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Who Says Human Rights are Not Respected? Assessing Local and Third Party Ratings

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Cover Page Footnote

I thank Amy Kroska, Martin Piotrowski, and Cyrus Schleifer for their generous assistance.

Who Says Human Rights are Not Respected? Assessing Local and Third Party Ratings

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ABSTRACT

Country ratings of human rights conditions are now quite popular in macro comparative research. However, little is known as to whether (or to what extent) these scores correspond with mass sentiment in each country. Do local ratings issued by the public correspond with third party ratings, such as those produced by the Cingranelli-Richards index (CIRI), the Political Terror Scale (PTS), and Freedom House (FH)? In this study, I address 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 generally suggest a positive association between local and third party ratings, and that local raters appear to be particularly responsive to the most severe violations of physical integrity rights. CIRI's torture scale, PTS, and Fariss' event-based measure (emphasizing the most extreme forms of repression) explain more of the between-country variation in local ratings than any of the other third party ratings analyzed. Nevertheless, there is also significant variation in human rights ratings within countries. In particular, survey respondents who are male, wealthy, politically conservative, and citizens offer significantly higher ratings than other individuals. Thus, while these results highlight between-country differences in human rights conditions, the local ratings illustrate the wide range of opinions that exist within countries.

Keywords: Attitudes, Globalization, Human Rights, World Polity

Introduction

The use of country ratings by scholars to model human rights conditions is popular in contemporary macro comparative research. Third party ratings (e.g., Cingranelli-Richards Index, Political Terror Scale) assess political regimes all over the world with respect to their violations of physical integrity rights and civil liberties. The ratings themselves now enjoy considerable legitimacy and serve as crucial arbiters in objectively describing human rights conditions as they exist on the ground. Armed with these ratings, scholars are now presumably able to determine (1) whether human rights conditions are improving over time, and (2) what factors significantly influence state repression.

An analysis of country ratings suggests that human rights conditions are not improving (Clark 2010, 2014; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005), an idea which has practically become conventional wisdom. However, this is somewhat surprising given that 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; Pegrum 2010), signaling a growing effort by the international community to address human rights violations (Hafner-Burton 2008). Accordingly, some now argue that third party ratings may suffer from “information effects”

(Clark and Sikkink 2013; Fariss 2014), suggesting that the implementation of human rights reforms in some countries may be masked by rising global standards.

With the assistance of third party ratings, human rights scholars are also able to speak confidently about what factors affect state repression. Past studies identify a number of state-level characteristics 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). Interestingly, the role of human rights treaties in stopping (or perhaps triggering) state repression represents one of the more significant debates in the human rights literature (Cole 2012a, 2012b; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Hathaway 2002).

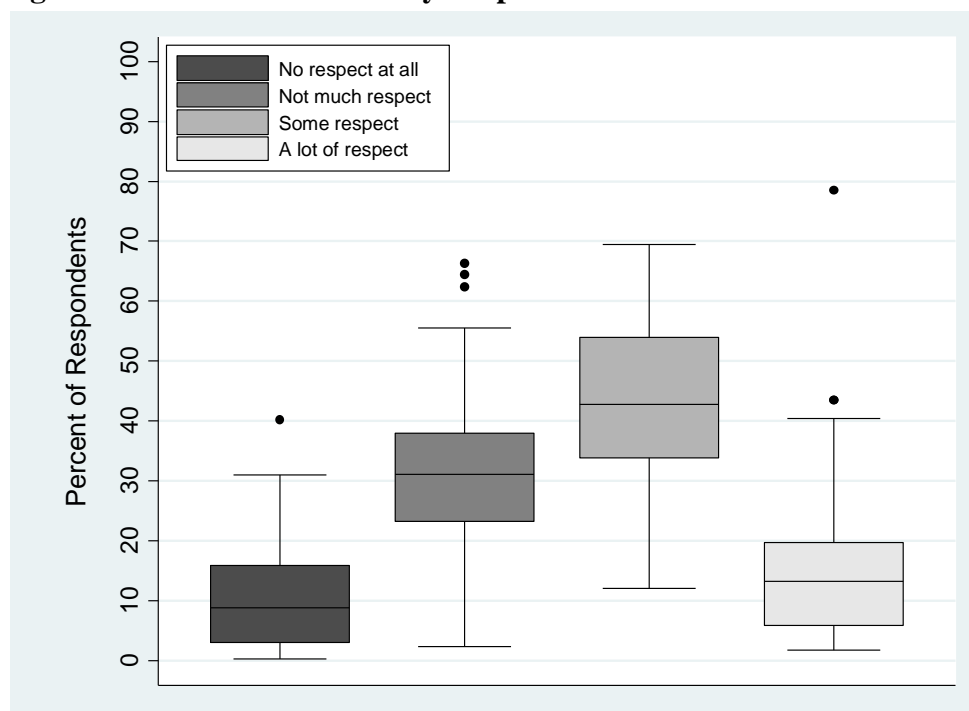
According to third party ratings, human rights conditions remain diverse across the world (Clark 2014). The Political Terror Scale (PTS) rates countries on their level of state repression, with scores ranging from 1 to 5 (I discuss this measure in greater detail below). While countries like Sweden feature very low levels of repression according to this measure, other countries like Pakistan rate very high at the other end of the continuum. Presumably, then, those individuals residing in Sweden and Pakistan live in 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. Thus, ideally, each population is in a position to evaluate the performance of their government. An important question, then, is to what extent do third party ratings correspond with the opinions of those who actually live in these countries? By comparing local attitudes with ratings that are produced by human rights groups, we are in a better position to evaluate whether the reliance on third party ratings by human rights scholars is warranted, and whether the conclusions we draw from our use of these ratings are accurate.

