Relativizing Human Rights:
A New System for Country Ranking

By

Todd Landman
Professor of Government
Department of Government
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ
UNITED KINGDOM
todd@essex.ac.uk

David Kernohan
Head of Department
Department for Economics & Statistics
Middlesex University
The Burroughs
Hendon
London NW4 4BT
UNITED KINGDOM
D.Kernohan@mdx.ac.uk

Anita Gohdes
Researcher
Benetech Initiative
480 S. California Ave.
Suite 201
Palo Alto
California 94306-1609
UNITED STATES
anita.gohdes@googlemail.com

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Abstract

This paper proposes a method for ranking country human rights performance that takes into account the performance of countries on a host of variables that are related to the protection of civil and political rights. The method involves two stages. The first stage employs principal component factor analysis to five different standards-based measures of civil and political rights to extract a single human rights 'factor score'. This human rights 'factor score' is then regressed on a collection of explanatory variables for the protection of civil and political rights and saves the residual as an indicator of the 'over' or 'under' performance of countries with respect to the protection of those rights. Both the 'factor score' and the residual score allow for a comparison of expected and actual human rights performance that leads to alternative rankings that we believe will be interest to scholars and practitioners working in the field of human rights.

Introduction

For over thirty years, scholars and practitioners have been measuring human rights, where considerable progress has been made on delineating which rights should be measured, how they should be measured, and providing a variety of measures for different categories and dimensions of human rights (see Jabine and Claude 1992; Landman 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Landman and Larizza 2009; Landman and Carvalho 2009). To date, measures have been developed that use events-based data, standards-based data, and survey-based data, as well as socio-economic and administrative statistics (see Jabine and Claude 1992; Landman 2002; Landman and Carvalho 2009). The provision of human rights data for global comparative analysis, however, has involved a narrow set of measures for a narrow set of human rights, primarily the state violation of civil and political rights (although some progress has been made in broadening the scope of rights).[1] Typically, any attempt to provide comparable measures of human rights has involved the development of standards-based data that code annual human rights performance of countries from narrative reports such as those provided by the US Department of State or Amnesty International. These measures code countries against a well-defined set of human rights standards and assign scores based on a limited scale that typically ranges from low (few violations and good performance) to high (many violations and bad performance).[2] These scales, such as the political terror scale[3], Freedom House scale of civil liberties and political rights[4], Cingranelli and Richards human rights data[5], and Oona Hathaway's (2002) scale of torture, are collected for large number of countries (normally between 160 and 190) over many years of time (between 15 and 40 years) and most suitable for empirical analyses that seek to explain the variation in human

[1] For example, the Cingranelli and Richards Human Rights Data Project (CIRI) includes measures for worker rights and women's social and economic rights, see www.humanrightsdata.com.
[2] Cingranelli and Richards reverse this logic and code good performance with a higher score.
[3] www.politicalterrorscale.org
[4] www.freedomhouse.org
[5] www.humanrightsdata.com

rights protection or the relationship between human rights protection and other variables of interest (see Landman 2005a, 2006a). There is now a large and burgeoning sub-field in political science, international relations, and socio-legal studies that have employed these measures.

Despite the production and use of these scales, they all rest on a fundamental problem: they code the annual human rights performance of a country without taking into account other prevailing conditions within the country. At one level, this makes complete sense, since human rights performance has been singled out, well-defined, and then measured; steps that follow the methodological advice found in such seminal publications as Adcock and Collier's 2001 article in the *American Political Science Review* and Goertz's (2006) *Social Science Concepts*. Such measures and the variation that they depict then become the object of inquiry that is in need of explanation through the testing of empirical theories and models of the kind developed in political science. But at another level, their use for descriptive analysis and country ranking, as in Freedom House reports 'Freedom in the World' is highly problematic and prone to the kind of criticism levelled at the UNDP in 1991 when it published a report that compared human rights performance against the human development index (see Barsh 1993). Such ranking is also popular among donor agencies using assessment frameworks for the allocation of overseas development assistance (ODA), such as the Millennium Challenge Account in the United States and the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), where raw country scores are used as litmus tests for decisions on the further extension of foreign aid.

In response to this problem, this paper proposes a relativized measure of human rights that takes into account significant factors that may have an effect on annual country performance.

It does so through three stages. First, it combines the main standards-based scales of civil and political rights through factor analysis to create a single *human rights factor score* (Landman and Larizza 2009) that provides a common dimension, or principal component, of human rights performance across 160 countries for the period 1980 to 2004. Second, it regresses this factor score on a series of key explanatory variables that feature in what has become known as the 'basic model' of human rights protection in primarily the political science literature (see Landman 2005a, 2005b, 2006) and then saves the residual from the regression analysis as a measure of the *unexplained variance in human rights performance* (see Duvall and Shamir 1980; Arat 1991, Foweraker and Landman 1997; Cingranelli and Richards 2007). This unexplained variance, in our view, captures the human rights performance of a country after having controlled for economic, political, and social conditions in the country and thus represents a relativized measure of that performance. Third, it plots this relativized performance across regions and time, and against predicted or expected levels of performance to show that despite the negative commentary on human rights conditions around the world, some regions and countries are doing much better than expected given the other prevailing socio-economic and political conditions that exist. It also shows that some regions are not doing as well as they should. In this way, the paper offers a new way to think about human rights country ranking that takes into account the relative performance of human rights.

The paper is structured in five parts. Part I outlines briefly existing standards-based measures of human rights to show how they are derived and what scales have been developed. Part II shows the bivariate relationships between all the measures for over 160 countries for the period 1980 to 2004, explains how the factor index has been generated, and then shows its basic features. Part III reviews the political science on the literature on the 'basic model' of human rights protection to show how we selected the key explanatory variables against which

the factor score is regressed. Part IV shows the relativized human rights measure for each major region in the world over time and compares it to the predicted scores given the presence of the key explanatory variables. The final section concludes by considering the way forward and how this system can be used for relativising other categories of human rights.

Part I: Existing scales of human rights performance

The development of standards-based measures of human rights have moved from fairly broad conceptions of the relative 'freedom' in a country (www.freedomhouse.org) to more narrowly defined sets of human rights that have in some cases included worker rights, women's economic rights, and women's social rights (see www.humanrightsdata.com), as well as measures of the de jure commitment of states to human rights through measuring the treaty ratification behaviour of states (Keith 1999; Landman 2005). This present paper is primarily concerned with the measures that capture the variable protection in civil and political rights. In each of these examples outlined here, the producers of the data have used source material on human rights practices within countries and applied coding protocols to the information to derive a set of standardised and comparable measures for cross-national and time-series analysis.

Freedom House

The first and most popular time-series standards-based measures of human rights was created by Raymond D. Gastil, which measures political rights and civil liberties on a scale of 1 (full protection and enjoyment of rights) to 7 (no protection or enjoyment of liberties). Gastil was primarily interested in the rights of individuals as they vary across countries. Freedom House, a non-governmental human rights organisation primarily based in the United States sponsored the development of the scales, and in 1989, took over the job of coding countries

using the original Gastil scale (Ryan 1994). In its disaggregated form, it provides a guide to the relationship between political and civil liberties over time, while in its aggregated form, it shows the broad patterns in regime behaviour over time. There were many criticisms of the Gastil scale (Barsh 1993), most of which focussed on the ways in which the scores are coded from the source material. Gastil (1990) argued that he used a 'mental checklist' that roughly scored political liberties such as competitive elections, and civil liberties such as freedom of the press and freedom of expression. But these general criteria have changed over the years and when Freedom House took over the coding, it published a complete checklist for both political and civil liberties (Ryan 1994), which are roughly the same as those employed by Gastil.

