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International Organizations as Normative Agenda Setters: Social Influence and Reputation in the effects of the International Human Rights Regime



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Abstract

This document deals with the question of how International Organizations (IOs) influence states. Analyzing original quantitative data from Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe, we explore the role of IOs in the configuration of states' interests and normative agendas, looking at a mechanism dominated by "social influence" dynamics—the reporting procedure of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) of the United Nations. Specifically, we investigate whether states adjust the substantive content of their periodic reports to mimic the human rights agenda explicitly set by the HRC through its concluding observations reports. We find that states take the HRC seriously and play the role of "good members" of the human rights regime, following the human rights agenda previously set by the HRC. We therefore provide systematic evidence that shows that, through a mechanism dominated by social influence dynamics of interaction, even poorly "legalized" IOs can have an influence over the definition of states' interests and the normative agenda they endorse. We also find that this influence is stronger in the case of more democratic countries.

Key words: international organizations, international human rights regime, agenda setting, social influence, Human Rights Committee

Resumen

Este documento trata sobre cómo es que las Organizaciones Internacionales (OIs) ejercen influencia sobre los estados. Con base en el análisis de datos originales sobre países de América Latina y Europa Central y del Este, exploramos el papel de las OIs en la configuración de los intereses y las agendas normativas de los estados, observando un mecanismo concreto dominado por dinámicas de "influencia social": el procedimiento de informes periódicos de los estados ante el Comité de Derechos Humanos (CDH) de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas. Específicamente, investigamos si los estados ajustan el contenido de sus informes periódicos para seguir la agenda de derechos humanos explícitamente establecida por el CDH mediante sus informes de observaciones finales. Encontramos que los estados se toman en serio al CDH e interpretan el papel de "buenos miembros" del régimen internacional de derechos humanos, siguiendo la agenda previamente establecida por el CDH. De esta manera, ofrecemos evidencia sistemática que demuestra que, mediante un mecanismo dominado por dinámicas de influencia social, incluso OIs poco "legalizadas" pueden tener influencia sobre la definición de los intereses y la agenda normativa de los estados. Encontramos también que esta influencia es más fuerte en el caso de países más democráticos.

Palabras clave: organizaciones internacionales, régimen internacional de derechos humanos, establecimiento de agenda, influencia social, Comité de Derechos Humanos

Introduction

From diverse theoretical and methodological angles, and looking at a variety of institutional settings, International Relations (IR) scholars have convincingly argued that International Organizations (IOs) matter—that is, that they have an influence over states. However, the question on how international institutions influence states remains less studied (Mitchell 2003; Kelley 2004, 425; Onuff 2002, 211; Bearce and Bondanella 2007, 703; Hawkins et al. 2006, 5; Johnston 2001). In particular, greater knowledge about the mechanisms IOs employ to influence states can reveal new evidence on the importance and roles they play. In this study we examine the effects of one possible mechanism – social influence— and confirm that through it IOs play a role in the constitution of state interests and the normative agenda they endorse. We study such mechanism within the context of the organs and bodies of the international human rights regime.¹ We also study whether the effectiveness of this mechanism enhances or diminishes as democracy consolidates and respect for rights increases.

A quite powerful argument in the IR literature regarding a key mechanism behind the influence of IOs over states is that the former can generate direct material costs over the latter (Keohane 1984; Krasner 1983; Martin and Simmons 1998; Hasenclever et al. 1997; Schimmelfennig 2005; Bearce and Bondanella 2007; Kelley 2004). But the organs and bodies of the international human rights regime cannot produce material costs—at least not directly. What they most evidently can do is to generate social (reputational) costs through “naming and shaming”. A sizable literature has argued that shaming² plays a role in the constitution of state interests and that it influences state behavior in the area of human rights (Brysk 1993 and 1994; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999; Cardenas 2007; Franklin 2007; Burgerman 2001; Risse 1999; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002; Hawkins 2002; Ron 1997; Foot 2000; Cardenas 2007; Davis and Murdie 2012; Anaya Muñoz 2009). Furthermore, by damaging states’ reputation, shaming might produce indirect material costs for states (Murdie and Peksen 2013), shaping the way they define their interests and therefore influencing their behavior.

We contribute to this line of research, focusing on an eminently social mechanism of rewards and punishments implemented by an IO. To assess the role of social influence, we purposively focus on a poorly “legalized” (Abbot et al. 2000) organ of the

¹ An international regime is a set of “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner 1983, 2).

² The act of shaming involves the public and explicit exposure of a state’s norm-deviant behavior. In the area of human rights, it implies shedding light into the violation of human rights by a specific state. In this sense, the literature understands shaming as *the explicit public denunciation of a gap between behavior and accepted norms* (Hawkins 2004, 783; Schimmelfennig 2001, 64; Lebovic and Voeten 2006, 868-870).

international human rights regime—the Human Rights Committee (HRC), one of the “treaty bodies” of the United Nations (UN) or “universal” human rights regime (OUNHCHR 2012)³. Since this particular organ lacks formal or legal mechanisms to impose (direct) material rewards or costs to states, focusing on it allows us to isolate more accurately the effects of the mechanism of social influence.

Specifically, we look at the “reporting procedure” of the HRC—a tool that clearly aims to shape state behavior through social influence. We examine up to what point the HRC shapes the reporting practices of states from Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. States party to the core human rights treaties adopted in the framework of the UN have to submit periodic reports to the different treaty bodies. In these reports, states make an assessment of the progress they have made and the obstacles they have faced in the implementation of the treaties’ norms. Treaty bodies examine these reports and, considering alternative information obtained from different sources, issue a set of “concluding observations”, in which they make a general (and often critical) assessment of the human rights situation in the country and issue recommendations thereof. Subsequently, states have to submit a new periodic report, which in turn will lead to a new evaluation and the elaboration of more concluding observations (OUNHCHR 2012). Specifically, we investigate whether states adjust the substantive content of their periodic reports to mimic the human rights agenda explicitly set by the HRC through its concluding observations.

From a policy perspective the article attempts to contribute to a discussion on whether the resources invested in the reporting procedure are worth it, or whether the international community should direct its scant resources towards “stronger” mechanisms such as those of the (judicial or quasi-judicial) adjudication of specific human rights violations complaints.

Our study finds that in the definition of the substantive content of their periodic reports, states in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe take the HRC seriously and play the role of “good members” of the human rights regime, following the changes in the human rights agenda explicitly set by the HRC in its concluding observations. In this sense, we argue that, through a mechanism of social influence, UN treaty bodies do have an influence over what states define as their interest, and that a procedure based on the periodic elaboration of written reports by states, followed by an evaluation and an explicit written report by an IO, even if nonbinding and lacking in enforcement, leads to changes in states’ normative (discursive) agenda. We verify that such adjustments make the states’ normative agendas more similar to that of the HRC in the short term. However, we find evidence that in the long term such adjustments are not strong enough to produce absolute convergence. We also verify that in contexts of greater respect for political rights, states adjust their normative discourse relatively more closely when responding to the HRC.

³ The HRC has been established by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to monitor and promote its implementation by State parties.

We acknowledge that what we can analyze in this process is only a particular manifestation of commitment (discourse), not compliance (see Cardenas 2007). We cannot assert whether actual legal or policy changes have followed states' discursive patterns. Nevertheless, we consider that even if in practice there usually is a clear gap between commitment and compliance, "talking the talk" of human rights is, at least, an important first step towards "walking the walk" (Checkel 2005; Schimmelfennig 2001; Risse 2000; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999). In this sense, the outcomes of the reporting procedure, even if constrained to the discursive level, are not something to be ignored or undervalued.

