

Overlapping international human rights institutions: Introducing the Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2)

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Abstract

With the proliferation of the international human rights regime, states confront a dense set of institutional commitments. Our knowledge of the influence of these commitments is limited for two reasons. First, scholars largely focus on the effect of treaty ratification on states' human rights behavior, but states engage with these institutions after ratification via regional human rights court rulings and UN recommendations. Second, scholars often examine these institutions in isolation. The institutions do not operate in isolation, however, nor do states necessarily consider the requests they receive from these institutions independently. In this article, we introduce the Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2), which maps the various recommendations international women's rights institutions make on European states. We begin by discussing the importance of recommendations from international institutions and their relationship with commitment and compliance. We then describe the data collection effort, including two dimensions on which recommendations made to European states vary – precision and action. Next, we report descriptive statistics from the dataset, including regional and temporal trends. We conclude with a discussion of the multifaceted research agenda that this new dataset can facilitate.

Keywords

human rights, international law, women's rights

Introduction

While peace research has traditionally focused on the study of conflict and violence, more recently scholars have called for broader understandings of peace, including the study of governmental respect for human rights as a key factor in the production of positive peace (e.g. Diehl, 2016). International human rights institutions have proliferated over the past 50 years in Europe and around the world as the international community's primary means of achieving positive peace in the form of greater respect for human rights. As these institutions have matured, they have become increasingly occupied with a wide range of activities, from education campaigns to hearing individual complaints about human

rights abuses. One of the primary ways that international human rights institutions interact with states following ratification is by periodically issuing recommendations to states about how to improve their human rights conditions.

A recommendation is a discrete obligation an international human rights institution places on the state in service of improving the state's human rights practices. Recommendations are used to name and shame states and to provide focal points for domestic human rights mobilization and policy change. International

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institutions differ in the way they issue recommendations; some send lengthy periodic reports to states and others make and record recommendations publicly during periodic meetings. While the extent to which states are legally bound to respond to recommendations varies by international institution, the general process of implementation unfolds in more or less the same way across international human rights institutions and member states: international institutions hand down recommendations, which are then forwarded to a state's foreign ministry, which, in turn considers recommendations and/or passes them along to other state institutions. The international human rights bodies often follow up with states to evaluate their progress implementing the recommendations.

Despite the ubiquity of recommendations across institutions, scholars know comparatively little about the volume and types of recommendations states receive from international human rights institutions or the extent to which such recommendations influence state behavior. Our new dataset, the Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2), along with the research that it facilitates, fills this empirical gap and addresses key limitations in the literature on commitment and compliance with the international human rights regime.

Our data focus on women's rights, a human rights issue that affects every country and in which international human rights institutions are particularly active. The Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2) captures the demands international women's rights institutions make on European states and in doing so enables scholars to overcome two major shortcomings in the current literature: (1) an overemphasis on the ratification process at the expense of understanding post-ratification compliance and commitments and (2) a tendency to study international human rights institutions in isolation of each other rather than as parts of a complex regime. To address these gaps, the WR2D2 captures state interactions with international human rights institutions following ratification by making discrete recommendations the unit of analysis. Second, and relatedly, the WR2D2 focuses on the overlapping nature of the recommendations international human rights institutions make to their member states. The WR2D2 allows scholars to explore many interesting questions related to post-ratification processes and complexity in the international human rights regime, including: how does the process of compliance unfold post-ratification? And to what extent are states more (or less) likely to implement multiple, reinforcing recommendations from different international human rights bodies?

This article begins with a discussion of the conceptual and theoretical motivation for the collection of these data. We then turn to describing the European women's rights architecture. We focus our data and research on Europe, both for its own substantive importance and for the institutional density and complexity at play in the region, and explain this decision in more depth below. Next, we present the WR2D2, the first database to map women's rights recommendations related to violence against women and women's economic rights in the post-ratification period, across three international human rights institutions from 2007 to 2016: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee of Ministers of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and from other states through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). We provide more context for choosing these three institutions in our discussion of the dataset. We then discuss two dimensions along which women's rights recommendations vary: precision and action. Following the description of the dataset, we present descriptive statistics and conclude with discussion of the multifaceted research agendas that can leverage this new dataset.

