Supplementary Appendix for "Problems of Model Specification and Improper Data Extrapolation"

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Appendix for the Rebuttal of “The Changing Standard of Accountability and the Positive Relationship between Human Rights Treaty Ratification and Compliance” by Christopher J. Fariss (forthcoming, BJPS)

Figure 1A. Annual means of Latent Human Rights Treaty Variable, by two levels of Democracy (Polity IV). Data are from Fariss (forthcoming, BJPS): https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/TI77ZP;

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Note: We do not agree that the findings show that ratification of human rights treaties improves human rights performance. The findings supporting this conclusion are the artifact of the positive time-trend for democracy, in parallel with the growth in the number of human rights treaty ratifications.
Figure 2A. Annual means of “Corrected” Human Rights Scores created by Dynamic IRM, by two levels of Democracy (Polity IV). Data are from Fariss (forthcoming, BJPS): https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/TI77ZP;

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Note: Figure 2A groups the Corrected Scores by the level of democracy. Notice that for democracies (Polity IV ≥ 6), the Corrected Scores recorded decline since 1980. Performance of non-democracies was up and down with a little overall improvement. Thus, if the average Corrected Scores are increasing over time, this is because the proportion of democracies in the sample goes up, almost doubling between 1965 and 2010 (from 30% to 58%).

Figure 2A also demonstrates that the Corrected Scores, which incorporate the assumption about a change in the standards of accountability, still show little improvement in human rights practices. Once average Corrected Scores are disaggregated based on the level of democracy, they provide no clear evidence that that there have been “real improvements to the level of respect for human rights”. Any improvements in the worldwide average level of respect for human rights is due almost entirely to the increase in the proportion of democratic states worldwide, especially since the end of the cold war.
Farris calculates two new measures of human rights, “Corrected” human rights scores and “Uncorrected” human rights scores. Corrected Scores assume changing standards of accountability in the records of human rights violations and the Uncorrected Scores based on conventional assumptions of IRM. The difference between the results obtained from OLS models for the period 1965-2010 using Corrected and Uncorrected Scores serves as his primary evidence that the changing standards are a real problem (see Figures 3-12 in the paper).

Farris’s scores are available for observations since 1949, but in the paper he excluded observations prior to 1965. We re-estimated all the models presented in the paper for the period 1981-2010 (the range of the CIRI data) using Fariss’s dataset. The re-estimated regressions produced statistically insignificant differences between the coefficients obtained for the Corrected and Uncorrected Scores (see Figures 3A-12A below).

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As in the paper, re-estimated coefficient from the linear models using the dependent latent physical integrity variables from the constant standard model (the Uncorrected Scores) and the dynamic standard model (Corrected Scores) respectively. The author tried 10 different measures of Treaty Ratification as the main independent variables. In total, there are 80 pairs of the model specifications. However, for the period 1981-2010, only for 2 out 80 total pairs there are statistically significant differences for the coefficients obtained for the Corrected and Uncorrected Scores.
The thick lines represent ±1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent ±2 the standard error of the coefficient. All differences are not statistically different from 0.

Figure 3A  Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Latent Human Rights Treaty Variable
Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Total Number of Ratified Treaties (CAT, CCPR, CESCR, CERD, CEDAW, CRC)

Re-Estimation for the period 1981-2010

The thick lines represent +/-1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent +/-2 the standard error of the coefficient. All differences are not statistically different from 0.
Figure 5A  Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Total Number of Ratified Treaties

Re-Estimation for the period 1981-2010

The thick lines represent +/-1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent +/-2 the standard error of the coefficient. All differences are not statistically different from 0.
The thick lines represent $\pm 1$ the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent $\pm 2$ the standard error of the coefficient. All differences are not statistically different from 0.
Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Convention Against Torture

Figure 7A Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Convention Against Torture

Re-Estimation for the period 1981-2010

The thick lines represent ±1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent ±2 the standard error of the coefficient.

All differences are not statistically different from 0.
Figure 8A  Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for
Convention on the Elimination of all
Forms of Discrimination against Women

Re-Estimation for the period 1981-2010

The thick lines represent +/- 1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent +/- 2 the standard error of the coefficient.

All differences are not statistically different from 0.
The thick lines represent ±1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent ±2 the standard error of the coefficient.

All differences are not statistically different from 0.
Figure 10A Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The thick lines represent +/-1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent +/-2 the standard error of the coefficient.

All differences are not statistically different from 0.
The thick lines represent $\pm 1$ the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent $\pm 2$ the standard error of the coefficient. Six out of 8 differences are not statistically different from 0.
Figure 12A Difference Between Linear Model Coefficients for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Re-Estimation for the period 1981-2010

The thick lines represent ±1 the standard error of the coefficient. The thin lines represent ±2 the standard error of the coefficient. All differences are not statistically different from 0.