This document is structured as follows. The first part presents information on how the reporting procedure works. The second section discusses the particularities of international human rights influence over Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. The third segment elaborates our hypotheses. We explain the empirical strategy in the fourth section. The fifth section evaluates empirically the validity of our arguments. The conclusion recapitulates our findings and offers suggestions for future research.

The reporting procedure

During the past seventy years, the international community has progressively developed an international human rights regime. This regime has grown broader, more complex, and more legitimate over time. Most countries in every region of the world have ratified a growing number of human rights treaties, recognizing the validity of international human rights norms. The "operational core" of the international human rights regime rests on a number of specialized organs and bodies, including the UN treaty bodies (see Sepúlveda et al 2004, 77-170; OUNHCHR 2012).⁴ Treaty bodies are perhaps the least studied component of the international human rights regime. They are composed of a varying number of "independent experts" and have the mandate to promote and monitor the implementation of the human rights norms established in each of the core human rights treaties adopted within the UN framework. The mechanism they more broadly use for this is the reporting procedure (OUNHCHR 2012; Sepulveda et al. 2004, 94-107).⁵ Treaty bodies, however, lack enforcement powers and the recommendations they make in their concluding observations reports are not legally binding nor directly linked to material incentives (Bayefsky 2000 and 2001; Bassiouni and Schabas 2011; Keller and Ulfstein 2012a;

⁴ The list of the UN treaty bodies is offered in Appendix A.

⁵ Treaty bodies also have the faculty to receive individual and state complaints regarding specific cases. They also elaborate "general comments", which clarify the content or scope of the human rights included in the treaties and most of them can undertake special investigations regarding severe violations of human rights in specific countries (see Keller and Ulfstein 2012; OUNHCHR 2012; Morijn 2011, 300-302; and Sepulveda, et al., 94-107).

Morijn 2011; Pillay 2012; Mutua 1998; O’Flaherty 2002; Keller and Ulfstein 2012a). Indeed, treaty bodies and the reporting procedure are often portrayed as the “weakest link” of the international human rights regime (Mutua 1998; Cramer and Simmons 2015, 586-588).

Every state that has ratified the core UN human rights treaties has the obligation to submit, to the corresponding treaty body, periodic reports on the implementation of the treaty’s norms. Treaty bodies then examine these reports and issue their concluding observations, highlighting their sources of concern and issuing recommendations thereof (OUNHCHR 2012; Kälin 2012; Sepúlveda et al. 2004, 94-107). Four or five years after the adoption of concluding observations, states shall submit a new periodic report, which will then lead to a new set of concluding observations, and so the reporting cycle goes on.⁶ The reporting procedure is supposed to be based in a “constructive dialogue” between the treaty bodies and states. It rests on an interaction process that involves an intense dynamics of (written and oral) communication (Keller and Ulfstein 2012; Morijn 2011; O’Flaherty 2011; Connors 2000).

Most of the literature on the UN treaty bodies and their reporting procedure is descriptive, anecdotic, and focused on the organs’ operative challenges or the perceived shortcomings in their design (Bayefsky 2000 and 2001; Bassiouni and Schabas 2011; Keller and Ulfstein 2012a; Morijn 2011; Pillay 2012; Mutua 1998; O’Flaherty 2002; Keller and Ulfstein 2012a). Being mostly developed by legal scholars and practitioners, “insiders” of the UN treaty bodies machinery, this literature is not framed around IR questions and tends to see UN treaty bodies as flawed, weak, and unable to alter states’ behavior in a significant manner (Mutua 1998; Krommendijk 2014, 18-19; Heyn and Viljoen 2001, 488, 511; Bassiouni 2011, 3-6; Keller and Ulfstein 2012b: 11). However, a couple of studies have found that in some cases the recommendations issued in concluding observations have been implemented by states, triggering reforms to domestic legal frameworks or eliciting the implementation of specific policy initiatives (Heyns and Viljoen 2001; Morijn 2011, 302 and 304).

While the IR literature on the transnational advocacy of human rights is abundant, it only mentions treaty bodies marginally, as one of many participants in Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs). Regarding the influence of treaty bodies over states, some qualitative research on shaming, for example, suggests that their actions are an important component of processes of “pressure from above”, which in turn influence domestic political processes (Brysk 1993; Keck y Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp y Sikkink, 1999).

A few systematic studies investigate the influence of treaty bodies over state behavior. However, do not focus on the reporting mechanism, but on the decisions or “views” on individual complaints (Cole 2012; Open Society Initiative 2010). To our knowledge, only one recent study analyzes the reporting procedure, focusing on the

⁶ In some cases, like that of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, reports are submitted every two years.

Committee against Torture, however (Creamer and Simmons 2015). So the literature is dominated by anecdotic evidence, which sometimes suggests that the periodic reporting system may occasionally have an influence over states' policies (Krommendijk 2014; Heyns and Viljoen 2002, 1-2-103, 110; Heyns and Viljoen 2001, 512-517; Morjin 2011, 310; Anaya Muñoz 2009 and 2012). In sum, with one exception, there are no systematic and large-N IR-oriented studies on the influence of treaty bodies' and their reporting procedure over states' normative agendas or policies. This study fills this void.

Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe: International human rights influences

The Latin American tradition of internationalism and legalism and the region's contribution to the development of international human rights norms is well known (Macaulay 2010: 136). By the early 1990s, all continental Latin American countries had ratified the ICCPR and the American Convention on Human Rights, thus accepting the validity and legitimacy of international human rights norms (see Risse and Sikkink 1999: 21 and Ropp and Sikkink 1999: 191). Furthermore, for most of the past few decades, a majority of them have aspired to be accepted as “worthy” members of the community of “civilized” states. So Latin America has been a recurrent “case study” in the IR research on human rights. The pioneering research on the transnational advocacy of human rights focused on Latin American countries (Brysk 1993 and 1994; Sikkink 1993; Keck y Sikkink 1998). A good number of authors have followed their lead, basically arguing that “pressure from above” (Brysk 1993) has elicited or at least facilitated meaningful domestic processes of change in the region (Anaya Muñoz 2009; Cardenas 2007; Hawkins 2002; Burgerman 2001; Franklin 2007; Ropp and Sikkink 1999).

This literature would seem to suggest that Latin America, as a region, is a “most likely” case in the study of international influence in the area of human rights. Though there is some truth in that view, it obscures the differences within the region. The breadth and depth with which the different countries of the region have acquired binding commitments with the international human rights regime varies. The actual levels of respect for human rights and other relevant indicators such as the presence of human rights Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the quality of democracy, and the countries' wealth also present significant differences. Thus, we have no reason to suppose that international actors (including IOs) have had the same amount of influence over all states across the region or that all countries are “easy cases” in this respect.

Similarly, the role of international actors and influences in the promotion of human rights norms in Central and Eastern European has been evident since the mid-1970s, within the framework of “the Helsinki Process” (Thomas 1999 and 2001). This was of course accelerated and intensified after the demise of communism and the transitions to democracy in the region during the 1990s. Indeed, by then most countries of the

region had ratified the ICCPR. By the same token, with the unparalleled development of a particularly highly “legalized” international and supranational institutional framework, the “European space” became the world’s hotspot for the socialization of international human rights norms. The literature shows how the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have promoted democracy and the human rights agenda, particularly targeting the formerly communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Checkel 2005; Schimmelfennig 2001 and 2005). However, as in the case of Latin America, the outcomes of such international influences have been clearly divergent across countries (Schimmelfennig 2005, 828 and 2001, 60-61).

So in this paper we focus on two regions of the world that have experienced intense processes of international influence in the area of human rights during the past few decades. We consider, however, that there are sufficient intra-region differences, as to have a healthy variation in our observations.

