

# Do Human Rights Treaty Obligations Matter for Ratification?

## Appendices

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## **Appendix A: Regression Results and Robustness Checks**

The main analysis in the body of the article is ratification of a given treaty within five years and within ten years of the treaty being opened for signature or the year in which a state becomes independent and is eligible to join treaties, whichever is later. Tables A1 and A2 produce similar analyses, accounting in the first three models for the individual components of treaty “demandingness” and controlling for additional state-level factors in the next four models, within five and ten years, respectively. Table A3 presents the results of time-series logistic regressions. The results are consistent: more demanding treaties are less likely to be ratified.

Table A1. Demanding obligations and human rights treaty ratification, logistic regression.

Ratification within 5 years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong obligations	0.991 (0.007)						
Precise obligations		0.998 (0.009)					
Requiring domestic action			1.003 (0.008)				
Demanding obligations				0.986* (0.008)	0.981** (0.009)	0.986* (0.008)	0.983** (0.008)
Democracy	1.786*** (0.320)	1.757*** (0.299)	1.785*** (0.309)	1.732*** (0.293)	1.722*** (0.304)	1.671** (0.381)	1.787*** (0.303)
Democratic transition	0.362** (0.150)	0.378** (0.145)	0.376*** (0.136)	0.362*** (0.141)	0.451* (0.202)	0.357** (0.155)	0.352*** (0.131)
Basic rights respected	0.910* (0.045)	0.909** (0.042)	0.903** (0.042)	1.007 (0.081)	0.885** (0.044)	0.914* (0.046)	0.914* (0.048)
IGO memberships	0.995 (0.009)	0.992 (0.009)	0.990 (0.009)	0.990 (0.010)	0.996 (0.009)	0.993 (0.009)	0.996 (0.009)
GDP/capita (ln)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)
Population (ln)				1.145* (0.094)			
Already ratified ICCPR					0.658* (0.145)		
Already ratified ICESCR					2.572*** (0.646)		
Judicial independence						1.089 (0.065)	
After ICCPR but before end of Cold War							0.532 (0.329)
Post-Cold War period							1.103 (0.664)
Constant	1.047 (0.433)	0.900 (0.454)	0.718 (0.344)	1.139 (0.470)	1.061 (0.521)	1.289 (0.543)	1.240 (0.520)
Observations	1,587	1,587	1,587	1,587	1,267	1,515	1,587
Log-likelihood	-1012.0	-1034.6	-1031.2	-994.7	-794.3	-957.1	-987.0
$\chi^2$	25.10	30.12	31.10	27.63	94.17	29.47	46.97
$p > \chi^2$	0.0003	0.0000	0.0000	0.0003	0.0000	0.0001	0.0000

Odds ratios reported. Robust standard errors clustered by country and treaty in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table A2. Demanding obligations and treaty ratification, logistic regression.

Ratification within 10 years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong obligations	0.986** (0.007)						
Precise obligations		0.995 (0.009)					
Requiring domestic action			1.001 (0.009)				
Demanding obligations				0.982** (0.008)	0.975*** (0.008)	0.981** (0.008)	0.980** (0.008)
Democracy	1.462** (0.236)	1.427** (0.223)	1.445** (0.235)	1.379** (0.206)	1.365** (0.207)	1.466* (0.300)	1.393** (0.229)
Democratic transition	0.555 (0.211)	0.585 (0.210)	0.586 (0.211)	0.577 (0.216)	0.719 (0.304)	0.531 (0.213)	0.600 (0.207)
Basic rights respected	0.997 (0.051)	0.993 (0.045)	0.986 (0.045)	1.148 (0.115)	0.976 (0.051)	1.001 (0.060)	1.014 (0.055)
IGO memberships	0.998 (0.010)	0.995 (0.009)	0.992 (0.010)	0.990 (0.011)	1.001 (0.009)	0.995 (0.010)	1.003 (0.008)
GDP/capita (ln)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)
Population (ln)				1.203** (0.109)			
Already ratified ICCPR					0.614 (0.223)		
Already ratified ICESCR					2.628*** (0.756)		
Judicial independence						1.086 (0.063)	
After ICCPR but before end of Cold War							0.191** (0.150)
Post-Cold War period							0.337* (0.213)
Constant	2.246* (0.932)	1.918 (1.028)	1.480 (0.776)	0.184 (0.247)	2.327* (1.165)	2.813** (1.243)	5.666*** (3.034)
Observations	1,587	1,587	1,587	1,556	1,267	1,515	1,587
Log-likelihood	-1033	-1079	-1086	-992.4	-758.5	-962.9	-986.4
$X^2$	14.18	15.43	15.18	18.55	46.11	29.95	76.20
$p > X^2$	0.0277	0.0172	0.0189	0.0097	0.0000	0.0001	0.0000

