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WORKING PAPERS

Sovereignty Relinquished: Explaining Commitment to the International Human Rights

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Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law
Stanford Institute on International Studies



Number 21
23 September 2004

This working paper was produced as part of CDDRL's ongoing programming on economic and political development in transitional states. Additional working papers appear on CDDRL's website:
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About the Author

Wade M. Cole is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at Stanford University. His areas of interest include political sociology, organizations, comparative and historical sociology, globalization, and education. His dissertation examines the worldwide emergence and institutionalization of postsecondary institutions established for and by indigenous peoples, with a focus on the incorporation of aboriginal cultures and epistemologies into higher education curricula.

**SOVEREIGNTY RELINQUISHED:
EXPLAINING COMMITMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
COVENANTS, 1966–1999***

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Running head: “Commitment to the International Human Rights Covenants”

Approximate word count (text, endnotes, references): 12,900

* Direct all correspondence to Wade M. Cole, Department of Sociology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-2047. This research was partially supported by grants to Francisco Ramirez and John Meyer from the National Science Foundation and the Bechtel Initiative on Global Growth and Change. I thank Jong-Seon Kim, John Meyer, Susan Olzak, Francisco Ramirez, Evan Schofer, Christine Min Wotipka, Morris Zelditch, Jr., and participants of the Comparative Sociology Workshop at Stanford University for their helpful comments. An earlier version was presented at the 2004 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in San Francisco, CA.

BIOGRAPHY

Wade M. Cole is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at Stanford University. His research interests include political sociology, organizations, comparative/historical sociology, globalization, and education. He is currently studying the worldwide emergence and expansion of post-secondary institutions chartered specifically to serve minority students, with an emphasis on the incorporation of minority cultures into higher education curricula.

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ABSTRACT

Countries that ratify human rights treaties voluntarily compromise their sovereignty by subjecting their behavior to externally imposed limits and scrutiny. Why, then, is ratification so prevalent? Using data for over 130 countries between 1966 and 1999, I examine whether the *content* of the International Human Rights Covenants and the *costs* associated with their ratification affect levels of commitment. I focus specifically on three theoretical perspectives: realism, world polity institutionalism, and the clash of civilizations. According to realists, treaty ratification is tightly coupled with internal sovereignty arrangements, human rights practices, and ideological commitments, all of which become more important as a treaty's monitoring and enforcement provisions strengthen. Civilization theorists predict tight coupling between treaty accession and cultural values, regardless of the mechanisms in place for enforcing compliance. World polity institutionalists expect ratification to be loosely coupled with a country's conduct or its political, ideological, or cultural commitments, although this gap narrows as treaty compliance is more effectively enforced. Results lend partial support to realism and world polity theory, although the clash of civilizations thesis is much less successful in accounting for patterns of ratification. Furthermore, the costs of ratifying a treaty, considered in terms of its surveillance and enforcement provisions, matter more for accession than does treaty content.

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In the aftermath of World War II, a global human rights “regime” (Donnelly 1986; Krasner 1982; Meyer et al. 1997a), complete with multilateral treaties, international organizations, and new beliefs about the sanctity of individuals, emerged swiftly and expanded tremendously. Indeed, the Covenant of the ill-fated League of Nations made no mention of “human rights” *per se*, but the phrase appears seven times in the United Nations Charter, including the Preamble itself (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Skrentny 2002). The centrality of human rights to the UN’s core identity and mission is evidenced by its sponsorship of several international resolutions, conventions, and covenants upholding the fundamental rights of individuals. Among the most important of these documents are the two human rights covenants adopted in 1966: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), known collectively as the International Human Rights Covenants. These covenants were designed to give force to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a legally impotent resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. As international treaties, the ICESCR and ICCPR are binding for ratifying countries, and both establish routine procedures for monitoring compliance.

The sudden proliferation of human rights activity and discourse occurred contemporaneously with the equally dramatic spread of decolonization across the globe (Strang 1990, 1991). After the Second World War, subjugated peoples around the world broke free of foreign occupation and assumed their role as sovereign nation-states,

although in many cases colonial administrators were simply replaced with indigenous despots. The legitimate exercise of this newly won self-determination, however, was circumscribed substantially by the growing human rights regime. Where sovereign states once retained the exclusive prerogative to protect or violate individual rights, supranational entities, such as the UN, increasingly assumed a more significant role. This, of course, produces a tension between national sovereignty and human rights so often noted by observers (e.g., Donnelly 1986; Sikkink 1993a, 1993b; Moravcsik 2000; Hathaway 2003): how are the rights of individual *persons* reconciled with those of sovereign *peoples*?

By now it is axiomatic that states—or perhaps more concretely, the rulers who control state institutions (Krasner 1999)—value and jealously guard their sovereignty against external usurpation.¹ However, the consolidation and expansion of a human rights regime directly impinges on sovereignty by limiting the range of appropriate state behavior and by empowering individuals against the state. “A citizen’s claim against his or her government for violation of internationally recognized human rights,” contends Sikkink (1993b:141), “clearly offers a direct challenge to the state’s prerogatives under the doctrine of internal sovereignty.” Nevertheless, approximately three-quarters of the world’s states had acceded to both human rights covenants by the year 2000. Why do so many countries ratify human rights treaties, threats to sovereignty notwithstanding? Although many theories advanced by social scientists resolve this paradox (albeit in disparate ways) by clearly specifying the conditions under which states are expected to ratify, research has yet to evaluate these perspectives systematically.

Human rights have attracted the attention of many political scientists and legal scholars (e.g., Donnelly 1986, 1998; Goodman and Jinks, forthcoming; Hathaway 2002, 2003; Moravcsik 2000; Sikkink 1993a, 1993b), but are curiously neglected by most sociologists (for recent exceptions, see Wotipka and Ramirez [2003] and Tsutsui and Wotipka [forthcoming]). In this paper, I enlist the help of both political scientists and sociologists to understand why states ratify human rights treaties. First, I consider the potential effects of a treaty’s content, and the costs incurred with ratification, on patterns of accession; this discussion serves as an important backdrop for the rest of the paper. I then draw hypotheses from three broad theoretical perspectives—realism, world polity institutionalism, and the clash of civilizations thesis—which respectively specify the political, sociological, and cultural mechanisms responsible for the ratification of human rights treaties. To evaluate these approaches, I analyze ratification of the International Human Rights Covenants by applying event history methods to data on over 130 countries between 1966 and 1999. I conclude with a summary of empirical findings, a discussion of their implications for current thinking about human rights, and suggestions for future research.

THE IMPACT OF TREATY CONTENT AND COST ON COMMITMENT

Nation-states consider two features of international treaties—their *content* and the *costs* associated with ratification—when deciding whether to join. These features, although conceptually distinct, typically operate in tandem. It is frequently assumed, for instance, that treaty ratification is more prevalent among countries whose behaviors and values already conform to a treaty’s stipulations than for those whose practices diverge from treaty requirements (e.g., Chayes and Chayes 1993; Simmons 2000). In addition,

the transparency of a state's commitment to a treaty, and the degree to which it is held accountable for violations of that commitment, are also thought to influence the decision to join. Because gaps between treaty requirements and actual conduct matter less for ratification if adherence is weakly monitored or enforced, the effect of treaty content on ratification is greatest when noncompliance is detectable and punishable. The two human rights covenants under consideration vary in terms of both content and cost: the rights protected by each covenant differ, as do the mechanisms in place for monitoring their compliance.

I make theoretically informed predictions regarding the effect of a treaty's content and cost on patterns of ratification. In developing hypotheses, I focus on three broad theoretical perspectives: realism (Chayes and Chayes 1993; Krasner 1999; Simmons 2000), world polity institutionalism (Meyer 1987; Meyer et al. 1997b), and the clash of civilizations thesis (Huntington 1993a, 1993b, 1996). These theories understand the nature of international treaties in very different ways, which in turn inform rival, but not necessarily incompatible, expectations about the influence of treaty content and cost on rates of commitment. According to realists, international treaties are legally binding, and states only ratify treaties with which they intend to comply. Therefore, both treaty content and enforcement factor prominently in a country's decision to sign. For world polity institutionalists, treaty ratification demonstrates a symbolic endorsement of highly legitimated principles, but frequently occurs in the absence of actual implementation. Here, the enforcement provisions of a treaty are also crucial, as a country's ability to commit to it rhetorically but not in practice declines if compliance is effectively monitored. Finally, the clash of civilizations thesis implies that treaty content alone

motivates ratification. Because ratification of a treaty reflects a sincere commitment to the cultural norms and values it promulgates, the mechanisms in place for enforcing adherence are unnecessary: only the “true believers” predisposed to comply will ratify. Before considering these theories in more detail, it is important to outline the kinds of rights protected by the International Human Rights Covenants, and to consider the provisions established for monitoring compliance to them. I take up these issues in the next two sections.

The Ideological and Cultural Content of the International Human Rights Covenants

The content of the human rights covenants—by which I mean the rights they each protect—cannot be understood apart from their politically contentious development. Although the ICESCR and ICCPR were originally envisioned as constituent parts of a single treaty, cold war divisions ultimately necessitated the adoption of parallel documents, primarily because of the “ideological rivalry over the status of economic and social rights”—the communist bloc wanted them included as human rights; the capitalist West did not (Donnelly 1998:7). Consequently, the ICESCR articulates a series of economic, social, and cultural rights generally endorsed by communist regimes, whereas the ICCPR promotes civil liberties and political freedoms typically championed by liberal democracies. The ICESCR includes the *economic* rights of individuals to unionize, freely choose their work, earn “fair” wages, and labor under safe conditions. *Social* rights incorporate, among other things, minimum standard of living guarantees and the rights to healthcare, compulsory primary education, free secondary education, and accessible higher education. *Cultural* rights empower individuals to participate in scientific research or creative activity, and protect the ownership of scholarly, literary, or

artistic products derived from these pursuits. The ICCPR protects many of the same *civil* and *political* freedoms enshrined in the U.S. Bill of Rights and France’s Declaration of the Rights of Man, including the rights to life, privacy, religion, peaceable assembly, and a fair trial; safeguards against arbitrary arrest and unreasonable search and seizure; and cultural rights for ethnic minorities. Table 1 provides a more extensive list of the rights protected in each covenant, as well as those identified in their precursor, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

In addition to the explicitly ideological focus of the International Human Rights Covenants, it is important to remember that the very idea of “human rights”—that individuals are endowed with inherent and inalienable rights simply by virtue of their essential personhood—is firmly rooted in Western cultural moorings. In fact, “most non-Western cultural and political traditions lack not only the practice of human rights but the very concept” (Donnelly 1982:303). Cultural traditions outside of the West are inconsistent with the notion of human rights because non-Western societies typically subordinate individuals to encompassing groups or communities (Donnelly 1982; Howard and Donnelly 1986). In the non-Western world, rights do not attach to individuals *per se*, but accrue from their membership in these larger collectivities. In traditional African societies, for example, rights issue from an individual’s ascriptive affiliations to family, tribe, or status. In India, caste membership traditionally determined an individual’s menu of rights. Rights in Islamic civilization derive from the Qur’an, and their enjoyment presupposes membership in the *ummah*, or religious community.² Traditional Chinese culture subsumes individuals beneath rulers who have a divine

obligation to protect their subjects, so that access to rights is delimited by jurisdictional boundaries. In East Asia more generally, “conceptions of vital human interests...differ from the human rights standards typically endorsed by U.S. liberal theorists, Western governments, and international human rights documents” (Bell 1996). Consequently, Howard and Donnelly conclude that there is a “necessary connection” between liberalism and human rights, and contend that “only in a liberal [read, Western] regime can there be a fundamental political commitment to the full range of internationally recognized human rights” (1986:802, 816).