Another advantage of focusing on these two particular regions is that the countries in both of them are not major players in the definition of the international human rights regime and its normative agenda. Russia, of course, is an important world power and Brazil is clearly a prominent player in economic and political terms, particularly in Latin America. But their capabilities have not allowed them to determine the course of the international human rights agenda and the practices of international human rights organs such as those of the HRC. Thus, we avoid the potential presence of an endogeneity problem. Finally, studying more than one region allows us to take into account the effect of regional differences – such as diffusion effects – that might alter the results. The following segment presents the hypothesis of this study.

Explaining the HRC’s influence: The hypotheses

One of the key or central functions of IOs is the generation and distribution of information regarding norm-compliant or norm-deviant behavior by states. On these bases, IOs greatly contribute to shaping the reputation of states, which in turn can have a positive/negative effect over their material interests. This is a key source of their leverage in international relations (Keohane 1984; Krasner 1983; Lipson 1991; Martin and Simmons 1998; Hasenclever et al. 1997). The organs and bodies of the international human rights regime are not very different in this respect. Just like any other IO, they generate and distribute information about state behavior—that is, about their commitment to and compliance with norms. In this way, through information, they might weaken states’ reputations. In this same sense, the treaty bodies’ reporting mechanism is “the primary method to generate information and increase transparency about implementation of and compliance with” human rights treaties by states (Creamer and Simmons 2015, 580).

A particularly important information-based mechanism to infringe social costs to norm-deviant states is shaming (Schimmelfennig 2001, 64-65; Brysk 1993; Keck and

Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999; Davis and Murdie 2012; Hafner-Burton 2008). Indeed, shaming is the most evident mechanism treaty bodies have to influence states. For instance, a highly critical concluding observations report is likely to affect the reputation of the state concerned and therefore to cause shame over it; a commending report, on the other hand, is likely to benefit the state's standing in the international community. States, furthermore, worry about the reputation they have in any institutional environment (Alcañiz 2012; Schimmelfennig 2001, 48). As Alcañiz (2012) points out, new democracies are particularly interested in enhancing their international credentials and reputation. Thus, a basic premise in this argument is that most states, particularly those in the path towards democracy, will have a preference for not being shamed (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

In addition, states will want to appear as good members of their community by “playing a role”. Role playing is a form of appropriate behavior—“agents behave appropriately by learning a role... [acting] in accordance with expectations” of the group to which they belong (Checkel 2005, 804). More specifically for our discussion on treaty bodies, states have good reasons to play the role of “good participants” in the reporting procedure and therefore of good members of the international human rights regime (Mutua 1998, 228; Cramer and Simmons 2015, 590). This kind of social/rational behavior is close to the notion of social influence (Johnston 2001) that underpins shaming. The logic of social influence is therefore not a purely social or purely rational mode of behavior. It is both social and rational (Schimmelfennig 2001, 65). Treaty bodies and their concluding observations are thus expected to generate a framework of social rewards and punishments, which could in turn influence states' socially-based cost/benefit calculations (see Pillay 2012, 12,16; United Nations 2006, 6; Heyns and Viljoen 2002, 107-108; O'Flaherty and Tsai 2011, 44-45; Kälin 2012: 37-41).

States could also fear or even experience material punishments or rewards according to the state of their reputations (Murdie and Peksen 2013). Other authors have argued, for example, that ratifying international human rights treaties can have positive reputational effects for states and indirectly increase their chances of obtaining foreign direct investment (Garriga forthcoming). Other potential consequences might be trade benefits or military or humanitarian aid. Considering these potential benefits and losses, states will prefer to have a positive reputation—to be acknowledged as norm-abiding, worthy members of the community of “civilized” states.

States furthermore might try to nurture their positive reputations without incurring into excessive costs. In this sense, it is surely difficult for many states to stop violating rights (Cardenas 2007). For instance, they would have to stop using repression to control dissidents and secure power. Moreover, changing behavior requires significant efforts at deep institutional reform and even cognitive, cultural change. Changing normative commitments and “playing a role” to gain reputational bonuses is certainly cheaper than compliance; although in the long term, the former might precipitate the latter.

Therefore, norm-violating states will thus seek more cost-efficient options, like “talking the talk”. Talking is cheap, at least in the short-term; or at least cheaper than

actual compliance. “Talking the talk” might not only avoid social punishments (shaming) but also generate social rewards (praise). In this way, countries that suffer pressure from above will tend to adopt, strengthen or underline a norms-based discourse to avoid shaming or counterbalance their effects (Shimmelfennig 2001; Anaya Munoz 2014).

In sum, states are expected to redefine their normative commitments vis a vis the HRC, to “talk the talk” the Committee wants to hear, as a result of their participation in the reporting procedure. To send the message that they take the HRC and its particular human rights agenda seriously, and thus to obtain a positive reputation as a state that is truly concerned with its human rights problems and that is committed to cooperate, states are expected to follow the agenda set by the HRC.

Based on all these arguments, we formalize our first hypothesis. We expect that:

Hypothesis 1. States will adjust the content of their reports to match changes introduced by the HRC in its concluding observations reports.

The literature has shown that democracy is the key variable in explaining state behavior in the area of human rights (Landman 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Neumayer 2005; Simmons 2009; Davis and Murdie 2012; Murdie and Perksen 2013; Hafner-Burton 2013). For this reason, we treat it as a key variable in our study. Democratizing countries, like those we focus on, might have a particular interest in being accepted as “members of the club” of “civilized” rights-respecting nations, and thus to be more mindful of their reputation and the opinion of the organs of the international human rights regime. Accommodating their reports to follow the HRC’s agenda could provide them with highly-valued reputational gains. This theoretical expectation rests on an assumption, however, of decreasing returns to the reputation a state possesses. As the perception of reputation increases, additional reputational gains are less valued than previous gains. In other words, states holding (relatively) bad reputations will value relatively more any additional gain than countries being recognized as “civilized” and “respected”. Based on this argument, less democratic states will tend to adjust more their normative commitments than more democratic states since their expected (marginal) rewards are higher.

It is also plausible to assume that more democratic states receive less criticism from international human rights organs and bodies, including the HRC. Therefore, they might be in less need to balance their reputational score by responding or changing their normative agendas to fit that of the HRC. Considering this, we could thus expect that more democratic countries (enjoying greater reputation) will value less reputational gains than their less democratic peers.

Considering these arguments, we state our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2A: States with (relatively) higher levels of democracy will adjust relatively less the content of their reports to match changes introduced by the HRC in its concluding observations reports than states with (relatively) lower levels of democracy.

Nevertheless, it could also be argued that more advanced democracies might consider that their domestic laws and institutions must increasingly improve in upholding human rights in practice. Politicians and bureaucrats in these countries might be (relatively) more willing to support the international human rights agenda as they have become more socialized to democratic, rights-abiding practices. Autocrats or the elite in less democratic countries, on the other hand, might undervalue human rights norms (relatively more) when compared to leaders in more democratic societies. Furthermore, public opinion and society in general is likely to demand more respect for human rights in more democratic settings. Moreover, “talking the talk” of human rights is likely to have lesser costs for more democratic countries, which are likely to have relatively higher levels of respect for political and civil rights. In other words their normative discourses might reflect more closely what these states already attempt to achieve in practice. On the contrary, the costs for less democratic countries might be higher, as “talking the talk” might make human rights violations more salient and expose the government to more intense criticism.

These arguments support our second alternative hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2B: States with (relatively) higher levels of democracy will adjust relatively more the content of their reports to match changes introduced by the HRC in its concluding observations reports than states with (relatively) lower levels of democracy.