In addition, such an exercise affords us the opportunity to examine variation in opinion among the local raters themselves. Mass sentiment may not be coherent, and 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 two research questions surrounding the local ratings of human rights conditions: (1) to what extent do the public's ratings correspond with the ratings provided by human rights groups?, and (2) to what extent do local ratings vary within each population? And, in addressing both questions, a third naturally arises. Are local ratings influenced by the personal characteristics of the individual (e.g., age, gender, income) net of objective conditions? 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 attitudes 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 state.

Figure 1. Distribution of Survey Responses

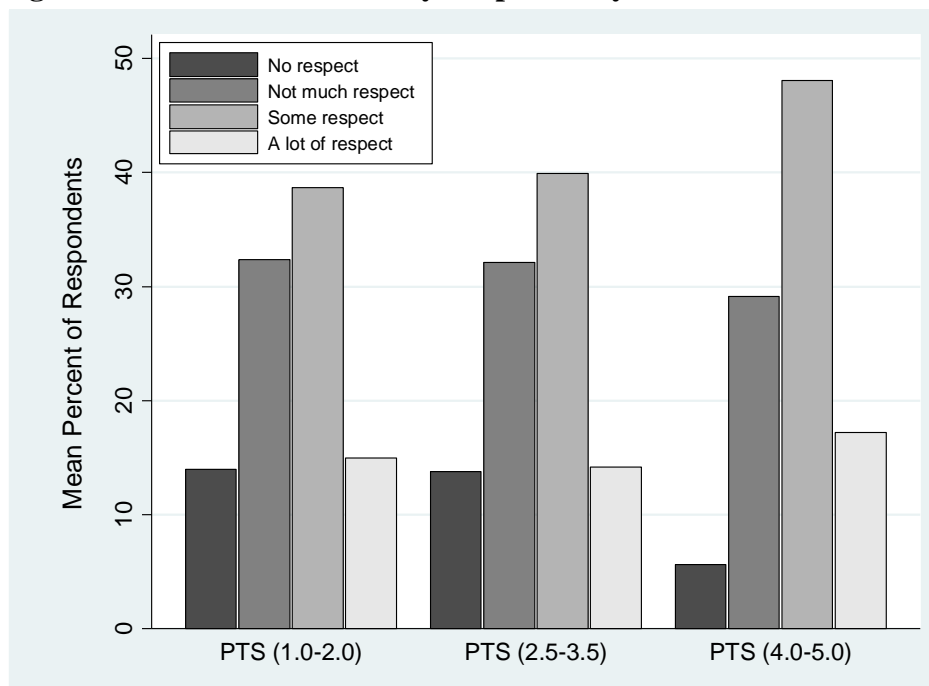


Note: Survey responses refer to the following item in the 2010 – 2014 wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), “How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in your country?” Responses include (1) “There is no respect at all,” (2) “There is not much respect,” (3) “There is some respect,”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

Nevertheless, when averaging these responses at the country level, do the local ratings offered by respondents correspond with third party ratings? 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 PTS in 2010. Countries with PTS scores of 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 (i.e., low levels of respect for human rights) 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 (i.e., high levels of respect for human rights) 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 local rating (i.e., that country’s average WVS score) and its third party 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 ratings offered by survey respondents *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. Distribution of Survey Responses by Political Terror Scale (PTS)



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).