Women's rights recommendations in theoretical and empirical context

In this section, we situate the new dataset on women's rights recommendations within the larger political science literature and explain how the WR2D2 and the research it facilitates address two shortcomings in the literature: an overemphasis on ratification at the expense of understanding post-ratification dynamics and a scholarly tendency to treat each human rights institution or treaty as operating in isolation when practitioners treat them in relationship with each other.

Before putting the recommendations into theoretical and empirical context, however, it is important to explain what the recommendations do – and do not do. Recommendations from international human rights institutions do not directly capture human rights violations, as the institutions do not have to note a specific human rights violation when making a recommendation and often make recommendations intended to achieve the progressive realization of women's rights within the state. Moreover, recommendations are not perfectly aligned with either commitment or compliance. All states receive recommendations from the UPR and CEDAW, regardless of their human rights practices. Similarly, all states in the Council of Europe, from Andorra to Azerbaijan, receive adverse judgments from

the ECtHR. These recommendations are one of many ways that member states express their *commitment* to institutions and *compliance* with their underlying laws and norms.

Political science research on the nexus between international human rights law and state behavior largely focuses on states' ratification of human rights treaties as a marker of states' commitment to international human rights (e.g. Downs, Rocke & Barsoom, 1996; Simmons, 2009; Hill, 2010; Conrad & Ritter, 2013). Such studies also rely on macro-level ratings of state human rights practices. While currently available data allow scholars to examine state human rights performance before and after ratification in the aggregate, we argue that in order to understand the influence of international human rights institutions on state behavior, we must move beyond aggregate assessments and study the primary mechanism through which international human rights institutions work to change state human rights practices: recommendations in the post-ratification period. By studying recommendations from international institutions, we can connect state human rights behavior with specific *types of recommendations*, thereby advancing our understanding of the effectiveness of international human rights institutions.

Commitment and compliance with international human rights law does not end at ratification; rather, that is where it begins. Regularly receiving and implementing recommendations from human rights institutions forces states to re-evaluate and revise the extent of their commitment to and compliance with those human rights instruments, institutions, and underlying norms. Our new dataset offers recommendation-level data that will enable researchers to directly link recommendations to human rights outcomes and thus rigorously investigate the post-ratification processes of commitment and compliance. These new micro-level recommendation data allow scholars to move beyond static, macro-level explanations for commitment and compliance and capture the nuance of state behavior in the post-ratification period.

A second conceptual and empirical shortcoming in the current literature is a tendency to focus on individual human rights institutions in isolation. However, international human rights institutions do not operate in a vacuum, nor do states consider the requests they receive from these institutions independently. To improve the efficacy of international human rights recommendations, it is important to engage in both comparative and joint analyses: which features of recommendations most frequently lend themselves to implementation and human

rights reform? What are the joint effects of multiple and overlapping recommendations on human rights outcomes?

Broad theoretical arguments about compliance with international law suggest that there is an important intersection between recommendation design and commitment and compliance. Data on the types of recommendations states receive from international human rights bodies can help advance the literature by allowing researchers to test assumptions about institutional design, rather than just speculate about them. Some scholars contend that the types of recommendations states receive, ranging from changing laws to paying reparations, can make domestic mobilization and compliance more or less likely (Hawkins & Jacoby, 2010; Hillebrecht, 2014a).

Further, the human rights recommendations states receive vary in density, a concept that we adapt from Carneiro & Wegmann (2018), which captures the frequency with which states receive similar recommendations from multiple human rights institutions. The various human rights institutions form an epistemic community in which participants share case law and other legal instruments, and as such, issue similar recommendations and rulings in the face of similar human rights abuses (Lupu & Voeten, 2012). Nuanced, recommendation-level data that span a set of institutions, like the WR2D2, can speak directly to questions about the impact of recommendation density on compliance and implementation.