These checklists were last updated in 2006 and the scoring system is now based on a checklist of 10 political rights questions and 15 civil liberties questions. The political rights questions are grouped into the three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4). Points are awarded to these questions on a scale from 0 (small degree of rights and liberties present) to 4 (high degree of rights and liberties present). The resulting raw points scores thus have a maximum value of 40 for political liberties (i.e. up to 4 points for the 10 questions) and 60 for civil liberties (i.e. up to 4 points for the 15 questions). There is an additional discretionary question with respect to political liberties that may result in between 1 and 4 points being subtracted from the total score. These raw points scores are then converted into the two 7-point scales. The scales are comparable and rank countries from good protection and/or enjoyment of rights and liberties (1) to bad protection

and/or enjoyment of these rights and liberties (7), which correspond to general conditions of rights and liberties in the countries.

Over the years, the Freedom House scales have been used as a measure of state repressiveness (Muller and Seligson 1987), the level of democracy (e.g. Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Helliwell 1994; Munck and Verkuilen 2002), the rule of law (Knack 2002), and now feature as one of the many components in the World Bank's measures of good governance (Kaufman, Kraay, and Zoido Lobatón 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2002). Despite this variety of uses for the scales, it seems that at a base level, they are measures of civil and political rights protection, and are best utilised in their separate form since combining them into a single index can produce biases. For example, a country with a score of 2 in its political rights and 4 in its civil liberties is indistinguishable form a country with a score of 4 in its political rights and 2 in its civil liberties if the analysis adds the two scores to equal 6. The data do provide comprehensive coverage of countries and time since 1972 and thus have been used throughout academic studies in economics, political science, and international relations. For example, it is a simple matter to plot the trends in the scales over time for all the countries in the data set, one country in the data set, or to compare the relative protection of political rights and civil liberties across different regions in the world. The data can also be subjected to more sophisticated statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, which is why it remains popular within the academic and policy analysis communities.

Political Terror Scale and the Scale of Torture

The dominant, and in many ways, more reliable standards-based scale of human rights is the ‘political terror scale’, which also was devised initially by Raymond Gastil in 1979. It was

then taken up by Michael Stohl in 1983 and has since been updated by a variety of academics (Stohl, Carleton and Johnson 1984; Stohl and Carleton 1985; Dixon and Moon 1986; Stohl, Carleton, Lopez, Samuels 1986; Gibney and Stohl 1988; Henderson 1991, 1993; Poe 1991, 1992; Gibney Dalton, and Vockell 1992; Moon and Dixon 1992; Poe and Sirirangsi 1993, 1994; Davenport 1995, 1996; Fein 1995). The political terror scale codes country performance (i.e. primarily human rights performance of the state) on a 1 to 5 scale using the annual reports produced by Amnesty International and the US State Department. Others have labelled it as a measure of the protection of 'personal integrity rights', since it focuses on the state use of extra-judicial killings, torture, political imprisonment and exile (see Poe and Tate 1994; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999; Zanger 2000a, 2000b). The five different levels of the scale code country human rights practices according to the different degrees and frequency with which political integrity rights violations are reported across both sources of information. The US State Department typically reports on many more countries than Amnesty International, but the scale is produced for both sources, and social science analyses that have been conducted using the political terror scale treat them separately, although more recently, factor analysis has been used to find a common dimension among different standard-based scales of human rights (see Landman and Larizza 2009).

The political terror scale was originally coded by one team, but now uses multiple teams, which enhances its reliability. The procedure involves two different teams of coders who code the country reports separately in the first instance and then compare their scores and resolve any differences. This method of multiple coding teams is similar to the method employed by truth commissions that adopted the ‘who did what to whom’ model for events-based data (see Chapter 4). In approximately 80% of the cases coded by the teams working on the political terror scale, coders have come up with the same score for the country in any

given year, while discrepancies between the coders are adjudicated through the use of additional coders and the main academics in charge of the project. The coders are instructed to ignore their own biases, prejudices, and perceptions of the countries and to limit their coding decisions to the information that is actually contained within the country reports provided by the State Department or Amnesty International. Every attempt is made by the coders to remain conservative in the exercise of their judgment in ways that give countries 'the benefit of the doubt' and yield scores that are slightly more favourable than the report may suggest. Finally, coders use the additional insights provided by particular adjectives and other descriptors in making their judgements. For example 'reports of torture' is considered less extreme than 'widespread use of', which in turn is less severe than 'systematic patterns in', etc. (see www.politicalterrorscale.org).

The methodological strengths of the political terror scale have led to its adaptation by Hathaway (2002: 1970-1971), who applies a similar five-point scale to measure the degree to which torture is practised across the globe. The scale is derived directly from the legal requirements found in the 1984 Convention on Torture and codes country practices based on the US State Department reports only. Like the political terror scale, Hathaway uses a five point scale that moves from no (or low) instances of torture (coded as 1) to widespread instances of torture (5). These different categories for coding the torture scale contain a discrete set of practices, key words, and decision rules for coding the narrative reports on torture found in the US State Department reports. Hathaway (2002: 1972) reports 80% agreement across her coding teams (Hathaway 2002: 1972). The torture scale was originally used in Hathaway's (2002) analysis of the effectiveness of the international rights regime and has featured in other cross-national and time-series analyses of human rights (see Landman 2005; Landman and Larizza 2009).

The political terror scale and the torture scale are directly comparable since they adopt the same five point scale that is ordinal and interval, which is to say, the scales are based on the assumptions that moving from one level to another denotes a worse set of practices and that a move from a score of 2 to 3 is the same as a move from a score from 4 to 5. In other words, the increase in severity is the same in moving across the different levels of these scales. Torture, however, is but one type of human rights violation captured by the political terror scale, such that the two measures are comparable and show similar trends, but are not perfectly correlated with one another. The overall correlation between the torture scale and the Amnesty version of the political terror scale is .61 ($p < .001$) and between the torture scale and the State Department version of the political terror scale is .69 ($p < .001$).

Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data

Drawing on these developments in the provision of standards-based measures of human rights, the David Cingranelli and David Richards provided data for thirteen different human rights for 195 countries for the period from 1980 to 2006, making this one of the most comprehensive cross-national time-series data collection on human rights in the world. The data comprise 0-2 scales for ten of the rights and 0-3 scales for three of the rights, where, in contrast to our previous examples of standards-based measures of human rights, a higher score denotes better government respect for the particular human right. Since its inception, the CIRI data have been coded using multiple teams and the project reports the inter-coder reliability tests as a matter of course. Some of the separate scales are then used for aggregate indices, including a physical integrity rights index (ranging from 0 to 8) and an empowerment rights index (ranging from 0 to 10). The physical integrity rights index comprises a sum of scores for torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance. This

selection of measures maps well onto the political terror scale, but since it aggregates separate measures, the contours and components that comprise it are more transparent to the analyst. Moreover, the separate indices can be examined alongside the aggregate index to see the ways in which particular rights violations drive an overall assessment and portrayal of physical integrity rights violations.

Part II: A factor index of human rights performance

The last section showed that since the 1970s, scholars and practitioners have sought to develop scales of human rights performance that can be compared across many countries and time, and can be used to build and test empirical theories on the likely explanation for the variation in human rights protection. The section also argued that most of these scales are tracking similar dimensions of state violation of human rights, although the Hathaway (2002) scale is specifically devoted to the measurement of torture. The similarity in approach and focus suggests that these scales should be highly correlated with one another. A simple bi-variate Pearson's correlations matrix (see Table 1) indicates the existence of clusters of large and significant correlation coefficients between the human rights scales. The correlations for the torture scale is the lowest across the board, which reflects its more narrow focus on this form of human rights abuse, but the values within the table range from .498 to .822 and are all at 99.9% levels of statistical significance.