Odds ratios reported. Robust standard errors clustered by country and treaty in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table A3. Demanding obligations and treaty ratification, time-series logistic regressions.

Ratification	1	2	3	4	5	6
Demanding obligations	0.980*** (0.006)	0.984*** (0.006)	0.981*** (0.006)	0.981*** (0.006)	0.970*** (0.006)	0.971*** (0.008)
Democracy	1.596*** (0.264)	1.941*** (0.390)	1.571*** (0.248)	1.555** (0.275)	1.381** (0.227)	1.748*** (0.291)
Democracy x Demanding obligations		0.993*** (0.002)				
Democratic transition	1.495* (0.313)	1.464* (0.310)	1.503** (0.310)	1.499* (0.330)	1.418 (0.314)	1.314 (0.233)
Basic rights respected	1.014 (0.046)	1.014 (0.046)	1.067 (0.062)	1.008 (0.051)	0.969 (0.042)	1.009 (0.050)
IGO memberships	1.023*** (0.005)	1.023*** (0.005)	1.019*** (0.006)	1.019*** (0.005)	1.006 (0.005)	1.016*** (0.005)
GDP/capita (ln)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)
Population (ln)			1.077 (0.068)			
Judicial independence				1.074 (0.062)		
Already ratified ICCPR					2.770** (1.287)	
Already ratified ICESCR					1.894** (0.614)	
After ICCPR but before end of Cold War						1.547 (0.493)
Post-Cold War period						5.126*** (3.068)
Constant	0.039*** (0.015)	0.036*** (0.014)	0.041*** (0.016)	0.047*** (0.018)	0.050*** (0.023)	0.025*** (0.011)
Observations	21,763	21,763	21,763	20,152	15,571	21,763
Country-treaty clusters	1,640	1,640	1,640	1,556	1,306	1,640
Log pseudo-likelihood	-4552.6	-4548.6	-4549.4	-4347.5	-3254.7	-4432.1
$\chi^2$	80.59	61.25	81.86	80.39	131.51	58.59
$p > \chi^2$	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Random effects with odds ratios reported. Robust standard errors clustered by country and treaty in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

## Appendix B: Summary Statistics and Descriptions of Treaty-Level Variables

Table B1 describes the functions of provisions across the ten core global human rights treaties. Provisions constituting obligations account for just over half of all provisions (53.6 percent). Of these, 40.8 percent are demanding, as seen in Table B2. Tables B3-B5 show the individual components of our “demandingness” variable.

Table B1. Functions of clauses in global human rights treaties.

Function of the treaty clause	Frequency	Percent of total
1. Preamble	33	2.1
2. General purpose or object	68	4.2
3. Definition of treaty terms	41	2.6
4. Treaty mechanics	188	11.7
5. Obligation	861	53.6
6. Limitation	35	2.2
7. Non-derogation	8	0.5
8. Accept jurisdiction of treaty body	7	0.4
9. Functioning of treaty body	294	18.3
10. Other or unclear	70	4.4
Total	1605	100

Table B2. Does this provision create a demanding obligation?

	Frequency	Percent of total
No	510	59.2
Yes	351	40.8
Total	861	100

Table B3. Does this clause create a precise or imprecise obligation?

