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## Who Says Human Rights are Not Respected? A Cross-National Comparison of Objective and Subjective Ratings

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## Who Says Human Rights are Not Respected? A Cross-National Comparison of Objective and Subjective Ratings

### Cover Page Footnote

I thank Amy Kroska and Martin Piotrowski for their generous assistance. Direct correspondence to: Rob Clark, Department of Sociology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019; email: [robclark@ou.edu](mailto:robclark@ou.edu).

## WHO SAYS HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT RESPECTED?

### A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON OF OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE RATINGS

#### ABSTRACT

Country ratings of human rights conditions are now quite popular in macro comparative analysis. However, little is known as to whether (or to what extent) these scores correspond with mass sentiment in each country. Do “objective” ratings from the Political Terror Scale (PTS) and the Cingranelli-Richards index (CIRI) correspond with “subjective” ratings issued by the public? In this study, I answer this question, drawing from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey (2010 – 2014), in which respondents from 59 countries are asked to assess the level of respect for individual human rights in their country. The findings suggest a mild, but positive, association between objective and subjective ratings, and that the correspondence may be driven, in particular, by incidents of torture. In addition, the results indicate that survey respondents who are male, wealthy, and politically conservative offer significantly higher ratings than other individuals. Finally, the results show that the gap between objective and subjective ratings is smallest among females, the highly educated, and respondents in wealthier nations, suggesting that these evaluations most closely match observed conditions. Overall, while objective ratings highlight between-country differences in human rights conditions, the subjective ratings illustrate the wide range of opinions that exist *within* countries.

## INTRODUCTION

World polity scholars argue that a global civil society has emerged during the post-WWII era, featuring the mass diffusion of policy models, cultural norms, and development targets across the world (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997). International organizations (IGOs and INGOs) are widely considered to be instrumental in this effort, setting global standards and principles that nation-states ultimately adopt for themselves (Boli and Thomas 1997). Scholars point to the global spread of numerous cultural scripts, including environmentalism (Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000), science and education (Drori, Meyer, Ramirez, and Schofer 2003; Schofer and Meyer 2005), gender equity (Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006), and democracy (Torfason and Ingram 2010).

In addition, human rights treaties have grown increasingly popular in recent decades and have proliferated across the world (Clark 2010; Cole 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Pegram 2010), signaling a growing effort by the international community to address human rights violations (Hafner-Burton 2008). Unfortunately, human rights conditions are not improving (Clark 2010, 2014; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005), and significant cross-national disparities in human rights practices persist (Clark 2014). In fact, whether international treaties even improve a country's human rights record has become an important debate in the literature (Cole 2012a, 2012b; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Hathaway 2002).

More generally, despite the diffusion of human rights principles across the world, the relative presence or absence of state repression continues to be affected by a number of state-level characteristics. Past studies identify a number of factors that improve a country's human rights performance, including economic development (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005, 2007; Poe and Tate 1994), democracy (Clark and Hall 2011; Powell and Staton 2009), and ties to

international organizations (Greenhill 2010; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Powell and Staton 2009), along with conditions that lead to human rights violations, such as civil war (Clark 2012; Clark and Hall 2011; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005, 2007) and population pressures (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005, 2007; Powell and Staton 2009).

Consequently, given that countries continue to vary widely across these characteristics, human rights conditions themselves remain diverse across the world. The Political Terror Scale (PTS) rates countries on their level of state repression, with scores ranging from 1 to 5 (I discuss this measure in greater detail below). While countries like Sweden feature very low levels of repression (scoring a perfect 1.0 in 2010), other countries like Pakistan rate very high at the other end of the continuum (scoring a 5.0 in 2010). Presumably, those individuals living in Sweden and in Pakistan are aware of their very different circumstances. The relative presence or absence of human rights violations (e.g., torture, political imprisonment) can be experienced directly or learned indirectly through family, neighbors, and friends. Citizens can also avail themselves to media reports, press releases from human rights groups, or the publications of other watchdog organizations. The public may even use the PTS ratings themselves as a source of information about their government. Ideally, then, each population is in a position to accurately evaluate the performance of their governments.

But mass sentiment may not be coherent, as individuals living in the same country may form very different impressions depending on a number of factors, including their definition of human rights (i.e., which rights are under consideration?), the standards they use to assess government performance (i.e., what rises to the level of a violation?), their access to information, their proximity to victimization, and perhaps their level of patriotism and loyalty to the state. In this study, I address several research questions surrounding public ratings of human rights

conditions. While past work examines the relationship between the personal characteristics of survey respondents and their assessment of human rights conditions (Clark and Hall 2011), a number of questions remain unanswered. To what extent do the public's "subjective" ratings correspond with the "objective" ratings provided by human rights groups? To what extent do the subjective ratings vary within each population? Are subjective ratings influenced by the personal characteristics of the individual (e.g., age, gender, income) net of objective conditions? And, finally, what types of individuals provide subjective ratings that most closely approximate the objective ratings?