[Table 1 about here]

Given this degree of agreement among the different scales, we used principal components factor analysis to reduce the group of interrelated human rights variables. The analysis revealed five components, but only one has an eigenvalue greater than 1 (i.e. 3.295) and

accounts for over 65% of the variance. The resulting factor loadings for this component (see Table 2) clearly show a strong relationship between each variable and the common underlying dimension they all measure. Moreover, the component captures a set of human rights violations that are consistent with Cingranelli and Richards (1999: 410) findings about the uni-dimensionality of their aggregate 'personal integrity rights scale'. Once extracted, the human rights factor score has been inverted to make more intelligible its substantive meaning, where low values of the factor score correspond to a low protection of human rights (high violations) and high values correspond to a high protection of human rights (low violations). By definition, this variable is normally distributed, with a mean of 0, a minimum value is –2.7 and a maximum value is 1.97. The use of this component has several distinct advantages for the next stage in the development of our alternative measure of human rights. It reduces the need for tests of robustness that substitute various specifications of the dependent variable, and avoids using ordered probit estimation techniques that are less easy to interpret than more standard regression estimators, and thus allows for substantive interpretation of our final residual calculations discussed in the next section.

[Table 2 about here]

Part III: Modelling human rights performance

The development of our alternative measure of human rights is predicated upon existing research in the social and political sciences, which has led to a general consensus on the 'basic model' of human rights protection (see Landman 2005a). Since the first cross-national statistical analysis on human rights in late 1980s (Mitchell and McCormick 1988), there has been a proliferation of studies using increasingly large and complex data sets and an expanding list of independent variables (see Landman 2005a; Moore 2006). These variables

most notably include the level, pace, and quality of economic development (e.g. Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999); the level, timing, and quality of democratization (e.g. Davenport 1999; Zanger 2000b; Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Mesquita, Downs, Smith, and Sherif 2005); involvement in internal and external conflict (Poe and Tate 1994; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999); the size and growth of the population (Henderson 1993; Poe and Tate 1994; Poe Tate and Keith 1999); foreign direct investment and/or the presence of multinationals (Meyer 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; Smith, Bolyard, and Ippolito 1999); the level of global interdependence (Landman 2005b); and the growth and effectiveness of international human rights law (Keith 1999; Hathaway 2002; Landman 2005b; Neumayer 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsuitsui 2005, 2007; Simmons 2009).

Our goal is to regress the human rights factor score on a selection of key explanatory variables and then save the residuals as a meaningful measure of human rights performance. This method has been employed before in work on repression (Duvall and Shamir 1980), democracy and human rights (Arat 1991; Coppedge 2005; Larizza 2008), citizenship rights and social movements (Foweraker and Landman 1997), and economic and social rights (Cingranelli and Richards 2007). The idea is simple and straightforward. It rests on the assumption that there has been a well specified set of variables that account for the variation in the dependent variable[6], which in our case is the human rights factor score. This set of variables explains a large degree of that variation but not all of it, and thus the *unexplained* variation becomes our variable of interest, since it is that variation in human rights performance that cannot be explained by our selection of variables. Let us consider this

[6] This assumption, as it turns out, is often overlooked, where failure to provide a well-specified set of variables, the residual is capturing a lot of 'noise' and may not represent what it purports to represent. In retrospect the analysis in Foweraker and Landman (1997) overlooked this problem with only one explanatory variable, and its use in Cingranelli and Richards (2007) is also questionable since they have only two explanatory variables in their model. We hope we overcome this problem in the present paper.

formally. Consider the standard regression equation for a pooled cross-section time-series data set:

$$y_{it} = \alpha + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \beta_k x_{kit} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where, y_{it} is the dependent variable for units *i* and time *t* (i.e. our human rights factor score across countries and over time) and the x_{kit} variables are that collection of variables that we specify as accounting for variation in human rights performance that have emerged through the last thirty years of cross-national research. The β_k values are the regression coefficients that capture the relationship between each of the explanatory variables and the dependent variable (these estimations tell us the magnitude, direction, and significance of the relationship). The α term is the intercept and the ε_{it} term is the error, which in our case is the key variable of interest, since this is the residual or unexplained variation in the dependent variable. It is possible to illustrate this idea in simple graphical terms to capture our idea of human rights 'over' and 'under' achievement in the sections that follow. Imagine a simple bivariate relationship between our dependent variable *y* (human rights performance) and one explanatory variable *x* (e.g. the level of economic development). We know from previous research and our own analyses that economic development and human rights are positively related, such that higher levels of economic development are associated with better protection of human rights. This relationship is presented in Figure 1. The straight line comprises the predicted values of *y* given the values of *x*. Denoted as $\hat{Y}$ in standard regression notation; the predicted values are the expected values of *y* for each value of *x,* while there are *actual* values of *y* for each *x* that sit on the line, below the line, or above the line. If the actual values sit on

the line, there is no difference between the expected and actual values of Y; if they sit above the line then there is a positive difference between the actual values and the expected values ($Y_{it} - \hat{Y} > 0$); and if they sit below the line then there is a negative difference between the actual values and the expected values ($Y_{jt} - \hat{Y} < 0$). In other words, for any given level of an explanatory variable ($x_1 - x_n$), some countries have a human rights performance that is in line with expectations, *better than expected* (i.e. a positive residual), or *worse than expected* (i.e. a negative residual). We call countries with positive residuals 'over-achievers' since their human rights performance is better than expected and countries with negative residuals 'under achievers' since their human rights performance is worse than expected. The use of the residuals thus captures our understanding of *relativising* human rights, since we are calculating the residual in the presence of significant explanatory variables.

[Figure 1 about here]

Our selection of explanatory variables include income and land inequality, the level of democracy, level of economic development, domestic conflict, population size, and ethnic fractionalisation (see Landman and Larizza 2009). This collection of variables represents those that have received the most support or generated the most consensus within the cross-national quantitative research on human rights (see Landman 2005a, 2006, 2009 for a summary). Each of these variables and the ways in which we operationalised them is presented here.

Inequality

For income inequality, we use a new measure based on the 'inequality project' (UTIP) developed by James K. Galbraith and Hyunsub Kum at the University of Texas, Austin. In an

effort to overcome the well-known deficiencies of the Deininger and Squire (1996) data set on income inequality (i.e. sparse coverage, problematic measurements, and the combination of diverse data types into a single data set), Galbraith and Kum use the UTIP-UNIDO measures of manufacturing pay inequality as an instrument to create a new panel data set of Estimated Household income inequality (EHII), which covers a large panel of countries from 1963 through 1999, for nearly 3200 country-years. This new dataset provides comparable and consistent measurements across space and through time, thus being a more valid proxy of income inequality than the Deininger and Squire data usually employed by cross-national empirical studies (Galbraith and Kum 2004). For our estimations, a linear interpolation of the original EHII variable has been computed for each country-series to increase the number of observations.

For land inequality, we use a measure that is expressed as the area of family farms as a percentage of the total area of land holdings (Vanhanen 1997). The reasoning behind this measure is that the higher the percentage of family farms, the more widely economic power resources based on ownership patterns of agricultural land are distributed (Vanhanen 1997: 47). Family farms are defined as 'holdings that are mainly cultivated by the holder family and that are owned by the cultivator family or held in ownerlike possession' (Vanhanen 1997: 49). The data on landownership were mainly derived from the FAO World Censuses of Agriculture (from the 1960s to the 1980s) and Vananhen's own estimations for the 1990s. As with our income inequality data, these data have been interpolated to fill in missing time points for those countries where two or more time points of data were made available. To make this variable equivalent to income inequality in terms of its measurement of land inequality, it has been inverted by subtracting the original percentage value from 100 such that a low score means a more favourable distribution of land.

