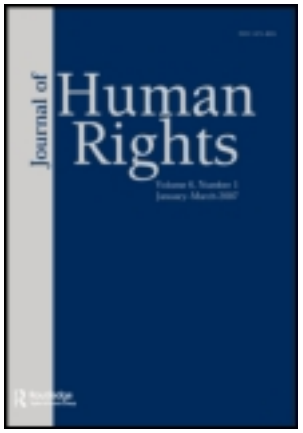

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Relativizing Human Rights

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Relativizing Human Rights

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Research, policy analysis, and conditional aid policy among some donor countries rely on standards-based measures of country human rights performance. These measures code annual performance based on narrative reports published by the US State Department and Amnesty International. The coding yields a performance ranking for countries that in our view is "absolute" or reflects that current state of human rights performance without taking into account the relative social, political, or economic conditions within countries. While this absolute ranking is useful for empirical analyses of some human rights questions and policy applications, it can lead to perverse outcomes in other areas of work. This article provides an alternative method for ranking country human rights performance that takes into account an array of additional variables that are related to the protection of civil and political rights. The method involves three stages. Stage one applies principal component factor analysis to five different standards-based measures of civil and political rights to extract a single human rights "factor score." Stage two regresses the factor score on a series of explanatory variables for the protection of civil and political rights for which there is widespread consensus and then saves the residual as an indicator of the "over" or "under" performance of countries with respect to the protection of those rights. Stage three plots the "factor score" alongside the relative score to compare these different measures of human rights performance over time and across different regions. Our results lead to a new depiction of human rights progress in the world that we believe will be of interest to human rights scholars and practitioners.

Introduction

For over 30 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, 2006a, 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 socioeconomic 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

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(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 a 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 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 subfield 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 in systematic ways (see Adcock and Collier 2001; Goertz 2006; Landman and Carvalho 2009). 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 and related disciplines. But at another level, the use of such measures for descriptive analysis and country ranking, as in Freedom House reports "Freedom in the World," can be highly problematic and prone to the kind of criticism levelled at the United Nations Development Programme (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 some 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). Here, country scores are used as litmus tests for decisions on the initial allocation or further extension of foreign aid (Landman 2006b).

In both the academic and policy areas of work, simple reliance on country scores and ranking paints a partial picture of human rights performance since the scores reflect only an "absolute" ranking based on annual narrative reporting on human rights practices. In response to this problem, this article advances an alternative 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 primarily in the political science literature (see Landman 2005a, 2005b, 2006a) 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 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 socioeconomic and political conditions that exist. It also shows that some regions are not doing as well as they should. In this way, the article offers a new way to think about human rights country ranking that takes into account the *relative* performance of human rights.

The article is structured in four main sections. The first section briefly outlines existing standards-based measures of human rights, shows the bivariate relationships between them and explains how the factor index has been generated. The second section 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. The third section plots the relativized human rights measure for the world over time and for each major region by showing the difference between actual scores and 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 relativizing other categories of human rights.

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 behavior of states (Keith 1999; Landman 2005a). This present article is primarily concerned with the measures that capture the variable protection in civil and political rights using what are known as "standards-based" scales. These scales use source material on human rights practices within countries and apply coding protocols to the information to derive a set of standardized and comparable measures for cross-national and time-series analysis.

Table 1 summarizes the five standards-based measures that we used to derive the human rights factor score. These measures include the two versions of the Political Terror Scale (one coded using US State Department Reports and one coded using Amnesty International Reports), the scale of torture from Oona Hathaway (2002), Freedom House Civil Liberties, and the Physical Integrity Rights Index from Cingranelli and Richards. Each of the scales provides a measure of violations of civil and political rights, including such rights as freedom from arbitrary detention, torture, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, exile, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and belief, and freedom of assembly and association. With the exception of the Cingranelli and Richards' physical integrity rights index, the scales award more points for a greater violation of these rights. For our purposes, all the scales were transformed to range from low (bad rights protection) to high (good rights protection). The table shows that despite the differences in emphasis across the scales, there is considerable overlap between them, as evidenced by the statistically significant intercorrelations. The correlations for the torture scale are the lowest across the board, which reflects the scale's 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 percent levels of statistical significance.

This high degree of intercorrelation is not surprising, since the similarity in approach to coding, measurement and focus suggests that these scales should be highly correlated with one another. Given this degree of agreement, we used principal components factor analysis to reduce the group of interrelated human rights variables and collapse them

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 .01 level (two-tailed).

into one single measure. The analysis revealed five components, but only one has an eigenvalue greater than 1 (i.e., 3.295) and accounts for over 65 percent of the variance. This factor was retained and the other four were rejected for their absence of significance. The resulting factor loadings for this component (see Table 2) clearly show a strong relationship between each separate 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 unidimensionality of their

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

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

aggregate "personal integrity rights scale." By definition, our human rights factor score is normally distributed, with a mean of 0, a minimum value of −2.7 and a maximum value of 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. First, it reduces the need for tests of robustness that substitute various specifications across the five separate measures that comprise the factor score. Second, it avoids using ordered logit or probit estimation techniques required for standards-based measures that are less easy to interpret than more standard regression estimators. Third, it allows for better substantive interpretation of our final residual calculations discussed in the next section.