	Frequency	Percent of total
Imprecise	198	23
Precise	663	77
Total	861	100

Table B4. Is this obligation strong or weak?

	Frequency	Percent of total
Weak	404	46.9
Strong	457	53.1
Total	861	100

Table B5. Does this clause obligate states to take domestic action?

	Frequency	Percent of total
No	75	8.7
Yes	786	91.3
Total	861	100

A demanding obligation is precise, strongly worded, and requires domestic action. We argued in the main text that all three dimensions contribute to demandingness. However, one might argue that each dimension on its own contributes to demandingness. Table B6 shows how the treaties are ranked by removing each dimension, one at a time. Removing the domestic action requirement does not alter the treaty rankings, likely because most obligations require a domestic action. Relying only on the strength of the obligation likewise does not alter the treaty ranking, except that the ICESCR and CEDAW switch places. The ranking changes only when the precision of the obligation is the only indicator. Table B7 displays the correlations among the precision, strength, required domestic action, and demanding obligation variables. Table B8 shows the high degree of agreement among the coders (Landis and Koch, 1977) in preparing the variables associated with treaty obligations. Table B9 is the codebook.

Table B6. Demandingness ranking using alternative measures.

Rank	Strong, Precise, Domestic Action	Strong, Precise	Strong	Precise
1	CRMW	CRMW	CRMW	CRMW
2	CED	CED	CED	CRPD
3	ICCPR	ICCPR	ICCPR	CED
4	CRC	CRC	CRC	CRC
5	CRPD	CRPD	CRPD	ICCPR
6	CAT	CAT	CAT	CEDAW
7	CEDAW	CEDAW	ICESCR	ICESCR
8	ICESCR	ICESCR	CEDAW	CERD
9	GENO	GENO	GENO	CAT
10	CERD	CERD	CERD	GENO

Table B7. Correlations among the components of “demandingness”.

	Precise	Strong	Domestic action	Demanding
Precise	1.0000			
Strong	0.1554	1.0000		
Domestic action	0.0465	-0.0263	1.0000	
Demanding	0.4534	0.7800	0.2563	1.0000

Table B8. Intercoder agreement, demanding obligations.

Variable	Agreement	Expected agreement	Kappa	SE	Z	Prob>Z
Precise	85.39%	63.04%	0.6046	0.0339	17.84	0.0000
Strong	92.06%	50.04%	0.8411	0.0339	24.81	0.0000
Domestic action	97.12%	82.99%	0.8308	0.0338	24.56	0.0000
Demanding obligation	93.66%	65.61%	0.8157	0.0255	31.96	0.0000



Table B9. Detailed coding instructions for key variables included in analysis.

<b>Variable name:</b>	<b>art function</b>
Variable descr.:	General function of the treaty provision being coded.
Coding rules:	Choose the option that best describes the general function or content of this provision.
	<p><b>1 = preamble:</b> this clause is part of the treaty’s preamble</p> <p><b>2 = purpose:</b> this clause expresses a general purpose or object of the treaty or part of the treaty.</p> <p><b>3 = definition of treaty language:</b> this clause defines language or terms employed in the treaty.</p> <p><b>4 = treaty mechanics:</b> this clause establishes mechanisms related to establishing the treaty itself or treaty mechanisms (signing, accession, ratification, entry into force, reporting, creation of treaty bodies).</p> <p><b>5 = obligation:</b> this clause creates a treaty obligation or duty for states parties.</p> <p><b>6 = limitation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This provision creates limitations on the obligations contained in another provision.</li> <li>• A limitation stipulates conditions under which a provision or part of it does not, or may not, apply.</li> <li>• A clause that introduces a subsequent list of obligations subject to limitation should be coded as a limitation.</li> <li>• Each of the provisions following the introductory limitation clause should also be coded as a limitation.</li> </ul> <p><b>7 = non-derogation:</b> this clause states that the treaty, or specific obligations contained in it, is non-derogable. Non-derogable clauses are obligations that cannot be suspended or for which no exceptions are possible. Non-derogation is usually stipulated in a clause to the effect that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “no exceptional circumstances...may be invoked...”, or</li> <li>• “no derogation from...may be made...”</li> </ul> <p><b>8 = accept jurisdiction of treaty body, court, or committee:</b> this clause relates to states parties’ optional acceptance of the jurisdiction of a treaty committee, court, or other body (to receive submissions from other states or from individuals; to interpret the treaty; to initiate inquiries).</p> <p><b>9 = functioning of treaty body/court/committee:</b> this clause specifies the creation, duties, or functioning of the related committee, court, or treaty body.</p>