Because of these opposing considerations (Hypotheses 2A and 2B), we remain agnostic regarding the direction (positive or negative) of the impact of the level of democracy on the extent to which states will follow the normative agenda set by the HRC. The following two sections describe the empirical approach to test the validity of our hypothesis, and present the empirical results.

Empirical Analysis

We use a three-dimensional unbalanced panel dataset of fifteen Latin American countries and twenty-two Central and Eastern European countries ⁷ during the period

⁷ These countries are: Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia,

1991-2015 for 32 concrete human rights. We follow several steps to build our dependent and independent variables. Our primary sources of information are the concluding observations reports by the HRC and the periodic state reports. Firstly, using text analysis software, we count the number of times that a specific list of words is used, both in concluding observations and state reports. Secondly, we group those words into 32 specific clusters of words, each pertaining to concrete human rights.⁸ Thirdly, we measure the (relative) saliency of a human right within each report. Measuring the saliency of human rights provides an important advantage to test our hypothesis. We expect that if the HRC aims to produce a change in states' discursive practices, it will highlight or stress a particular set of human rights from one report to the next. By enhancing the saliency of specific rights to states' eyes, the HRC signals what rights it would like the state prioritizes. In sum, if the states were mindful of the sort of mechanism outlined in the previous section, then they are expected to follow these changes in the HRC's concluding observations reports, adjusting the emphasis they put on specific sets of human rights in their own reports, to match those of the HRC. To measure saliency, we divide the number of times the pertaining words appeared in a report by the total number of words of the same report. As stated above, these ratios provide with an approximate value of the relative importance that the HRC and states confer to each human right.

Since our key variables measure the extent to which states' reports follow the human rights agenda set by the HRC, for methodological reasons, fourthly, we consider the reporting cycle to begin with a concluding observations report, which is then followed by a new state report. In this sense, this methodological approach is based on the assumption that "periodic reports should take as their starting point the Concluding Observations of the previous examination" (Kälin 2012: 21 and 27). All together, we examine 104 cycles within 32 clusters of human rights for 37 states. Even if states parties to the ICCPR are expected to send a new periodic report every 4 years, a good number of states are usually late in doing so. Furthermore, the obligation to produce periodic reports is activated after the ratification of the ICCPR. Obviously, states have ratified the ICCPR at a different year. In this way, reporting cycles are not homogeneous across countries. So our data contains a different number of observations for each country.

To analyze the impact of the HRC on states' normative discourses, we employ two different strategies. First, we assess the states' response to the HRC in the short term (within each cycle that includes a HRC report and a state report). In doing so, we provide information on the effectiveness of the HRC to influence states' discourses in each report. However, this analysis does not provide an assessment on how similar these agendas become in the long term. A second model examines whether or not

Georgia, Guatemala, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

⁸ Our list of human rights includes not only rights as such, but also the rights of specific groups and some particular human rights issues. We used the "world examiner" of Atlas.ti. The clusters and the words in each of them are shown in Appendix B.

states' and HRC's reports converge in the saliency they grant to different rights in the long term.

Our dependent variable in the first model (estimating short term effects) is the change in the relative saliency of a human right in states' reports from one cycle to another and our independent variable is the change in the relative saliency of a human right in the HRC's concluding observations reports with respect to the relative saliency of a human right in states' reports from one cycle to another. Thus, we directly measure how much the HRC deviates from the previous state's report when setting its agenda, and then to what extent the state follows such adjustment. A positive and statistically significant coefficient for our key independent variable will show support for our first hypothesis.

To test our second hypothesis, we proceed to multiply the change in the relative saliency of a human right in the HRC's concluding observations reports with three variables capturing democratic quality, as expressed by the respect of key democratic rights: 1) Political Rights Scores, 2) Civil Liberties Scores, and 3) the Physical Integrity Rights Index. The scores of political rights and civil liberties come from the Freedom in the World reports, by Freedom House (2015). They range from 1 (the greatest degree of freedom) to 7 (the smallest degree of freedom), but for interpretation purposes, we reverse the scale in the models. The Physical Integrity Rights Index is constructed by the CIRI Human Rights Data Project (2015). This index ranges from 0 (no government respect for the right to be free from Torture, Extrajudicial Killings, Political Imprisonment, and Disappearances) to 8 (full government respect for these four rights) (CIRI Human Rights Dataset Project, 2015). As suggested above, by employing these three indexes, we take into account most types of rights that characterize democratic quality.

In the second model (aiming to estimate long term effects), we employ as our dependent variable the difference in the absolute value between the relative saliency of a human right in the states' reports and the preceding HCR's concluding observations reports and as our key independent variable the number of elapsed reporting cycles. A larger positive coefficient of our key independent variable (if statistically significant) would indicate greater HRC's ineffectiveness to influence states' normative agenda in the long term. However, if at the same time we verified the validity of the first hypothesis, we could conclude that such ineffectiveness is relatively lower, considering that although changes in the HRC report occur faster than those of the states, these changes follow the same path. Finally, a non-statistically coefficient – and a valid first hypothesis – would reveal that such changes occurred at similar speed (maximum effectiveness). In our long-term analysis, we also include the Political Rights Score, the Civil Liberties Score, and the Physical Integrity Rights Index to assess the effect of the marginal gains of reputation on the likelihood of convergence in the long term as democratic quality varies. We can express the empirical version of short and long-term models as equations (1) and (2) state.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Change in the relative saliency of rights in states periodic reports}_{irc} = & \beta_0 + \gamma_i \text{state}_i + \delta_r \text{right}_r + \\ & \beta_1 * \text{Change in the relative saliency by HRC}_{irc} + \beta_2 * \text{Openness index}_{ic} + \beta_3 * \text{Reporting} \\ & \text{Cicle}_{irc} + \beta_4 * \text{International NGO}_{ic} + \beta_5 * \text{Log(Gross Domestic Product)}_{ic} + \beta_6 * X_{ic} + \beta_7 \\ & * X_{ic} * \text{Change in the relative saliency by HRC}_{irc} + Z_j u_j + v_{ir,t} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Where r is the human right, i the state, and c the reporting cycle by country by human right, X Political Right Rating, Physical Integrity Rights Index or Civil Liberties Rating.

$$\begin{aligned} |\text{Relative saliency of rights in states reports}_{irc} - \text{Relative saliency by HRC}_{irc}| = & \beta_0 + \gamma_i \text{state}_i + \delta_r \\ & \text{right}_r + \beta_1 * \text{Reporting Cicle}_{irc} + \beta_2 * \text{Log(Gross Domestic Product)}_{ic} + \beta_3 * \text{International} \\ & \text{NGO}_{ic} + \beta_4 * \text{Openness index}_{ic} + \beta_5 * X_{ic} + Z_j u_j + v_{ir,t} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Where $||$ is the absolute value function, r the human right, i the state, and c the reporting cycle by country by human right, X Political Rights Score, Physical Integrity Rights Index or Civil Liberties Score.

In both models, the control variables account for cross-state-right heterogeneity as follows. For the realist paradigm, state power is a key variable in explaining state behavior across issue-areas in international relations, including that of human rights, of course (Waltz 1979; Krasner 1983). Powerful states might be less concerned about their reputation in this particular area and thus less vulnerable to social influences and shaming than states with fewer resources. To account for the relative power of a state, we introduce in the model two different measures: the natural log of Gross Domestic Product per capita and the log of the Gross Domestic Product at constant 2005 U.S. dollars gathered from the World Development Indicators by the World Bank (2015). We also control for the strength of transnational civil society actors. For this, we include a variable that counts the number of international NGOs with presence in each country. The literature has shown that transnational activism is a relevant determinant when explaining outcomes in the area of human rights (Greenhill 2010; Murdie and Davis 2012; Simmons 2009; Neumayer 2005). We also control for countries' degree of economic integration into the world economy, as more (economically) integrated countries might be more sensitive to international human rights processes (Neumayer 2005). For this, we employ the Openness Index—that is the sum of the exports and imports relative to the Gross Domestic Product at constant 2005 U.S. dollars (World Bank 2015).⁹ We also include the number of elapsed reporting cycles to control for “the age” of the HRC. Perhaps as the HRC “becomes older” its effectiveness might grow stronger.