The assumption that ideological quarrels between communists and liberals produced, in essence, two opposing “classes” of human rights is so widespread and fundamentally intuitive that scholars rarely bother to question whether Western and Eastern bloc countries actually differ(ed) in their commitment to economic, social, civil, and political rights. The same is true of civilizational cleavages: most observers take non-Western countries’ resistance to “human rights imperialism” so much for granted that no one has determined if levels of commitment to human rights in fact vary across major cultural divides. Analyzing ratification of the human rights covenants enables us to probe all of this accepted wisdom and evaluate its veracity. The results, as I demonstrate below, are rather surprising, and may force social scientists to reconsider the salience of cold war politics and cultural conflicts in the consolidation and expansion of the global human rights regime.

The Costs of Treaty Ratification

In addition to a treaty’s content, I also expect the costs associated with its ratification to affect levels of commitment. In particular, I consider whether the extent to

which treaty compliance is monitored, and violations sanctioned, influences patterns of ratification. Hathaway (2003:1846) contends that “countries will behave differently in their decisions to commit to treaties containing stronger enforcement provisions or where noncompliance is easily detected than they will when the enforcement provisions are weaker and compliance more difficult to detect.” More to the point, “treaty provisions with stronger enforcement procedures are expected...to exhibit a closer relationship between countries’ human rights records and their willingness to commit.” Because the human rights covenants vary in the degree to which compliance is monitored, Hathaway’s claim can be evaluated empirically.

Of the two covenants, the ICESCR has the weakest enforcement mechanisms in place. It requires only that states submit a report within two years of ratification, and every five years thereafter, to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³ This committee, which oversees implementation of the ICESCR, consists of experts elected by parties to the covenant who serve in their personal capacities, independent of any government. The reports it reviews, authored by states themselves, are designed to outline the measures undertaken to bring laws and practices into alignment with the covenant.

The ICCPR requires that its parties file reports with the Human Rights Committee, another panel of independent experts elected by member states, within one year of ratification, as well as “whenever the Committee so requests” [ICCPR, Article 40(1)(b)]. By convention, reports are tendered every five years, but the Committee is empowered to solicit them at any time. As such, parties to the ICCPR cannot always anticipate when their activities will be placed under scrutiny. The absence of a routine

reporting procedure adds an element of surprise that makes the ICCPR more effective at monitoring compliance than the ICESCR. In addition to reporting requirements, Article 41 of the ICCPR authorizes the Human Rights Committee to hear one state’s complaints against another, provided that both parties have acknowledged the Committee’s competence to receive interstate communications. As of 2001, only 47 countries have formally recognized the Committee’s capacity under Article 41 to adjudicate their disputes with other states, and to date the procedure has never been used (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] 2003).

States that ratify the ICCPR can also opt to join its First Optional Protocol (hereafter, “Optional Protocol”), which subjects parties to the most rigorous monitoring provisions available.⁴ In addition to the reporting and grievance mechanisms established by the ICCPR, a state that ratifies the Optional Protocol “recognizes the competence of the [Human Rights] Committee to receive and consider communications from *individuals* subject to its jurisdiction who claim to be victims of a violation by that State Party of any of the rights set forth in the [International] Covenant [on Civil and Political Rights]” (Optional Protocol, Article 1; emphasis added). Acceding to the protocol effectively subjects state parties to the “boomerang pattern” identified by Keck and Sikkink (1998): it offers aggrieved individuals a means of recourse outside the state. According to Donnelly (1986:611), the “Optional Protocol provides a genuine, if limited, instance of international monitoring, which in at least a few cases has altered state practice.” Of the 1,279 individual communications from 77 countries received under the Optional Protocol through April 2004, the Human Rights Committee ruled 362 cases inadmissible (i.e., beyond the scope of its authority), 349 in favor of the alleged victim, and 103 in the

state’s favor. Of the remainder, 178 cases were discontinued, and 287 cases are currently pending (OHCHR 2004). By 2000, 67 percent of countries that had ratified the ICCPR also acceded to the Optional Protocol (OHCHR 2002); of these, the average lag between ratification of the ICCPR and the protocol was approximately four years.

To determine if the rate at which human rights treaties are ratified differs with respect to their content and the costs associated with accession, I invoke three well-established perspectives in political science and sociology: realism, world polity institutionalism, and the clash of civilizations. In the next section, I explicate these theories and derive hypotheses from them regarding a state’s willingness to ratify the ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol, which protect different kinds of rights and provide for consecutively more stringent surveillance and enforcement procedures.

THEORIES OF TREATY RATIFICATION

What prompts countries to compromise their sovereignty by joining human rights treaties? The theories I review here clearly specify the different conditions under which countries will ratify the human rights covenants. The realist, institutionalist, and cultural approaches differ on a variety of dimensions, not the least of which is the level of analysis to which they attend. Realists focus exclusively on nation-states, which exist in an anarchic environment, as the only relevant unit of analysis. Conversely, world polity institutionalists view the world as an integrated cultural system and make it the center of theoretical attention. The clash of civilizations thesis exists somewhere between the two: proponents argue that although “[n]ation states are and will remain the most important actors in world affairs, [...] their interests, associations, and conflicts are increasingly

shaped by cultural and civilizational factors” that transcend national frontiers, but are not (yet) global in scope (Huntington 1996:36). In this paper, I focus on three very specific theoretical differences that bear directly on treaty ratification: each theory under consideration advances different views about the *nature* of international treaties, the relevance of treaty *content* for ratification, and the effect of *costs* associated with ratification on the propensity to join a treaty (see Table 2). In what follows, I highlight these differences and draw out their implications with respect to a country’s likelihood of ratifying the ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Realism

A realist theory of treaty ratification follows directly from its conception of treaties: for realists, treaties become binding on ratifying states, and commitment to them is sustained by the international legal norm of *pacta sunt servanda* (“pacts are to be obeyed”). Realists further argue that states typically want to make credible commitments, and will therefore avoid entering into agreements that they cannot, or will not, implement (Martin 2000; Simmons 2000). After all, a “state need not enter into a treaty that does not conform to its interests” (Chayes and Chayes 1993:179). Ratifying a human rights treaty imposes substantial costs on countries whose practices diverge significantly from the treaty’s stipulations, and the likelihood that these costs will be realized increases as the mechanisms in place for monitoring and enforcing compliance strengthen. Consequently, states will only ratify a strongly monitored and enforced treaty if (1) the treaty’s stipulations already align with current state practices, or (2) the state is willing and able to alter its behavior in compliance with the treaty.

Consistent with the actor-centered and interest-driven ontology indicative of realist theories (e.g., Krasner 1999; Moravcsik 2000; Hooge and Marks 2001), a central assumption is that rulers prefer to remain in power and therefore seek to buffer themselves from disruptions in the political status quo. According to this logic, three factors determine whether states will ratify human rights treaties: the configuration of domestic sovereignty, prevailing human rights practices, and ideological commitments. Domestic sovereignty refers to “the organization of public authority within a state” (Krasner 1999:9), and is arrayed along an ideal-typical continuum with autocratic and democratic poles. In autocratic regimes, one person possesses unlimited power; in democratic countries, elected officials are held accountable to the public. Democratic states presumably have constitutional or statutory guarantees of the rights protected by the human rights covenants already in place, and should therefore be more likely than autocratic ones to ratify them. Democracies also incorporate substantial limitations on the scope of state power, so their accession to human rights treaties tends not to alter domestic sovereignty arrangements drastically. Autocratic regimes, on the other hand, refrain from placing legal or institutional restrictions on their own power; *a fortiori*, we should not expect them to submit willfully to limitations imposed externally. This, however, is precisely what ratification of the human rights covenants entails: it subjects a regime’s internal activities to monitoring to ensure that it does not engage in externally proscribed behavior.

As I have shown, the monitoring provisions of some human rights treaties, particularly the Optional Protocol, are more intrusive than for others, such as the ICESCR. The Optional Protocol affords individuals mistreated by repressive regimes

opportunities for recourse unavailable to them domestically, which fundamentally alters the relationship between rulers and ruled (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Conversely, the ICESCR provides for the weakest monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, so autocratic regimes can ratify and subsequently disregard it with relatively little cost. We might therefore expect autocratic regimes to exhibit stronger opposition to the ICCPR and its Optional Protocol, which strictly enforce political rights that pose direct challenges to the legitimacy of despotic governments, than to the ICESCR.⁵ This is a case where treaty content and cost intersect to amplify resistance to ratification.

In addition to placing formal limits on institutionalized state power, democratic polities typically have favorable human rights practices. Where a state’s conduct already conforms to human rights standards, ratification of human rights treaties is more likely for the simple reason that doing so incurs few if any costs (Heyns and Viljoen 2001; Hathaway 2002, 2003). Again, the effect of human rights practices on ratification is expected to increase as the mechanisms in place for monitoring compliance become more effective. States with poor human rights records can ratify weakly monitored treaties with relative impunity, confident that the slippage between their rhetorical and actual commitments will not likely be exposed to the international community.

The logic of realist theory extends beyond the configuration of power and prevailing human rights practices to include ideological commitments. For instance, communist countries are expected to ratify the ICESCR, but not the ICCPR, precisely because the rights guaranteed by the ICESCR articulate with communist ideology. Indeed, the Soviets themselves were instrumental in placing economic and social rights on the global agenda. Despite their abuse of basic civil and political rights, Beetham

(1998:86) notes that “[m]ost socialist and communist regimes have had an explicit commitment to the protection of economic and social rights.”⁶ The converse is true for much of the capitalist West. Economic rights, which are thought to obstruct the operation of a laissez-faire market, have historically been more contentious than civil and political rights in liberal democracies.⁷

As communist countries transitioned to democracy during the 1990s, it is reasonable to expect that their ideological commitments, including their attitudes about human rights, changed as well. Hathaway (2003:1854) has argued that “newer regimes are more likely to commit to treaties” in order to “distance themselves from a prior regime,” presumably a repressive one. Newly democratic countries are especially likely to ratify human rights treaties in order to “lock in” liberal reforms (Moravcsik 2000). Therefore, realists would predict that the likelihood of ratifying the human rights covenants, especially the ICCPR, increases among formerly communist countries directly following independence or regime change. Among newly democratic countries, rates of ratification for the Optional Protocol should be much lower. New democracies may continue to have questionable human rights practices for some time after the fall of repressive regimes, and will consequently be reluctant to join a treaty with strong surveillance and enforcement mechanisms.

