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Key Words: Commitment, CEDAW, Reservations, Women's Rights, Ratification

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When states ratify human rights treaties, how often do they comply with them? How does the level of commitment to the treaty influence compliance? For example, some ratifying states fully commit to a human rights treaty, while others may ratify but place legal reservations on one or more treaty articles. While a state may view treaty ratification as a low-cost opportunity signal that indicates its support for the international human rights regime (Simmons 2009), such "window dressing" does not necessarily translate into treaty compliance (Hathaway 2002).

We examine how the level of commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) treaty affects the treatment of women in member states. Since being signed in 1979 and entering into legal force in September 1981, CEDAW has advanced women's social, political, and economic rights around the world, even though some women still face detrimental obstacles when it comes to receiving an equal education, reproductive healthcare, voting rights, equal work for equal pay, property rights, and fair childcare/marriage laws.

The CEDAW convention has fourteen articles that cover the civil rights and legal status of women, as well as reproductive rights and the impact of cultural factors on gender relations (OHCHR 2019). Article 2, one of the core provisions of the treaty, commits states members to eliminating discrimination against women using legal, legislative, and other means. In the area of legal rights, CEDAW focuses on women's right to vote and hold public office (Article 7), legal privileges surrounding marital status (Article 16), non-discrimination in education (Article 10) and employment (Article 11), the right to choose a spouse (Article 16), parental rights (Articles 11 and 16), and personal and property rights (Article 16). Another major concentration of CEDAW is women's reproductive rights. Throughout the treaty, reproductive choice, childcare, maternity protection, and shared responsibility in childrearing are highlighted (Articles 4, 5, 11).

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CEDAW also focuses on the influence of culture and tradition that may put constraints on women's advancement. It works to challenge discrimination that women may face in their day to day lives including stereotyping and micro-aggressions (Article 10).

The enactment of the CEDAW convention is monitored by the Committee of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which was established in Article 17 (De Pauw 2013, 57). States that are participating in the convention are expected to submit a national report to the committee, showing how they have adopted the provisions of the convention. Signing but not ratifying the treaty sends the signal that a state may agree with what is in the document, but it is not willing to be held legally accountable by the Committee. The United States, for example, has signed CEDAW, but it has not ratified the human rights treaty. However, the US is unique in this regard, because 189 states ratified or acceded to CEDAW by 2023, indicating a willingness by most countries in the world to be legally bound by the treaty (OHCHR 2019). In terms of what the Committee views as core articles for the CEDAW treaty, it 'has, during the review of many periodic reports, determined that reservations to articles 2, 7, 9 and 16, as well as general reservations, are incompatible with the Convention's object and purpose" (De Pauw 2013, 59).[1]

Does the treaty work? Some scholars find that ratification of human rights treaties in general has little effect on states' human rights practices (Hathaway 2007). However, studies focusing on CEDAW find more evidence of treaty compliance, with CEDAW ratifying states having significantly higher women's political, social, and economic rights than countries that do not ratify the convention (Cole 2009; Simmons 2009; Hill 2010; Lupu 2013; Cho 2014). However, the question of level of commitment to the treaty has yet to be fully analyzed. Can a

[1] The general reservation most discussed by the Committee relates to Article 29, which articulates conflict management procedures (e.g., arbitration).

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treaty commitment that has reservations on core articles of the treaty be counted the same as one that does not? We find that reservations and level of commitment to the CEDAW convention have significant consequences for the livelihood of women in those countries.[2]

Among ratifying states, there is significant variation in the use of reservations on articles of the CEDAW treaty. Table 1 shows commitment levels to CEDAW from 1980-2022 using state year as the unit of analysis. 31 percent of countries ratifying CEDAW do so with reservations, comprising 24% of all state year observations. While previous studies have found that CEDAW membership improves women's rights overall (e.g., Simmons 2009; Hill 2010), scholars do not typically take the level of commitment into account. Our study fills this gap by examining how reservations influence treaty compliance and by examining which types of reservations are most detrimental to CEDAW's mission.