To address these questions, I rely on survey data from the most recent wave (2010 – 2014) of the World Values Survey (WVS). In this survey wave, respondents from 59 countries were asked how much respect there is for individual human rights in their country. Four responses are available, including "There is no respect at all" (a score of 1), "There is not much respect" (a score of 2), "There is some respect" (a score of 3), and "There is a lot of respect" (a score of 4). As Figure 1 reveals, the subjective ratings of respondents vary considerably. Figure 1 presents four box plots (one for each response category), with each box plot depicting a frequency distribution of the percent of respondents selecting that category across all 59 states. In very few cases did a large majority of the respondents agree on the same rating. And, in most cases (34 out of 59 countries), none of the ratings were even selected by a simple majority. On average, 10.6% of respondents selected the lowest rating, 15.5% selected the highest rating, while the remaining respondents selected one of the two middle categories (30.9% and 43.0%, respectively). Overall, in 50 of the 59 countries, three of the four response categories were selected by at least 10% of the survey respondents. Thus, in most countries, sizeable portions of

the sample expressed markedly different opinions as to the human rights conditions in that country.

[Figure 1 here]

Nevertheless, when averaging these responses at the country level, do the subjective ratings offered by respondents correspond with objective conditions? According to Figure 2, this does not appear to be the case. Figure 2 depicts the distribution of survey responses by three categories of states, as classified by the PTS in 2010. Countries with PTS scores of 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 appear on the left, countries with scores of 2.5, 3.0, and 3.5 appear in the middle, and countries with scores of 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 appear on the right. Several patterns stand out. First, the distribution of survey responses across categories looks fairly similar. In particular, survey respondents in the most repressive states (PTS scores of 1.0 – 2.0) provide quite similar ratings to those living in moderately repressive states (PTS scores of 2.5 – 3.5). On the other hand, respondents in the least repressive states (PTS scores of 4.0 – 5.0) do appear to provide more favorable ratings, as indicated by smaller percentages in the bottom two categories (“no respect” and “not much respect”) and higher percentages in the top two categories (“some respect” and “a lot of respect”). Ultimately, though, regardless of a state’s actual human rights record, “some respect” appears to be the most popular choice for survey respondents, followed by “not much respect,” with the two extreme ratings (“no respect” and “a lot of respect”) selected least often. Overall, the correlation between a country’s subjective human rights rating (i.e., that country’s average WVS score) and its objective human rights rating (i.e., that country’s PTS score) is positive, but mild ( $r = .256$ ). Thus, it appears that there is as much, if not more, variation in the subjective ratings *within* countries as there is *between* them, suggesting that an individual’s vantage point may be influenced by more than just objective conditions.

[Figure 2 here]

In sum, the survey respondents generally do not provide a coherent image of human rights conditions in their country, nor are their evaluations necessarily consistent with the objective ratings offered by PTS. In the following analyses, I examine what factors influence the subjective ratings of survey respondents, including an individual's gender, education, income, political ideology, citizenship, age, and marital status, along with country level predictors that capture levels of economic development, democracy, and ties to the international community. Thus, if personal characteristics shape subjective human rights ratings, then perhaps the lack of correspondence between subjective and objective ratings is a function of sample differences regarding those characteristics that are particularly influential. Consequently, once controlling for these characteristics, perhaps the mild, positive association between subjective and objective ratings will strengthen. Secondly, I also consider what types of individuals provide subjective ratings that most closely approximate the objective ratings. That is, I consider which personal characteristics are associated with providing the most *accurate* subjective ratings. In short, some characteristics may lead individuals to produce biased evaluations of their state's human rights record (in either direction), while other characteristics may significantly *reduce* bias, and still others will be unrelated to a respondent's assessment.

## DATA AND METHODS

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE.** *Subjective Human Rights Rating.* Subjective ratings come from the following item of the WVS (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>), "How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in your country?" Responses include (1) "There is no respect at all," (2) "There is not much respect," (3) "There is some respect," and (4) "There is a lot of respect for human rights." I reverse-coded the original scores so that higher

values indicate a more positive rating. In this analysis, I restrict attention to the sixth wave of the WVS (2010 – 2014).

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES. Micro-Level Predictors.** I estimate a set of micro-level variables from the WVS, including *Gender* (female = 1), *Education Level* (1 – 3), *Income Scale* (1 – 10), *Political Ideology* (left = 1; right = 10), *Citizenship* (citizen = 1), *Age Category* (reference = 15 – 24 years), and *Marital Status* (reference = single/never married). Given that there is considerable variation in the subjective human rights ratings of each country, it is possible that these personal characteristics play a role in shaping the diversity of perceptions towards human rights conditions.

**Macro-Level Predictors.** All macro-level variables are measured at 2010, coinciding with the first year of the 2010 – 2014 wave of the WVS. *Objective Human Rights Ratings (PTS and CIRI)*. The objective human rights ratings come from the Political Terror Scale (Gibney, Cornett, Wood, Haschke, and Arnon 2015) and the Cingranelli-Richards Index (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay 2014), both of which are high-profile measures of a state's human rights practices. The Cingranelli-Richards Index is “widely used by governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, think-tanks, and private businesses” (Cingranelli and Richards 2010: 404), and the Political Terror Scale is the “most commonly used indicator of state violations of citizens' physical integrity rights” (Wood and Gibney 2010: 368). The two measures examine very similar forms of state repression, and both sets of ratings are based on annual reports from Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department.