**10 = other or unclear:** select this option only if none of the previous options applies

**11 = no reservation allowed:** this clause prohibits states from entering reservations, either to a specific provision or to the treaty as a whole.

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<b>Variable name:</b>	<b>precise</b>
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Variable descr.:	The treaty provision creates a precise rather than a general obligation.
Coding rules:	Code this variable only if you entered “5, obligation” for the previous variable “art_function.”
	Choose from the drop-down options: <b>0 = general.</b> A provision should be coded as “general” if it does not require or imply specifically identifiable actions on the part of the state or other actors. <b>1 = precise</b>

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<b>Variable name:</b>	<b>strong</b>
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Variable descr.:	Distinguishes weaker from stronger obligations
Coding rules:	Code this variable only if you entered “5, obligation” for the variable “art_function.”
	<b>0 = weak.</b> A weak obligation is one that requires states only to attempt, or make an effort, to achieve an objective. Weak obligations express a goal or aspiration rather than concrete steps to take. <b>1 = strong.</b> A strong obligation is one that requires states to take measures, achieve objectives, or guarantee rights. The language is not just of “undertaking or “seeking” but of doing. The verbs take the form of imperatives (commands).

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<b>Variable name:</b>	<b>domestic_action</b>
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Variable descr.:	The treaty provision creates an obligation for domestic action. Not all obligations created by a treaty require domestic action. Many provisions obligate states vis-à-vis each other or some international organization. Select “yes” if the provision envisions and requires further action in the laws or institutions of the state.
Coding rules:	<b>1 = yes;</b> the provision being coded creates an obligation for domestic action on the part of the state. The action could be executive, administrative, legislative, judicial, or a combination. The goal is to distinguish obligations created for states from obligations for states to take particular domestic measures.
	<b>0 = no;</b> the provision does not create an obligation for domestic action.

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## Appendix C: Descriptions of Primary Covariates

Table C1 summarizes the variables and data sources used in our analyses. We reference the original sources but most of the variables are also available from the International Political Economy Data Resource (Graham and Tucker 2017).

Table C1. Data and sources for main analyses.

Measure	Source	Time Coverage
Treaty ratification	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2023	1948-2014
IGO membership	Pevehouse et al. 2020	1948-2014
Democracy	Boix, Miller and Rosato 2022	1948-2014
Democratic transition	Boix, Miller and Rosato 2022	1948-2014
Basic rights respected	Fariss, Kenwick and Reuning 2020	1949-2014
Judicial independence	Coppedge et al. 2022	1948-2014
GDP per capita (log)	Penn World Table 2023	1950-2014

## Appendix D: Replication of Zvobgo, Sandholtz, and Mulesky (2020) – Main Results

Version 2 of the IHROC – Treaty Reservations dataset is available via the JHR Harvard Dataverse site. This version increases the overall sample size by roughly six percent, to 77,821, and the number of reservations to 1,013. In Table D1, below, we replicate Zvobgo et al.'s (2020: 795) main findings. With the exception of one of the control variables in Model 3, *GDP per capita (logged)*, which is statistically significant at a lower error level ( $p < 0.05$ ), all variables maintain their direction and level of statistical significance. For a given variable, the difference in the size of the coefficients is between one-hundredth and one-tenth of one point. Slight differences are to be expected with a slightly different (larger) sample size. Figure D1 is nearly identical to Figure 7 in Zvobgo et al. (2020: 794). The results are highly robust.