Table 1: CEDAW Commitment Levels (State Years, 1980-2022)

No Ratification	1,801	22.38%
Ratification with Reservation	1,940	24.1%
Ratification without Reservation	4,308	53.52%

Our article is organized as follows. We begin by reviewing the literature on compliance with human rights treaties, generally and for CEDAW, and we discuss how reservations influence compliance. This is followed by the theory section where we connect the use of reservations in treaties more broadly to the opposability and permissibility perspectives in international law. We argue that states ratifying human rights treaties with reservations will

[2] "Reservations are the means by which nations alter or exclude treaty terms to individually limit the obligation or effect of the treaty." Piper (1985, 296)

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exhibit lower compliance levels than those who join treaties without reservations (or do not join at all). We also argue that states with better human rights will use procedural reservations more often, while states with worse rights will place reservations on core articles that are central to the success of a human rights treaty. Empirical analyses (ordered logit, regression, and Heckman selection models) of state commitments to CEDAW confirm our hypotheses, with women's rights being best for states who ratify the treaty without reservations. We conclude with some thoughts on directions for future work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Puzzle of Non-Compliance with Human Rights Treaties

The international human rights regime has witnessed the creation of dozens of treaties and international criminal courts in the past few decades. While the expectation is that countries that join human rights treaties or courts will improve human rights protections in the domestic sphere, many quantitative analyses show a weak or even negative effect of human rights treaties on human rights behavior (e.g., Keith 1999; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Hathaway 2002). This puzzle has been explained with multiple arguments, along with a recognition that the standards and measures for human rights may themselves shift over time (Fariss 2019).

One argument is that states that join human rights treaties are motivated by different domestic forces. We can identify a set of states who are true non-compliers and prefer to engage in mass repression and another set of states (true compliers) who are generally compliant with human rights, but who may place legal limitations (e.g., reservations) on international treaties because of strong domestic legal enforcement provisions. "States with robust domestic rule of law might shy away from committing to international treaties because treaty commitments will

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be effective" (Hathaway 2007, 612). The aggregated patterns for treaty compliance may be similar between the two groups if some of the true non-compliers behave similarly to the true compliers due to domestic institutions.

A second argument focuses on external pressures that may encourage true non-compliers to ratify human rights treaties, even though their intentions to comply with the treaty's provisions are weak. States often face international social pressure for ratifying human rights treaties (Avdeyeva 2007), but they may be less likely to implement the treaty through domestic policy changes if they join for international signaling purposes (Cole 2009) or if they feel coerced into doing so (Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). Goodliffe and (2006) note that countries may join human rights treaties to signal that they are credible to other states in the international system, which is why new democracies may sign onto these treaties to "lock-in" their commitment to democratic principles. Human rights treaties in the aggregate may appear to have weak compliance rates if external pressures lead to true compliers and true non-compliers joining the treaties at similar rates but having different compliance intentions.

A third perspective focuses on domestic enforcement mechanisms. Even if states wanted to implement changes in policy and follow human rights treaty content, it can be extremely costly. Hathaway (2002) argues that non-democratic countries are less likely to adhere to treaties due to these costs; democracies and states with effective legal systems follow human rights treaties because of strong internal pressure and monitors (Neumayer 2005). This explains why states with weak judicial independence often ratify human rights treaties but violate them regularly (Powell and Staton 2009), and why high rule of law states place many reservations on human rights treaties (Simmons 2009; Hill 2016). Yet, high rule of law countries are more likely

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to be true compliers in terms of human rights preferences, and thus they should avoid reservations on core articles that are essential to the success of a human rights treaty.

CEDAW's Compliance Record

While the human rights treaty literature often finds weak compliance patterns, the empirical record examining the effects of the CEDAW treaty on women's rights is much stronger. In large N analyses, Simmons (2009) shows that CEDAW produced significant improvements in women's education, reproductive, and employment rights over time for states members. She points to the cases of Colombia where CEDAW helped women gain access to reproductive health and Japan where CEDAW helped women leverage the legal system in their favor. Using matching techniques for 165 states from 1976-2006, Hill (2010) also finds that CEDAW ratification significantly improves women's political rights, although he finds weaker effects for social and economic rights. Controlling for states' overall preferences for joining human rights treaties, Lupu's (2013) matching analysis shows that CEDAW members see significant improvements in women's political, social, and economic rights. On the other hand, Hill (2010) and Lupu (2013) finds weak effects for other human rights treaties (Convention Against Torture (CAT), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)) on compliance, a pattern also observed by Englehart and Miller (2014). Yet these authors also show that CEDAW leads to human rights improvements after ratification, noting that members could make "easy" changes quickly after ratification, but fail to move forward with harder reforms in women's rights, which would create a plateau in compliance patterns.