Examining the nature of women's rights recommendations is also in keeping with many of the current trends in international human rights and peace data collection and analysis. A large body of women's rights, human rights, and international law literature empirically and theoretically connects women's rights with human rights more broadly. This literature suggests that while women's rights and human rights are not interchangeable, scholars can use international relations theories to understand the enforcement of a range of women's rights issues, from domestic violence to gender equity laws (Avdeyeva, 2007; Brown Thompson, 2002; Htun & Weldon, 2012; Merry & Shimmin, 2011; Montoya, 2009).

Numerous datasets provide data on respect for women's political, economic, and social rights, as well as the prevalence of violence against women (e.g. Cingranelli, Richards & Clay, 2014; Richards & Haglund, 2015; WomanStats, 2016). Similarly, a recent wave of data on international courts, including the European Court of Human Rights Database (Cichowski & Chrun,

2017), the Compliance and Human Rights Tribunals Dataset (CHRT; Hillebrecht, 2014b), and the iCourts Database of International Court Decisions, among others, aim to understand the scope of adjudication and compliance with international courts. With the exception of UPR-info.org, the UN instruments, such as CEDAW, remain underrepresented in the data.

Recent data on naming and shaming from the UN and UPR speak to the role of recommendations in shining a spotlight on abuses and pressuring states to clean up their human rights practices (Terman & Voeten, 2018; Lebovic & Voeten, 2009; Krain, 2012). Our new data on women's rights recommendations in Europe bridge these different datasets and help to bring these distinct issue areas into conversation. This new dataset also speaks to broader datasets on democracy, economic and social rights, and overall human rights conditions, as it inserts the politics of international human rights bodies' recommendations into these macro-level data.

Women's rights institutions in Europe: Scope and case selection

Our empirical focus is on women's rights recommendations made by three international institutions to European states. We limit our issue scope to women's rights recommendations involving violence against women and women's economic rights, not only because women's rights are normatively important and this research can impact the effectiveness of international institutions in securing them, but also because both violence against women and women's economic rights span the European and UN human rights institutions and they are nearly universal challenges for states and institutions. Of course, while violence against women and women's economic rights are critical components of any conceptualization of women's rights, they do not comprise the sum total of women's rights.

Although focusing specifically on Europe limits our ability to generalize to other regions of the world, we selected Europe for several reasons, all of which give us leverage in answering important questions about institutional complexity, commitment, and compliance. First, Europe represents a particularly dense institutional environment in which to analyze the effect of regime complexity. Many European states are party to various international human rights treaties and organizations.

Second, Europe has the most active regional human rights court in the world, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), allowing us to examine variation in recommendations coming from a highly legalized body,

relative to recommendations from quasi-legal institutions and the impacts that this has on compliance and commitment. By comparing institutions and the types of recommendations they each issue, scholars are able to speak directly to debates about the role of institutional design in shaping post-ratification behavior and commitment (e.g. Mitchell, 1994; Abbott et al., 2000; Koremenos, Lipson & Snidal, 2001).

Third, the Council of Europe reaches from Turkey and the Ukraine to Norway and Sweden, providing for significant variation in the protection of women's rights across the 47 member states. This allows scholars to draw inferences about state-level factors that influence the volume and type of recommendations international institutions make to their member states. Fourth, because our European sample includes some of the most consolidated democracies, we can assess variation in the volume and types of recommendations made to robust democracies. In sum, the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical benefits of considering a region with a dense network of international human rights organizations, multiple forms of democracies, and widely variant levels of women's rights protections outweigh a global sample with less nuanced data.

Regional institutions

At the regional level, two international organizations, the European Union and the Council of Europe, provide two decidedly different but overlapping human rights frameworks. The European Union generates human rights policy through a series of directives and regulations, which are advanced by the European Council and voted on by the Parliament. The FEMM Committee of the European Parliament and the Council's Gender and Equality group also advance and recommend policy and legislation related to women's equality. While it is possible to pursue infringement proceedings for women's rights violations at the Council of the European Union, this mechanism is secondary to the EU's policymaking and assessment work. Moreover, the EU does not generate recommendations similar to those coming from other international institutions. As such, we do not include the EU in the dataset.