Table D1. Treaty reservations at the provision level.

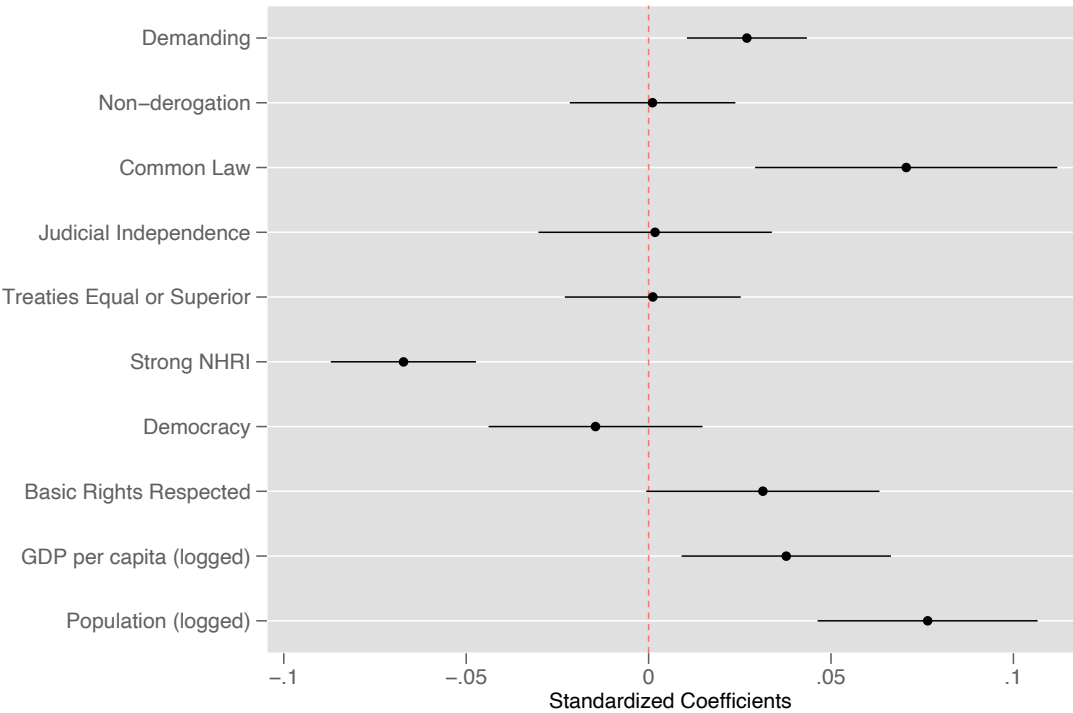
	1	2	3	4
Demanding	0.52** (0.12)	0.52** (0.14)	0.49** (0.15)	0.42** (0.12)
Non-derogation	-0.16 (0.39)	-0.23 (0.46)	-0.06 (0.48)	-0.51 (0.49)
Common Law		1.50** (0.34)	1.35** (0.34)	1.11** (0.38)
Judicial Independence		0.10 (0.10)	0.03 (0.13)	0.02 (0.13)
Treaties Equal or Superior		-0.19 (0.29)	-0.21 (0.30)	-0.25 (0.31)
Strong NHRI		-0.12** (0.03)	-0.14** (0.03)	-0.12** (0.03)
Democracy		0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Basic Rights Respected		0.05 (0.13)	0.16 (0.13)	0.17 (0.13)
GDP per capita (logged)			0.23* (0.09)	0.29** (0.09)
Population (logged)			0.36** (0.08)	0.38** (0.08)
Constant	-4.65** (0.11)	-4.62** (0.17)	-12.28** (1.14)	-12.97** (1.27)
Treaty Dummies	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	77821	56237	51703	51703

Standard errors in parentheses.

All models report standard errors clustered by country-treaty.

+  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Figure D1. Predicted effect of variables on the likelihood of reservation, with 95 percent CIs.



## References

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