The studies reviewed in this section suggest that CEDAW has created significant improvements for women's rights in states that have ratified the treaty. As we discuss in the next section, though, the use of reservations by CEDAW members may hinder treaty compliance.

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How Reservations Influence CEDAW Treaty Compliance

The impact of treaty ratification on member states' behavior can be dependent upon the reservations a state places on the treaty. "Reservations allow states to ratify without obligating itself to provisions it does not wish to undertake" (Riddle 2002, 605). Riddle explains that CEDAW has more reservations than any other international human rights treaty. CEDAW allows states to place reservations unless they are "contrary to the object and purpose of the treaty" (Riddle 2002, 613). States apply these reservations through a specific reporting system.[3] These reports go to the Committee where they comment on these reservations as well as the progress and measures of the state for implementing the treaty requirements. After ratifying CEDAW, states have twelve months to report these implementations and reservations to the committee and then every four years after. Along with the reservation a state puts on CEDAW, the state must also explain why this reservation is necessary, give examples of how this reservation is consistent with other reservations the state has on treaties, and how the state will limit these reservations in the future (Riddle 2002). States can remove reservations at any time, and many have done so over the years, especially in the face of international pressure (Boyes et al 2023). The map below shows which states ratify the CEDAW treaty with or without reservations.[4]

<Insert map here>

Empirical studies that have examined reservations on CEDAW suggest that their usage may undermine states' compliance with the treaty. Cole (2009) identifies an ordinal scale of

[3] Unlike most other treaty areas where reservations can be applied by other states via reciprocity, human rights treaties are not reciprocal because even if a State Member objects to another state's treaty reservations, it does not alter their own obligations under the treaty (Korkelia 2002, 439).

[4] This map demonstrates the commitment levels of states to CEDAW. It shows states in the year 2021 that have fully ratified, ratified with reservations and then withdrawn those reservations, ratified with reservations, and not ratified the treaty.

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treaty commitment ranging from signature to ratification with reservations, to ratification without reservations. He finds that the level of legal commitment is consequential for treaty compliance. Landman (2005) also shows that countries with more serious reservations to the CEDAW treaty are less likely to implement its provisions. Similarly, Cho (2014) discovers worsened human rights patterns across greater reservation levels, although she notes that CEDAW only influences democratic countries' human rights behavior. On the other hand, Englehart and Miller (2015) find that the use of reservations did not diminish the effect of CEDAW on women's rights.

Scholars identify several factors to explain why countries use reservations in human rights treaties, including democracy, rule of law, and the depth of commitment to a treaty. First, liberal democracies may utilize reservations, understandings, and declarations (RUDs) more often than autocratic states because if they take treaty obligations more seriously, they may seek to limit compliance on articles they find difficult to implement domestically (Neumayer 2007). Simmons' (2009) notes, however, that treaties can be more effective if they mobilize domestic constituencies, an effect that is strongest in regimes going through democratic transitions. Consistent with this, she finds that CEDAW has a stronger positive effect on improving women's rights in transitional regimes.

Second, rule of law also influences the use of reservations in human rights treaties. "Polities that place a very high value on the rule of law are likely to be especially careful about the precise nature of the legal obligations into which they enter" (Simmons 2009, 102). Using country ratification episodes for human rights treaties, Simmons' finds that high rule of law states are more likely to employ reservations, and that democracies are less likely to do so, once

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both factors are accounted for.[5] Hill (2016) explains that this might occur when the gap between domestic law and the behavioral change indicated by the treaty is large, especially in countries where domestic judicial enforcement is strong (see also Comstock 2019). Legal traditions can also influence the use of reservations, with common law and Islamic law states using them more than civil law countries (Simmons 2009; Mitchell and Powell 2011). While Krivenko (2009) identifies many reservations used by Islamic law states when ratifying CEDAW, Neumayer's (2007) study found a negative relationship between percentage Muslim and the use of reservations in CEDAW.

Finally, treaty design can influence the use of reservations with deeper legal commitments creating more incentives for their usage. As Hill (2016, 1131) argues, the use of RUDs is more likely when "(1) domestic courts become more powerful and (2) the legal obligations the treaty creates are increasingly different from the legal rules that exist ex ante in domestic law." Similarly, Zvogbo, Sandholtz, and Mulesky (2020) find that reservations are used in human rights treaties frequently on the most demanding treaty provisions that require more compliance domestically. Consistent with this, the articles in CEDAW that have the highest number of state reservations (Table 6) involve core articles that require more difficult domestic changes.[6] Our theory builds upon these findings, while also considering divergent treaty commitments between true compliers and true noncompliers.