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; Bueno de Mesquita, Cherif, Downs, and Smith 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 Tsutsui 2005, 2007; Simmons 2009).

Our method regresses the human rights factor score on a selection of key explanatory variables and then saves 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 formally. The standard regression equation for a pooled cross-section time-series data set is written as follows:

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

where y_{it} is the dependent variable for units i and time t (i.e., our human rights factor score for each country and at each point in time) and the x_{kit} variables are that collection of variables that we specify as accounting for the variation in human rights performance that have emerged through the last 30 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 human rights factor score (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 human rights factor score. 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 human rights factor score y 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 a 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. There are also *actual* values of y for each x that sit on the line, below the line, or above the line. In our case, these are the actual values of our human rights factor score. 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), *ceteris paribus*. We call countries with positive residuals "overachievers" since their human rights performance is better than expected and countries with negative residuals "underachievers" since their human rights performance is worse than expected. The use of the residuals thus captures our understanding of *relativizing* human rights, since we are calculating the residual in the presence of significant explanatory variables.

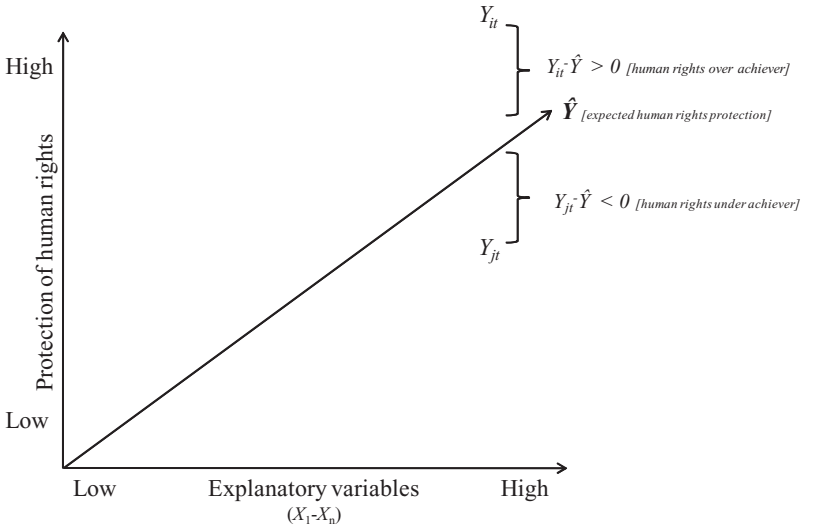

FIGURE 1. Human rights *overachievers* and *underachievers.*

Our selection of explanatory variables include income and land inequality, the level of democracy, level of economic development, domestic conflict, population size, and ethnic fractionalization (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, 2006a, 2009b for a summary). Each of these variables and the ways in which they are operationalized are discussed in turn.

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 University of Texas Inequality Project-United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (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 favorable 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 Riedinger (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 a modified version of the Polity IV 20-point combined democracy score (DEMOC – AUTOC), which ranges from −10 to + 10. Following Vreeland (2008), we use the X-POLITY variable, which includes most of the components of the combined POLITY score but takes out the components for competitiveness of political participation (PARCOMP) and regulation of political participation (PARREG), since both of these components contain elements of political violence and suppression. Vreeland argues that their inclusion does not make sense for research on civil war, and we agree that the same holds true for research on the violation of civil and political rights, since both components contain features that are also found in measures of human rights. Even though a large number of human rights studies use the original Polity measure (see Poe and Tate 1994; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999; Davenport 1999; Zanger 2000a; Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Bueno de Mesquita, Cherif, Downs, and Smith 2005), we are persuaded by Vreeland's argument, and we also expect a positive relationship between his modified Polity measures and our measure of human rights. Certainly, the work of Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005) shows that particular components of the Polity measure are indeed related to human rights.

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, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, and Vishny 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 multicultural 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 (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Walker and Poe 2002). 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 fractionalization 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 is maximized 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, which is known (serial correlation). Second, the error terms tend to be heteroskedastic, which means that they tend to have different variances across units (Stimson 1985; Beck and Katz 1995). 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 3), which is to say, we examined the variation in 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

Table 3
Independent Variables Used in the Statistical Analysis (Summary Statistics With Between and Within Variation) (Without Imputations)

Variable		Mean	*SD*	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	9.29	4.43	1	14	3412
	Between		3.82	1	14	
	Within		2.23	−2.66	19.21	
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	

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-sectional 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 article.

The final adjustment made to the data set was to use a popular method to address the problem of missing data. Some of our variables have less frequent observations than others and create "patches" in the data set with missing values. We used Gary King's multiple imputation method in *R* to estimate values for which there are no data (Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2012). The method uses algorithms to impute missing values for all variables. Since the algorithms randomly draw from the distributions they assume the variables to follow, the values imputed are a sample, and he thus recommends multiple imputations to make sure that the results are not driven by the imputed values themselves. He recommends five imputations, but we used 10, which produces 10 datasets that all have the same values for the observations without missing data and different imputed values for the missing data. Since we require a single value for our own procedure, we averaged across the predicted values from each of the 10 data sets, which we believe provides additional robustness to our results.