Other researchers have used different indicators to measure land inequality. The most common alternative would have been the Gini index of land concentration (Russett et al. 1964; Muller and Seligson 1987). This type of index calculates 'the difference between an "ideal" cumulative distribution of land (where all farms are the same size) and the actual distribution' (Russett et al 1964: 237-238). We prefer our measure to the Gini index for three reasons. First, without controlling for the ownership of land, the Gini index does not adequately capture the relative distribution of economic resources among those who cultivate the land, and is thus insensitive to the kind of asset inequality we believe is most likely to be related to human rights abuses. Second, Brockett's (1992: 172) empirical analysis clearly demonstrates that land distribution data based on the Gini index tend to underestimate land maldistribution in countries characterized by the prevalence of landlessness among peasants. Third, the necessary data on the number and size of land holdings (required to compute the Gini Index) are not available for most of the developing countries, thereby seriously compromising the global perspective of our study (Vanhanen 1997: 50). The alternative measure of land inequality adopted by Prosterman and Reidinger (1987) would be more in line with our purposes, but again of limited practical utility given its small coverage.

Democracy

For the level of democracy, we use the Polity IV 20-point combined democracy score (DEMOC – AUTOC), which ranges from -10 to + 10. The variable POLITYIV2 – which is also used here - incorporates the authors recommendations for transforming Polity 'standardized authority codes' (i.e., -66, -77, and -88 for interruption, interregnum or transition) to scaled POLITY scores so that the variable may be used consistently in time-series analyses without losing crucial information by treating the 'standardized authority scores' as missing values. Give the large number of consistent findings for the positive

relationship between democracy and human rights (see Poe and Tate 1994; Poe Tate, and Keith 1999; Davenport 1999; Zanger 2000; Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Mesquita, Downs, Smith, and Sherif 2005), we also expect a positive relationship for this variable.

Ethnic fractionalization

The level of ethnolinguistic fractionalization is measured using data from Alesina et al. (2003). The fractionalization index is computed by using the Herfindahl index of ethnolinguistic group shares, which represents and improvement over existing measures (e.g. La Porta 1999) by compiling a separate variable for ethnic fragmentation. Their main goal is 'to clearly distinguish between ethnic, religious and linguistic heterogeneity', where '[a]lternative indicators tend to lump together ethnic and linguistic differences as part of an "ethnolinguistic" fractionalization variable' (Alesina et al. 2003: 158). Since their measure is more disaggregated it has the potential for better differentiation between the dimensions of fractionalization, even though some of those dimensions can be overlapping. This variable is included since several studies on ethnic conflicts have shown that multi-cultural societies are especially prone to political instability, domestic violence, and eventually state terror, as authorities are more likely to resort to coercive means to deal with ethnically-based mobilizations and acts of political dissents (Walker and Poe 2002; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). In our preliminary analysis of this variable, we discovered that its relationship with the protection of human rights is curvilinear such that up to a point increasing fractionalisation is negatively related to the protection of human rights, but then declines as the level of fractionalization increases. In other words, countries with a small number of distinct lines of ethnic cleavage tend to have worse protection of human rights, while this with a large plurality of groups tend to have better protection of human rights. We thus specify our model to include a squared term of this variable to take into account this particular functional form.

Domestic conflict

As in the research on human rights and political violence, we include a variable for internal domestic conflict, which is specified as an independent variable alongside the other variables in our model. We do not use the simple dummy variable for civil war from the Correlates of War project as in much of extant work on human rights, nor do we use events-based measures of the kind coded from single and multiple news sources found in the literature on political violence. The civil war dummy is still a fairly crude variable that tends to absorb quite a lot of the explanatory space in most human rights literature (see Poe and Tate 1994) and the events-based measures have proved to be fairly insecure for the kind of cross-national and time-series comparisons conducted here on grounds of validity and reliability. We thus employ the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) measure of internal conflict, which is an aggregate 12-point scale that comprises the overall risk levels for civil war and threat of a military coup, terrorism and political violence, and general levels of civil disorder. We feel that this measure is superior in some respects since it provides greater variance than the civil war dummy and perhaps greater validity than the event-based measures of conflict to date. We expect this variable to have a negative relationship with the protection of human rights, which is consistent with the findings in both literatures.

Other control variables

The level of economic development is measured through the natural log of the value of real per capita income (GDP, constant 2000 US $), and is taken from the World Bank Development Indicators. We expect this variable to have a positive relationship with the protection of human rights. Total population size is based on de facto definition of population, which counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship--except for refugees not permanently settled in the country of asylum, which are generally considered

part of the population of their country of origin. The variable is taken from the World Bank and has been logged to correct for skewed distribution. We expect this variable to have a negative relationship with the protection of human rights, since more populous countries tend to have greater difficulty in protecting personal integrity rights.

Methods of Estimation

Our data set follows by now what has become a standard construction of a matrix of cross-section and time-series units, where variation in the variables and the number of observations are maximised across time and space. Such data sets do, however present a number of problems for estimating parameters using standard regression techniques. First, the error terms tend to be correlated from one time period to the other (serial correlation). Second, the error terms tend to be heteroskedastic, which means that they tend to have different variances across units (Stimson 1985: 19; Beck and Katz 1995: 637-638). To control for serial correlation, we model the dynamics of our data by introducing a Prais-Winsten (first order) autoregressive transformation. To control for heteroskedasticity, we adopt a variation of White's (1980) estimator of robust standard errors that adjusts for clustering across countries.

In addition to the standard problems mentioned above, our data set has the additional problems of unit-specific effects associated with time invariant or nearly time invariant variables (Plümper and Troeger 2007). In other words, some of our variables do not vary much or at all over time, and we need a method for controlling for this feature of some of our variables. When unit effects are present, but not explicitly modelled, their presence is picked up in the error term, and consequently, if these unit effects are then correlated with one or more explanatory variables, the error term too will be correlated with the explanatory variables, and simple ordinary least squares (OLS) would produce biased coefficient

estimates. Plümper and Troeger (2007) have devised a three-stage regression technique known as "fixed-effects-vector-decomposition" (FEVD) that 'decomposes' the explained and unexplained elements of the fixed effects and produces final estimates that take into account the particular qualities of time invariant or nearly time invariant variables.

In order to identify the time invariant and nearly time invariant variables in our data set we compared the 'between-unit' variation to the 'within-unit' variation (see Table A1), which is to say, we examined the variation in a variables across different countries and within our countries. We then used the rule of thumb that those variables for which 'between variation' is 2.5 times larger than 'within variation' we specify as invariant or nearly invariant. Those variables for which this is the case include income and land inequality; per capita GDP; population size; and both forms of the ethnic fractionalization variable. We thus adopt the fixed effect vector decomposition method of estimation and specify these variables in the FEVD procedure as invariant. By doing so, we successfully combine the benefits of an increased number of observations with the ability to control for unobservable country-specific differences, eliminating much of the omitted variable bias of cross-section data. FEVD thus represents the most appropriate method of estimation for calculating the residuals in the ways that capture the relative human rights performance that is the main focus of this paper.

Part IV: Relativizing human rights and a new country ranking

The previous two sections of the paper explained how we derived the human rights factor score by combining existing measures of human rights and how we calculated the residuals using the FEVD method of estimation. This section shows the different ways in which the residuals can be used to compare and contrast human rights performance across and within

regions of the world, and how the picture that emerges is different if only the original scores had been used. Throughout this section of the paper, we present the time-series trends in the residuals alongside the predicted values, which allows for an assessment of how regions are doing in light of where they ought to be, all *things being equal*. Figure 2 show the global time-series trend in predicted human rights performance and the global average for the residuals. It is clear that for the world, countries had been doing slightly better than expected up until the end of the Cold War, when the overall pattern in performance reversed and countries on average started to exhibit patterns in human rights performance that were slightly worse than expected, a trend that continues until the end of the period despite some evidence of fluctuation in the mid-1990s.