The Political Terror Scale (PTS) indicates the extent to which the state engages in acts of repression, including political murder, extrajudicial killings, torture, beatings, physical abuse, disappearances, as well as political imprisonment and detention without trial. Countries are

placed in one of five categories, depending on how extensive the repression is, ranging from rare (1) to unlimited (5). Separate scores are produced for each data source (i.e., Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department). I calculated the average of these two scores and inverted this value, thereby creating a nine-point scale, ranging from 1 (repression is unlimited) to 5 (repression is rare). The Cingranelli-Richards Index (CIRI) measures a country's respect for "physical integrity rights," based on four distinct categories: forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and torture. Countries are given a score of 0 (no government respect for right) to 2 (full government respect for right) for each of the four categories. Thus, the aggregated physical integrity rights score ranges from 0 (no respect for any right) to 8 (full respect for all rights). In addition to estimating the aggregated score, I also examine the effect of each category to investigate whether the subjective ratings are driven by any particular type of human rights violation.

However, there is growing concern that PTS and CIRI ratings may be plagued by "information effects" resulting from improved and/or more aggressive reporting of human rights violations (Clark and Sikkink 2013; Fariss 2014). Annual reports from Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department are now longer, cover more categories of human rights violations, and feature expanded definitions of what constitutes a violation (Clark and Sikkink 2013), thereby affecting the comparability of country ratings over time. Fariss (2014) argues that human rights ratings are biased because (1) the quality and quantity of information has improved, (2) human rights groups have greater access to evidence, and (3) monitoring agencies have broadened their focus. In sum, "the U.S. State Department and Amnesty International look harder for abuse, look in more places for abuse, and classify more acts as abuse" (Fariss 2014: 300). Consequently, a country's human rights rating may worsen over time, even if its practices

have actually improved. Indeed, despite the institutionalization of human rights norms across the world, several studies report that human rights ratings have remained stagnant, or even declined slightly in recent years (Cingranelli and Richards 2010; Clark 2010; Cole 2012a; Fariss 2014; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005). Fortunately, information effects are of little concern in the cross-sectional analysis presented below, as I only use PTS and CIRI ratings at one point in time.

*GDP PC (PPP)* (log). Gross domestic product per capita (GDP PC) is converted to 2011 international dollars using purchasing power parity rates (PPP). An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GDP as the U.S. dollar has in the United States. Data come from the World Bank's (2016) *World Development Indicators*. *Democracy*. Democracy ratings come from Polity IV (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2014), one of the "most commonly used indicators of democracy" (Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008: 645). Polity IV ratings assess the following regime characteristics: political participation, executive recruitment, and constraints on executive authority. Separate scores are first constructed that reflect a state's level of "institutionalized democracy" (ranging from 0 to 10) and "institutionalized autocracy" (ranging from 0 to 10). The latter is then subtracted from the former to produce each country's final rating, with scores that range from -10 (low) to 10 (high). *IGO Ties*. International governmental organization (IGO) ties refer to the number of IGOs to which each country belongs, listed in the Union of International Association's *Yearbook of International Organizations*. Data come from Cole and Ramirez (2013).

**ANALYSIS.** I estimate ordered probit models of the ordinal dependent variable (subjective human rights rating) on the independent variables. I cluster on states so that observations are assumed to be independent across countries, but not necessarily within them across individuals. I establish time order by setting the macro-level variables at 2010 (the first year of the sixth

wave). Also, I am sensitive to potential collinearity in my models. Therefore, in separate analyses, I calculated the OLS-based variance inflation factor (VIF) score for every model reported below in Tables 1 and 3. The maximum VIF score across all models is never greater than 2.37, while the average VIF score across all models is never greater than 1.66, indicating that collinearity is not a problem in these analyses.

SAMPLE. In the sixth wave of the WVS (2010 – 2014), 82,718 individuals across 59 countries provide a subjective human rights rating for their country. The countries represent most every geographic region in the world, including Northern Europe (Estonia, Sweden), Southern Europe (Slovenia, Spain), Eastern Europe (Belarus, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine), Western Europe (Germany, Netherlands), Central America (Mexico), North America (United States), South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay), the Caribbean (Trinidad-Tobago), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), South Africa (South Africa), East Africa (Rwanda, Zimbabwe), West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan), South Asia (India, Pakistan), South-East Asia (Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand), East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), West Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Turkey, Yemen), and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand). These cases form the basis for the descriptive analyses (see Figures 1 – 3), except for Hong Kong, which does not feature an objective human rights rating from PTS. In the regression models (see Tables 1 and 3), 48 countries are included (N = 53,362), as missing data on the independent variables cause 11 countries to drop out (respondents from Argentina, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, and Taiwan are excluded).