Relativizing Human Rights and a New Country Ranking

The previous sections of the article explained how we derived the human rights factor score by combining existing measures of human rights and how we calculated the residuals

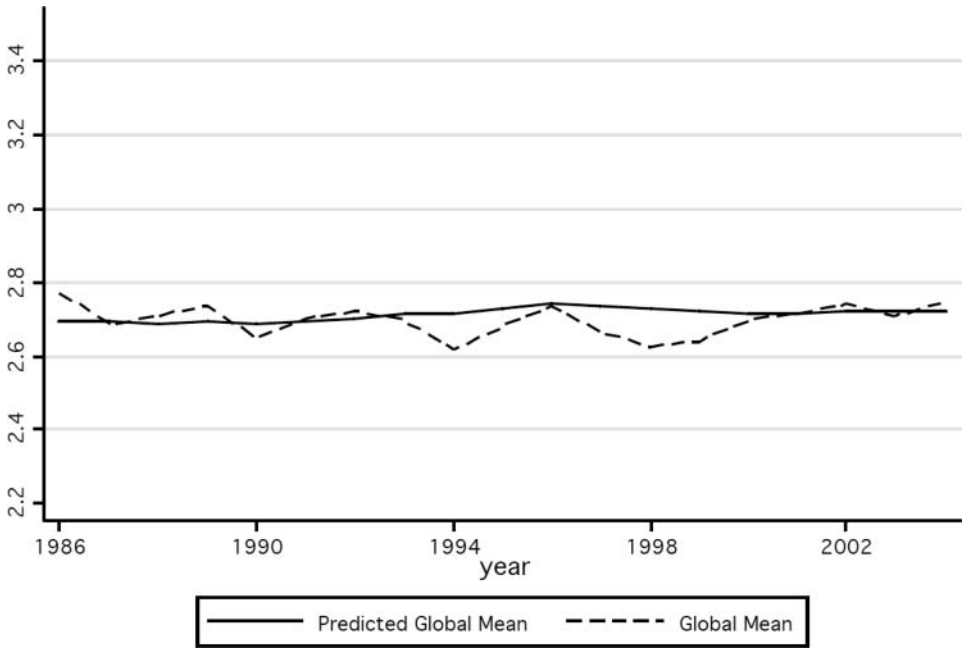

FIGURE 2. Global time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

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 article, we present the time-series trends in the actual values of the factor score 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 shows the global time-series trend in predicted human rights performance and the global average for the actual values, where the difference between the trends is the residual. It is clear that for the world, countries had been doing slightly better than expected up until the end of the Cold War, and then through the late 1990s were doing worse than expected with a slight improvement to a position of overachievement by the turn of the twenty-first century.

Figure 3 shows the predicted values alongside the actual values 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 overall, followed by Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. But, more importantly for the purposes of this article, the figure also shows that *within* regions over time, some regions are doing better than 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.

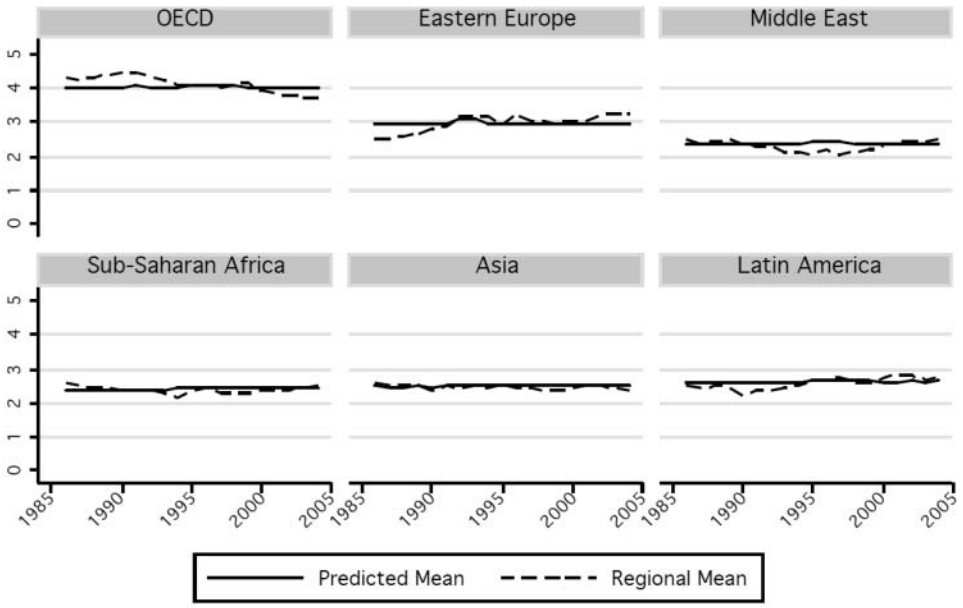

FIGURE 3. Regional time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2005.