</Figure 2 about here/>

Figure 3 shows the predicted values alongside the residuals for all regions in the world. Comparing across the different regional graphs shows that some regions in absolute terms are doing better than others, where the OECD countries have the highest levels of performance, followed by Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. But, more importantly, the figure also shows that *within* regions, some regions are doing as well as can be expected given the other underlying and prevailing factors at work. This relative performance seems important to us, since it is often absolute levels that are used by academics and policymakers rather than taking into consideration the underlying factors and then looking at those levels of performance that remain unexplained. The six regions in Figure 3 are discussed in turn with reference to specific charts for each.

The trends in the OECD (Figure 4), as expected, are highest in absolute terms in comparison to the other regions in the world, but as against their own expected values (given the relative values of all their independent variables), we can see that the region has shown a downward trend in performance from the mid-1990s. This trend can in part be explained by the new membership of the OECD by 'transitional' countries, including Mexico (1994), Czech Republic (1995), Hungary (1996), Korea (1996), Poland (1996), and Slovak Republic (2000).[7] For Eastern Europe (Figure 5), remarkable progress has been made over the period both in expected and actual terms, but the actual performance remains consistently below that which is expected given the trends in the other variables. For Latin America (Figure 6), the expected level of performance shows a positive trend with variable achievement in actual performance that becomes consistently positive towards the second half of the period. Asian performance (Figure 7) has developed from a period of over-achievement in the 1980s to one of under-achievement since 1990 even though the region as a whole ranks fourth out of all the regions. The trends in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 8) show similar patterns of over and under achievement as in Asia, but from the late 1990s, the actual performance has caught uop to expected performance in ways that are not yet apparent in Asia. Finally, the Middle East (Figure 9) has the overall lowest levels of performance among the regions, and its trends in actual performance have exceeded expected levels in the early part of the period, fell far below expected performance levels throughout the 1990s, and have shown improvement toward the end of the period where actual performance once again exceeds expected performance.

</Figures 4-9 about here/>

[7] See www.oecd.org for a list of all member state ratification dates of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

As a final illustration of the utility of the relativized score, it is possible to make forecasts for of human rights performance in particular ways. By way of illustration, we wanted to know the change in performance for those badly performing cases as against on increasing trend in per capita GDP. We averaged the under/overachievement of each country for the year 2000-2004 and then predicted the change in human rights protection given an underlying change in per capita GDP (at 2% and 5% annual growth rates) for two sets of cases: (1) those cases that fall 1 standard deviation below the mean, and (2) those that fall 2 standard deviations below the mean. This type of forecast allows us to compare these two different sets of badly performing countries and show their likely trajectory in terms of human rights performance using the relative measures that have been developed in this paper. Figure 10 shows the forecasts for both sets of countries at both rates of change in per capita GDP, where it is clear that positive developments in human rights performance are expected at both rate of per capita GDP growth, despite the relative under-achieving status of the group of cases.

</Figure 10 about here/>

Part V: Conclusions and the way forward

In this paper, we have developed a relativized measure of human rights performance that combined existing measures into a single factor score, regresses that factor score on a well-specified set of explanatory variables, and saves the residual as a meaningful way to capture the unexplained variation (or degree of over- and under- achievement) in human rights performance. We showed that there is relatively high consistency and significant correlation between existing measures and that there is one principal component that captures an underlying dimension of state protection of civil and political rights that can be used to calculate the residual in the ways that we have done here. There is great value in the

relativized scoring system since it allows for systematic a comparison of the expected and actual levels of performance for the whole world and separate regions over time. The scores, in turn, allow for the comparison of absolute differences and relative differences that control for other underlying factors that explain the variation human rights performance. Thus, it is possible to show that one region is doing better than another, but in our view more importantly, it is possible to show the degree of progress within a region as against where it ought to be given the presence of other domestic variables. It also eliminates many of the political arguments about differences in capability and capacity owing to differences, for examples, in levels of development and democracy. Rather, it controls for those and other factors and then allows for the comparison of human rights performance.

There is still more work to be done in extending this method to other sets of rights. For example, we should with very little difficulty by able to replicate our model for certain sets of economic and social rights, as found, for example, in the Cingranelli and Richards human rights data project. We also believe that the these scores can be combined with GIS software to produce human rights performance maps that chart the degree of over and under achievement in an easy to understand format for policy makers and private companies interested in the relative human rights performance of countries. Finally, the forecasting work is of great value to examine the world's worst performers and to inform those interested in some form of directed policy intervention aimed at improving the human rights conditions in particular parts of the world. For example, the findings in this paper can be used to produce more stylized depictions of country rankings that plot relative performance against actual performance for given years to group countries into performance categories that would be of interest to popular publications such as the Economist and others. We do hope that this paper and the method that it

develops will be of enduring value to the community of scholars and practitioners working in this exciting field.

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Table 1: Human Rights scales correlations

Variable		PTS (AI)	PTS (SD)	Torture Scale	Freedom House Civil Liberties	CIRI Physical Integrity Index
PTS (AI)	Pearson Correlation	1	.820**	.606**	.512**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	3362	3322	1936	3296	3058
PTS (SD)	Pearson Correlation	.820**	1	.683**	.589**	.822**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	3322	3647	2112	3576	3318
Torture Scale	Pearson Correlation	.606**	.683**	1	.498**	.685**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	1936	2112	2198	2138	2059
Freedom House Civil Liberties	Pearson Correlation	.512**	.589**	.498**	1	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	3296	3576	2138	3751	3378
CIRI Physical Integrity Index	Pearson Correlation	.774**	.822**	.685**	.591**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	3058	3318	2059	3378	3445

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Component loadings

	Extracted Component
PTS (AI)	.845
PTS (SD)	.909
Torture Scale	.684
Freedom House Civil Liberties	.720
CIRI Physical Integrity Index	.877

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA)
Eigenvalue for extracted component = 3.295

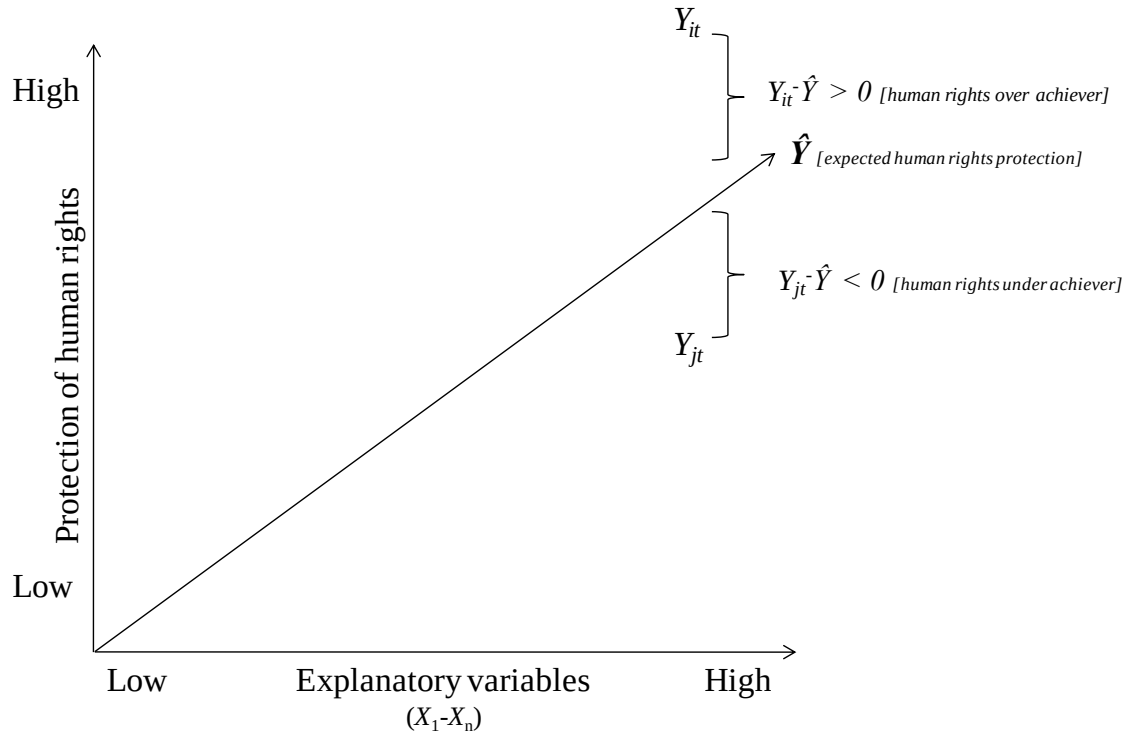

Figure 1. Human rights *over achievers* and *underachievers*

Figure 2. Global time series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005.