## RESULTS

Table 1 reports results from six ordered probit models of the subjective human rights rating from WVS respondents during the sixth wave (2010 – 2014). All models are fully specified, with the objective human rights rating varying across models (PTS, CIRI, and the four CIRI categories). Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the robust standard error in parentheses. Across all six models, the estimates for income ( $p < .001$ ) and political ideology ( $p < .05$  or greater) are statistically significant, indicating that wealthier and more conservative respondents report more favorable human rights ratings relative to others. Moreover, these effects are net of the objective ratings from PTS and CIRI, indicating that high-income, politically conservative respondents provide ratings that are significantly greater than what one would expect given the objective conditions on the ground. Similarly, the coefficient for gender is negative throughout all six models, and statistically significant in the first two models ( $p < .05$ ), indicating that females provide lower ratings than what would be expected given the objective conditions.

Overall, these findings are intuitive, given past work that links personal characteristics to attitudes and dispositions that relate directly or indirectly to human rights. First, past work reveals that wealthier individuals tend to offer more favorable human rights ratings than the poor (Clark and Hall 2011), presumably because of their greater distance from victimization. In addition, authoritarianism is associated with adopting a right-wing ideology (Heaven and Bucci 2001; Jost, Kruglanski, Glaser, and Sulloway 2003), which suggests that conservatives adopt a more permissive “law and order” attitude with respect to state repression. Females and liberals are also more likely to frame torture as a violation of human rights (Hertel, Scruggs, and Heidkamp 2009), suggesting higher standards by which to judge state behavior. Finally, past

work shows a mild link between gender and national pride (Smith and Kim 2006), indicating that males are more likely to identify with, rather than critically assess, state performance.

Among the macro-level predictors, we are most interested in the performance of the objective human rights ratings. In model 1, a country's PTS rating ( $p < .05$ ) is positively associated with the ratings provided by survey respondents. Thus, once personal characteristics are modeled out of the data, a positive and significant relationship between the objective and subjective ratings does emerge. When I replace the PTS rating with the CIRI rating in model 2, the latter remains positive, but is only marginally significant ( $p < .10$ ). Fortunately, CIRI reports human rights ratings for several categories, including forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and torture. Thus, in the remaining models, I examine whether one or more of these categories exhibit stronger associations with the subjective ratings. The extent to which the state participates in forced disappearances or political imprisonment is not significantly associated with an individual's assessment of human rights in that country. By contrast, individuals appear to be more responsive to the two most severe forms of state repression, extrajudicial killings ( $p < .10$ ) and torture ( $p < .01$ ). In particular, states receiving a positive rating from CIRI on torture are much more likely to also receive positive subjective ratings from the general population.

Among the other macro-level predictors, GDP PC is *negatively* associated with subjective human rights ratings. The measure is negatively signed in every model, but only achieves statistical significance in models 1 and 6 ( $p < .05$ ), while reaching marginal significance in model 2 ( $p < .10$ ). Although it is impossible to be certain what is driving this negative association, a likely explanation is that wealthier countries feature populations with higher standards regarding matters of rights and liberties relative to the rest of the respondents in the

sample. Thus, practices that may be considered a human rights violation in a wealthier country may not be classified as such in a less developed country.

[Table 1 here]

Overall, the findings from Table 1 suggest the importance of three personal characteristics (gender, income, and ideology) for shaping subjective human rights ratings. Figure 3 and Table 2 also help illustrate this idea. Figure 3 presents a scatterplot of each country's average survey response (ranging from 1.0 to 4.0) by the amount of variation around the average response, as indicated by the Gini (higher scores indicate greater dispersion around the mean). The average rating is presented along the  $y$ -axis, while the variance is presented along the  $x$ -axis. The two measures are negatively correlated ( $r = -.776$ ), indicating that high averages are associated with low variance. That is, countries where the average rating is relatively low features greater dispersion around the mean. This is intuitive, as low averages will be brought down by a disproportionately large number of low ratings, which will inflate the variance. Of particular interest, though, are the 10 states marked by a dark circle (Egypt, Brazil, Palestine, Russia, Mexico, India, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, China, and Philippines). Each of these states received a PTS rating of 2.0 in 2010. However, the average ratings they receive from the survey respondents (and the amount of dispersion occurring around these averages) vary widely. Could the personal characteristics of the survey respondents be responsible for such notable differences in the subjective ratings when the objective conditions are so similar?

[Figure 3 here]

Table 2 addresses this question, reporting each country's PTS rating (the objective rating), WVS rating (the mean subjective rating), along with summary statistics describing each country's sample, including gender (the percent of females in the sample), income (the average

score of survey respondents on the income scale), and ideology (the average score of respondents on the political ideology scale). The table is sorted by WVS rating, with the five countries rated below 2.5 featured in the top panel, and the five countries rated above 2.5 featured in the bottom panel. As the final three columns reveal, the two groups of countries can also be distinguished by their respective sample compositions. The top panel features samples with a relatively high percent of females (especially Egypt and Brazil), along with respondents who are relatively poor and politically moderate. By contrast, the bottom panel features a higher percent of males (especially India), along with respondents who are wealthier and slightly more conservative (although India is a notable exception). It is not surprising, then, that the average subjective ratings among the countries in the top panel are notably lower than that of the countries in the bottom panel. Overall, these patterns seem to indicate that, in the absence of variation in the objective conditions across these 10 countries, variation in the subjective human rights ratings among these countries is driven by the gender, class, and ideological composition of their respective survey samples.