The preceding discussion motivates four hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Democratic countries are more likely than autocratic countries to ratify the ICCPR and its Optional Protocol, which place stronger limitations on a state’s power and monitor compliance more effectively, than the ICESCR.

Hypothesis 1b: The better a regime’s human rights practices, the greater its propensity to ratify the human rights covenants. The magnitude of this effect will increase as monitoring provisions grow stronger, since countries with poor human rights practices can ratify weakly monitored and enforced treaties with relative impunity.

Hypothesis 1c: Communist countries are more likely to ratify the ICESCR, and less likely to ratify the ICCPR, than non-communist countries.

Hypothesis 1d: Formerly communist countries are at increased risk of ratifying the ICCPR, but not its Optional Protocol.

World Polity Institutionalism

World polity institutionalists maintain that nation-states are embedded in and constituted by an exogenous institutional environment (Thomas et al. 1987; Meyer et al. 1997b). This environment, variously referred to as the “world polity” (Meyer 1987; Boli and Thomas 1997, 1999) or “world society” (Meyer et al. 1997b), contains a Western-*cum*-global culture replete with cognitive and normative prescriptions for the legitimate identities, structures, and activities of modern nation-states (Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987; Meyer 1989).⁸ In accordance with world culture, which is increasingly instantiated by international treaties, states are expected to acknowledge and protect the human rights of individuals, irrespective even of citizenship status (Soysal 1994). Despite this expectation, many states adopt human rights treaties not because of a deep commitment to defend human rights, but because doing so signals to the international community that

they are behaving in a legitimate manner. As a result, Meyer and colleagues (1997b) argue, decoupling is endemic to the world polity. Most countries, even notoriously repressive ones, ritually ratify human rights instruments independent of any internal characteristics that might be expected to predict otherwise. However, the dissonance between rhetorical and actual commitment to a treaty is sustainable only if a state's internal activities are effectively buffered from external monitoring and evaluation (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Purely symbolic or perfunctory ratification of human rights treaties therefore becomes much less feasible as the mechanisms in place for monitoring and enforcing compliance strengthen.

World polity institutionalists have suggested three primary mechanisms to explain when states are most susceptible to world cultural influences. The first is the density of connections to the central polity. The more active states are in international forums, such as transnational governance regimes (e.g., the UN) and global “civil society” (Boli and Thomas 1997, 1999), the more likely they are to adopt, however superficially, world cultural standards. Participation in international organizations exposes individuals and countries to global discourse, norms, and models. As embodiments and carriers of world culture, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are particularly effective at spreading global norms and facilitating grassroots mobilization among individuals. State participation in international governmental organizations (IGOs) is important as well, as it is here that human rights conventions are typically debated, written, and voted upon.

Another mechanism posited by institutional theorists is imitation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) or normative “bandwagoning” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). As the

number of countries adopting a practice or ratifying a treaty increases, other countries increasingly perceive that practice or treaty as legitimate and adopt it themselves, regardless of its practical relevance. Previous studies have documented the cumulative impact of crecive legitimation on the establishment of science and technology ministries (Jang 2003) and the enactment of women’s suffrage legislation (Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997). Although prior research on diffusion processes suggests that imitation is most prevalent among geographically proximate units (e.g., Knoke 1982; Land, Deane, and Blau 1991; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997; Simmons 2000), I focus here on the density of previous ratifications at the world level. Examining global rather than regional patterns of ratification underscores the centrality of isomorphic forces at work in the *world* polity and is consistent with Strang and Meyer’s contention (1994:103) that “diffusion within the world system...seems grounded in the way [all] contemporary nation-states are culturally constructed as formally equivalent.”

Participation in international meetings or conferences provides yet another institutional mechanism via which world cultural norms are consolidated, articulated, and diffused throughout the world. Taking part in conferences is expected to galvanize state action for two reasons. First, conferences draw attention to world cultural standards or values, and states may ratify human rights covenants immediately prior to international meetings as a way of advertising their punctilious commitment to legitimating principles. Second, participation in human rights conferences may induce states that have not yet ratified the covenants to do so; this influence can be exerted through shaming, socialization, or persuasion (Risse 2000; Goodman and Jinks, forthcoming). Because the 1993 World Human Rights Conference in Vienna has thus far been the only world-level

conference to address the issue of human rights comprehensively, I pay close attention to its impact on ratification.

The expected influence of these mechanisms on ratification of the human rights covenants are formalized as follows:

Hypothesis 2a: The stronger a state’s linkage to the world polity, the greater its likelihood of ratifying the human rights covenants.

Hypothesis 2b: A state’s risk of ratifying the covenants increases as the number of states previously acceding to them increases.

Hypothesis 2c: States ratify the human rights covenants in anticipation of, during, or subsequent to the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

Since the decoupling of symbolic from actual commitment to a treaty is effective only if evaluation is largely ceremonial, I expect the influence of world polity processes on ratification to diminish as the provisions in place for monitoring treaty compliance become more elaborate.

Clash of Civilizations

The “clash of civilizations” thesis, originally advanced by Samuel Huntington (1993a, 1993b, 1996), argues that the collapse of communism significantly transformed geopolitical dynamics. With the end of the cold war, interstate conflicts are no longer motivated by dogmatic faith in antipodal economic ideologies, nor are they characterized by superpowers jockeying for global influence. Instead, contemporary conflict is rooted in the fundamental religious and cultural differences between nine civilizations identified

by Huntington: African, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Japanese, Latin American, Sinic (Chinese), Slavic-Orthodox, and Western.

Although recent empirical research has demonstrated that Huntington’s theory of cross-civilizational conflict does not withstand scrutiny (Russett, Oneal, and Cox 2000; Henderson and Tucker 2001), the clash of civilizations thesis nevertheless makes implicit predictions for state activity, such as the ratification of human rights treaties, outside the domain of overt military confrontation. Implied in this view is the notion that human rights treaties are instruments of cultural imperialism, with the West imposing its values on the rest of the world. Where realism anticipates treaty ratification when the standards contained therein align with domestic law, practices, or ideology, a theory of civilizations expects states to join human rights treaties, which are thoroughly infused with Enlightenment values, only when they are consistent with a country’s prevailing cultural norms. Ratification occurs where there is congruence or between a state’s national culture and the Western values embedded in the concept of human rights. When tensions arise between the ostensibly “universalistic” character of human rights and the “particularistic” cultural values of nations or civilizations (Robertson 1992), civilizational theorists expect that identification with the particular will trump commitment to the universal.

According to Huntington (1996:155), “Countries tend to bandwagon with countries of similar culture and to balance against countries with which they lack cultural commonality.” We might therefore expect diffusion processes to operate within civilizations, just as world polity institutionalists expect practices to spread throughout the world. World polity theorists suggest that ratification of the human rights covenants

diffuses across formally equivalent and structurally isomorphic states throughout the entire global cultural system, but civilizational theory might predict diffusion to occur most prominently between culturally similar states within civilizations.⁹

The clash of civilizations thesis motivates two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Nation-states belonging to non-Western civilizations are less likely to ratify human rights treaties than Western countries.

Hypothesis 3b: A focal state’s risk of ratifying the human rights covenants increases as the number of ratifications among its civilizational kin increases.

The civilizations perspective implies that the effect of civilizational membership and diffusion on ratification of the human rights covenants will be little influenced by the strength of their monitoring and enforcement provisions. Non-Western countries’ refusal to ratify human rights treaties constitutes an outright symbolic rejection of Western values, regardless of whether adherence is effectively monitored.

DATA AND METHOD

Dependent Variables

Data for evaluating the hypotheses advanced by realism, world polity theory, and the clash of civilizations thesis are assembled from a variety of sources, and are available at yearly intervals for over 130 countries ever extant between 1966 and 1999. The years a nation-state ratified the ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol—the dependent variables in analyses—were coded from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report, *Status of Ratifications of the Principal*

International Human Rights Treaties (2002). For each country, these variables receive a score of 1 during the year it ratified the ICESCR, ICCPR, or Optional Protocol, respectively; otherwise, the variables are scored 0.¹⁰ Figure 1 charts the cumulative number of ratifications for each treaty between 1968, when Costa Rica became the first country to ratify both covenants and the Optional Protocol, and 2002. (Appendix A also provides the dates for each country’s ratification of the covenants and protocol.) Patterns of ICESCR and ICCPR ratification are nearly identical throughout the observation period,¹¹ while the number of states acceding to the Optional Protocol is appreciably smaller. Note the dramatic spike in ratifications of all three treaties during the early 1990s. This apex reflects the growing number of independent states that quickly ratified the covenants, and, to a lesser extent, the Optional Protocol, following the collapse of communism. Additionally, in 1993 the World Human Rights Conference drew the world’s attention to human rights, which may also account for the increased number of ratifications during this period.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Independent Variables

Autocracy/Democracy. To assess the realist hypothesis that democratic countries are at greater risk of ratifying the human rights covenants than autocratic regimes, I include a composite institutionalized polity score from the *Polity IV* data project (Marshall and Jaggers 2002). This variable ranges from –10 to 10, with low values indicating high autocracy and large values denoting high democracy. Three features characterize full democracies: (1) routine procedures that enable citizens to express preferences for policies and leadership; (2) institutionalized constraints on executive

power; and (3) universal guarantees of basic civil liberties. Conversely, autocracies place few institutional restrictions on power and restrict or repress competitive political participation.

Human rights practices. Using data collected from annual human rights reports issued by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the U.S. Department of State, countries were assigned a score of 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating better human rights practices (see Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui, forthcoming). A score of “5” describes countries that are under secure rule of law, and where politically motivated imprisonment, torture, and political murders are extremely rare. Countries were assigned a rating of “4” if imprisonment for non-violent political activities is limited, torture and beatings are exceptional, and political murder is rare. Countries where political imprisonment is extensive, execution and political murders are common, and detention for political views is acceptable are coded as “3.” Countries in which murders and “disappearances” are common, but where state-sponsored terror is directed at political prisoners only, receive a score of “2.” Finally, a score of “1” is reserved for states where the rule of law is completely absent, and where terror affects the entire population. Data on human rights practices are available beginning in 1975; missing data points between 1966 and 1974 are extrapolated from a country’s median score over the period 1975–1999.