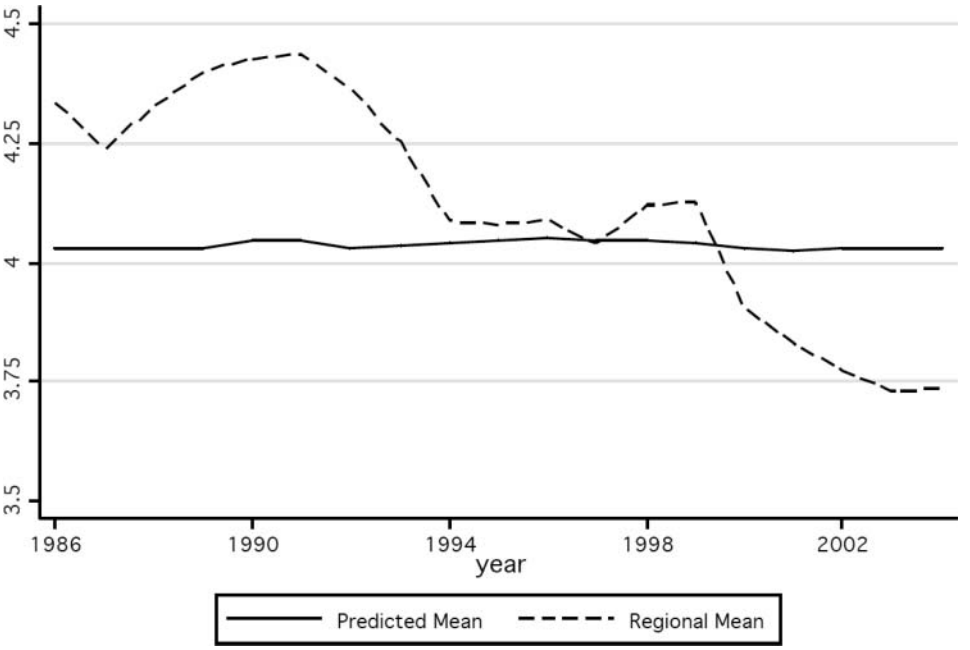

FIGURE 4. OECD time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

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. From 1999 onwards, actual performance has dropped below expected performance at an increasing rate. 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] where human rights performance has not been as high as in the other OECD member states. For Eastern Europe (Figure 5), progress has been made over the period both in expected and actual terms, and the actual performance from the early 1990s exceeds the expected performance in remarkable fashion. The Eastern European trends are the obverse of the trends in the OECD countries, perhaps since EU membership and the Copenhagen Criteria provide additional incentives for countries to improve their human rights performance in ways that membership in the OECD does not. Latin America (Figure 6) sees very similar trends to those observed in Eastern Europe with an actual level of performance that becomes consistently positive towards the second half of the period. Asian performance (Figure 7) has developed from a period of overachievement in the 1980s to one of underachievement 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 underachievement as in Asia, but from the late 1990s, the actual performance has caught up 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 different 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

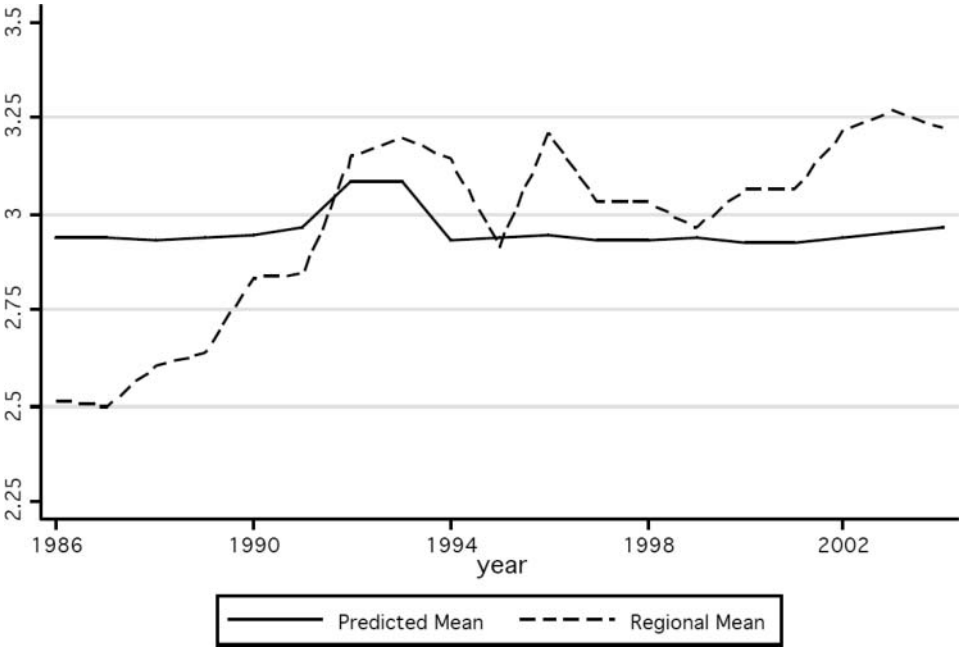

FIGURE 5. Eastern European time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