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 country ratings offered by PTS. In the following analyses, I examine what factors influence the human rights ratings of survey respondents, including an individual’s gender, income, education, newspaper consumption, political ideology, citizenship, age, and marital status, along with country level predictors that capture levels of economic development and ties to the international community. If personal characteristics shape one’s personal evaluation of human rights conditions, then perhaps the lack of correspondence between local and third party 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 local and third party ratings will strengthen.

Data

DEPENDENT VARIABLE. *Local Human Rights Rating.* 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 examine a set of micro-level variables from the WVS, including *Gender* (female = 1), *Income Scale* (1 – 10), *Education Level* (1 – 3), *Newspaper Consumption* (never = 1; daily = 5), *Political Ideology* (left = 1; right = 10), *Citizenship* (citizen = 1), *Age* (16 – 99), and *Marital Status* (reference = married/cohabiting). Given that there is considerable variation in the local 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. *Third Party Human Rights Ratings.* I use several third party ratings, including 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 local ratings correspond with any particular type of human rights violation.

However, there is now 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).

To address changing standards in the existing ratings, Fariss (2014) generates unbiased estimates of repression using four standards-based human rights measures (including CIRI and PTS), along with five event-based measures. Unlike the standards-based measures, the event-based measures are updated as new information becomes available, which enhances longitudinal comparability. Also, the event-based measures tend to focus on the “extreme end of the repression spectrum” (Fariss 2014:301), including mass repression, genocide, politicide, government killing, and political executions. As Fariss (2014:304) explains, because the event-based measures are periodically updated and reflect the most visible forms of repression, they are a “valid representation of historical record to date,” and can therefore serve as a baseline by which to compare the standards-based measures. Fariss then generates latent variable estimates based on a dynamic standard model (in which the probability of a country being coded at a certain level among the standards-based measures is adjusted to reflect rising standards). The model produces estimates that suggest violations have declined notably since the 1980s. I use these estimates to serve as a third human rights indicator, and one that will account for changing standards in human rights practices.

I also include two popular measures of democracy to assess whether local raters consider political rights, civil liberties, and/or the quality of their political institutions when evaluating human rights. Democracy ratings come from Freedom House (Freedom House 2016) and Polity IV (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2014), which represent the two “most commonly used indicators of democracy” (Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008:645). Freedom House’s annual survey measures democracy according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights take into consideration the electoral process (e.g., free and fair elections), political pluralism and participation (e.g., inclusiveness in the political process), and the functioning of government (e.g., corruption and transparency). Civil liberties take into account freedom of expression (e.g., press freedom, academic freedom, religious freedom), organizational rights (e.g., freedom of assembly, labor rights), rule of law (independent judiciary, civilian control over police, political repression), and individual rights (private property rights, gender equity, equal economic opportunity). Each country is rated on a seven-point scale in both categories, with 1 representing the most free, and 7 representing the least free. I calculated the average of these two categories for each country and inverted this value so that higher numbers represent greater levels of democracy, thereby creating a 13-point scale, ranging from 1 (low) to 7 (high). In addition to estimating the aggregated score, I also examine the effect of each category to investigate whether local ratings correspond more with political rights or civil liberties. Polity IV

ratings restrict attention to a narrower range of criteria (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).

Finally, I include two macro-level predictors that control for each country's level of economic development, as well as its organizational embeddedness in the international community. *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*. *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).

SAMPLE. In the sixth wave of the WVS (2010 – 2014), 82,718 individuals across 59 countries provide a 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 a human rights rating from PTS. In the regression models (see Tables 1 and 2), 48 countries are included (N = 50,565), 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

Tables 1 and 2 report results from 12 multilevel mixed-effects ordered probit models of local human rights ratings from WVS respondents during the sixth wave (2010 – 2014). All models are fully specified, with the third party human rights rating varying across models, beginning with model 2. Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the standard error in parentheses. Across all 12 models, the estimates for gender ($p < .01$), income ($p < .001$), political ideology ($p < .001$), and citizenship ($p < .01$) are statistically significant, indicating that wealthy and conservative male citizens report more favorable human rights ratings relative to others. 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, prior 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. By contrast, given that international migrants represent a category of victimized individuals (Bustamante 2002), it is not surprising that non-citizens would offer more negative assessments of human rights practices in their country of residence. 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) political elites.