Communism and Post-communism. To determine if the propensity to ratify the ICESCR is greatest among communist countries, I include a communism indicator coded from Perrett and Hogg (1989) and CIA (2002). In addition, formerly communist countries are hypothesized to be at increased risk of ratifying the human rights covenants,

especially the ICCPR, directly following regime change. To assess this possibility, I include a dummy variable indicating the first three years after the fall of a communist regime.

Gross domestic product per capita. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, a standard control variable in cross-national research, proxies a country’s general level of economic development. Extensive research has documented a link between development and democracy (e.g., Lipset 1959; Jackman 1973; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Helliwell 1994); therefore, it is reasonable to assume, following a realist line of thought, that the propensity to ratify human rights treaties will increase as countries become more developed. GDP per capita is logged to reduce extreme skew, and to account for the curvilinear relationship often found between economic development and political democracy (Jackman 1973). This variable comes from the World Bank (2002).

Organizational linkages to the world polity. The strength of a state’s organizational linkages to the world polity is measured by the number of its memberships in international organizations, both governmental (IGOs) and non-governmental (INGOs). Each variable captures a different dimension of global integration. Membership in INGOs, which are voluntary, private, non-for-profit organizations, describes the extent of a state’s participation in “global civil society” (Boli and Thomas 1999). Because the number of INGO memberships varies dramatically across countries, I use a natural logarithm transformation (after adding 1 to all cases to account for countries with no memberships) to correct for a skewed distribution. Alternatively, IGO memberships measure the level of a state’s participation in global governance structures,

such as the UN.¹² Membership data for both INGOs and IGOs come from the *Yearbook of International Organizations* (UIA, various years), which reports nation-state memberships annually from 1982 onward. Yearly memberships for the period 1966–1976 are substituted with 1976 counts, while memberships between 1977 and 1981 use data for 1978.

Worldwide diffusion. I evaluate the effect of isomorphic pressures on ratification of each treaty with variables that record the cumulative number of countries that have previously acceded to the human rights covenants and the Optional Protocol.

Socialization effects. To determine if the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) influenced rates of ratification, I include a dummy variable set equal to one for the years 1992, 1993, and 1994. This indicator taps anticipatory, on-site, and subsequent socialization processes associated with the conference (Wotipka and Ramirez 2003).

Civilizational membership. Civilizational membership is operationalized as a series of dummy variables designating each of the nine civilizations identified by Huntington (1996): African, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Japanese, Latin American, Sinic, Slavic-Orthodox, and Western (for a recent application, see Beckfield 2003). I indicate each state’s primary civilizational membership using extensive coding details provided by Russett, Oneal, and Cox (2000:592). Countries not identified by Russett and colleagues were coded from Henderson and Tucker (1999).¹³ Using these data, I compare each non-Western civilization’s likelihood of ratifying the human rights covenants and Optional Protocol relative to the West. I also consider Huntington’s (1996) “West versus the rest” thesis, which suggests that the most salient post-cold war cleavage is between Western and non-Western countries.

Civilizational density. To examine the impact of diffusion processes within civilizations on a focal state’s risk of ratification, I also compute civilizational density measures for the ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol. These measures record the number of countries in each civilization that have previously ratified the treaties. To standardize across civilizations of unequal size, I divide the number of prior ratifications by the total number of countries that belong to the corresponding civilization, yielding the proportion of countries within a given civilization that have already ratified each treaty.

Descriptive statistics for all independent variables employed in the following analyses are reported in Appendix B.

Method

I use an event history framework to estimate the effects of each covariate described above on a country’s likelihood of ratifying of the International Human Rights Covenants, including the Optional Protocol. Event history analysis offers a powerful methodological tool for modeling the dynamic impact of explanatory variables on the rate at which units experience some event or transition in qualitative states over time (Allison 1984; Tuma and Hannan 1984). In general terms, these models estimate the instantaneous rate at which unit i experiences event j during the interval $(t, t + \Delta t)$, given that the event has not yet occurred by time t :

$$\lambda_{ij}(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Pr_{ij}(t, t + \Delta t \mid T \geq t)}{\Delta t}, \quad (1)$$

where in this case $\lambda_{ij}(t)$ yields i th country’s hazard (or “risk”) of ratifying treaty j during a given year. Separate analyses are conducted for, and compared across, the ICESCR,

ICCPR, and Optional Protocol. Because there is no *a priori* justification for specifying the effect of historical time on a state’s risk of ratification, I estimate exponential or “constant rate” models in which hazard rates are constant as a function of time, but vary as an exponential function of time-dependent and time-invariant covariates:¹⁴

$$\lambda_{ij}(t) = \exp(\beta \mathbf{x}_{it} + \varepsilon), \quad (2)$$

where \mathbf{x}_{it} is a vector of covariates, measured for each country i , that may or may not vary with time t , and β is a corresponding vector of regression coefficients describing each variable’s estimated effect on country i ’s hazard of ratifying treaty j .

Countries established prior to 1966, when the International Human Rights Covenants were adopted and made available for accession, become “at risk” of ratifying during that year; countries established after 1966 enter the risk set upon independence, when they become eligible to ratify the covenants as autonomous, sovereign states. All sovereign countries belong initially to two risk sets: one each for the ICESCR and ICCPR. Ratification of each covenant constitutes a distinct, independent event, so it is possible to exit the risk set for one covenant and remain at risk of ratifying the other. Countries that ratify the ICCPR are also eligible to join its Optional Protocol, and the protocol’s risk set includes only those countries that have previously ratified the ICCPR. Since ratification of each treaty is a discrete and non-repeatable event, countries that accede to either covenant or the protocol are subsequently eliminated from the corresponding risk set. Countries that have not ratified by 1999, when the observation period ends, are right-censored.

RESULTS

Tables 3, 4, and 5 present maximum likelihood coefficient estimates from exponential event history analyses of ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol ratification, respectively. Significance tests are based on robust standard errors (Huber 1967; White 1980). For each treaty, I estimate a series of four parallel models: Models 1 through 4 analyze ratification of the ICESCR, Models 5 through 8 assess patterns of ICCPR accession, and Models 9 through 12 investigate ratification of the Optional Protocol. Before considering the substantive results of these models, the overall logic of the analyses is as follows. Because world and civilizational diffusion are highly correlated (see Appendix C), they cannot be entered simultaneously into the same model without introducing problems of severe multicollinearity. To address this issue, the first model in each analysis (i.e., Models 1, 5, and 9) is designed to examine the effect of worldwide diffusion processes on ratification of the human rights covenants, net of other covariates. Models 2, 6, and 10, which substitute the cumulative number of world ratifications with civilizational density, significantly improve upon their corresponding baseline models, as evidenced by the larger model fit chi-square statistics on the same degrees of freedom. Consequently, all subsequent analyses include the intra-civilizational diffusion measures to the exclusion of worldwide diffusion. The first two models in Tables 3, 4, and 5 also enter all eight non-Western civilization indicators, while the last pair evaluates the “West versus the rest” hypothesis by including the Western civilization dummy only. Lastly, democracy is moderately or substantially correlated with several other variables in the analysis (e.g., human rights practices, IGO memberships, GDP per capita, and Western civilization), so in the final models (i.e.,

Models 4, 8, and 12) I determine if its removal significantly alters the results obtained in previous ones.

[TABLES 3, 4, and 5 ABOUT HERE]

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

I begin by examining the correlates of ICESCR ratification (see Table 3). For every model in which it is entered (i.e., Models 1–3), the autocracy/democracy index has a positive and statistically significant effect on rates of ratification, indicating that democratic countries are at greater risk of joining the ICESCR than autocratic regimes. Communist regimes are no more (or less) likely than non-communist countries to ratify the ICESCR, except during the first three years following regime change, when the likelihood of ratification escalates dramatically.¹⁵ Human rights practices have a consistently positive but non-significant effect on ratification. The impact of GDP per capita is universally negative, but also statistically insignificant, across models.

Turning to world polity institutionalism, states with dense organizational ties to global governance structures are significantly more likely to ratify the ICESCR than countries with few such linkages, although in the first pair of models this effect is only marginally significant ($p < .10$). Supplementary analyses not reported indicate that the extent of a country’s participation in global civil society, as measured by INGO memberships, is not a significant predictor of ratification (results available upon request).¹⁶ The effect of a worldwide diffusion process finds modest support in the data: the cumulative number of prior ratifications promotes subsequent ratifications, albeit rather weakly. Based on results from Model 1, each additional accession to the ICESCR raises the likelihood that remaining countries will ratify by approximately one percent

($\exp[.010] = 1.01$). Diffusion effects operate much more strongly within civilizations (see the effect of *civilizational density* in Models 2–4). The positive influence of the World Human Rights Conference on ratification between 1992 and 1994 is present in three of four models, although it surpasses the conventional significance threshold ($p < .05$) in only one, Model 4.

The hypothesized effect of civilizational membership on ratification of the ICESCR finds only limited support. The effect of each civilization indicator in Models 1 and 2 is interpretable relative to the West, but only one, Japanese civilization, reaches statistical significance in either. Interestingly, only three civilizations—Japanese, Slavic-Orthodox, and Latin American—register positive coefficients, whether statistically reliable or not, across both models. Of the eight non-Western civilizations, Slavic and Latin countries, and Japan, have the closest affinities to the West. Japan has consciously modeled itself after the West since the nineteenth century, and is generally regarded as a member of the “West” economically and politically, if not culturally. Slavic countries are geographically and, given the predominance of (Orthodox) Christianity, culturally proximate to the West. Latin American culture, also steeped in Christianity (i.e., Roman Catholicism), owes much to its Iberian heritage. Nevertheless, the most important finding is the widespread lack of significant civilizational effects, especially for Islamic civilization, where a large negative effect might have been expected. Despite the absence of direct civilizational effects on ratification, diffusion processes within civilizations are quite strong. A country’s hazard of ratifying both covenants increases substantially as each additional country in its civilization becomes party to them.¹⁷

To test Huntington’s (1996) “West versus the rest” hypothesis, Models 3 and 4 replace the block of non-Western civilization indicators with a single Western civilization dummy variable. Western civilization becomes a marginally reliable predictor of ICESCR ratification only when the autocracy/democracy scale is removed from analysis (Model 4). This suggests that Western states ratify the ICESCR because of their propensity to be democratic, not because of any intrinsic cultural resonance between Western civilization and the principles embedded in the covenant.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The predictors of ICCPR ratification, with a few minor exceptions, are substantively identical to those accounting for ratification of the ICESCR (see Table 4). Democratic countries, both old (autocracy/democracy index) and newly established (post-communist regimes), express commitment to civil and political rights. Each additional ratification of the ICCPR at the world level also inspires subsequent ratifications, although intra-civilizational diffusion processes are again much stronger. Civilizational membership itself continues to be a poor predictor of ratification, as do a country’s human rights practices. Surprisingly, regimes under communist control are also no less likely to ratify the ICCPR than other countries, nor are Western countries more likely than non-Western ones to ratify.