Unlike the EU, the Council of Europe and its key human rights organ, the European Court of Human Rights, is an adjudicative rather than legislative body. The Council of Europe consists of 47 member states, including 19 countries that are not part of the EU. The ECtHR primarily hears constituent complaints alleging human rights abuse and rules on admissibility, merits,

and financial reparations. After rendering an adverse judgment, the case gets transferred to the Department for the Execution of Judgments, which supervises compliance. Compliance expectations include financial reparations as well as symbolic gestures and general measures, such as recommended changes in human rights law and policy. The political body of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers, determines whether or not a state has satisfactorily complied with the ECtHR's rulings.

International institutions

European states also receive recommendations from the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. In the area of women's rights, the two main UN mechanisms are the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). CEDAW entered into force in 1981 and there are currently 189 state parties to the treaty. The CEDAW evaluates periodic self-submitted reports and issues concluding comments (recommendations). The Committee also considers individual petitions from states that are party to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and issues recommendations to states found in violation of the treaty.

The UPR launched in 2007 as a peer-based review mechanism. Every three years, states submit their human rights record for review by each of the other UN member states. During their review, states receive recommendations from their peers about their human rights practices. While recommendations range in topic from anti-impunity measures to children's rights, women's rights are a key area of concern.

The human rights architecture in Europe represents an institutional environment in which states' human rights practices are dictated and evaluated by an amalgam of international and regional legislative, adjudicative, and peer review bodies. The stakeholders for each of these oversight bodies differ, which produces a set of diverse recommendations that fall along a spectrum of precision and type of action.

Overview of the Women's Rights Recommendations Digital Database (WR2D2)

Given the 2007 establishment of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, 2007 provides an appropriate starting point for the WR2D2. We gathered data on 47 European countries from a number of different sources. For the ECtHR, we referenced all of the cases between 2007 and 2016 listed in the ECtHR's case-law database, HUDOC. For CEDAW, we evaluated the concluding

Table I. Number of recommendations by international institution

<i>International institution</i>	<i>Number of recommendations</i>
European Court of Human Rights	227
Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	1,946
Universal Periodic Review	1,527

observation reports and individual petitions from the CEDAW for the countries in our sample between 2007 and 2016. To gather data on the UPR recommendations, we relied on the UPR-info.org recommendations database and examined each of the recommendations related to women's rights across all of the UPR sessions to date.¹ We narrowed down the full set of recommendations for each institution to those involving violence against women and women's economic rights. For more information on this process, please refer to the Online supplementary appendix.

Table I displays the number of recommendations made by each institution related to violence against women and women's economic rights for the years 2007–16. Strikingly, even when only considering *two women's rights issues*, states are the recipients of an exceedingly large volume of recommendations. Table I shows that CEDAW issued the most recommendations, states made the second highest number of recommendations through the UPR, and the European Court made the least.

Figure 1 displays the number of new recommendations received by year for all countries from 2007 to 2016. States are not always willing and able to effectively implement recommendations immediately and are often not given recommendations multiple years in a row. In the UPR process, states are only examined once every three years. The Committee of Ministers of the ECtHR only makes recommendations to states that have received an adverse decision and failed to take the necessary steps to guarantee compliance. The CEDAW evaluates states based on periodic self-submitted reports. As a result, we would not expect the number of recommendations to increase linearly or be equal across each year.

¹ We believe information in the source material to be a complete list of the recommendations. International institutions rely on naming and shaming, particularly by domestic groups, to ensure compliance with recommendations, giving institutions incentives to publish all recommendations publicly.

