorporating powerful groups that are not mainly motivated by rights concerns. Today, the adamant ideology of international activist networks has already accomplished its task of shining a light on a panoply of grievous human rights abuses. Going forward, effective reform coalition ideologies may need to shift to a phase of more vernacular discourse and compromise with diverse social constituencies in developing states.

Today's human rights movement faces a number of challenges that call out for pragmatic adjustments to its accustomed stance of assertive legalism, shaming moralism, and principled universalism. Among these are the need for normative dialogue over the adaptation of liberal rights principles to illiberal societies, flexibility in bargaining with powerful spoilers to end wars that exacerbate rights abuse, tailoring rights rhetoric to local conditions, strengthening the economic and institutional supports that enable rights-conforming behavior, and reconciling rights and security in ways that publics find convincing. Such accommodations to political reality should not be condemned out of hand as selling out principles but rather judged in terms of

their plausible contribution to creating preconditions for the further success of the human rights movement.

References

- Acharya, Amitav. 2004. "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism." *International Organization* 58 (2): 239-275.
- Alston, Philip. 2013. "Does the Past Matter? On the Origins of Human Rights," *Harvard Law Review* 126 (1): 2043-2081, review of Martinez 2012.
- Anstey, Roger. 1975. *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810*. London: Macmillan.
- Barnett, Michael. 2011. *Empire of Humanity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- BBC News Africa. 2013. "Did the ICC help Uhuru Kenyatta win Kenyan election?" March 11.
- Blackburn, Robin. 1988. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*. London: Verso.
- Bolt, Christine, and Seymour Drescher, eds. 1980. *Anti-slavery, Religion, and Reform*. Hamden, CT: Dawson.
- Bonner, Robert E. 2009. *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyle, Elizabeth Herger. 2002. *Female Genital Cutting: Cultural Conflict in the Global Community*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Brown, Christopher Leslie. 2006. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Burt, John. 2013. *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*. Cambridge: Harvard Belknap.
- Campbell, Alexander. 1832. *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon*. Boston: Benjamin H. Greene.
- Carwardine, Richard J. 2003. *Lincoln: Profiles in Power*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Clark, Ann Marie. 2013. "The Normative Context of Human Rights Criticism: Treaty Ratification and UN Mechanisms," in Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, chapter 7.
- Clarkson, Thomas. 1808. *The History Of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*. Philadelphia: James P. Parke.

Colley, Linda. 1992. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Chicago Council on Global Affairs. 2012. *Foreign Policy in the New Millennium: Results of the 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Dina Smeltz, project director. Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Cross, Whitney R. 1950. *The Burned-Over District* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Davis, David Brion. 2006. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davis, David Brion. 1980. "An Appreciation of Roger Anstey." In Bolt and Drescher.

Delbanco, Andrew. 2012. *The Abolitionist Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. With commentaries by John Stauffer, Manisha Sinha, Darryl Pinckney, and Wilfred M. McClay.

Ditchfield, G. M. 1980. "Repeal, abolition, and reform: a study in the interaction of reforming movements in the parliament of 1790-96." In Bolt and Drescher, 101-118.

Drescher, Seymour. 1987. *Capitalism and Antislavery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drescher, Seymour. 2010. "Civilizing Insurgency: Two Variants of Slave Revolts in the Age of Revolution." In Drescher and Pieter C. Emmer, eds. *Who Abolished Slavery: Slave Revolts and Abolitionism, A Debate with Joao Pedro Marques*. New York: Berghahn.

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* 52 (4): 887-918.

Finkelman, Paul. 2007. "The Significance and Persistence of Proslavery Thought." In Steven Mintz and John Stauffer, eds. *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom, and the Ambiguities of American Reform*. Amherst: University of Amherst Press, 95-114.

Fitzhugh, George. 1857. *Cannibals All! or, Slaves without Masters*. Richmond, Va.: A. Morris.

Frederickson, George M. 1989. "Masters and Mudsills: The Role of Race in the Planter Ideology of South Carolina." In Paul Finkelman, ed., *Proslavery Thought*,

Ideology, and Politics. New York: Garland.