Although the factors motivating a country’s decision to join the ICESCR and ICCPR are quite similar, a few small differences distinguish ratification of the two covenants. The World Human Rights Conference, for instance, exerts a much more reliable and consistent effect on ICCPR ratification than it did on accession to the ICESCR, reaching statistical significance in three of four models (and marginal

significance in the other). The conference, which convened just as many communist regimes were making the transition to democracy, provided those countries a forum for demonstrating their newly found commitment to civil and political rights. Alternatively, membership in IGOs becomes a slightly less effective predictor of ICCPR ratification compared with the ICESCR. It achieves standard levels of statistical significance only in Model 8, after the democracy score was removed from analyses; in all previous models, its impact is marginal (see Models 5–7). This finding is interesting in its own right, however. Where Beckfield’s (2003) recent analysis of membership in international organizations revealed that global economic stratification produces cross-national disparities in international associational linkages—on average, wealthy countries belong to more international organizations than poor ones—my data indicate that the distribution of memberships in international organizations is also patterned along a political dimension. More specifically, democratic countries are more embedded in the world polity than states with autocratic regimes (Paxton 2002). Because democracy and membership in IGOs are moderately correlated (see Appendix C), the influence of a country’s participation in global governance regimes on ICCPR ratification is therefore attenuated when both variables are entered simultaneously into the same model (hence the marginally significant effect of IGO membership in Models 5–7). As with the ICESCR, membership in INGOs continues to be unrelated to ratification of the ICCPR.

First Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Table 5, which presents results from the analysis of the Optional Protocol, clearly indicates that the factors motivating its ratification differ from those predicting ratification of either the ICESCR or the ICCPR. For the first time, human rights practices

significantly and substantially affect rates of ratification: countries with favorable human rights practices are most likely to join the protocol. A country’s treatment of its own citizens mattered less for ratification of the ICESCR or the ICCPR proper because neither provided individuals with the opportunity to bring formal allegations of mistreatment to the attention of the international community. Democracy continues to be related positively to ratification, although its effect is overshadowed by a country’s human rights practices. Communist regimes are less likely than non-communist countries to ratify the protocol, but the relationship is significant among non-Western communists only (see note 15).

Perhaps most striking in Table 5 is the dramatic reversal in the effect of a country’s linkage to the world polity on rates of accession to the Optional Protocol. Unlike the human rights covenants, countries with *fewer* rather than more IGO memberships are at greatest risk of ratifying the protocol. (The same is true of INGO memberships, which for the first time exhibit a statistically significant and negative effect on ratification). This finding suggests several alternative interpretations. First, international organizations, which act as “watchdogs” against human rights abuses, become more intrusive as the surveillance and enforcement mechanisms of a treaty grow stronger. INGOs in particular keep oversight committees apprised of human rights violations throughout the world (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Therefore, the greater a state’s participation in international organizations, the more likely its human rights abuses will be exposed, which should dissuade it from entering into binding commitments.¹⁸ Second, participation in INGOs gives individuals a greater awareness of their internationally protected human rights, which increases their likelihood of using grievance procedures

established by the Optional Protocol. States whose citizens participate actively in INGOs may therefore be wary of ratifying the protocol. Finally, it could be that extensive participation in IGOs simply makes countries more adept at navigating international politics in general. According to this argument, states with more experience in global governance regimes are better able to recognize the costs of joining a strongly enforced treaty than are poorly integrated, less savvy states, which may not fully appreciate the consequences of ratification.¹⁹ Although tentative and *ad hoc*, these explanations invite further empirical exploration.

A handful of civilizational indicators also depress the likelihood of accession to the Optional Protocol. According to Model 10, Islamic countries and Japan are less likely than the West to ratify (the negative effect for Japan is also significant in Model 9); the likelihood is also lower, albeit statistically less reliable, for Buddhist countries. The inflated coefficient estimates for Japan reflect the fact that it alone belongs to the Japanese civilization, so its failure to ratify during the observation period produces an artificially exaggerated effect. Civilizational density also has a negative though statistically trivial impact on ratification of the protocol, where its effect was strongly positive for ICESCR and ICCPR accession.

Several statistically insignificant findings also warrant brief attention. Although newly transitioned post-communist countries were quick to ratify the ICESCR and ICCPR, they are no more likely than other countries to join the Optional Protocol. This suggests that newly democratic countries express a symbolic, but not actual, commitment to human rights. Because brand new democracies are still likely to suffer the vestiges of their prior regimes' repression of human rights, they are more cautious about signing

treaties with strong monitoring and enforcement provisions. Additionally, the World Human Rights Conference does not prompt states to ratify the Optional Protocol, even though its effect on accession to the covenants was significantly positive. Participation in international meetings, *pace* Risse (2000) and Goodman and Jinks (forthcoming), does not persuade states to alter their preferences about human rights. Surely, states flaunt their *rhetorical* approval of human rights at conferences, but they do not validate this “cheap talk” by entering into strongly enforced treaties. Finally, neither world diffusion processes, economic development, nor membership in Western civilization influence ratification of the Optional Protocol.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results reported in Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide rather strong, but not absolute, evidence in support of hypotheses derived from realism and world polity theory, but support for the clash of civilizations thesis is much more tenuous. Consistent with realist predictions, democratic countries tend to be at higher risk of ratifying the human rights covenants than states with autocratic regimes (Hypothesis 1a), but the effect of democracy on accession to the Optional Protocol is eclipsed by the sizeable impact of a country’s human rights practices. Hypothesis 1b also finds partial support: the effect of human rights practices on ratification is present only for the Optional Protocol, which monitors compliance closely and institutionalizes individual grievance procedures. Communist countries are no more likely to ratify the ICESCR, nor less likely to ratify the ICCPR, than non-communist countries (disconfirming Hypothesis 1c), which debunks the common assumption that communist regimes endorse economic rights but not political freedoms, at least in principle. When it comes to joining treaties with teeth,

however, many communist countries, particularly non-Western ones, do shy away from ratification. Post-communist regime changes elevate the likelihood of acceding to both covenants, but not the Optional Protocol (Hypothesis 1d). Although eager to announce their new commitment to human rights, the presumed inability of post-communist governments to extirpate their predecessors’ dubious human rights practices keeps them from ratifying strongly enforced treaties. As suggested by realists, countries will not ratify a treaty to which they cannot comply.

World polity institutionalism is also quite successful at predicting ratification, although it, too, has some limitations. As the number of IGOs to which a country belongs increases, so does its likelihood of ratifying the human rights covenants (but not the Optional Protocol), although the effect is stronger for ratification of the economic and social, rather than civil and political, covenant. State involvement in the world *polity* therefore seems to promote ratification of human rights treaties, at least for somewhat weakly enforced ones. Participation in world *society*, as measured by INGO memberships, does not predict ratification of the ICESCR or the ICCPR; therefore, Hypothesis 3a is only partially supported. The strong negative effect of membership in international organizations on accession to the Optional Protocol was not hypothesized, but makes sense given their role as human rights watchdogs and as facilitators of the “boomerang pattern” (Kick and Sikkink 1998), whereby individuals circumvent repressive governments by addressing their concerns to an international audience. If democratic institutions hold governments accountable for their human rights practices internally, international organizations tend to do so externally. The World Human Rights Conference promoted ratification of the ICESCR and ICCPR (Hypothesis 2c), but not the

Optional Protocol. Contrary to the suppositions of some observers (e.g., Risse 2000; Goodman and Jinks, forthcoming), international conferences do not appear to be venues where countries are coaxed into changing their fundamental preferences. Instead, conferences provide an opportunity for countries to dramatize their rhetorical, but often superficial, commitment to world cultural principles. Results also produced weak evidence of the worldwide diffusion of ICESCR and ICCPR ratification (Hypothesis 2b), but rates of accession to the Optional Protocol were unaffected by crecive legitimation processes.

Contrary to Hypothesis 3a, civilizational membership itself has little positive or negative impact on ratification of human rights treaties, even for civilizations conventionally thought to be antagonistic to human rights. Conversely, the intra-civilizational diffusion of ratification is rather strong (Hypothesis 3b), although the effect of civilizational density is limited to the ICESCR and ICCPR. This suggests the operation of institutional, if not specifically or exclusively world polity, processes.

What can we conclude about patterns of treaty ratification more generally? First, treaty content does not seem to influence the propensity of countries to ratify, at least in the ways typically assumed for human rights treaties. Granted, evidence supports the rather disingenuous claim that democratic countries ratify the human rights covenants at higher rates than autocratic countries. However, the equally intuitive and taken-for-granted notion that communist countries support economic but not civil or political rights, at least rhetorically, is wrong. Communist regimes were just as likely as other countries to ratify both human rights covenants throughout the observation period, which overlapped with much of the cold war. The cold war may have shaped the initial

development of the global human rights regime, but it apparently did not affect its subsequent consolidation and expansion. Moreover, the fact that human rights are firmly grounded in the Enlightenment tradition has not discouraged non-Western countries from signing human rights treaties. Put differently, these findings suggest that the effect of content on ratification of human rights treaties matters politically, but not ideologically or culturally.

The costs associated with treaty ratification are much more consequential for commitment than a treaty's content. As long as evaluation and enforcement of compliance remains weak, countries, even those with egregious human rights records, can accede to the covenants purely for the symbolic benefits that ratification confers. I expected to find that as the strength of the covenants' monitoring and implementation provisions grew incrementally stronger, the internal political (not cultural) characteristics of states would become correspondingly more salient predictors of ratification. Evidence demonstrates that the intrusiveness of a human rights treaty's surveillance mechanisms clearly influences rates of its ratification, but not in the straightforward linear manner anticipated. Patterns of ratification for the ICESCR, which requires only that states submit human rights reports at regular intervals to a supranational oversight committee, and the ICCPR, which solicits “surprise” reports and enables state parties to lodge formal complaints against one another, are essentially identical. State-to-state enforcement procedures are ineffective because of the generalized “sovereignty costs” (Moravcsik 2000) involved. When a state activates formal international procedures to charge another with abusing human rights, it violates more than the accused state's sovereignty—it also assails sovereignty norms more generally. States appear to recognize this, because the

interstate grievance clause of the ICCPR (Article 41) has never been invoked. Therefore, it does not pose a credible threat to sovereignty, and countries can safely ignore it when deciding whether to join the ICCPR. The factors influencing ratification change significantly only with the Optional Protocol, which empowers *individuals* to allege abuse of human rights. When commitment to human rights treaties becomes more tangible and less expressive, a state’s actual conduct, more than anything else, determines whether it will ratify. This is especially true when the state is held accountable to its own subjects, who presumably are less concerned than states with upholding sovereignty norms.