[5] We find a similar pattern in Table A4 where we estimate a Heckman probit model with CEDAW ratification as stage one and the use of reservations as stage two. We show that more democratic countries ratify CEDAW at higher rates and are less likely to place reservations on the treaty. Yet, wealthier states join less often and use more reservations, a pattern consistent with what Simmons observed (2009, 101) for high rule of law states.

[6] The core articles (2, 7, 9, 16, and 29) have an average of 29 states making reservations versus 7 states making reservations on average for non-core articles (1, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 28). Articles with no reservations are excluded from these lists.

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THEORY

Historically, reservations were not permitted in treaties. Rather, countries negotiated any objections prior to signing a treaty; this was called the *unanimity rule* (Piper 1985). An alternative perspective developed in 1928 through the Organization of American States which was called the Pan American Rule. This allowed for reservations but created different expectations for relationships among treaty members that used them.[7] A country that did not accept another state's reservation, for example, created a situation where the dyadic compliance expectation was lower than when dealing with a treaty member without reservations (Swaine 2006, 312).

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an Advisory Opinion in 1951 related to the Genocide Convention that opened the door to the use of reservations in treaties more broadly. Because states feared the Genocide Convention would be applied broadly, they sought to place reservations on its jurisdiction. The ICJ recognized the utility of flexibility in this case, introducing the *compatibility rule* as an alternative to the unanimity rule (Piper 1985, 311). This allowed countries to place reservations on a treaty if they were compatible with the object and purpose of the treaty. This rule was institutionalized in Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and recognized countries' rights to use reservations with three exceptions: "(1) a treaty explicitly prohibits reservations; (2) a treaty limits reservations to specific matters; or (3) a reservation is 'incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty'" (Buenger 2013-2014, 74).

[7] "The Pan-American rule provided that if state *A* ratified a treaty including a reservation to which state *B* objected and state *C* accepted, the treaty would be in force between states *A* and *C* subject to the reservation and between states *B* and *C* unrestricted by the reservation. The treaty would not be in force between states *A* and *B*." Piper (1985, 308)

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Two schools of thoughts emerged in international law regarding the effect of reservations. One school of thought, the *opposability approach*, views reservations as problematic because they undercut the purpose of international treaties (Piper 1985; Swaine 2006, 315). This puts the onus on other treaty members to lodge complaints about reservations, often within a time frame that is difficult for states to comply with. For example, the CEDAW treaty requires states to lodge complaints within twelve months of countries' ratification/accession. Furthermore, if reservations are lodged against core articles of a treaty, and states do not object due to time or other constraints, this undermines the expected compliance of the reserving state with the treaty's terms. According to this perspective, states who place reservations on treaties like CEDAW should be less likely to commit genuinely to improved women's rights.

The second school of thought, the *permissibility approach,* takes a perspective closer in line to the ICJ's 1951 judgement regarding the compatibility rule. By allowing reservations, treaties can attract more member states and increase the reach and scope of the agreement. Helfer (2006, 378) argues that reservations enhance a treaty's "breadth and depth" and enable the treaty itself to become more politically agreeable to more states. Swaine (2006, 329) notes also that broadened treaty participation makes it more likely that treaty norms will become customary law. He argues that reservations have informational value in that they can indicate areas of potential treaty deviance, provide information about domestic constraints (e.g., Sharia law for Islamic states), and generate reputational effects. The use of reservations can also identify gaps in existing treaty language that could be addressed with additional agreements. More generally, reservations create more flexibility in states' treaty commitments, which is often viewed positively with respect to treaty compliance (Clark 1991; Koremenos 2005).

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We evaluate these two schools of thought on reservations empirically. The opposability approach implies that any use of reservations will be detrimental to states' compliance with the CEDAW treaty. On the other hand, the permissibility approach suggests that the use of reservations may attract more CEDAW members and ultimately change their behavior over time as general customary law and norms shift towards better women's rights and as treaty members are socialized and pressured into better practices. Both perspectives could find support as well given that some states share the treaty's preferences (true compliers), while others find the treaty useful from an instrumental perspective, but do not share its preferences (true noncompliers).