Foner, Eric. 1970. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Foner, Eric. 1980. "Abolitionism and the Labor Movement in Antebellum America." In Bolt and Drescher.

Foner, Eric. 1996. "Free Labor and Nineteenth-Century Political Ideology." In Stokes and Conway.

Foner, Eric. 2010. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. New York: Norton.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie. 2008. "Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem." *International Organization* 62 (4): 689-716.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2013. *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie, and James Ron. 2009. "Seeing Double: Human Rights Impact through Qualitative and Quantitative Eyes." *World Politics* 61 (2): 360-401.

Harrison, Brian. 1980. "A Genealogy of Reform." In Bolt and Drescher, 119-148

Hatch, Nathan O. 1989. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. Yale University Press.

Hopgood, Stephen. 2006. *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hopgood, Stephen. 2013. *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Howe, Daniel Walker. 1996. "The Market Revolution and the Shaping of Identity in Whig-Jacksonian America" In Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds. *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Hurwitz, Edith. 1973. *The Politics of Public Conscience: Slave Emancipation and the Abolitionist Movement in Britain*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Ignatieff, Michael 2001. *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

The Lessons of Abolitionism for Human Rights Strategy

- Jervis, Robert. 1978. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30 (2): 167-214.
- Kaufmann, Chaim, and Robert Pape. 1999. "Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-Year Campaign against the Atlantic Slave Trade." *International Organization* 53(4): 631-668.
- Kearns Goodwin, Doris. 2005. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Keck, Margaret, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kindornay, Shannon, James Ron, and Charli Carpenter. 2012. "Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Implications for NGOs." *Human Rights Quarterly* 34 (2): 472-506.
- Kraditor, Aileen S. 1989. *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Krain, Matthew. 2012. "J'accuse! Does Naming And Shaming Perpetrators Reduce The Severity Of Genocides Or Politicides?" *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (3): 574-589.
- Lovejoy, Paul E. 1982. "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis." *Journal of African History* 23 (4): 473-501.
- Marietta, Jack D. 1984. *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Martinez, Jenny S. 2012. *The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Merry Engle, Sally, and Peggy Levitt, eds., 2009. "Vernacularization in Action: Using Global Women's Human Rights Locally." Special Issue of *Global Networks* 9 (4).
- Mintz, Steven. 1995. *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Moyn, Samuel. 2010. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Harvard Belknap.
- Moyn, Samuel. 2012. "Of Deserts and Promised Lands: The Dream of Global Justice." *The Nation*, Feb. 29. Review of Martinez 2012.

Neier, Aryeh. 2012. *The International Human Rights Movement: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Newman, Richard S. 2002. *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Noll, Mark A. 2006. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

North, Douglass. 1961. *The Economic Growth of the United States: 1790-1860*. New York: Norton.

Oakes, James. 2013. *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865*. New York: Norton.

Poe, Steven C., Neal Tate, and Linda Camp Keith. 1999. "Repression of the Human Right to Personal Integrity Revisited: A Global Cross-National Study Covering the Years 1976–1993." *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (2): 291–313.

Price, Richard. 1998. "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines." *International Organization* 52 (3): 613-44.

Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 2013. *The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Risse, Thomas, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. *The Power of Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Risse, Thomas, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 1999. *The Persistent Power of Human Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scheffer, David. 2012. *All the Missing Souls: A Personal History of the War Crimes Tribunals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 2011. *The Justice Cascade*. New York: Norton.

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Snyder, Jack, and Leslie Vinjamuri. 2003/04. "Trials and Errors: Principles and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice." *International Security* 28 (3): 5-44.

The Lessons of Abolitionism for Human Rights Strategy

Stewart, James Brewer. 1996. *The Abolitionists and American Slavery*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Stokes, Melvyn, and Stephen Conway, eds. 1996. *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Temperley, Howard. 1980. "Anti-slavery as a Form of Cultural Imperialism." In Bolt and Drescher.

Turley, David. 1991. *The Culture of English Antislavery, 1780-1860*. London: Routledge.