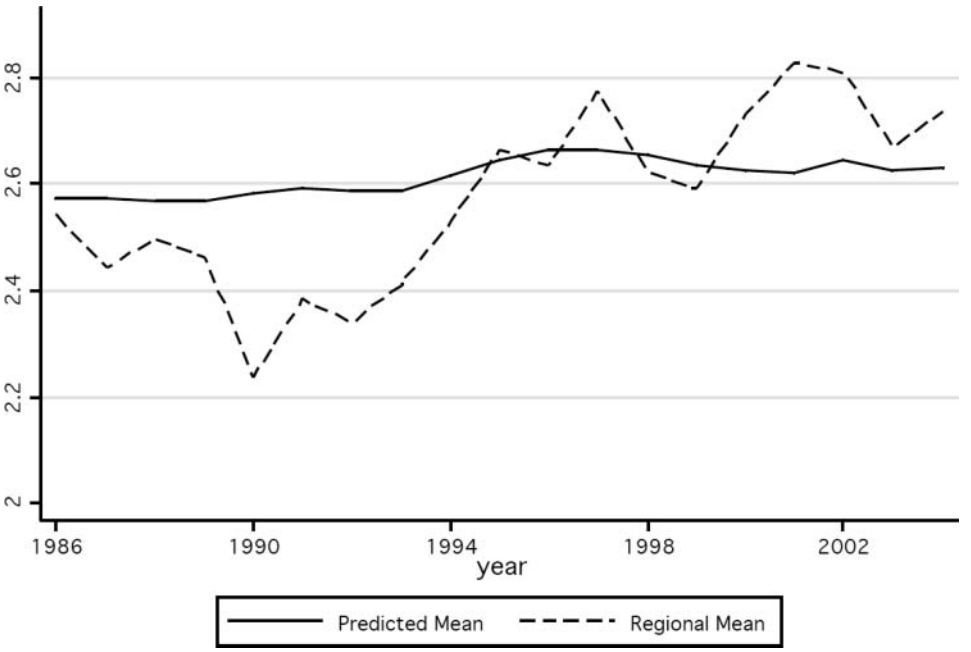

FIGURE 6. Latin American time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

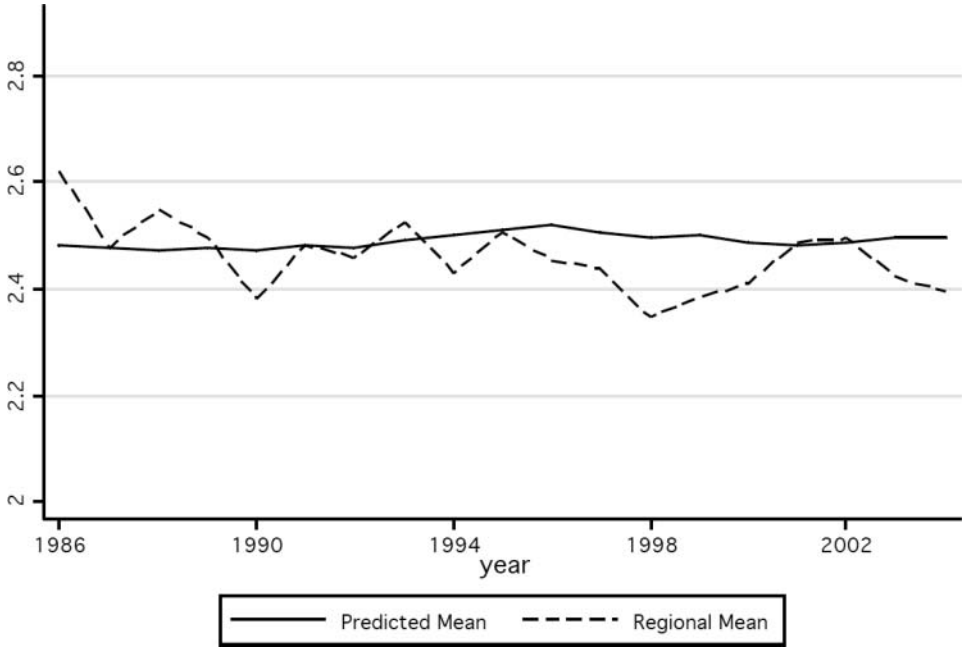

FIGURE 7. Asian time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

shown improvement toward the end of the period where actual performance once again exceeds expected performance.

As a final illustration of the utility of the relativized score, it is possible to make forecasts 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 an 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 percent and 5 percent annual growth rates) for two sets of cases: (1) those cases that fall below the mean, and (2) those that fall 0.5 standard deviation 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 article. 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 rates of per capita GDP growth, despite the relative underachieving status of the group of cases.