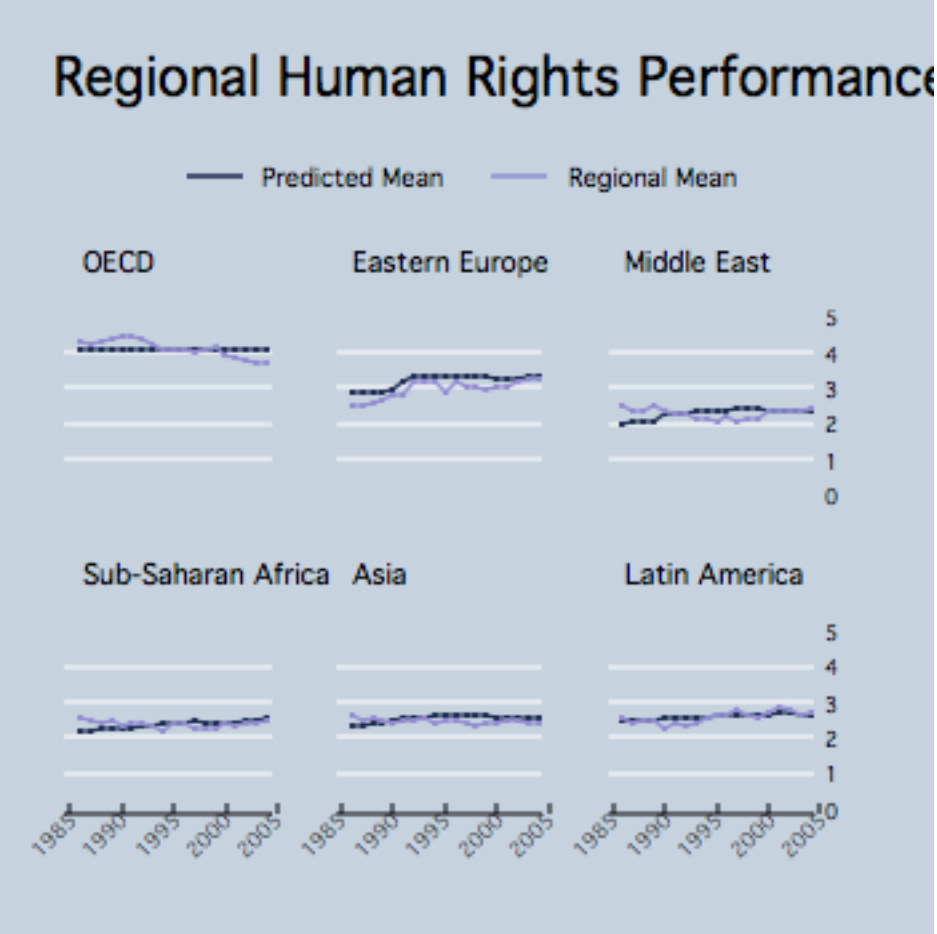

Figure 3. Regional time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

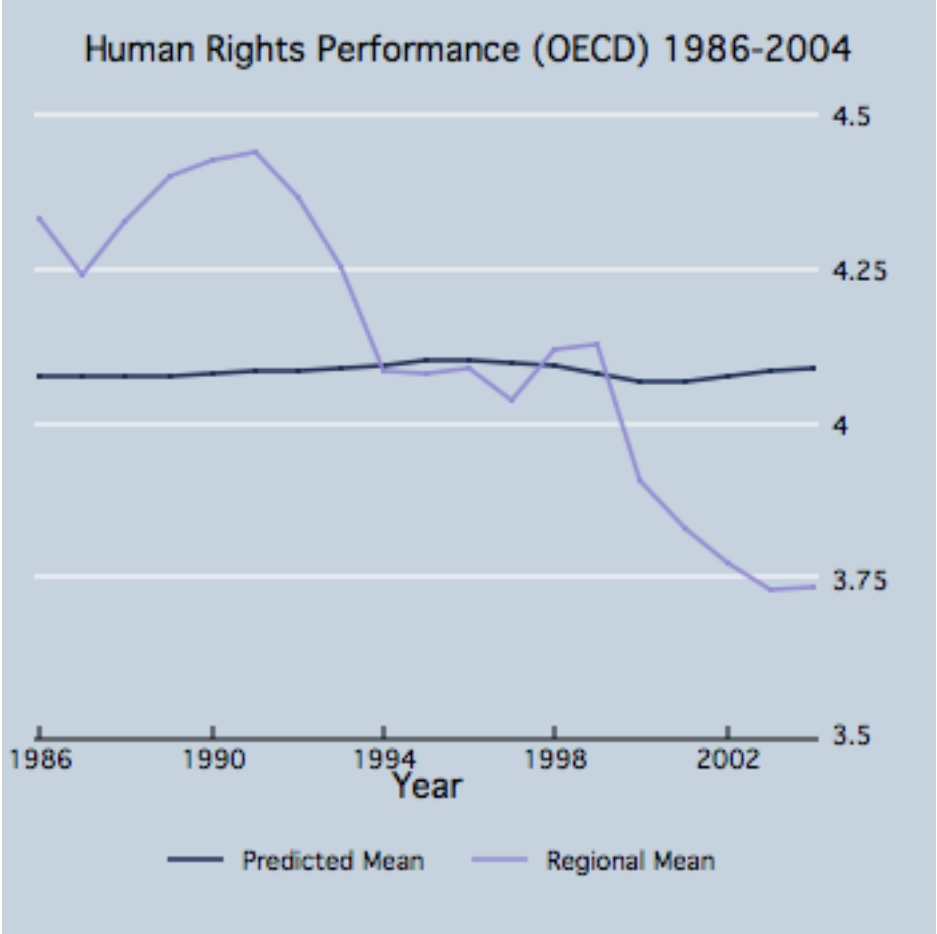

Figure 4. OECD time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

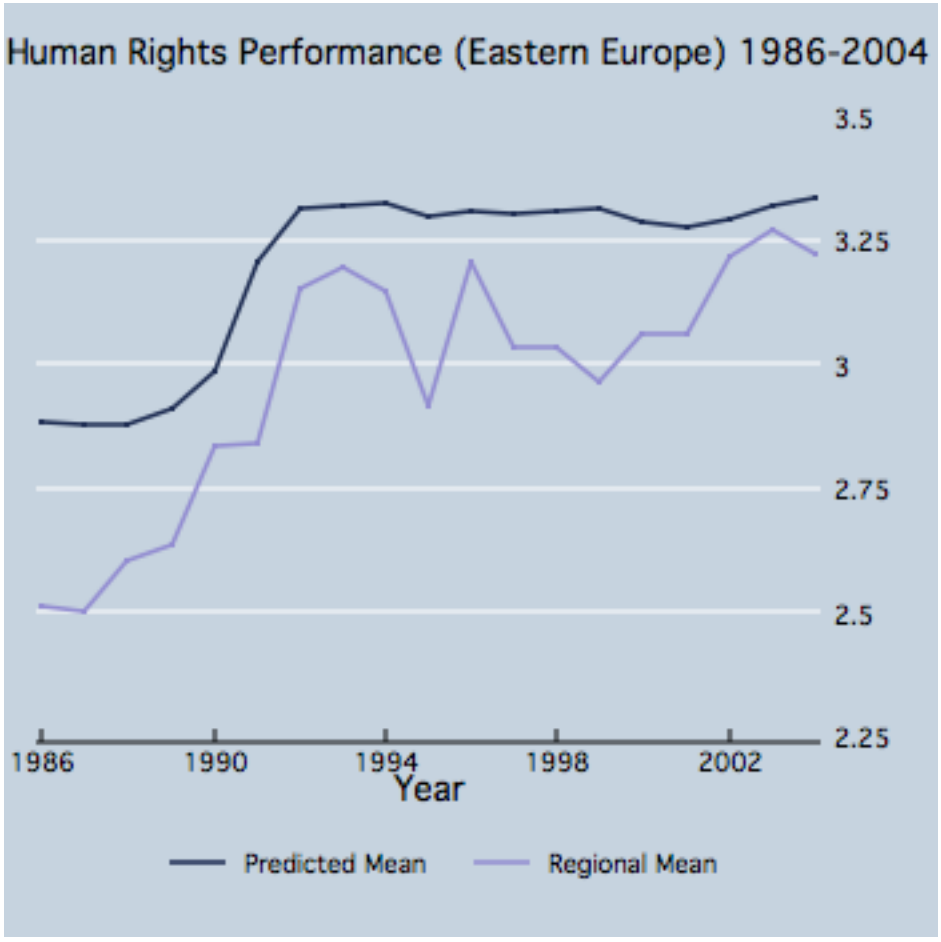

Figure 5. Eastern European time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