CEDAW's design incorporates different generational perspectives on women's human rights. The protection of civil and political rights, pieces of two core articles of the CEDAW convention (Articles 2 and 7), accords with the first generation of human rights that were embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ICCPR treaty (Downs 1993). The protection of economic and social rights (e.g., core Articles 9 and 16) reflects the second generation of human rights, as articulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These rights were somewhat in tension during the Cold War as western states promoted first generation human rights and strongly supported the ICCPR treaty, while communist states advocated for the protection of economic rights in the ICESCR treaty. Because CEDAW combines these two generational perspectives on human rights, we anticipate differences in terms of states' women's rights before joining the treaty. For example, communist states might have better economic rights on average, but worse protections for women's political and civil liberties rights. As a result, they might use reservations on the articles that protect women's political rights more frequently. Western states, on the other hand, typically have higher levels of democracy, rule of law, and protection of women's first-generation human

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rights, and should be less likely to utilize reservations on the core articles of CEDAW that accord with these rights.

The opposability perspective suggests that true compliers should be less likely to place reservations on the CEDAW treaty's core articles and comply with the treaty at higher levels. Consistent with this argument, we observe that 27.7% of states that ratify CEDAW fully (without reservation) also ratify the Optional Protocol that further solidifies their commitment to the treaty, compared with 17.5% of states that ratify CEDAW with one or more reservations, and 0.6% of non-ratifiers.[8] As noted earlier, the CEDAW Committee has emphasized in its recommendations to states members that Articles 2, 7, 9, 16, and 29 are the core articles that must be complied with and recommends that any reservations on these articles should be removed. Representing first generation political rights, Article 2 protects women's political and civil liberties, while Article 7 protects women's voting and political participation rights. Representing second generation social rights, Article 9 protects the nationality rights for women and their children, while Article 16 identifies women's rights in marriage and family relations. Countries with better women's rights a priori should be less likely to place reservations on these core articles and more likely to protect women's rights. This hypothesis aligns with the opposability school of thought, viewing reservations as detrimental generally to the effectiveness of an international treaty.

Hypothesis 1: States that ratify CEDAW without reservations are more likely to see improvements in women's human rights than states that ratify with reservations or states who do not ratify the treaty.

[8] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opcedaw.aspx. We coded one for each year in our state dataset if the years CEDAW members had ratified the Optional Protocol. Data were coded from the organization's website: https://indicators.ohchr.org/.

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The permissibility perspective suggests that a treaty can attract more members by allowing for flexibility in states' commitment levels. That ninety eight percent of all countries have ratified CEDAW could be explained in part by the treaty's design allowing reservations. On the other hand, reservations on the core political or social articles discussed above should be utilized more often by countries that seek the benefits of joining CEDAW but want to limit its reach domestically (true noncompliers). We expect that states placing reservations on the treaty's core articles should have worse women's rights generally and that their overall compliance with the treaty will be lower. Yet, the flexibility embedded in the treaty that encourages participation by such states may also create mechanisms for improving their protection of women's rights over time. The CEDAW Committee and other CEDAW members provide feedback on these reservations, which can create pressure over time for their removal and for implementation of domestic legislation to address the underlying rights. We evaluate dynamic patterns for average women's rights across time to assess this.

In our discussion of reservations, we noted however that democratic and high rule of law states may use reservations on human rights treaties because of the expected high level of domestic enforcement. By the time of CEDAW's signature, most western states had generally supported the political and social rights embodied in the treaty, and thus they had few incentives to place reservations on these core articles. They were less constrained though in using reservations on non-core or procedural articles. Article 29, for example, has the highest number of state reservations among all CEDAW treaty articles and it concerns procedures for dispute resolution. This article states that when two or more parties within a state have a disagreement over a violation of CEDAW and it is not settled, they can ask for outside arbitration. If six months after this arbitration the parties still cannot agree, they can utilize adjudication and take

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the issue to the ICJ. Involving the ICJ often brings in the question of sovereignty to state issues. If the dispute ever reached the ICJ, the state would have less control over the outcome of the dispute. The states that have reservations on Article 29 are willing to ratify CEDAW, but they are not willing to stake their sovereignty on their ability to uphold these human rights. The use of this procedural reservation is less about the protection of the core principles of the treaty and relates more to states' overall position on dispute resolution. By allowing the usage of these types of reservations, CEDAW created more flexibility for high rule of law states, which leads to our second hypothesis.