Discussion and Implications

In this article, we have developed a relativized measure of human rights performance that combined existing measures into a single-factor score, regressed the factor score on a well-specified set of explanatory variables and saved the residual as a meaningful way to capture the unexplained variation (or degree of over- and underachievement) 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

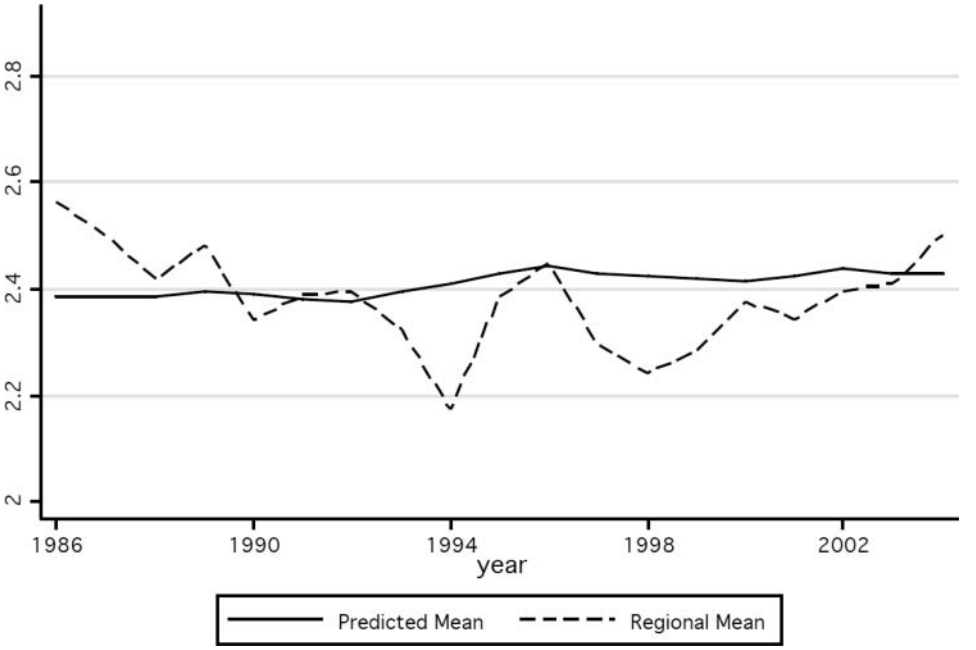

FIGURE 8. Sub-Saharan Africa time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

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 a systematic 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 in 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 degrees of progress in a region over time 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 example, in levels of development and democracy. Rather, it controls for those and other factors and then allows for the comparison of human rights performance.

The comparison of actual-to-predicted performance is important for descriptive and analytical reasons. Descriptively, we have shown in this article that the world appears to be very different if one takes into account the underlying factors that explain the variation in human rights performance. Aid policies decided on the basis of absolute scores (e.g., as the Millennium Challenge Account), in our view, could unfairly punish countries for poor human rights performance, when in fact, the punished country may be doing better than expected. For example, if we rank order the countries in our data set from worst performance to best performance for the year 2004 (a year selected at random) using the actual scores (see Table 4), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the worst performer (i.e., ranked Number 1), but its predicted score places it as ninth worst, suggesting that the DRC is doing worse than it ought to be all things being equal (a difference in a rank of eight places). In contrast, Peru's actual performance ranks it the sixty-seventh worst country, while its predicted performance ranks it the twentieth worst country, suggesting that Peru is

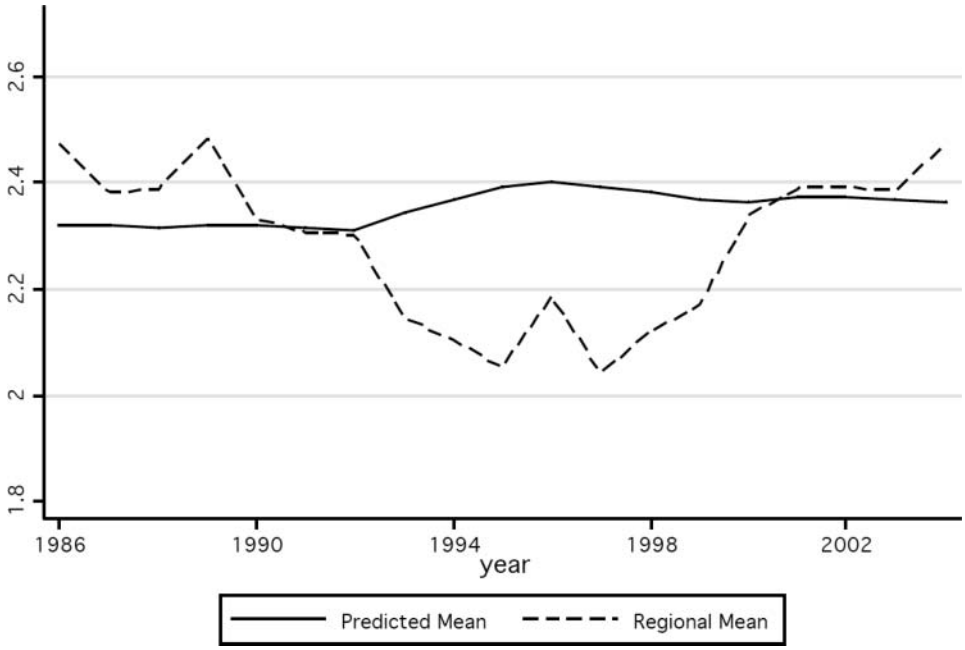

FIGURE 9. Middle East time-series trends in expected and actual human rights performance, 1986–2004.