Figure 6. Latin American time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

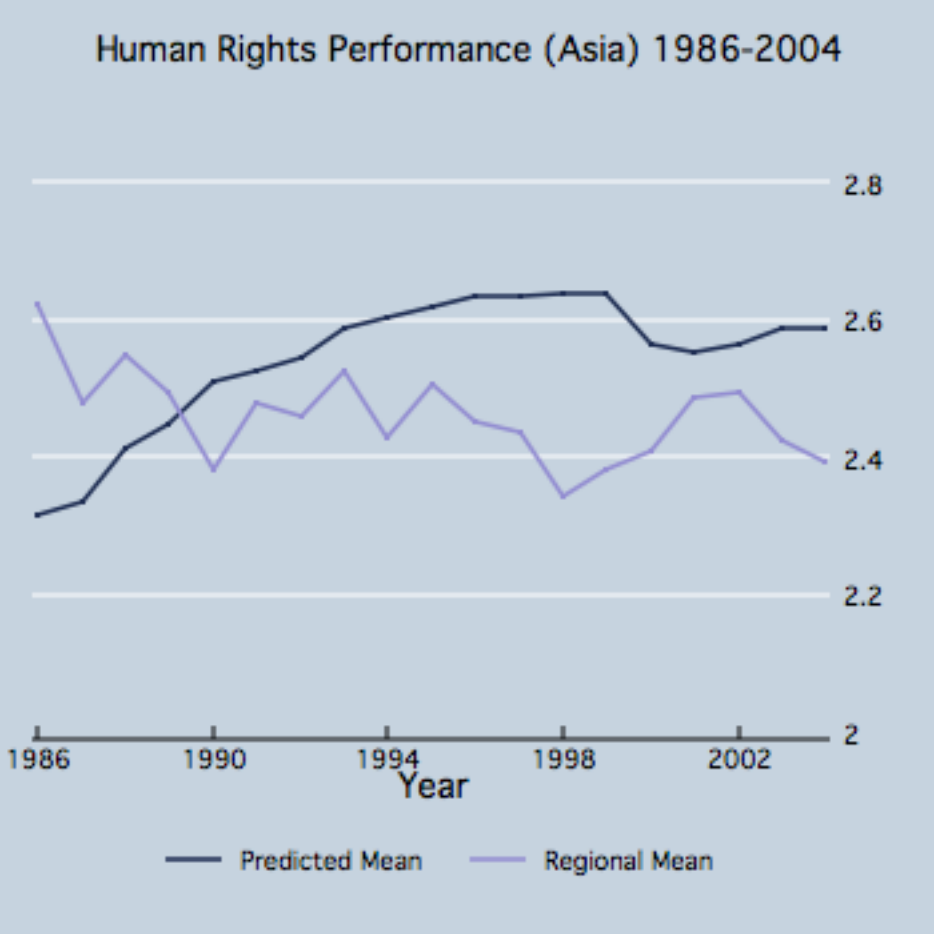

Figure 7. Asian time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

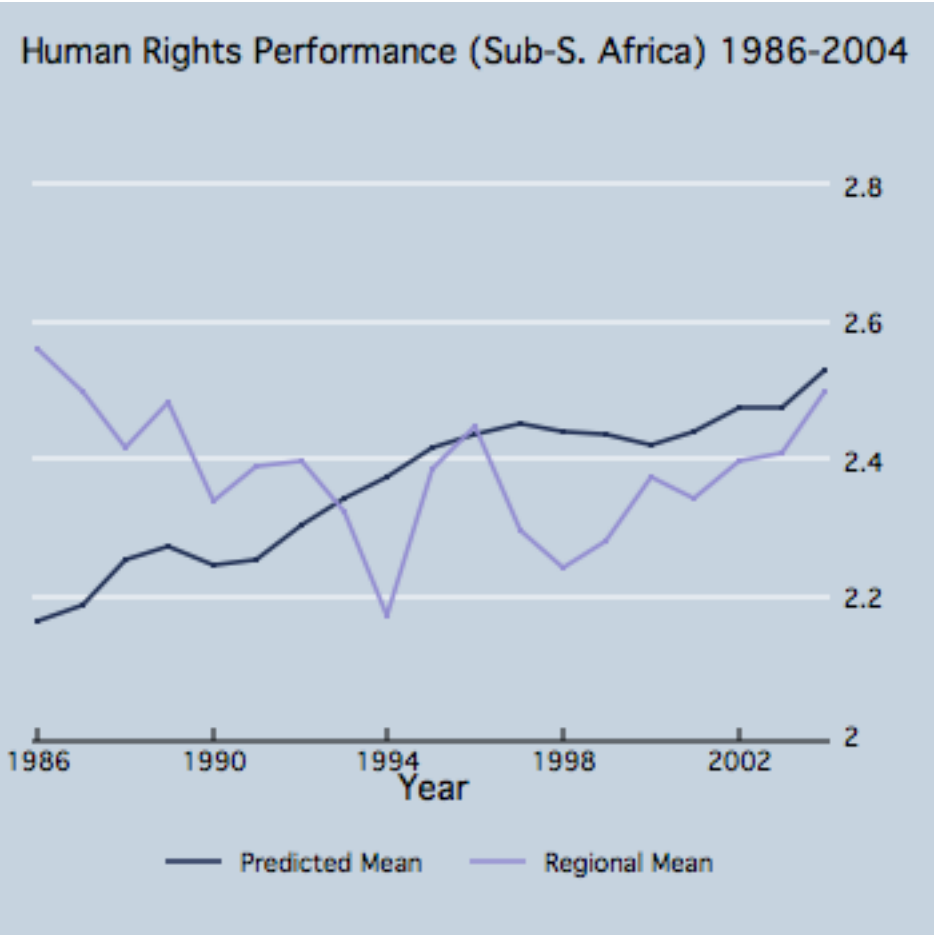

Figure 8. Sub-Saharan Africa time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