This paper has investigated the factors that promote ratification of the International Human Rights Covenants, and suggests that countries will not join a treaty of consequence unless they are willing and able to abide by the commitment. Of course, ratification and implementation are empirically distinct activities. Given that a majority of countries in the world has eventually ratified the human rights covenants, even those with poor human rights records (Hathaway 2002), there is good reason to anticipate implementation deficits. Future studies would do well to ascertain the extent to which ratifying countries have actually incorporated the terms of the covenants into practice by faithfully protecting the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of their citizens.

Current work relies too much on case studies or anecdotal evidence to demonstrate widespread and systematic implementation of human rights treaties (e.g., Donnelly 1998; Heyns and Viljoen 2001); perhaps more problematic is the lack of theoretical specificity in current human rights research, especially in sociology.

Sustained quantitative and theoretically informed studies of implementation, in addition to ratification, would have clear empirical implications for realist and world polity theories, which predict different patterns of implementation. Once a country ratifies a human rights treaty, realist theories anticipate one of two implementation strategies, both of which result in the same ultimate outcome. If the rights articulated in the treaty already comport with domestic practice, there is little need for states to alter their behavior; in this case, the status quo *ex post* (i.e., after ratification), all else being equal, effectively remains unchanged from the status quo *ante*. Conversely, states that ratify a human rights treaty despite questionable human rights practices are expected to bring their behavior into alignment with the treaty’s stipulations. This expectation rests on the norm of *pacta sunt servanda*, which assumes that any country, democratic or otherwise, would not ratify a treaty it did not intend to implement.

World polity theorists, on the other hand, expect to find cases where ratification is decoupled from implementation, since states often accede to human rights treaties for purely symbolic rather than instrumental reasons. Countries may in fact have no intention of abiding by the terms established in the treaties they ratify. Somewhat paradoxically, world polity theorists also highlight the diffuse effects that the norms codified by treaties can have on nation-state practices, independently of ratification. According to Hathaway (2002:2021), “human rights treaties and the process that surrounds their creation and maintenance may have a widespread effect on the practices of *all* nations,” even those that do not ratify, “by changing the discourse about the expectations regarding those rights” (emphasis in original). Future research should aim

to bridge the lacunae between ratification and implementation by investigating these realist and world polity suppositions empirically.

ENDNOTES

¹ By *sovereignty*, I mean what is conventionally (if erroneously) referred to as Westphalian sovereignty: the authority to exclude external actors from the internal affairs of state (Krasner 1993, 1999).

² The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990), for example, is quite explicit in declaring that divine law (Shari’a) ultimately preempts human rights as promulgated in international law.

³ Until 1985, the UN Economic and Social Council received reports under the ICESCR.

⁴ The Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, prohibits state parties from using the death penalty. I do not consider ratification of this protocol.

⁵ Consistent with this logic, autocratic regimes may support the ICESCR but not the ICCPR because economic and social rights actually *expand* the scope of state authority by promoting the state’s penetration of civil society. Conversely, civil and political rights typically *restrict* state activity by buffering civil society from state intrusion.

⁶ The Soviet constitution of 1977 illustrates this point. Article 35 of the constitution guaranteed equal opportunities in employment, irrespective of sex. Article 40 secured the right to work and to choose one’s profession; Article 42, access to health care; Article 43, availability of welfare and other forms of social insurance; Article 44, access to housing; and so on. Each of these articles finds a direct corollary in the ICESCR (Articles 3, 6, 12, 9, and 11, respectively).

⁷ Donnelly (1982) and Howard and Donnelly (1986) caution us not to overextend this line of reasoning, however. They argue that under communist regimes, individuals have rights by virtue of their class membership and contributions to society, not their essential personhood. Following Marx’s maxim, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” Article 59 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution reads, “Citizens’ exercise of their rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance of their duties and obligations.” Human rights, however, are not conditional; rather, they inhere in individuals, independent of their group affiliations or their responsibilities as citizens. By definition, human rights accrue to individuals *qua* humans and are not contingent on citizenship. Additionally, the civil and political rights records for some liberal democracies were far from perfect when the covenants were drafted. The governments of the United States and Australia, in particular, were singled out for their treatment of minorities: the former for its system of *de jure* segregation, the latter for its treatment of the aboriginal population.

⁸ World culture’s foundation in the “Western cultural account” (Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987) exemplifies Robertson’s (1992) “universalization of particularism,” the process whereby local cultures or practices attain global relevance.

⁹ Although world polity and civilizational membership theorists both assign “culture” a central role in motivating state behavior, they understand the term in very different ways. Whereas world polity institutionalists use “culture” in its constitutive or cognitive sense, civilizational theorists highlight culture’s expressive and normative dimensions (Jepperson and Swidler 1994; Boli and Lechner 2001). For world polity theorists, world culture refers to the abstract institutional models that produce a remarkable degree of loosely coupled structural isomorphism across states (Meyer 1987, 1999; Meyer et al. 1997b). Huntington’s culture, on the other hand, is a discriminating rather than a homogenizing force, an expression of that which distinguishes one state (or a particular community of states) from all others. This conception of culture, which emphasizes its character as a “blueprint” for everyday activity, tends to be tightly coupled with actual behavior.

¹⁰ Notice that I code *ratifiers*, not *signatories*. This choice of terminology is deliberate. As noted by Donnelly (1998:5), “*Signing* a treaty is a declaration by a state that it intends to be bound by the treaty. That obligation, however, only becomes effective after the treaty has been *ratified* or acceded to according to the constitutional procedures of that country...” [emphases in original]. Future work might examine the different factors that motivate states to *sign* rather than *ratify* treaties, a distinction with obvious relevance for world polity institutionalism.

¹¹ The fact that 134 of the 154 countries that ratified *either* covenant between 1966 and 2002 also ratified the other simultaneously validates the UN’s claim that all human rights, whether economic, social, civil, or political, are “universal, indivisible and interdependent[,] and interrelated” (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, article 5; see also Donnelly 2003:27-30).

¹² States are members of IGOs, while individuals are members of INGOs. The IGO variable simply records the number of IGOs to which a state belongs in a given year. The INGO measure, aggregated to the nation-state level, provides yearly counts of the total number of INGOs that have at least one national as a member.

¹³ Both Russett et al. (2000) and Henderson and Tucker (1999) relegate “problematic” states not easily classified into one of the nine civilizations identified by Huntington into a residual “Other” category. These states include Haiti, whose French colonial heritage distinguishes it from its Latin American neighbors, and several Pacific island microstates (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Tonga, and Tuvalu). Following coding procedures established by Russett et al. (2000:592), I recoded the microstates as “Western” based on information garnered from the CIA (2002) regarding the religious composition of the population, official or predominant languages spoken, infant mortality and literacy rates, life expectancy, and colonial heritage. For the sake of retaining Haiti in analyses, I coded it as “Latin American.”

¹⁴ The integrated hazard rates for ratification of the ICESCR, ICCPR, and Optional Protocol approximate a linear function of time, indicating that an exponential specification is indeed appropriate.

¹⁵ Although the coefficient estimates for communism fail to reach statistical significance in any of the models, the sign changes from positive to negative when the non-Western civilization indicators are replaced with the Western civilization dummy (compare Models 1 and 2 with 3 and 4). Close inspection of Appendix A reveals that most of the communist states in Europe, especially those under direct Soviet influence, ratified the human rights covenants during the 1970s. Conversely, several non-Western communist regimes (e.g., Cambodia, China, Cuba, Ethiopia) did not ratify during the observation period. When non-Western civilizations are controlled, the positive (though non-significant) coefficients associated with communism effectively describe *European* communist regimes. Similarly, when Western civilization is controlled, the coefficients, which describe *non-Western* communist countries, become negative.

¹⁶ Membership in IGOs and INGOs cannot be entered simultaneously into the same model because of their extremely high intercorrelation ($r = .80$).

¹⁷ Intra-civilizational diffusion is most pronounced among African, Latin American, Slavic, and Western countries. Disaggregated civilization effects are available upon request.

¹⁸ As an initial test of this supposition, I evaluated interaction effects between country-level membership in international organizations (both IGOs and INGOs) and human

rights practices. Although results were statistically insignificant, more work should be undertaken before definitive conclusions are drawn.

¹⁹ I thank John Meyer for suggesting this point.

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Table 1. Rights articulated in the International Bill of Human Rights

<i>Right protected</i>	<i>Human rights instrument</i>		
	UDHR	ICESCR	ICCPR
Equality of rights without discrimination	✓	✓	✓
Life	✓		✓
Liberty and security of person	✓		✓
Protection against slavery	✓		✓
Protection against torture and cruel and inhuman punishment	✓		✓
Recognition as a person before the law	✓		✓
Equal protection under the law	✓		✓
Access to legal remedies for rights violations	✓		✓
Protection against arbitrary arrest or detention	✓		✓
Hearing before an independent and impartial judiciary	✓		✓
Presumption of innocence	✓		✓
Protection against ex post facto laws	✓		✓
Protection of privacy, family, and home	✓		✓
Freedom of movement and residence	✓		✓
Seek asylum from persecution	✓		
Nationality	✓		
Marry and found a family	✓	✓	✓
Own property	✓		
Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion	✓		✓
Freedom of opinion, expression, and the press	✓		✓
Freedom of assembly and association	✓		✓
Political participation	✓		✓
Social security	✓	✓	
Work under favorable conditions	✓	✓	
Free trade unions	✓	✓	✓
Rest and leisure	✓	✓	
Food, clothing, and housing	✓	✓	
Health care and social services	✓	✓	
Special protections for children	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	
Participation in cultural life	✓	✓	
Social and international order is needed to realize rights	✓		
Self-determination		✓	✓
Humane treatment when detained or imprisoned			✓
Protection against debtor's prison			✓
Protection against arbitrary expulsion of aliens			✓
Protection against racial or religious hatred			✓
Protection of minority culture			✓

Source: Adapted from Donnelly (1998:6, Table 1.1).