Additionally, we include a set of state dummy variables to account for unobserved time-right-invariant state heterogeneity (state_i), a set of rights cluster dummy variables to account for unobserved time-state-invariant heterogeneity (rights_r). To control for the potential presence of statistical dependence between units of analysis (countries)

⁹ Summary statistics of the variables by region are displayed in Table C1 in Appendix C.

within a particular cluster of units (region in this case), we work with a multilevel regression, which let us predict random effects in the variance-covariance matrix for the region level while controlling for the state level, therefore finding unbiased standard errors (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Steenbergen and Jones 2002). This provides a more conservative inference for the aggregate effect. In equations (1) and (2), Z_j is the design matrix for the j th region (i.e. Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe). Thus, we include random coefficients u at the higher level. The multilevel technique allows us to estimate their variances and to recover the best linear unbiased predictions of u , using a Bayesian prediction. The element u_j denotes the j th unobservable region specific effect whose vector is assumed to be i.i.d. $(0, \Sigma)$. We only allow the intercept to vary randomly.

Results

The analysis presented in this section shows and discusses the results of the estimation of equations (1) and (2) for the short and long term analysis, respectively.¹⁰

Short Term Analysis: The effects of a reporting cycle on the change in the relative saliency of rights in state reports

We show the results of the estimation of the first multilevel equation (1) in Table I. To verify the robustness of the results, we estimate seven different specifications. In the first one (column 1 in table I), we only include the state dummies in addition to the change in the relative saliency of rights in the HRC's concluding observations reports. In this specification, we only evaluate our first hypothesis. In the second and third specifications, we incorporate the Political Rights Score variable and the interaction between this variable and the change in the relative saliency of rights in the HRC's concluding observations reports to test our second hypothesis. While we employ the gross domestic product to take into account the realist argument in the first specification, we use the gross domestic per capita in the second specification of each pair. We follow the same logic in the remaining specifications. In the following pair, we instead use the interactions between the change in the relative saliency of rights introduced by HRC and the Physical Integrity Rights Index to test the second hypothesis. Finally, we employ the interaction between the change in the relative saliency of rights by the HRC and the Civil Liberties Score for the same purpose in the last pair of specifications.

In all the specifications we find support for our first hypothesis. The coefficient of our key independent variable is positive and robust (statistically significant at 1%). It indicates that states respond to the HRC adjusting their priorities and agendas to

¹⁰ For validation purposes, we also have run a multilevel regression between the ratios $y_{it,t+s}$ (state report) and x_{it} (concluding observations report) controlling by states and rights. These results are reported in Table DI in Appendix D. Results show a positive and significant relationship.

follow those set by the HRC. The coefficient for the interaction between the Political Rights Score and the key independent variable also results positive and statistically significant. Tests of joint significance¹¹ also show that this variable and its interaction with the change in the relative saliency of rights set by HRC are also statistically significant. However, we only find partial evidence to support Hypotheses 2B (instead of Hypothesis 2A). Although both interactions -- between Civil Rights and the relative saliency of rights introduced by HRC and between Physical Integrity and the relative saliency of rights introduced by HRC -- are statistically significant, the tests of joint significance do not show support for the inclusion of these variables. In other words, the joint significance tests reveal that their inclusion – taking into account (jointly) the variables that form the interactions – is not justifiable. These results show that respect for political rights (as specified in the Freedom House scores) rather than civil liberties seem to exert a more significant effect in the adoption of human rights normative discourses.¹² None of our control variables seem to matter.

¹¹ We display the results of these tests in the final two lines of Table I.

¹² Because the Political Rights Index concentrates on characteristics pertaining to the type of regime such as free and fair elections, rights to organize parties, opportunities for the opposition to win elections, these features might exert a more powerful effect on the reputation a state holds due to the intense media coverage of elections, campaigns, and party life.

TABLE I. SHORT TERM MODEL

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>CHANGE IN THE RELATIVE SALIENCY BY HRC (CHRC)</i>	0.159*** (15.9)	0.0695*** (4.2)	0.0695*** (4.19)	0.118*** (3.36)	0.118*** (3.34)	0.0589*** (3.45)	0.0587*** (3.45)
<i>POLITICAL RIGHT RATING (PR)</i>		0.187 (1.429)	0.194 (1.2)				
<i>PR* CHRC</i>		0.0250*** (6.03)	0.0250*** (6.03)				
<i>PHYSICAL INTEGRITY RIGHTS INDEX (CIRI)</i>				-0.0593 (-0.73)	-0.0827 (-0.99)		
<i>CIRI* CHRC</i>				0.0167** (2.54)	0.0168** (2.56)		
<i>CIVIL RIGHTS RATING (CL)</i>						-0.0858 (-0.38)	-0.16 (-0.78)
<i>CL* CHRC</i>						0.0289*** (6.54)	0.0289*** (6.55)
CONTROL VARIABLES							
<i>OPENNESS INDEX</i>		0.0138 (1.27)	0.0145 (1.33)	0.0205* (1.92)	0.0188* (1.75)	0.0190* (1.82)	0.0162 (1.49)
<i>REPORTING CYCLES</i>		0.365 -1.41	0.371 -1.16	0.204 -0.8	0.0611 -0.22	0.145 -0.4	-0.0631 (-0.17)
<i>INTERNATIONAL NGOS</i>		-0.00155* (-1.87)	-0.00158* (-1.93)	-0.00112 (-1.38)	-0.00131 (-1.59)	-0.000914 (-0.76)	-0.000804 (-0.70)
<i>LOG(GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT)</i>			-0.4 (-0.33)		1.01 (1.06)		1.145 (1.09)
<i>LOG(GDP PER CAPITA)</i>		-0.502 (-0.53)		0.284 (0.31)		0.374 (0.33)	
<i>CONSTANT</i>	-0.0326 (-0.07)	6.727 (0.9)	12.86 (0.43)	0.0767 (0.01)	-22.8 (-0.96)	-1.082 (-0.11)	-27.19 (-1.01)
<i>REGION EFFECT</i>	-24.28	-24.51	-24.37	-22.35	-22.35	-24.69	-24.57
<i>STATE DUMMIES</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>RIGHTS DUMMIES</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

	1226	1140	1140	1052	1052	1140	1140
<i>NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS</i>							
<i>X + X*CHRC^A</i>		0.212*	0.22	-0.0427	-0.0659	-0.057	-0.131
<i>CHRC + X + X*CHRC^A</i>		0.281**	0.289*	0.0757	0.0517	0.00192	-0.0724