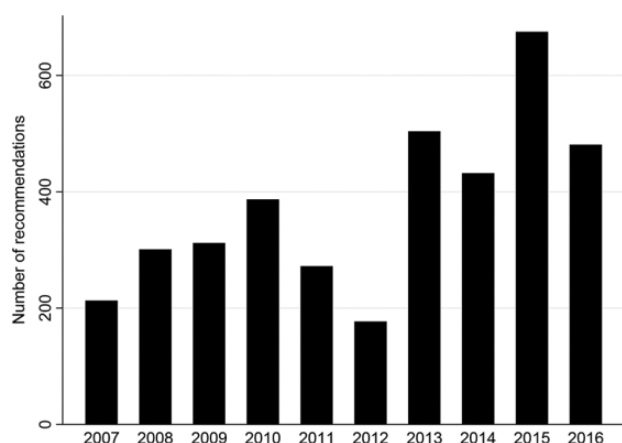


Figure 1. Number of recommendations by year

Figure 2 displays the regional distribution of recommendations. Darker colored states represent states that received the largest number of women's rights recommendations from the three international institutions, while lighter colored states are those receiving the fewest recommendations from 2007 to 2016. Turkey, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, and Norway received the largest number of recommendations, while Monaco, Latvia, San Marino, Ireland, Romania, and Estonia received the least. This illustrates that international human rights institutions issue many recommendations to weak and strong democracies alike.

Recommendation quality

We seek to not only understand the quantity of recommendations that states receive from human rights institutions but also the qualitative nature of those recommendations. Building on the legalization literature (e.g. Abbott et al., 2000) and the growing literature on the implementation of international tribunals' rulings, we consider two dimensions of the human rights institutions' recommendations: precision and action.² While Abbott et al. (2000) discuss the concept of precision, they do not operationalize or collect data on the precision of international human rights institutions' recommendations. Our use of action is based on the practice of

regional courts, which identify different types of required actions. We operationalize and describe each in turn below.

Precision

The legalization literature points to precision as a key variable for explaining changing trends in the legalization of international institutions. These scholars understand precision to mean the degree to which an international body's recommendations are explicit and that states' obligations are unambiguous and clearly defined (Abbott et al., 2000). Given the different institutions that govern human rights in Europe, we expect precision to vary tremendously, both across institutions and within them. We also suggest that international institutions may vary the precision of recommendations strategically, making compliance more or less attainable.

We adopt a typology that categorizes recommendations into one of three categories: passive (0), guided (1), and directive (2). The precision variable is ordinal, with higher values indicating greater precision of recommendations. Abbott et al. (2000) also suggest three levels of precision in international law: high, moderate, and low. The UPR utilizes precision as a dimension in their typology of recommendations: those requiring minimal action, continual action, considering action, general action or specific action (UPR-info.org, 2014). Based on our reading of hundreds of recommendations and utilizing Abbott et al. (2000) and the UPR's typology as guides, we are able to reliably code three categories of precision.

The first category, passive, captures those recommendations that prompt states to 'consider' an issue and/or eliminate, eradicate or address a broad women's rights issue, such as gender inequality. Recommendations of this sort are vague and give the state interpretive power in implementation, which requires less effort on the part of the receiving state. It is difficult to determine, however, whether states have – or have not – taken them seriously. After all, how is one to know if a state has 'considered' a topic? The second category of precision is guided. In this category, states would be prompted to 'take steps' toward a particular goal although those steps are not clearly identified. These recommendations provide more guidance and carry an expectation of action but the state may lack clarity on what types of measures would satisfy the Committee. The third category of precision is directive. These recommendations explicitly ask states to undertake particular actions, often referencing specific policies, programs, or laws, for example. The Online supplementary appendix provides examples.

² We do not operationalize two other concepts advanced by Abbott et al. (2000), delegation or obligation. Delegation pertains to institutions that govern state–state relations, rather than state–society relations. Obligation refers to the degree to which institutions enforce legal obligations on states. This is captured by the diversity of institutions in our sample, not in the recommendation-level data.



Figure 2. Distribution of total recommendations in Europe 2007–16

Table II. Types of actions

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>
IO-oriented	Recommendations in this category pertain to the state's relationship with international organizations and international law and are especially focused on improving states' working relationship with human rights institutions.
Assessment	This category of actions pertains to requests to evaluate and assess the attainment of policy objectives and legal initiatives, as well as the improvement of oversight bodies.
Provision of justice and accountability	This category focuses on holding individual perpetrators accountable for abuses and on the provision of justice for victims, including victim access to justice.
Changing societal attitudes	This category captures recommendations that are aimed at changing the public's perception, including through education and mass media. The key constituency for these actions is the public at large.
Legal and legislative changes	This category includes actions directed to the judiciary and legislature and involves the adoption of new laws and/or the amendment of existing laws.
Policy and programming	This category includes actions that are related to creating or amending existing policies and programs, often directed at a specific constituency, such as the police, survivors groups, etc.
Implementation	This category captures recommendations focused on the implementation of previous rulings, recommendations, and international legal commitments.
Overarching actions, no accountable actions	This last category captures recommendations in which the action is unclear <i>and</i> there is no clearly identified accountable party. This is a 'safety valve' category and only used when an action does not fit into any of the above.