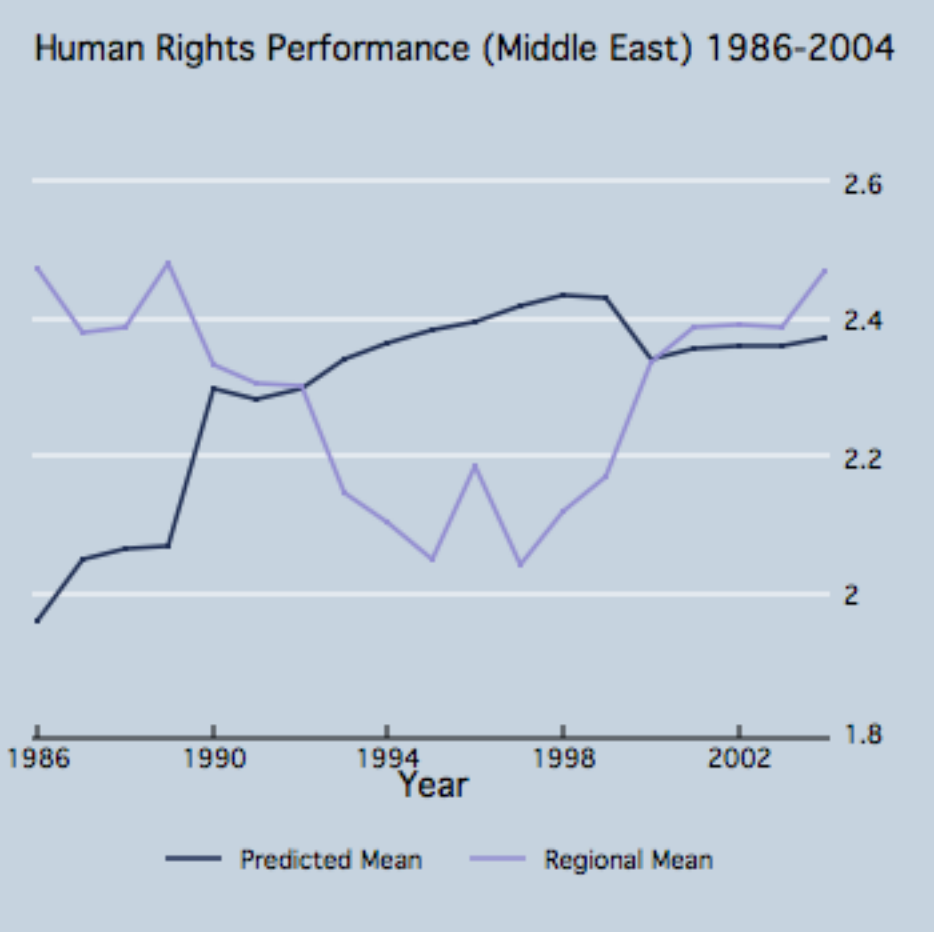

Figure 9. Middle East time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986-2005

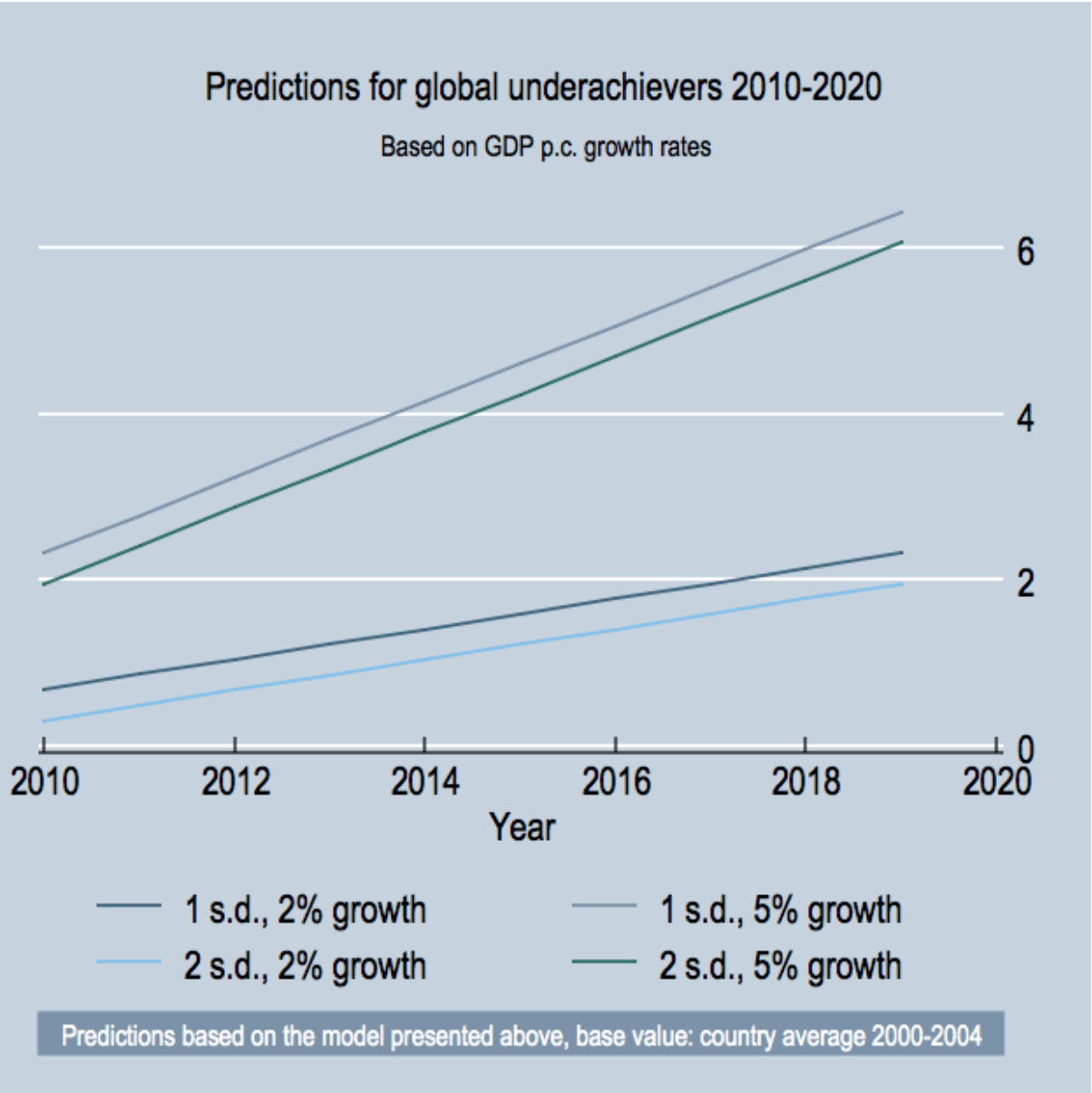

Figure 10. Forecasting human rights performance for under-achievers against two rates of change in per capita GDP, 2010-2020

Table A1: Independent variables used in the statistical analysis (summary statistics with between and within variation)

Variable		Mean	St. Dv.	Min	Max	N
Income Inequality	Overall	43.48	7.16	20.07	64.75	3306
	between		7	20.76	58.13	
	within		2.09	31.98	61.81	
Land Inequality	Overall	52.92	20.99	2	100	3229
	between		20.14	4.12	92.44	
	within		.57	9.62	83.86	
Level of Democracy	Overall	.91	7.42	-10	10	3541
	between		6.37	-10	10	
	within		3.77	-13.63	13.03	
Ethnic fragmentation	Overall	.46	.26	0	.93	3802
	between		.26	0	.93	
	within		0	.46	.46	
Ethnic fragmentation sq.	Overall	.28	.24	0	.87	3802
	between		.24	0	.87	
	within		0	.28	.28	
Domestic conflict	Overall	3.41	2.83	0	12	2630
	between		2.16	0	9.16	
	within		1.80	-2.29	10.08	
Population size	Overall	15.93	1.54	12.30	20.98	4016
	between		1.54	12.47	20.86	
	within		.16	13.52	16.68	
Economic Development	Overall	7.43	1.59	3.80	10.78	3568
	between		1.56	4.57	10.38	
	within		.22	5.16	8.70	