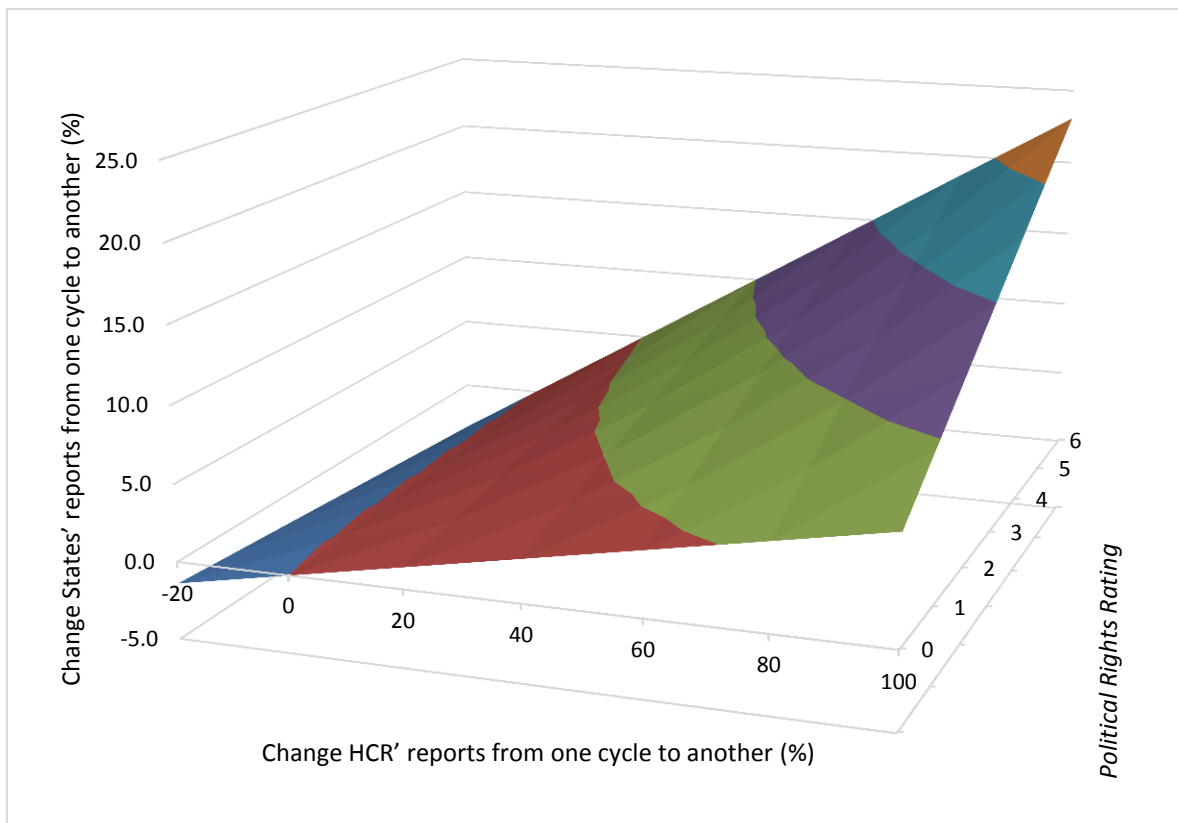
T-STATISTICS IN PARENTHESES

* P<0.1, ** P<0.05, *** P<0.01

^A LINEAR COMBINATION TEST, WHERE X IS PR, CIRI OR CL

Figure I illustrates the effect of the interaction for political rights and the key independent variable. As displayed, the effect of political rights is not only statistically significant, but also meaningful in the short term.

FIGURE I. MARGINAL EFFECT OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL RIGHT RATING AND HCR'S CONCLUDING OBSERVATION REPORTS ON THE CHANGE IN THE RELATIVE SALIENCY OF A RIGHT IN THE STATES' REPORTS



We also run other several specifications to both verify the robustness of the results of the key independent variable and investigate the existence of other effects affecting the adjustment of states' discursive practices. In all these specifications, the coefficients of our key independent variable remain statistically significant. In all these specifications, we control for openness, the Political Rights Score, the reporting cycles, and the number of international NGOs. First, we exclude from the sample countries whose political rights

scores were relatively low.¹³ The presence of autocratic-oriented governments could distort our results as they might purposively ignore the organs of the international human rights regime. Both hypotheses hold after excluding these observations.

In addition, we include an interaction term between the independent variable and the number of elapsed reporting cycles. A positive and statistically significant coefficient for the interacted variable indicates that the effect of the HRC's reports on states' agendas accelerates over time. This result could offer some clue on how the effectiveness of the HRC to influence states has been evolving over time. This variable does not turn out to be statistically significant. We also incorporate an interaction between the number of international NGOs and the change in relative saliency of rights in the HRC's concluding observations reports. In doing so, we evaluate whether the density of a transnational NGO presence can accelerate the socialization of norms. Such effect does not seem to exist as the results indicate. Other tests we implement to evaluate the realist argument is through the inclusion of two additional variables (in different specifications): the total population and the composite index of national capability as additional proxies of state power in the international arena. Such variables do not seem to matter.¹⁴

Finally, we test whether several contextual factors accelerate the response of states to the HRC's normative agenda. These other factors might affect the material rewards and punishments a state can receive for embracing (or not) the HRC's agenda. First, we multiply the change in the relative saliency of rights by the HRC with both the degree of economic openness and the developmental assistance commitments states have received. Some studies find a positive association between reputation, trade benefits and humanitarian aid (Garriga forthcoming). As these potential rewards grow – due to a greater dependence on the world economy and external financial aid – states might follow the HRC more closely. We do not find evidence to support these expectations. In sum, democratic quality (measured as respect for political rights) is the key scope condition to explain which states become more responsive to the changes in rights saliency introduced by the HRC.

Long Term Analysis

Estimates for equation (2) are shown in Table 2. In all specifications the coefficient associated to the reporting cycle variable is positive and significant, which means that, on average, the more reporting cycles experienced by a state the higher the absolute value of the difference between the relative saliency of particular rights in both sets of reports. Thus, we find that there is room for improvement in the degree to which the HRC is effective in having states to change their normative agendas. Some improvements seem to be happening in the short term, but those appear to advance at slow pace. Based on the sample we analyze, the HRC seems to be far from eliminating all signs of ineffectiveness in this respect.

¹³ We eliminate observations in which the score equals zero as the number of available observations allows us to run the models with enough confidence.

¹⁴ See Table E1 in Appendix E for the results.

The estimates in Table 2 also report the impact of our measures of respect for rights. In all cases, these factors are not associated with greater dissimilarity between the HRC's and the states' agendas in the long term. As stated above healthier democracies might be more willing to adjust their normative discourse to match that of the HRC in the short term. In the long term, these adjustments do not seem to be strong enough to produce more similar agendas.

TABLE 2. LONG TERM MODEL

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>REPORTING CYCLES</i>	0.0000713*	0.000137*	0.000151**	0.000157**
	(2.30)	(1.95)	(1.96)	(2.23)
<i>POLITICAL RIGHTS RATING (PR)</i>		0.0000665		
		(1.61)		
<i>PHYSICAL INTEGRITY RIGHTS INDEX (CIRI)</i>			3.43E-07	
			(0.01)	
<i>CIVIL RIGHTS RATING (CL)</i>				0.000104
				(1.55)
CONTROL VARIABLES				
<i>LOG(GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT)</i>		-0.000738***	-0.000720***	-0.000714***
		(-3.50)	(-3.28)	(-3.40)
<i>OPENNESS INDEX</i>		0.000004	0.000002	0.0000014
		(0.1)	(0.43)	(0.34)
<i>INTERNATIONAL NGOS</i>		0.000002	0.000002	0.0000005
		(1.29)	(1.09)	(0.26)
<i>CONSTANT</i>	0.00027***	0.0183***	0.0182***	0.0181***
	(1.25)	(3.37)	(3.17)	(3.33)
<i>REGION EFFECT</i>	-20.82	-20.8	-20.78	-20.8
<i>STATE DUMMIES</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>RIGHTS DUMMIES</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS</i>	2528	2368	2304	2368

T-STATISTICS IN PARENTHESES

* P<0.1, ** P<0.05, *** P<0.01

^A LINEAR COMBINATION TEST, WHERE X IS PR, CIRI OR CL

Conclusions

In this paper, we look at an eminently social mechanism of influence of IOs over states—the reporting procedure of the HRC. Specifically, we explore the responsiveness of states to the agenda set by the HRC in its concluding observations reports. Our data supports the hypothesis that, in general, states do emphasize the same human rights normative agenda put forward by the HRC. Clearly, the HRC exerts some degree of influence over the definition of states' discursive practices and their normative agenda. More so, our findings suggest that through its reporting procedure (and therefore through social influence) the HRC plays a role in the constitution of states' interests—that is, a key outcome of the reporting procedure is that states include an important reputational component into their understanding of interests and conclude that their interest is best served by taking the HRC seriously and “playing the role” of a “good member” of the human rights regime. This is important, particularly if we consider that treaty bodies in general are poorly legalized international institutions and that the reporting procedure is considered “teeth less”. Social influence, therefore, seems to be providing the leverage apparently lacking in formal institutional design.