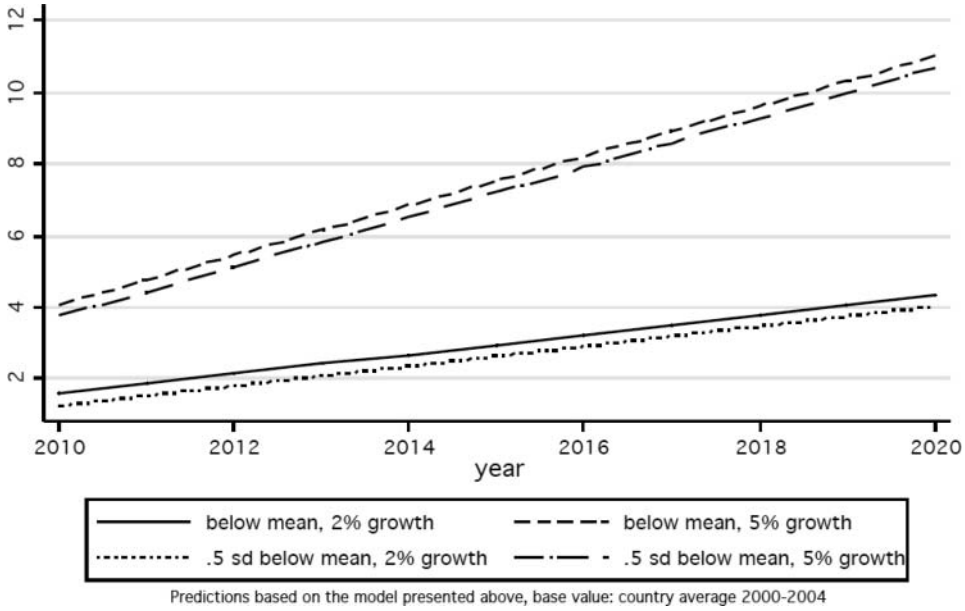

FIGURE 10. Forecasting human rights performance for underachievers against two rates of change in per capita GDP, 2010–2020.

Table 4
Absolute Rank, Predicted Rank, and Relative Differences in Country Human Rights Performance (2004)

Country Name	Absolute Rank (worst to best)	Predicted Rank (worst to best)	Relative Difference in Rank*
Congo, DRC	1	9	−8
Sudan	2	3	−1
Colombia	3	4	−1
Burundi	4	16	−12
Nepal	5	30	−25
Korea (North)	6	22	−16
Haiti	7	26	−19
Cote d'Ivoire	8	69	−61
Myanmar (Burma)	9	5	4
China	10	10	0
Iraq	11	1	10
Russian Federation	12	6	6
Ethiopia	13	15	−2
Afghanistan	14	2	12
Israel	15	61	−46
Nigeria	16	32	−16
Bangladesh	17	33	−16
Indonesia	18	18	0
Philippines	19	29	−10
Angola	20	8	12
Somalia	21	14	7
Pakistan	22	17	5
Zimbabwe	23	40	−17
India	24	11	13
Egypt	25	37	−12
Chad	26	19	7
Rwanda	27	24	3
Uzbekistan	28	49	−21
Algeria	29	21	8
Eritrea	30	70	−40
Cameroon	31	39	−8
Turkmenistan	32	58	−26
Syrian Arab Republic	33	13	20
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	34	7	27
Brazil	35	28	7
Yemen, rep.	36	38	−2
Belarus	37	72	−35
Equatorial Guinea	38	48	−10
Lao People's Democratic Republic	39	68	−29

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Table 4
Absolute Rank, Predicted Rank, and Relative Differences in Country Human Rights Performance (2004) *(Continued)*

Country Name	Absolute Rank (worst to best)	Predicted Rank (worst to best)	Relative Difference in Rank*
Vietnam	40	60	−20
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	41	35	6
Saudi Arabia	42	43	−1
Venezuela	43	44	−1
Central African Republic	44	59	−15
Thailand	45	87	−42
Togo	46	52	−6
Tunisia	47	56	−9
Lebanon	48	54	−6
Cambodia	49	25	24
Uganda	50	31	19
Sri Lanka	51	12	39
Tanzania	52	66	−14
Turkey	53	23	30
Georgia	54	53	1
Zambia	55	73	−18
Azerbaijan	56	67	−11
Cuba	57	34	23
Mexico	58	42	16
Jamaica	59	102	−43
Honduras	60	82	−22
Ukraine	61	84	−23
Kenya	62	47	15
Mauritania	63	65	−2
Kazakhstan	64	92	−28
Tajikistan	65	46	19
Ecuador	66	75	−9
Peru	67	20	47
Armenia	68	91	−23
Malaysia	69	101	−32
Mozambique	70	41	29
Morocco	71	55	16
Kyrgyzstan	72	100	−28
Republic of Moldova	73	89	−16
Djibouti	74	74	0
Guyana	75	117	−42
Liberia	76	27	49
Malawi	77	83	−6
Guatemala	78	36	42
Dominican Republic	79	107	−28

(Continued on the next page)

Table 4
Absolute Rank, Predicted Rank, and Relative Differences in Country Human Rights Performance (2004) *(Continued)*