Action

We also consider the nature of the actions or changes prompted by each recommendation. We divide these actions into eight different categories: IO-oriented, assessment, provision of justice and accountability, changing societal attitudes, legal and legislative changes, policy and programming, implementation, and overarching actions with no accountable actors. To develop the eight categories, we coded recommendations made to

five countries (France, Norway, Sweden, Romania, Turkey) from each institution and noted that the recommendations tended to fall into these categories. Our schema takes into account both the action and the actor accountable for carrying out the recommendation. Aside from the actions that fall into the eighth and final category, actions and/or those accountable are directly specified. Table II provides a brief description of each action category. The full set of coding rules, description of the

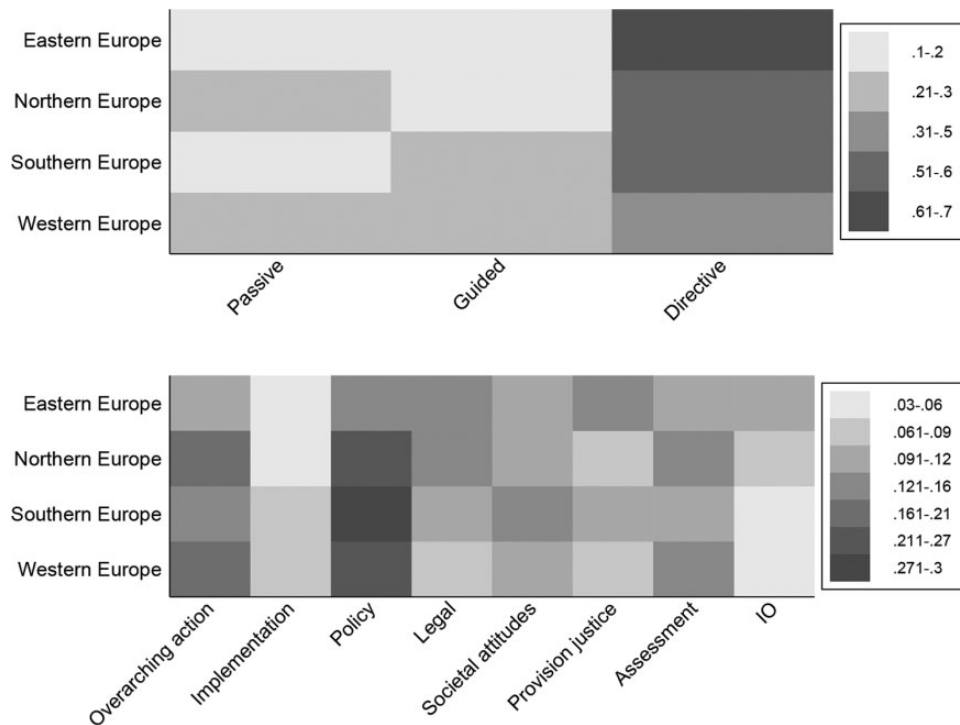


Figure 3. Regional variation in precision and action

coding process, and intercoder reliability statistics for the precision and action coding are included in the Online appendix.

Regional variation in precision and action

In order to examine variation in precision and action, Figure 3 reports the proportion of recommendations in each category of precision and action across four subregions in Europe taken from the UN's geo-scheme for Europe: Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western. The top panel of Figure 3 displays the proportion of recommendations in each category of precision in each subregion. Recommendations made to Eastern European countries are more likely to be directive than either guided or passive, which is encouraging given that Eastern European countries have lower average levels of women's rights protections than the other subregions in Europe. Interestingly, the two subregions with the highest proportion of passive recommendations are Northern and Western Europe, subregions with robust women's rights protections. Our data will allow scholars to ask: do institutions use the lack of specificity in rights-protecting states as a way to delegate the steps necessary to achieve compliance?