We also find that more democratic contexts, characterized by greater respect for political rights, facilitate the process of social influence. More democratic countries take the HRC more seriously in the adoption of a specific normative agenda. This result is also in accordance to Creamer's and Simmons's (2015) study that finds less willingness to submit a report to the Convention against Torture in those countries with incipient or nascent democracies.

In the tentative case that adjusting their human rights normative (discursive) agenda also fostered greater respect for rights in practice (herein we do not prove the existence of this effect), a virtuous cycle would exist in which treaty bodies and democratic values and practices complement each other. Further research is needed, however, to fully disentangle this relationship.

In any case, this study shows that facing a framework of social rewards or punishments, states (re)constitute their understanding of their interest and thus adjust their behavior; at least so by “talking the talk” IOs want to hear and “playing the role” IOs want to observe. A procedure clearly based in the logic of social influence has indeed been consequential. This article thus contributes to the literature that shows the potential of social influence mechanisms implemented by IOs to shape states' interests and behavior. This finding also helps explain why and how the diffusion of norms and discourses occurs. We learn that IOs like the HRC can in fact play an important role in this process, even if they seem to be teeth less. However, the existence of a specific mechanism – like the reporting procedure – that both produces and disseminates information about states' behavior and facilitates the iterated interaction between IOs and states is essential. Under these conditions, IOs become a relevant actor, at least in the definition of normative and discursive outcomes. The clear policy implication of our study is, therefore, that treaty bodies make a relevant contribution to achieving the objectives of the broader human rights regime; although there is still room for improvement, as our

long term model analysis suggest. The international community should not only continue to support their work, but to do so more decisively.

Our evidence cannot tell us, however, whether this mechanism of social influence can only get so far as to influence discursive practices and elicit rhetorical reactions, or if eventually it can also generate actual legal and policy changes in practice. In any case, we pose that discursive commitments have a role in the constitution of the contours of “the appropriate” in the area of human rights. Through social influence, IOs do have a role in shaping the “realms of possibility” (Tannenwald 1999, 435) or the “range of legitimate policy options” for states (Klotz 1995, 461-462; also see Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 701).

Appendices

APPENDIX A

List of the UN treaty bodies:

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, established to monitor the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
2. The Human Rights Committee, established to monitor the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
3. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established to monitor the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination;
4. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established to monitor the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women;
5. The Committee against Torture, established to monitor the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
6. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, established to monitor the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
7. The Committee on Migrant Workers, established to monitor the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families;
8. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established to monitor the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
9. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances, established to monitor the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

APPENDIX B

Right, group or issue	Words
1 Legal recourse	Amparo , Habeas [corpus]
2 Sexual and reproductive rights	abortion, abortions, contraception, contraceptive, contraceptives, pregnancies, pregnancy, pregnant, reproductive, sterilization, sterilizations
3 Amnesties	amnesty, amnesty's, amnesties, immunity
4 Agrarian/rural issues	agrarian, campesino, campesino's, campesinos, peasant, peasants, land, land's, landowner, landowner's, landowners, rural
5 Right to liberty/detention	arrest, arrested, arrests, detain, detained, detainee, detainees, detention, custody, incommunicado, Pretrial [detention]
6 Freedom of assembly	assemblies, assembly, association, associations
7 LGBTBI rights	bisexual, bisexuals, bisexuality, gay, gays, homosexual, homosexuals, homosexuality, intersex, lesbian, lesbians, lgbt, transexual, transexuality, transgender
8 Rights of the child	adolescent, adolescent's, adolescents, child, child's, children, children's, infant, infant's, juvenile, juveniles, minor, minor's, minors
9 Armed conflict	armed, arms, conflict, conflicts, combat, combatant, combatant's, combatants, combating, firearms, guerrilla, guerrilla's, insurgent, insurgents, war, wars
10 Rights of people with disabilities	disability, disabilities
11 Due process rights	accused, acquittal, acquittals, acquit, acquitted, court, conviction, convictions, courts, court's, defendant, defendants, defendant's, defense, defence, judge, judge's, judges, judgement, judgements, judicial, judiciary, juridical, jurist, jurist's, jurists, jury, jury's, guilty, lawyer, lawyer's, lawyers, magistrate, magistrate's, magistrates, procedural, proceedings, prosecution, prosecute, prosecuted, prosecuting, prosecutions, prosecutor, prosecutors, prosecutor's, ruling, rulings, sentence, sentenced, sentences, trial, trials, tribunal, tribunal's, tribunals, tried
12 Violence, insecurity and crime	crime, crimes, criminal, criminal's, criminals, criminality, insecurity, security, terror, terrorism, terrorist, terrorist's, terrorists, violence, violent
13 Right to education	education, educational, school, school's, schools, teacher, teacher's, teachers, university, university's, universities

14	Right to equality and no discrimination	equal, equality, unequal, inequality, discriminate, discrimination, discriminatory, prejudice, race, races, racism, stereotypes, stigmatization
15	Right to freedom	free, freedom, freedoms, freely, liberty, liberty, liberties
16	Rights of imprisoned persons	imprisoned, imprisonment, incarceration, inmate, inmate's, inmates, jail, jail's, jails, penitentiaries, penitentiary, prison, prison's, prisoner, prisoner's, prisoners, prisons
17	Disappearances	disappearance, disappearances, disappear, disappeared
18	Electoral rights	ballot, balloting, campaign, campaign's, campaigns, candidate, candidate's, candidates, elect, elected, election, election's, elections, elective, electoral, electors, electorate, vote, voter, voter's, voters
19	Indigenous peoples' rights	aboriginal, aboriginal's, aboriginals, ethnic, ethnicity, indian, indian's, indians, indigenous, minorities, minority, minority's, native, native's, natives, multicultural, multiculturalism, plurinational
20	Executions	assassinate, assassinated, assassination, assassinations, execution, executions, homicide, homicides, killed, killings, massacre, murder, murders, murdered
21	Investigations	investigate, investigated, investigating, investigation, investigation's, investigations, impunity
22	Freedom of expression	editorship, journalism, journalist, journalist's, journalists, expression, speech, media, media's, press, newspaper, newspaper's, newspapers
23	Legality	illegal, illegality, law, law's, laws, lawfully, legal, legality, legally, licit, illicit, unlawful, unlawfully, unlawfulness
24	Military and police	army, army's, military, military's, navy, navy's, police, police's, policing, policeman, policeman's, policemen, soldier, soldier's, soldiers, troops, paramilitary, paras
25	Penalties	penal, penalized, penalties, penalty, punish, punishable, punished, punishing, punishment
26	Freedom of religion	religion, religion's, religions, religious, church, church's, churches, priest, priest's, priests
27	Torture	confession, confessions, illtreatment, inhuman, istambul, torture, tortured, maltreatment
28	Labour rights	labour, union, union's, unions, employees, employment, employer, salaries, salary, unemployment, worker, worker's, workers, workforce, workplace, workplace's, workplaces
29	Women's rights	female, femicide, feminicide, woman, woman's, women, women's, gender, genderbased, girl, girl's, girls, rape, rapist