Note: UDHR = Universal Declaration of Human Rights; ICESCR = International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; ICCPR = International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Table 2. Summary of theoretical predictions for the ratification of human rights treaties

Perspective	Nature of treaties	Treaty content	Costs of ratification
Realism	Treaties are legally binding documents upheld by the norm <i>pacta sunt servanda</i>	Ratification occurs only if the treaty’s stipulations align with the political status quo <i>ante</i> (i.e., the configuration of domestic sovereignty, prevailing human rights practices, and ideological commitments in place prior to accession)	Effects of realist variables increase as the mechanisms in place for monitoring and enforcing compliance strengthen
World polity institutionalism	Treaties codify highly legitimated world cultural principles	Ratifying treaties demonstrates a symbolic commitment to the principles they espouse, but often occurs without corresponding changes in actual practices; The likelihood of ratification varies with the extent to which countries are embedded in and linked to the global polity	Decoupling rhetoric from practice is only successful if surveillance and evaluation of treaty compliance are ceremonial; Diminishing effect of world polity variables as monitoring and enforcement mechanisms strengthen
Clash of civilizations	Treaties are instruments of cultural imperialism	Treaty ratification reflects a sincere commitment to the norms and values promulgated therein, which are typically rooted in Western culture; Non-Western countries are less likely to ratify than Western countries	Constant effect of civilization variables irrespective of the degree to which compliance is monitored and enforced; Rejection of treaties is purely symbolic and not contingent on the costs associated with ratification

Table 3. Effect of realist, world polity, and civilization variables on ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Variables	Model			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Realism</i>				
Autocracy/Democracy	.051** (.019)	.051** (.019)	.056*** (.018)	—
Human rights practices	.122 (.120)	.104 (.119)	.073 (.112)	.043 (.104)
Communist	.037 (.877)	.069 (.845)	-.252 (.844)	-.490 (.822)
Post-communist	1.161* (.572)	1.309* (.561)	1.417*** (.433)	1.540*** (.427)
GDP per capita (logged)	-.144 (.114)	-.148 (.113)	-.118 (.086)	-.091 (.077)
<i>World polity institutionalism</i>				
IGO memberships	.012† (.006)	.012† (.007)	.013* (.007)	.015** (.006)
World Human Rights Conference	.474 (.337)	.623† (.331)	.533† (.325)	.638* (.309)
Cumulative ratifications ($t - 1$)	.010*** (.003)	—	—	—
<i>Clash of civilizations</i>				
African	-.314 (.555)	-.115 (.535)	—	—
Buddhist	-.493 (.597)	-.172 (.549)	—	—
Hindu	-.137 (.653)	.045 (.628)	—	—
Islamic	-.409 (.518)	-.218 (.493)	—	—
Japanese	.238 (.209)	.464* (.217)	—	—
Latin American	.495 (.435)	.446 (.428)	—	—
Sinic (Chinese)	-1.314 (1.167)	-1.069 (1.163)	—	—
Slavic-Orthodox	.200 (.551)	.113 (.552)	—	—
Western	—	—	-.069 (.396)	.512† (.296)
Civilizational density ($t - 1$)	—	1.393*** (.417)	1.384*** (.389)	1.239** (.390)
Intercept	-3.478***	-3.367***	-3.488***	-3.752***
Wald χ^2 (vs. null)	116.27***	118.27***	116.76***	78.53***
<i>df</i>	16	16	9	8
Number of ratifications	110	110	110	118
Number of countries	137	137	137	153
Number of country-year spells	2,221	2,221	2,221	2,462

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 4. Effect of realist, world polity, and civilization variables on ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Variables	Model			
	5	6	7	8
<i>Realism</i>				
Autocracy/Democracy	.045* (.019)	.046* (.018)	.052** (.017)	—
Human rights practices	.123 (.114)	.100 (.112)	.066 (.108)	.041 (.098)
Communist	-.003 (.906)	.037 (.860)	-.275 (.843)	-.437 (.827)
Post-communist	1.274* (.554)	1.412** (.549)	1.321** (.424)	1.518*** (.424)
GDP per capita (logged)	-.092 (.109)	-.096 (.106)	-.098 (.086)	-.039 (.074)
<i>World polity institutionalism</i>				
IGO memberships	.011† (.006)	.011† (.006)	.011† (.006)	.015** (.006)
World Human Rights Conference	.599† (.314)	.797** (.306)	.730* (.297)	.793** (.289)
Cumulative ratifications ($t - 1$)	.012*** (.003)	—	—	—
<i>Clash of civilizations</i>				
African	-.352 (.511)	-.144 (.488)	—	—
Buddhist	-.438 (.591)	-.124 (.547)	—	—
Hindu	-.123 (.668)	.078 (.628)	—	—
Islamic	-.593 (.485)	-.373 (.452)	—	—
Japanese	.207 (.170)	.436* (.187)	—	—
Latin American	.431 (.421)	.372 (.408)	—	—
Sinic (Chinese)	-1.464 (1.157)	-1.187 (1.146)	—	—
Slavic-Orthodox	-.344 (.530)	-.278 (.553)	—	—
Western	—	—	.079 (.371)	.391 (.268)
Civilizational density ($t - 1$)	—	1.569*** (.395)	1.469*** (.395)	1.308*** (.384)
Intercept	-3.863***	-3.686***	-3.638***	-4.190***
Wald χ^2 (vs. null)	124.46***	117.46***	117.27***	83.89***
<i>df</i>	16	16	9	8
Number of ratifications	112	112	112	120
Number of countries	137	137	137	153
Number of country-year spells	2,253	2,253	2,253	2,508

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 5. Effect of realist, world polity, and civilization variables on ratification of the First Optional Protocol of the ICCPR

Variables	Model			
	9	10	11	12
<i>Realism</i>				
Autocracy/Democracy	.052 [†] (.030)	.047 (.029)	.051 [†] (.027)	—
Human rights practices	.451** (.170)	.439** (.164)	.375** (.143)	.370** (.131)
Communist	−1.358 (1.000)	−1.463 (.976)	−1.159* (.535)	−1.516*** (.435)
Post-communist	.540 (.460)	.540 (.472)	.321 (.425)	.578 (.407)
GDP per capita (logged)	−.125 (.167)	−.138 (.167)	−.121 (.136)	.017 (.134)
<i>World polity institutionalism</i>				
IGO memberships	−.024** (.008)	−.025*** (.008)	−.025*** (.008)	−.029*** (.007)
World Human Rights Conference	.078 (.358)	.141 (.363)	−.035 (.341)	−.057 (.331)
Cumulative ratifications ($t - 1$)	−.008 (.006)	—	—	—
<i>Clash of civilizations</i>				
African	.036 (.640)	−.326 (.647)	—	—
Buddhist	−.637 (.625)	−1.260 [†] (.703)	—	—
Hindu	−.690 (.760)	−1.365 (.822)	—	—
Islamic	−.803 (.612)	−1.258* (.717)	—	—
Japanese	−13.067*** (1.043)	−14.719*** (1.089)	—	—
Latin American	.500 (.428)	.460 (.416)	—	—
Sinic (Chinese)	.701 (1.686)	.082 (1.631)	—	—
Slavic-Orthodox	−.391 (.520)	−.834 (.615)	—	—
Western	—	—	.424 (.437)	.519 (.402)
Civilizational density ($t - 1$)	—	−1.726 [†] (.975)	−.024 (.779)	−.278 (.723)
Intercept	−1.598	−1.057	−1.876* (.437)	−2.616** (.402)
Wald χ^2 (vs. null)	253.10***	284.57***	68.89***	67.71***
<i>df</i>	16	16	9	8
Number of ratifications	82	82	82	88
Number of countries	122	122	122	130
Number of country-year spells	873	873	873	910

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.

[†] $p \leq .10$ * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests)

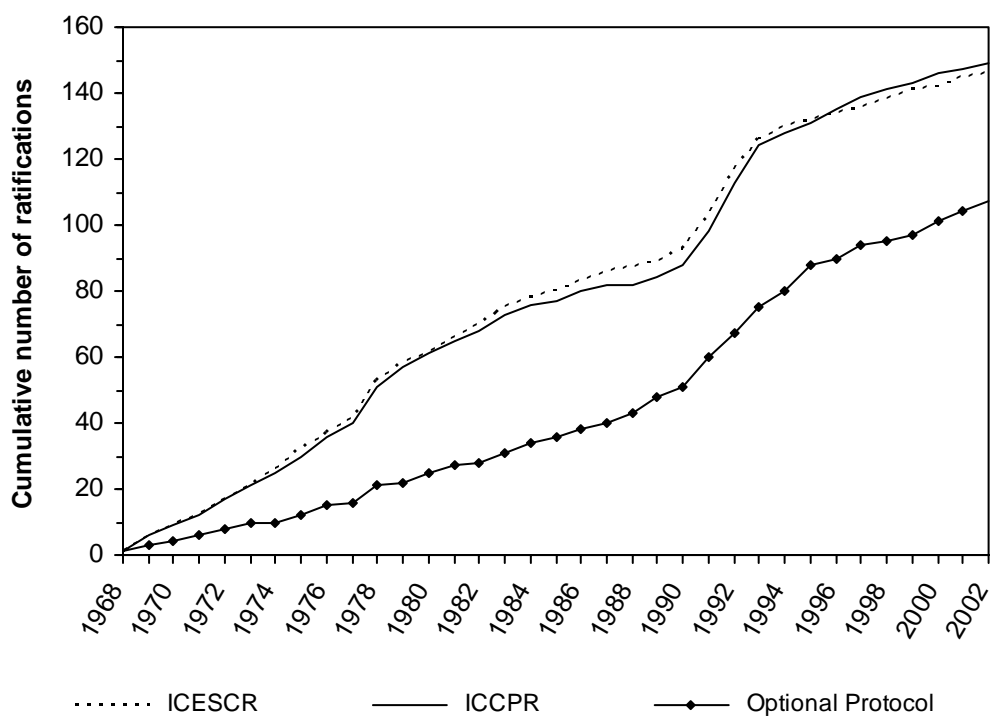


Figure 1. Cumulative Number of Ratifications for the International Human Rights Covenants and the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1968-2002

Appendix A. Dates of Ratification of the International Human Rights Covenants and the ICCPR Optional Protocol