Country Name	Absolute Rank (worst to best)	Predicted Rank (worst to best)	Relative Difference in Rank*
Papua New Guinea	80	95	−15
El Salvador	81	63	18
Congo Brazzaville	82	50	32
Jordan	83	93	−10
Guinea	84	62	22
United Arab Emirates	85	123	−38
South Africa	86	71	15
Gambia	87	116	−29
Gabon	88	103	−15
United States of America	89	132	−43
Yugoslavia, fr (Serbia/Montenegro)	90	45	45
Romania	91	85	6
Trinidad and Tobago	92	136	−44
Albania	93	80	13
Niger	94	106	−12
Bolivia	95	113	−18
Sierra Leone	96	51	45
Swaziland	97	98	−1
Kuwait	98	88	10
Bhutan	99	96	3
Madagascar	100	86	14
Mongolia	101	118	−17
Ghana	102	105	−3
Argentina	103	115	−12
Nicaragua	104	57	47
Paraguay	105	76	29
Guinea-Bissau	106	81	25
Burkina Faso	107	90	17
Lesotho	108	109	−1
Bulgaria	109	94	15
Republic of Korea (South)	110	99	11
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	111	111	0
Namibia	112	77	35
Singapore	113	121	−8
Cyprus	114	145	−31
Mauritius	115	124	−9
Panama	116	112	4
Benin	117	126	−9

(Continued on the next page)

Table 4
Absolute Rank, Predicted Rank, and Relative Differences in Country Human Rights Performance (2004) *(Continued)*

Country Name	Absolute Rank (worst to best)	Predicted Rank (worst to best)	Relative Difference in Rank*
Botswana	118	138	−20
Comoros	119	108	11
Qatar	120	110	10
Oman	121	119	2
Spain	122	135	−13
Greece	123	131	−8
Bosnia Herzegovina	124	64	60
Fiji	125	129	−4
Costa Rica	126	147	−21
Mali	127	114	13
France	128	142	−14
Poland	129	122	7
Hungary	130	141	−11
Czech Republic	131	133	−2
Croatia	132	97	35
Senegal	133	78	55
Bahrain	134	79	55
United Kingdom	135	144	−9
Switzerland	136	151	−15
Portugal	137	148	−11
Germany	138	139	−1
Austria	139	149	−10
Slovakia	140	120	20
Cape Verde	141	125	16
Uruguay	142	140	2
Italy	143	143	0
Taiwan	144	137	7
Japan	145	146	−1
Netherlands	146	156	−10
Luxembourg	147	158	−11
Norway	148	152	−4
Denmark	149	155	−6
Iceland	150	154	−4
Ireland	151	153	−2
Belgium	152	157	−5
Estonia	153	128	25
Australia	154	150	4
Latvia	155	127	28
Chile	156	104	52
Lithuania	157	130	27

(Continued on the next page)

Table 4
Absolute Rank, Predicted Rank, and Relative Differences in Country Human Rights Performance (2004) *(Continued)*

Country Name	Absolute Rank (worst to best)	Predicted Rank (worst to best)	Relative Difference in Rank*
Canada	158	159	−1
Slovenia	159	134	25
New Zealand	160	162	−2
Finland	161	160	1
Sweden	162	161	1

Note. Overperformers are marked in grey; Spearman rank correlation is .86.
*Relative difference equals the absolute rank minus the predicted rank.

doing much better than expected (a difference in rank of 47 places). Reliance on the actual scores only could lead to the impression that a country like Peru is not worth supporting when in fact it is a classic example of a human rights overachiever.

Analytically, the relativized human rights performance should serve as a new variable in need of explanation. Why is it that some countries are overperformers and some countries are underperformers? The gap between actual and predicted performance itself is in need of explanation. The gap can be examined for single countries or groups of countries defined by region, incomes levels, or other criteria. Possible variables that account for the gap in performance could include the participation of countries in multiple levels of human rights governance (e.g., some states are members of regional and international human rights regimes); the use of trials and other transitional justice mechanisms (e.g., Olsen, Payne, and Reiter 2010, 2012; Sikkink 2011); the relative position of countries in the global capitalist system (e.g., Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Foweraker and Landman 2004); social mobilization from domestic and transnational advocacy networks (e.g., Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999); the presence of "elected authoritarian" regimes as in many Central Asian countries (e.g., Smith-Cannoy 2012); or other variables of interest that are not part of the basic human rights model used to derive the relative human performance in this article.

Finally, there is certainly more work to be done in extending this method to other sets of rights and to using better methods for visualizing relative human rights performance. For example, we should with very little difficulty be 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. It is also possible for these scores to be combined with Global Information Systems (GIS) software to produce human rights performance maps that chart the degree of over- and underachievement in an easy to understand format for policymakers and private companies interested in the relative human rights performance of countries. The forecasting work shown above 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. While our example used growth in per capita GDP, other variables with links to policy intervention can be used to generate similar forecasting analyses. We do hope, however, that this article and the method that it develops will be of enduring value to the community of scholars and practitioners working in this exciting field.

Notes

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. See www.politicalterrorscale.org.
4. See www.freedomhouse.org.
5. See www.humanrightsdata.com.
6. This assumption, as it turns out, is often overlooked, where failure to provide a well-specified set of explanatory variables can result in the residual term capturing a lot of "noise" with it not therefore representing 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 article.
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.

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