The bottom panel of Figure 3 displays the proportion of recommendations in each category of action in each

subregion. Darker cells indicate that a higher proportion of recommendations fall into a specific category for that particular subregion, while lighter cells indicate that a lower proportion of recommendations fall into a specific category for a particular subregion. In all subregions, the highest proportion of recommendations involve policy. However, Eastern European countries are also likely to receive a high proportion of legal recommendations, perhaps because Eastern European states have relatively weaker legislation than in other subregions in Europe. Moreover, Northern and Western Europe both receive a higher proportion of recommendations requiring assessment than do Eastern or Southern Europe, perhaps because the international institutions recognize these states' relatively high bureaucratic capacity to carry out assessment activities. One hypothesis that our data will allow scholars to test is whether international institutions take into account the capacity of the states when they identify and articulate their recommendations.

A multifaceted research agenda

The WR2D2 dataset offers scholars the opportunity to pursue new research on compliance, implementation, and the enforcement of international law. Using the WR2D2 dataset, scholars will not be restricted to using ratification as an indicator of commitment and/or

compliance and now have access to the extensive activities in which international institutions engage with states. This will allow researchers to more fully examine both the behavior of international institutions and the extent to which international women's rights law influences respect for women's rights.

The WR2D2 dataset is expansive, providing nearly 4,500 observations across 47 countries and over 800 million citizens. The data are flexible and can easily be aggregated to the country or country-year level. To this end, these data can be easily combined with established time-series, cross-national datasets such as POLITY, Political Terror Scale (PTS), CIRI Human Rights Data, and any number of existing data sources. Thus, the WR2D2 data can help scholars answer questions such as:

- Do international institutions behave strategically when making recommendations?
- Do international institutions make particular types of recommendations to states where they expect compliance as opposed to states where they do not expect compliance?
- Does institutional design influence the types of recommendations made by international institutions?
- How do power dynamics between the institutions and states affect the nature of recommendations states receive?

With respect to international human rights recommendations and state behavior, these data allow scholars to examine many important research questions, including:

- Do *more* recommendations from international institutions influence state women's rights practices? How do states process multiple and sometimes overlapping recommendations?
- To what extent do states comply with recommendations from some international institutions and not others?
- How does compliance with recommendations from international human rights institutions vary within states? To what extent do states comply with particular types of recommendations?

The authors are also conducting a large-scale data collection effort on compliance with the recommendations in the WR2D2 dataset; these data will be made publicly available. This second dataset will interface seamlessly with the WR2D2 data, allowing scholars to empirically examine the aforementioned questions.

Conclusion

The extensive growth of the international human rights legal regime in the past few decades has produced a complex, diverse, and often overlapping set of institutions, which, in turn, has yielded a wide and diverse range of obligations for states to fulfill. In this article, we depart from previous research by focusing on post-ratification processes and the complexity of the international human rights regime. The WR2D2 maps recommendations coming from *multiple* international human rights institutions in the *post-ratification* period. The volume of recommendations and the variation in their quality merits further attention.

We report a number of interesting patterns that we hope will encourage scholars to use the WR2D2. Figure 1 reports the trends in recommendations related to women's rights over time. Figure 2 displays spatial trends, indicating variation in the number of recommendations received across states, and showing that even robust democracies receive many recommendations. We also show interesting variation in recommendation precision and action across subregions in Europe in Figure 3.

We collected and coded the WR2D2 in order to better understand post-ratification processes and institutional complexity. We suggested several important research questions scholars can answer using these new data; these are only the beginning when it comes to research questions that can be examined utilizing the WR2D2. The WR2D2 can be used to contribute to our understanding of the influence of international human rights law on state behavior more broadly, as well as overcome the literature's overreliance on ratification as an indicator of commitment and compliance and tendency to treat international human rights instruments in isolation.

Replication data

The dataset and do-file for the empirical analyses in this article, along with the Online appendix, can be found at: <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>.

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