Country	ICESCR	ICCPR	OP	Country	ICESCR	ICCPR	OP
Afghanistan	1983	1983	—	Eritrea	2001	2002	—
Albania	1991	1991	—	Estonia	1991	1991	1991
Algeria*	1989	1989	1989	Ethiopia	1993	1993	—
Angola	1992	1992	1992	Finland*	1975	1975	1975
Argentina*	1986	1986	1986	France	1980	1980	1984
Armenia	1993	1993	1993	Gabon	1983	1983	—
Australia*	1975	1980	1991	Gambia*	1978	1979	1988
Austria*	1978	1978	1987	Georgia	1994	1994	1994
Azerbaijan	1992	1992	—	German Dem. Rep.	1973	1973	—
Bangladesh	1998	2000	—	Germany, Fed. Rep.*	1973	1973	1993
Barbados	1973	1973	1973	Ghana	2000	2000	—
Belarus*	1973	1973	1992	Greece	1985	1997	1997
Belgium*	1983	1983	1994	Grenada	1991	1991	—
Belize	—	1996	—	Guatemala	1988	1992	—
Benin	1992	1992	1992	Guinea	1978	1978	1993
Bolivia	1982	1982	1982	Guinea-Bissau	1992	—	—
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	1992	1993	1995	Guyana*	1977	1977	1993
Botswana	2000	2000	—	Haiti	—	1991	—
Brazil	1992	1992	—	Honduras	1981	1997	—
Bulgaria*	1970	1970	1992	Hungary*	1974	1974	1988
Burkina Faso	1999	1999	1999	Iceland*	1979	1979	1979
Burundi	1990	1990	—	India	1979	1979	—
Cambodia	1992	1992	—	Iran	1975	1975	—
Cameroon	1984	1984	1984	Iraq	1971	1971	—
Canada*	1976	1976	1976	Ireland*	1989	1989	1989
Cape Verde	1993	1993	—	Israel	1991	1991	—
Central African Rep.	1981	1981	1981	Italy*	1978	1978	1978
Chad	1995	1995	1995	Jamaica	1975	1975	1975
Chile*	1972	1972	1992	Japan	1979	1979	—
China	2001	—	—	Jordan	1975	1975	—
Colombia	1969	1969	1969	Kenya	1972	1972	—
Congo*	1983	1983	1983	Korea, D.P.R.	1981	1981	—
Costa Rica	1968	1968	1968	Korea, Republic of*	1990	1990	1990
Cote d'Ivoire	1992	1992	1997	Kuwait	1996	1996	—
Croatia*	1991	1992	1995	Kyrgyzstan	1994	1994	1995
Cyprus	1969	1969	1992	Latvia	1992	1992	1994
Czech Republic*	1993	1993	1993	Lebanon	1972	1972	—
Czechoslovakia	1975	1975	1991	Lesotho	1992	1992	—
Denmark*	1972	1972	1972	Libya	1970	1970	1989
Djibouti	2002	2002	—	Liechtenstein*	1998	1998	1998
Dominica	1993	1993	—	Lithuania	1991	1991	1991
Dominican Republic	1978	1978	1978	Luxembourg*	1983	1983	1983
Ecuador*	1969	1969	1969	Macedonia, FYR of	1994	1994	1994
Egypt	1982	1982	—	Madagascar	1971	1971	1971
El Salvador	1979	1979	1995	Malawi	1993	1993	1996
Equatorial Guinea	1987	1987	1987	Mali	1974	1974	—

(Continued on next page)

(Appendix A continued from previous page)

Country	ICESCR	ICCPR	OP	Country	ICESCR	ICCPR	OP
Malta*	1990	1990	1990	Somalia	1990	1990	1990
Mauritius	1973	1973	1973	South Africa*	1998	1998	—
Mexico	1981	1981	—	Spain*	1977	1977	1985
Moldova, Rep. of	1993	1993	—	Sri Lanka*	1980	1980	1997
Monaco	1997	1997	—	St. Vincent/Grenadines	1981	1981	1981
Mongolia	1974	1974	1991	Sudan	1986	1976	—
Morocco	1979	1979	—	Suriname	1976	1976	1976
Mozambique	—	1993	—	Sweden*	1971	1971	1971
Namibia	1994	1994	1994	Switzerland*	1992	1992	—
Nepal	1991	1991	1991	Syria	1969	1969	—
Netherlands*	1978	1978	1978	Tajikistan	1999	1999	1999
New Zealand*	1978	1978	1989	Tanzania	1976	1976	—
Nicaragua	1980	1980	1980	Thailand	1999	1996	—
Niger	1986	1986	1986	Togo	1984	1984	1988
Nigeria	1993	1993	—	Trinidad and Tobago	1978	1978	1980
Norway*	1972	1972	1972	Tunisia*	1969	1969	—
Panama	1977	1977	1977	Turkmenistan	1997	1997	1997
Paraguay	1992	1992	1995	Uganda	1987	1995	1995
Peru*	1978	1978	1980	Ukraine*	1973	1973	1991
Philippines*	1974	1986	1989	United Kingdom*	1976	1976	—
Poland*	1977	1977	1991	United States*	—	1992	—
Portugal	1978	1978	1983	Uruguay	1970	1970	1970
Romania	1974	1974	1993	USSR (Russian Fed.)*	1973	1973	1991
Rwanda	1975	1975	—	Uzbekistan	1995	1995	1995
San Marino	1985	1985	1985	Venezuela	1978	1978	1978
Senegal*	1978	1978	1978	Vietnam	1982	1982	—
Seychelles	1992	1992	1992	Yemen, PDR	1987	1987	—
Sierra Leone	1996	1996	1996	Yugoslavia	2001	2001	—
Slovakia*	1993	1993	1993	Zaire (Congo, DR)	1976	1976	1976
Slovenia*	1992	1992	1993	Zambia	1984	1984	1984
Solomon Islands	1982	—	—	Zimbabwe*	1991	1991	—

* Indicates that the country recognizes the Human Rights Committee's competence to receive interstate communications under Article 41 of the ICCPR.

Note: ICESCR = International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; ICCPR = International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; OP = First Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Appendix B. Descriptive statistics for variables used in the analysis, by risk set

Variables	ICESCR					ICCPR					Optional Protocol				
	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N
<i>Realism</i>															
Autocracy/Democracy	-2.32	7.11	-10	10	2,769	-2.28	7.12	-10	10	2,802	-2.00	7.18	-10	10	3,767
Human rights practices	3.65	1.10	1	5	3,043	3.64	1.10	1	5	3,073	3.58	1.15	1	5	4,069
Communist	.09	.28	0	1	292	.09	.28	0	1	292	.10	.31	0	1	455
Post-communist	.01	.10	0	1	35	.01	.10	0	1	36	.01	.12	0	1	63
GDP per capita (logged)	7.31	1.53	3.90	10.74	2,573	7.31	1.52	3.90	10.74	2,573	7.32	1.52	3.90	10.74	3,440
<i>World polity institutionalism</i>															
INGO memberships (logged)	4.87	1.55	0	7.88	3,281	4.88	1.55	0	7.79	3,311	5.15	1.52	0	8.11	4,310
IGO memberships	33.08	19.25	0	104	3,281	33.18	19.23	0	104	3,311	36.46	19.52	0	104	4,310
Cumulative ratifications ($t - 1$)	54.03	43.53	0	140	3,320	52.81	42.54	0	143	3,350	32.06	28.13	0	95	4,371
World H.R. Conference	.07	.25	0	1	219	.07	.25	0	1	227	.08	.28	0	1	363
<i>Clash of civilizations</i>															
African	.24	.43	0	1	789	.24	.43	0	1	797	.22	.41	0	1	948
Buddhist	.05	.21	0	1	153	.04	.21	0	1	150	.04	.21	0	1	194
Hindu	.03	.18	0	1	115	.03	.18	0	1	115	.03	.18	0	1	151
Islamic	.24	.43	0	1	810	.24	.43	0	1	802	.26	.44	0	1	1,130
Japanese	<.01	.06	0	1	14	<.01	.06	0	1	14	<.01	.09	0	1	34
Latin American	.13	.33	0	1	424	.13	.34	0	1	433	.12	.32	0	1	519
Sinic	.04	.20	0	1	136	.04	.20	0	1	136	.04	.19	0	1	171
Slavic-Orthodox	.03	.18	0	1	108	.04	.19	0	1	122	.05	.22	0	1	255
Western	.23	.42	0	1	771	.23	.42	0	1	781	.23	.42	0	1	1,009
Civilizational density ($t - 1$)	.30	.25	0	1	3,320	.29	.24	0	1	3,350	.16	.18	0	.79	4,371

Notes: ICESCR = International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; ICCPR = International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. “N” refers to the number of country-year spells.

Appendix C. Correlations for variables used in analyses

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
(1) Autocracy/Democracy	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(2) Human rights practices	.37	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(3) Communist	-.18	-.07	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(4) Post-communist	.03	-.00	-.05	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(5) GDP per capita (logged)	.53	.53	-.13	-.04	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
(6) INGO memberships (logged)	.48	.09	-.04	-.11	.52	1.00	—	—	—	—	—
(7) IGO memberships	.35	.18	-.14	-.16	.52	.80	1.00	—	—	—	—
(8) Cumulative ratifications, ICESCR	.16	-.13	.01	.12	-.01	.32	.14	1.00	—	—	—
(9) Cumulative ratifications, ICCPR	.16	-.13	.01	.11	-.01	.32	.13	.99	1.00	—	—
(10) Cumulative ratifications, OP	.18	-.14	-.01	.11	-.01	.30	.11	.97	.98	1.00	—
(11) World H.R. Conference	.09	-.09	-.02	.30	-.02	.06	-.01	.34	.32	.32	1.00
(12) African	-.31	-.13	-.08	-.07	-.46	-.27	-.25	-.00	-.00	-.01	-.00
(13) Buddhist	.02	-.09	.21	.01	-.12	-.05	-.11	.04	.04	.04	.01
(14) Hindu	-.01	-.07	-.04	-.02	-.18	-.07	-.12	-.00	-.00	-.01	-.00
(15) Islamic	-.35	-.15	-.07	.01	-.17	-.21	-.06	.04	.03	.03	.01
(16) Japanese	.07	.07	-.01	-.01	.09	.04	.04	-.07	-.07	-.06	-.02
(17) Latin American	.06	-.21	-.07	-.04	.05	.11	.06	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.03
(18) Sinic	-.10	-.05	.34	-.02	.00	.00	-.13	-.00	-.00	-.00	-.00
(19) Slavic-Orthodox	.08	.03	.12	.23	.06	-.01	-.06	.12	.12	.12	.06
(20) Western	.58	.51	-.04	.00	.65	.43	.43	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.01
(21) Civilizational density, ICESCR	.30	-.03	.02	.10	.17	.43	.25	.90	.89	.85	.28
(22) Civilizational density, ICCPR	.28	-.05	.02	.08	.14	.42	.24	.91	.91	.88	.26
(23) Civilizational density, OP	.39	.02	-.13	.07	.23	.45	.24	.75	.75	.76	.23

Variables	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)
(12) African	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(13) Buddhist	-.10	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(14) Hindu	-.10	-.03	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(15) Islamic	-.30	-.09	-.09	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(16) Japanese	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.03	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
(17) Latin American	-.25	-.08	-.08	-.23	-.03	1.00	—	—	—	—	—
(18) Sinic	-.10	-.03	-.03	-.09	-.01	-.08	1.00	—	—	—	—
(19) Slavic-Orthodox	-.12	-.04	-.04	-.11	-.01	-.09	-.04	1.00	—	—	—
(20) Western	-.33	-.10	-.10	-.30	-.03	-.25	-.10	-.12	1.00	—	—
(21) Civilizational density, ICESCR	-.15	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.09	-.07	-.08	.28	.13	1.00	—
(22) Civilizational density, ICCPR	-.12	-.04	-.05	-.05	-.09	-.06	-.07	.23	.10	.99	1.00
(23) Civilizational density, OP	-.06	-.12	-.11	-.32	-.06	.26	-.14	.07	.25	.81	.81