[Table 2 here]

Table 3 presents results from the final set of analyses, where I model the gap between the subjective and objective ratings. In these models, the dependent variable is the absolute value of the residuals formed when regressing the subjective ratings on the objective ratings. Thus, larger values indicate greater distance between the two ratings (in either direction), while smaller values indicate a more narrow gap. In model 7, I construct the dependent variable using the PTS ratings. In model 8, I use the CIRI ratings. Overall, the results are similar across the two models. Females ( $p < .05$ ) and highly educated ( $p < .01$ ) respondents provide significantly more accurate ratings than males and less educated respondents. In both cases, the negative

coefficients indicate a smaller gap between the respondent's subjective human rights rating and the objective conditions on the ground. Given that females and more educated individuals are more likely to be involved in human rights organizations (Clark and Hall 2011), it is reasonable to expect that their ratings may more closely reflect objective conditions than others who are less well versed in human rights discourse. To further illustrate this point, recall that the correlation between a country's average subjective human rights rating and its PTS rating is fairly low ( $r = .256$ ). However, when I recalculate the average subjective rating so that I only consider the survey responses of highly educated females (i.e., females with the highest education score), the correlation improves notably ( $r = .371$ ).

Finally, among the macro-level variables, GDP PC ( $p < .05$ ) is a significant, negative predictor in both models, indicating that respondents in wealthier countries provide more accurate ratings than those in less developed countries. In fact, when I calculate the correlation between a country's average subjective human rights rating and its PTS rating among highly educated females in countries with a GDP PC of \$20,000 or greater, the positive correlation grows even stronger ( $r = .492$ ). In sum, these results highlight several individual-level and country-level factors that influence how well subjective ratings correspond with objective conditions. Moreover, they identify important populations to target for disseminating information on human rights conditions (i.e., less educated males, individuals living in less developed states).

[Table 3 here]

## DISCUSSION

In this study, I examine subjective human rights ratings from 82,718 survey respondents across 59 countries representing every region of the world. The survey responses indicate considerable disagreement as to the human rights conditions in each country and suggest that personal characteristics are particularly relevant for shaping how individuals define the violations of human rights. In particular, wealthy, conservative males tend to inflate human rights ratings in their country relative to what would be expected given the objective ratings offered by PTS and CIRI. Of course, those who are poor, liberal, and/or female tend to evaluate their governments more critically than what is expected. Ultimately, though, females and highly educated respondents provide the most *accurate* ratings, selecting responses that most closely match conditions on the ground. Likewise, respondents living in more economically developed nations tend to select more accurate ratings, perhaps indicating their greater familiarity with human rights scripts. Perhaps the most interesting finding, though, is that once the relevant personal characteristics are modeled out of the data, the objective PTS ratings are positively and significantly associated with the subjective human rights ratings from the WVS. Moreover, while CIRI is only marginally significant as a predictor of subjective ratings, CIRI's torture rating is strongly associated with the survey responses. Ultimately, then, these positive associations lend additional credibility to the objective ratings, as they generally correspond with evaluations produced by the general population.

To be sure, the present study begins with the working assumption that the ratings produced by PTS and CIRI are "objective," while the ratings offered by survey respondents are "subjective." While it is beyond the scope of this paper to critically assess this judgment, it is reasonable to argue that, because the ratings from PTS and CIRI were produced with

considerable care and effort, they should enjoy a more privileged status. Nevertheless, future work may wish to examine the extent to which the subjective ratings produced by the WVS can serve as a viable measure of objective conditions. Future work should also consider building on the present study by incorporating a longitudinal component into an analysis of objective and subjective ratings. That is, do *changes* in the PTS and CIRI ratings correspond with *changes* in mass sentiment regarding human rights conditions? Such an analysis would be protected from the confounding effects of time-invariant personal characteristics, but would certainly be limited by the lack of available data across multiple waves of the WVS. Finally, a study that replicates the present analysis using other forms of evaluation (e.g., assessment of political system, estimation of poverty rates) would be interesting in order to compare responses from the general public to reports of objective conditions from various projects (e.g., Polity IV, PovcalNet). Popular assessments of how democracy is functioning within a given country, as well as perceptions of poverty levels are important for gauging public sentiment on the quality of institutions and living conditions. Ultimately, while it is important to determine whether states are respecting human rights and democratic principles, it is likewise important that the public is both prepared to evaluate its government critically and fully aware when it should do so.