30	Foreigners' rights	alien, alien's, aliens, asylum, foreigner, foreigner's, foreigners, migrant, migrant's, migrants, refugee, refugee's, refugees, xenophobia
31	Reforms	reform, reform's, reformed, reforming, reforms, amend, amendment, amendment's, amendments, derogate, derogation, derogations
32	Victims	victim, victim's, victims

APPENDIX C**TABLE C I. SUMMARY STATISTICS**

Name	Description	Region		
		Central & Eastern Europe	Latin America	Total
<i>Change in the relative saliency by states</i>	Change in the relative saliency of a human right in states periodic reports	48.36% (2.093)	61.74% (2.443)	55.20% (2.279)
<i>Change in the relative saliency by HRC</i>	Change in the relative saliency of a human right in the HRC's concluding observations reports respect to the change in the relative saliency of a human right in states' reports from one cycle to another	73.89% (3.927)	148.30% (7.414)	111.88% (5.977)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	600	626	1,226
<i> Relative saliency by states - Relative saliency by HRC </i>	Absolute value between the relative saliency of a human right in the states' reports and the preceding HCR's concluding observations reports and as our key independent variable the number of elapsed reporting cycles	0.13% (.002)	0.14% (.002)	0.13% (.002)
<i>Reporting Cycles</i>	Number of elapsed reporting cycles	2.40 (1.465)	2.56 (1.322)	2.47 (1.404)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,376	1,152	2,528
<i>Openness Index</i>	Sum of exports and imports of goods and services measured as a share of gross domestic product.	97.02 (28.28)	54.20 (22.93)	77.00 (33.59)
<i>Log(Gross Domestic Product)</i>	Natural logarithms of Gross Domestic Product	24.42 (1.42)	24.84 (1.36)	24.61 (1.41)
<i>Log(Gross Domestic Product per capita)</i>	Natural logarithms of Gross Domestic Product per capita	8.44 (0.85)	8.23 (0.55)	8.35 (0.74)
<i>Physical Integrity Rights Index (CIRI)</i>	The index ranges from 0 (no government respect for the right to be free against Torture, Extrajudicial Killings, Political Imprisonment, and Disappearances) to 8 (full government respect for these four rights)	5.46 (1.774)	4.39 (2.093)	4.96 (2.001)

<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,376	1,152	2,528
<i>International NGOs</i>	Number of international NGOs with presence in the country	2,069 (1,201)	1,794 (722.4)	1,943 (1,018)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,312	1,120	2,432
<i>Political Rights Rating</i>	The rating ranges between 1 and 7, with 1 representing the smallest degree of freedom and 7 the greatest degree of freedom based on a 40-point scale for 10 political indicators	3.75 (2.72)	3.86 (1.65)	3.80 (2.0)
<i>Civil Liberties Rating</i>	The rating ranges between 1 and 7, with 1 representing the smallest degree of freedom and 7 the greatest degree of freedom based on a 60-point scale for 15 civil liberties indicators	3.92 (1.93)	3.75 (1.46)	3.84 (1.7)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,312	1,152	2,464
<i>Composite Index of National Capability</i>	Weighted Index for annual values for total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, military personnel, and military expenditure.	0.010 (0.13)	0.005 (0.005)	0.007 (0.009)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	352	576	928
<i>Official Development Assistance Commitments</i>	Millions of US Dollar at constant prices of firms written obligation by government or official agency to provide resources to a recipient country or multilateral agency	84.3 (135.1)	290.4 (298.9)	183.71 (250.8)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,216	1,120	2,336
<i>Years to respond to HRC</i>	Difference in years between the “response” year and the year in which the HRC released its concluding observations report	6.05 (2.402)	6.94 (3.521)	6.46 (2.998)
<i>Log(population)</i>	Natural logarithms of all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship--except for refugees not permanently settled in the country of asylum, who are generally considered part of the population of their country of origin.	15.97 (1.28)	16.60 (1.08)	16.26 (1.23)
<i>N</i>	Number of observations	1,376	1,152	2,528

Note: It reports mean value, Number of observation (N), and standard deviation in brackets.

APPENDIX D

TABLE DI. EQUATION FOR THE RELATIVE SALIENCY OF RIGHTS IN STATES PERIODIC REPORTS

	(1)
<i>Change in the relative saliency by HRC</i>	0.173*** (9.88)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.000161 (-0.79)
Ψ_j^2	-20.83 (-1.56)
σ_v^2	-6.603*** (-469.49)
<i>state dummies</i>	Yes
<i>Rights dummies</i>	Yes
N	2,528
t statistics in parentheses	
* p<0.1	** p<0.05 *** p<0.01

APPENDIX E

TABLE E1. ALTERNATIVE SHORT TERM EQUATION FOR THE CHANGE IN THE RELATIVE SALIENCY OF RIGHTS, GROUPS OR ISSUES IN STATES PERIODIC REPORTS

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Change in the relative saliency by HRC (CHRC)</i>	0.112*** (2.98)	0.113*** (3.00)	0.151*** (14.37)	0.193*** (7.98)	0.136*** (6.94)	0.163*** (5.88)
<i>Log(Gross Domestic Product)</i>	0.751 (0.61)		-0.191 (-0.14)	-0.416 (-1.39)	-0.466 (-0.38)	-0.117 (-1.23)
<i>Political Right Rating (PR)</i>			0.219 (1.31)	0.035 (0.43)	0.24 (1.46)	0.043 (1.34)
<i>Openness Index</i>	0.0145 (1.11)	0.00894 (0.96)	0.00904 (0.61)	-0.00408 (-0.67)	0.0149 (1.35)	-0.0019 (-0.93)
<i>Openness Index * CHRC</i>					0.000286 (1.04)	
<i>Reporting Cycles</i>	-0.188 (-0.64)	-0.167 (-1.05)	0.277 (0.72)	0.0214 (0.16)	0.371 (1.14)	0.101* (1.88)
<i>Reporting Cycles* CHRC</i>	0.0155 (1.31)	0.0153 (1.29)				
<i>International NGO (INGO)</i>			-0.00125 (-1.31)	0.0002 (0.66)	-0.00155* (-1.86)	0.000017 (0.14)
<i>INGO* CHRC</i>						-0.000003 (-0.32)
<i>Log(Population)</i>		2.348 (1.23)				
<i>Official Development Assistance Commitments (ODA)</i>			0.0000321 (0.07)			
<i>ODA* CHRC</i>			-0.0000105			

				(-0.30)		
<i>Composite Index of National Capability (CINC)</i>					34.68	
<i>Constant</i>	-19.45	-40.85	6.73	9.620	14.36	2.49
	(-0.62)	(-1.24)	(0.2)	(1.31)	(0.47)	(1.08)
<i>Region effect</i>	-24.07	-23.99*	-24.76	-23.54	-24.65	-22.09
<i>state dummies</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>rights dummies</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Number of observations</i>	1198	1198	1111	354	1140	1140
<i>X + X*CHRC^a</i>	-0.173	-0.152	0.0000216		0.0152	0.00001
<i>CHRC + X + X*CHRC^a</i>	-0.0604	-0.0392	0.151***		0.151***	0.163***

t-statistics in parentheses

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

^a Linear combination test, where X is *Reporting Cycles*, *ODA* or *CL*.

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