Among the macro-level predictors, we are most interested in the performance of the third party human rights ratings. In model 2, a country’s CIRI rating is not significantly related to its local rating net of other factors. However, CIRI reports human rights ratings for several categories, including forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and torture. Thus, in the next four models, I examine whether one or more of these categories exhibit stronger associations with the local ratings. The extent to which states participate in forced disappearances or political imprisonment is not significantly associated with an individual’s assessment of human rights in those countries. By contrast, survey respondents appear to be more responsive to the two most severe forms of state repression, extrajudicial killings and torture. The coefficient for extrajudicial killings falls just outside of marginal significance ($b = .204$; $p > .10$), while the effect of torture ($b = .315$; $p < .01$) is much stronger. Thus, states that respect physical integrity rights in these two categories receive notably higher human rights ratings from the local population.

Table 1. Multilevel Mixed-Effects Ordered Probit Models of Human Rights Rating (WVS)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Gender (Female = 1)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)
Income Scale (1 – 10)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)
Education Level (1 – 3)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)
Newspaper Consumption (Never = 1; Daily = 5)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)
Political Ideology (Left = 1; Right = 10)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)
Citizenship (Citizen = 1)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.126** (.041)
Age ^a	.179 (.383)	.174 (.383)	.179 (.383)	.177 (.383)	.177 (.383)	.171 (.383)
Marital Status (Reference = Married/Cohabiting)						
Divorced/Separated	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)
Widowed	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)
Single/Never Married	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)
GDP PC (PPP) (log)	-.062 (.088)	-.177 (.111)	-.049 (.103)	-.156 (.103)	-.095 (.101)	-.153 (.087)
IGO Ties	.001 (.006)	.001 (.006)	.001 (.006)	.001 (.006)	.001 (.006)	-.002 (.006)
CIRI		.064 (.040)				
CIRI (Forced Disappearances)			-.024 (.107)			
CIRI (Extrajudicial Killings)				.204 (.125)		
CIRI (Political Imprisonment)					.062 (.096)	
CIRI (Torture)						.315** (.113)
Level 1 N	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565
Level 2 N	48	48	48	48	48	48
Level 2 Variance Component	.223	.211	.222	.211	.221	.191
LR Test vs. Ordered Probit	7,639***	7,145***	7,619***	7,263***	7,593***	6,452***
BIC	117,167	117,176	117,178	117,176	117,178	117,171

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

^a Coefficients and standard errors multiplied by 10^3 .

Note: Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the standard error in parentheses.

In model 7, a country's PTS rating ($p < .05$) is positively associated with the ratings provided by survey respondents. Thus, in contrast to what we see in Figure 2, once personal characteristics are modeled out of the data, a positive and significant relationship between local ratings and PTS ratings does emerge. In model 8, I replace the PTS ratings with human rights scores from Fariss. Not surprisingly, the effect is relatively large ($b = .181$; $p < .01$), as this measure focuses on the most extreme forms of repression. Thus, consistent with the CIRI models, survey respondents in the WVS appear to be especially responsive to the most severe human rights violations.

In the remaining models, I estimate the effect of third party democracy ratings to examine whether local raters consider a wider range of regime characteristics. In models 9 – 11, I examine the Freedom House ratings, including the overall rating, followed by the political rights rating and the civil liberties rating. In each case, the effect is positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$). Notice, however, that the civil liberties rating ($b = .088$) is larger than the political rights rating ($b = .070$) and appears to drive the overall effect. This is not surprising, as civil liberties are more closely related to conventional indicators of human rights than political rights. Finally, in model 12, I find that the Polity IV effect is non-significant and close to zero, indicating that institutional characteristics do not factor very heavily in human rights ratings of local respondents.

Among the third party ratings examined in Tables 1 and 2, the CIRI torture rating, PTS, and Fariss exert the strongest effects. These three measures explain more of the between-country variation in local ratings than any other measure, as indicated by the reduction in the variance component (as reported towards the bottom of each table). In other words, to the extent that the attitudes of local raters vary from one country to the next (presumably because of differences in objective conditions), these three measures capture that variation better than any of the others.