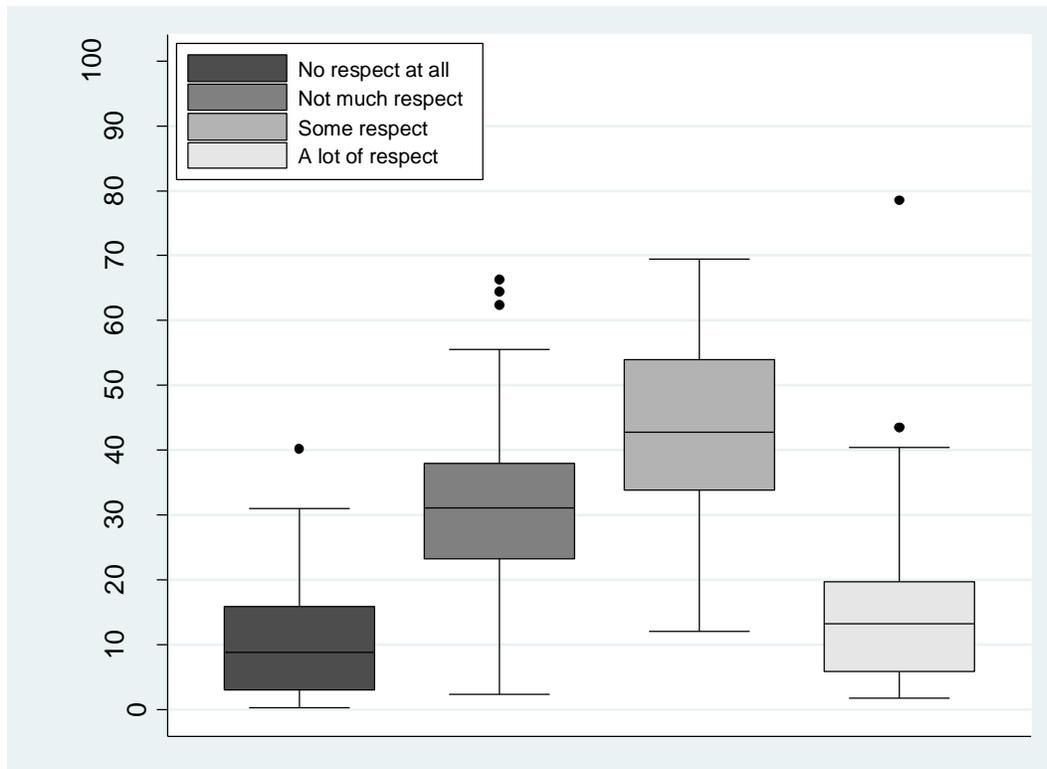
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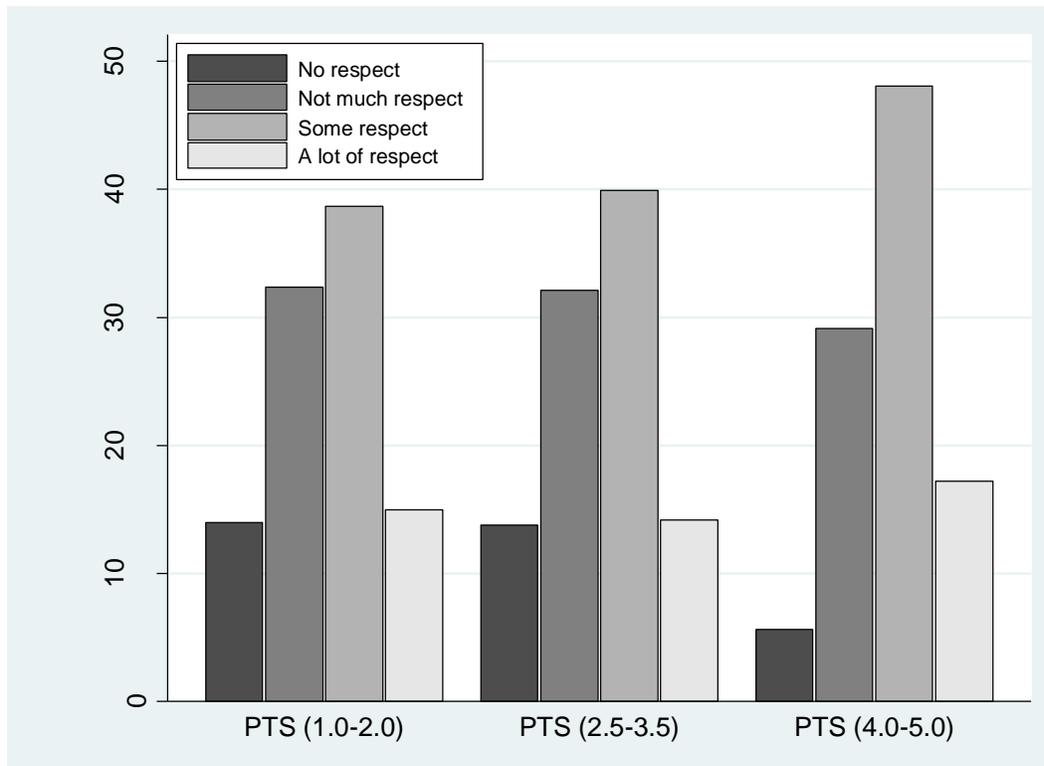
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**Figure 1. Distribution of Survey Responses**

*Note:* Survey responses refer to the following item in the 2010 – 2014 wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), “How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in your country?” Responses include (1) “There is no respect at all,” (2) “There is not much respect,” (3) “There is some respect,” and (4) “There is a lot of respect.” The distribution of survey responses are shown across the four response categories (N = 59).

**Figure 2. Distribution of Survey Responses by Objective Human Rights Rating**

*Note:* Survey responses refer to the following item in the 2010 – 2014 wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), “How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in your country?” Responses include (1) “There is no respect at all,” (2) “There is not much respect,” (3) “There is some respect,” and (4) “There is a lot of respect.” The distribution of survey responses are shown for different categories of states classified by the Political Terror Scale (PTS) in 2010. Countries with PTS scores of 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 appear on the left, countries with scores of 2.5, 3.0, and 3.5 appear in the middle, and countries with scores of 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 appear on the right (N = 58).

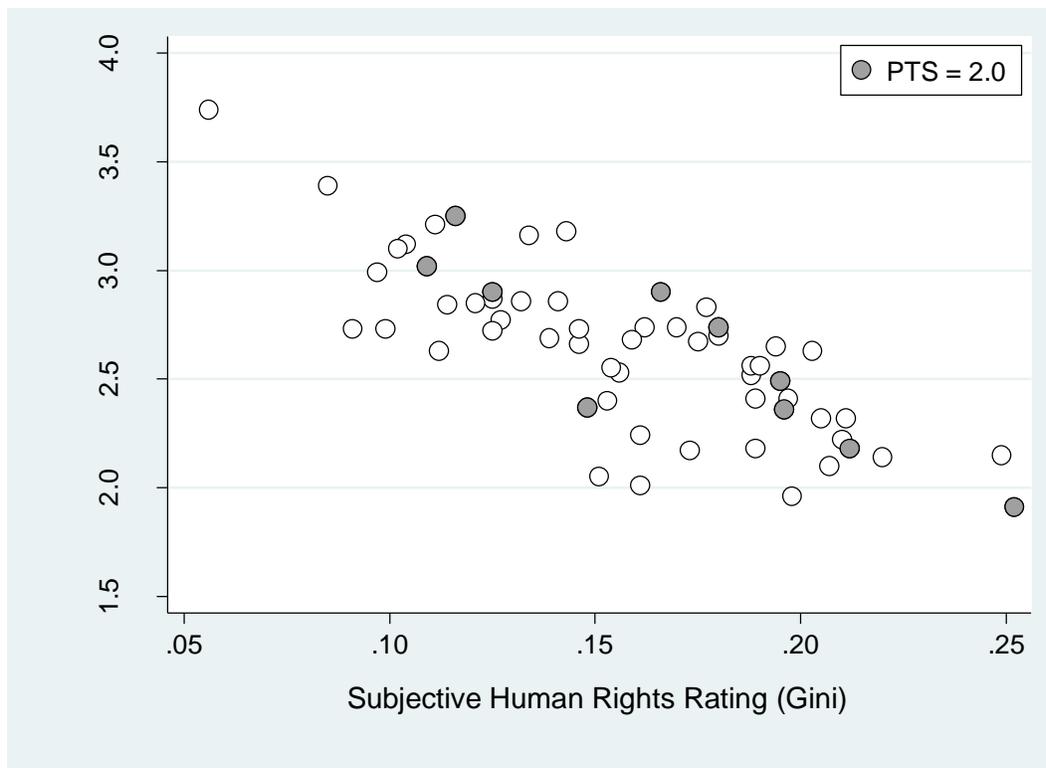
**Table 1. Ordered Probit Models of Subjective Human Rights Rating, WVS (2010 – 2014)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Gender (Female = 1)	-.040* (.019)	-.039* (.019)	-.033 (.018)	-.036 (.019)	-.034 (.019)	-.035 (.018)
Education Level (1 – 3)	-.028 (.038)	-.026 (.035)	-.022 (.035)	-.032 (.036)	-.022 (.035)	-.023 (.035)
Income Scale (1 – 10)	.052*** (.011)	.052*** (.010)	.054*** (.011)	.054*** (.011)	.054*** (.010)	.049*** (.010)
Political Ideology (Left = 1; Right = 10)	.031*** (.008)	.027** (.009)	.024* (.010)	.027** (.009)	.024* (.010)	.030** (.009)
Citizenship (Citizen = 1)	-.025 (.172)	-.035 (.164)	-.088 (.157)	-.042 (.167)	-.080 (.163)	.013 (.144)
Age Category (Reference = 15 – 24 years)						
25 – 34 years	-.021 (.031)	-.006 (.033)	-.010 (.034)	-.004 (.033)	-.008 (.034)	-.023 (.032)
35 – 44 years	-.038 (.034)	-.022 (.033)	-.028 (.036)	-.018 (.034)	-.025 (.035)	-.039 (.034)
45 – 54 years	-.019 (.046)	-.002 (.043)	-.002 (.046)	.001 (.043)	.001 (.043)	-.021 (.044)
55 – 64 years	-.020 (.050)	.004 (.049)	.011 (.050)	.008 (.049)	.012 (.049)	-.022 (.048)
65 + years	.048 (.059)	.083 (.060)	.113 (.062)	.087 (.060)	.110 (.061)	.042 (.058)
Marital Status (Reference = Single/Never)						
Married/Cohabiting	.047 (.033)	.033 (.034)	.035 (.034)	.027 (.035)	.033 (.032)	.038 (.034)
Divorced/Separated	.019 (.044)	.008 (.042)	.018 (.045)	.004 (.046)	.013 (.042)	.008 (.040)
Widowed	-.062 (.058)	-.066 (.058)	-.071 (.059)	-.076 (.059)	-.072 (.057)	-.039 (.052)
GDP PC (PPP) (log)	-.191* (.097)	-.188 (.114)	-.090 (.110)	-.159 (.098)	-.106 (.100)	-.170* (.076)
Democracy	-.002 (.014)	-.003 (.016)	.004 (.015)	.007 (.014)	.002 (.016)	-.007 (.013)
IGO Ties	.003 (.007)	.003 (.008)	.001 (.009)	.001 (.007)	.002 (.008)	-.001 (.006)
PTS	.153* (.062)					
CIRI		.062 (.037)				
CIRI (Forced Disappearances)			-.006 (.103)			
CIRI (Extrajudicial Killings)				.178 (.103)		
CIRI (Political Imprisonment)					.031 (.089)	
CIRI (Torture)						.349** (.109)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.015	.011	.008	.011	.008	.019
BIC	131,164	131,633	132,075	131,629	132,059	130,638