Finally, among the macro-level controls, I find that GDP PC is *negatively* associated with local ratings. The measure is negatively signed in all 12 models, but only achieves statistical significance in model 8 ($p < .05$), while reaching marginal significance in models 6 and 7 ($p < .10$). Although it is difficult 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 2. Multilevel Mixed-Effects Ordered Probit Models of Human Rights Rating (WVS)

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Gender (Female = 1)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)	-.026** (.010)
Income Scale (1 – 10)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)	.047*** (.003)
Education Level (1 – 3)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)
Newspaper Consumption (1 = Never; 5 = Daily)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)
Political Ideology (Left = 1; Right = 10)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)	.032*** (.002)
Citizenship (Citizen = 1)	.125** (.041)	.126** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)	.125** (.041)
Age ^a	.171 (.383)	.168 (.383)	.172 (.383)	.173 (.383)	.172 (.383)	.177 (.383)
Marital Status (Reference = Married/Cohabiting)						
Divorced/Separated	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)	-.039 (.020)
Widowed	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)	-.024 (.023)
Single/Never Married	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)	-.013 (.013)
GDP PC (PPP) (log)	-.190 (.099)	-.234* (.099)	-.121 (.089)	-.110 (.088)	-.130 (.091)	-.071 (.088)
IGO Ties	.002 (.006)	.002 (.006)	-.002 (.006)	-.002 (.006)	-.001 (.006)	.000 (.006)
PTS	.161* (.068)					
Fariss		.181** (.060)				
Freedom House			.081* (.040)			
Freedom House (Political Rights)				.070* (.036)		
Freedom House (Civil Liberties)					.088* (.044)	
Polity IV						.008 (.013)
Level 1 N	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565	50,565
Level 2 N	48	48	48	48	48	48
Level 2 Variance Component	.199	.187	.205	.206	.206	.221
LR Test vs. Ordered Probit	6,895***	6,390***	7,191***	7,278***	7,109***	7,638***
BIC	117,173	117,170	117,174	117,174	117,174	117,178

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)^a Coefficients and standard errors multiplied by 10^3 .

Note: Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient, with the standard error in parentheses.

Overall, the findings from Tables 1 and 2 suggest the importance of four personal characteristics (gender, income, ideology, and citizenship) for shaping local human rights ratings. Figure 3 and Table 3 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 local ratings when the objective conditions are so similar, according to PTS?

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 3 addresses this question, reporting each country's PTS rating (the third party rating), WVS rating (the mean local 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). We do not include citizenship data here, as all samples are overwhelmingly comprised of citizens. Thus, while citizenship may significantly affect one's rating of human rights conditions, there are too few non-citizens in these samples to significantly alter the average local rating for any country.

Table 3 is sorted by each country's average 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 local 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 local ratings among these countries is driven by the gender, class, and ideological composition of their respective survey samples.

Table 3. 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
Mean	2.0	2.26	57.4 %	4.19	5.85
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
Mean	2.0	2.96	47.5 %	4.66	6.05

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.

Discussion

In this study, I examine local 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 human rights

violations. In particular, wealthy and conservative male citizens tend to inflate human rights ratings in their country relative to what would be expected given the third party ratings included in these models. Of course, those who are poor, liberal, female, and/or migrants tend to evaluate their governments more critically than what is expected. Likewise, respondents living in more economically developed nations tend to express more negative sentiments.

Most importantly, though, once the relevant personal characteristics are modeled out of the data, third party ratings tend to be positively and significantly associated with the local ratings generated from the WVS survey respondents. In particular, while the overall CIRI rating is not significantly associated with local ratings, CIRI's torture rating is strongly associated with the survey responses. Likewise, the PTS and Fariss ratings perform well, as do the Freedom House ratings for political rights and civil liberties. Ultimately, then, these positive associations lend credibility to third party ratings, as they generally correspond with evaluations produced by the general population.

Future work may wish to examine the extent to which the local ratings produced by the WVS can serve as a viable measure of objective human rights conditions. A critical step in this process will surely be to develop a method for adjusting each country's ratings by the personal characteristics of the survey respondents. Nevertheless, the results from this study suggest that such a project holds promise. In addition, future work should also consider building on the present study by incorporating a longitudinal component into an analysis of local and third party ratings. That is, do *changes* in third party assessments 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 systems, estimates of bribery and corruption) would be interesting in order to compare responses from the general public to reports of objective conditions from various projects (e.g., Polity IV, Corruption Perceptions Index). Popular assessments of how democracy is functioning within a given country, as well as perceptions of corruption levels are important for gauging public sentiment on the quality and transparency of institutions. Ultimately, while it is important to determine whether states are respecting human rights and democratic principles, it is likewise important to ascertain whether the public is generally aware of how its government behaves.

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