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed tests)

Note: Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the robust standard error in parentheses (N = 53,362).

**Figure 3. Survey Responses, Mean by Variance**



*Note:* Survey responses refer to the following item in the 2010 – 2014 wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), “How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in your country?” Responses include (1) “There is no respect at all,” (2) “There is not much respect,” (3) “There is some respect,” and (4) “There is a lot of respect.” The plot shows each country’s average response by how much variation exists around the average response. Dark-shaded circles refer to those 10 states with a score of 2.0 on the Political Terror Scale (PTS) in 2010, including Egypt, Brazil, Palestine, Russia, Mexico, India, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, China, and Philippines (N = 59).

**Table 2. Selected Characteristics of Respondents in 10 Countries with PTS Rating of 2.0**

State	PTS Rating (2010)	WVS Rating (Mean)	Gender (Percent Female)	Income Scale (Average)	Political Ideology (Average)
Egypt	2.0	1.91	67.8 %	4.27	6.25
Brazil	2.0	2.18	62.4 %	4.40	5.37
Palestine	2.0	2.36	51.2 %	4.74	5.97
Russia	2.0	2.37	55.4 %	4.21	5.42
Mexico	2.0	2.49	50.1 %	3.32	6.25
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>57.4 %</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>5.85</b>
India	2.0	2.74	37.7 %	4.51	4.97
Kyrgyzstan	2.0	2.90	50.9 %	5.56	6.55
Thailand	2.0	2.90	47.7 %	4.63	5.94
China	2.0	3.02	51.0 %	4.42	-----
Philippines	2.0	3.25	50.0 %	4.19	6.75
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>47.5 %</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>6.05</b>

*Note:* PTS ratings range from 1.0 (low) to 5.0 (high). WVS ratings range from 1.0 (low) to 4.0 (high). Gender refers to the percent of respondents in each country who are female. Income scale refers to the average income level of respondents in each country, ranging from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Political ideology refers to the average ideological position of respondents in each country, ranging from 1 (left) to 10 (right). Political ideology question not asked in China.

**Table 3. OLS Models of the Gap Between Objective and Subjective Ratings**

	Model 7 (PTS)	Model 8 (CIRI)
Gender (Female = 1)	-.013* (.006)	-.012* (.006)
Education Level (1 – 3)	-.030** (.010)	-.028** (.010)
Income Scale (1 – 10)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)
Political Ideology (Left = 1; Right = 10)	.002 (.003)	.001 (.003)
Citizenship (Citizen = 1)	-.026 (.031)	-.026 (.028)
Age Category (Reference = 15 – 24 years)		
25 – 34 years	.016 (.009)	.018 (.009)
35 – 44 years	.012 (.012)	.014 (.012)
45 – 54 years	.011 (.015)	.013 (.015)
55 – 64 years	.012 (.016)	.013 (.016)
65 + years	-.008 (.017)	-.003 (.016)
Marital Status (Reference = Single/Never)		
Married/Cohabiting	-.014 (.010)	-.015 (.010)
Divorced/Separated	-.007 (.018)	-.007 (.018)
Widowed	-.000 (.017)	-.001 (.016)
GDP PC (PPP) (log)	-.057* (.021)	-.053* (.021)
Democracy	-.006 (.004)	-.007 (.004)
IGO Ties	.000 (.002)	.001 (.002)
R <sup>2</sup>	.020	.017
BIC	82,658	81,936

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed tests)

Note: Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the robust standard error in parentheses (N = 53,362).