> *Hypothesis 2: States with better women's rights are more likely to use procedural or non-core treaty reservations, while states with worse women's rights are more likely to place reservations on the core articles of the CEDAW treaty.*

RESEARCH DESIGN

To test our theory, we use information on women's political, social, and economic rights from the CIRIGHTS Human Rights Dataset from 1981-2019 to assess states' compliance with the CEDAW treaty (Mark et al. 2023). If the treaty works as designed, then member states should implement better policies and laws to protect women's rights after joining CEDAW, a pattern observed with aggregate time series data (Englehart and Miller 2014). CIRIRIGHTS analyzes 15 internationally recognized human rights for around 200 countries. The project codes women's economic, social, and political rights annually on a scale of zero (worst) to three (best).[9]

[9] CIRIGHTS generates scores based on states' human rights practices (rather than stated policies) using information on annual human rights reports from Amnesty International and the US State Department. See https://cirights.com/.

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Women's *political rights* include women having the right to vote, to run for office, to hold elected and appointed governmental positions, to join political parties, and to petition governmental officials (Mark et al. 2023). Regarding women's *economic rights,* CIRIGHTS analyzes whether women get equal pay for equal work, free choice of profession without the need to obtain husband or a male relative consent, the right to gainful employment without husband or male relative consent, equality in hiring and promoting, job security, non-discrimination by employers, the right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace, the right to work at night, the right to work in occupations classified as dangerous, and the right to work in the military or the police force (Mark et al. 2023). Based on countries' practices on these various dimensions of women's rights, they receive a score on an ordinal scale from no rights (zero), to some unenforced rights (one), to some enforced rights (two), to full rights (three).

Although CIRIGHTS has a social rights measurement, it covers only years since 2005. Therefore, we use the V-Dem women's civil liberties index as our social rights proxy (Coppedge et al 2023). The V-Dem women's civil liberties index is comprised of four questions including freedom of domestic movement for women, freedom from forced labor for women, property rights for women, and access to justice for women. This variable is on a zero to one scale with one being the highest level of civil liberties for women in a state.[10]

Table 2 shows states' level of rights for political, social, and economic rights for women from 1981-2019.[11] Political rights show more progress overall, with 67% of countries having some enforced political rights for women and 11% having fully enforced rights. Economic

[10] The V-Dem and CIRIGHTS social rights measures are correlated at 0.53.
[11] The social rights indicator in this table is from CIRIRIGHTS and not the social indicator from V-Dem used in our multivariate models. This measure only spans from 2005 to 2021, which is why we employ a V-Dem indicator in our broader analyses. Table A3 in the Appendix presents descriptive statistics for the dependent variables.

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rights, on the other hand, are enforced or fully enforced by only 35% of states. Social rights are in the middle with 54% of countries showing some or full rights (since 2005).

To measure the level of CEDAW commitment, we collect original data from the United Nations Treaty Collection series capturing ratification (or accession), along with reservations that countries place on their treaty commitments. When ratifying a treaty, "a state indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. The institution of ratification grants states the necessary timeframe to seek the required approval for the treaty on the domestic level and to enact the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to that treaty" (UNTC 2019). A reservation is "a declaration made by a state by which it purports to exclude or alter the legal effect of certain provisions of the treaty in their application to that state." (UNTC 2019). These reservations can be against any article or paragraph of the CEDAW treaty and can be enacted at any point by member states. We do not include declarations in our coding of reservations, unless they explicitly call for a reservation on a specific article of CEDAW.[12]

Table 2: Women's Rights in CIRIGHTS Data

Percentage of State Years			
CIRIGHTS Level	Political	Social	Economic
No Rights	4%	18%	11%
Some Unenforced Rights	18%	28%	54%
Some Enforced Rights	67%	31%	28%
Full Rights	11%	23%	7%
N	6449	2934	6339

[12] In Table A3, we add a dummy variable to our main models indicating if a reservation was made through a declaration and our results are robust. On the importance for RUD distinctions, see McKibben and Western (2020) and Zvogbo, Sandholtz, and Mulesky (2020).

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For example, in 1981, Egypt placed a reservation on Article 2 of CEDAW related to political discrimination: "The Arab Republic of Egypt is willing to comply with the content of this article, provided that such compliance does not run counter to the Islamic *Sharia*." Egypt also placed reservations on Article 16 (marriage and family relations) and Article 29 (dispute resolution procedures). One or more CEDAW member states have placed reservations on political (Articles 2, 7, 15), economic (Articles 11, 13), social (Articles 5, 9, 10, 16), procedural (Articles 28, 29), and general human rights provisions (Article 1) in the treaty (see Table 6). We code reservations for each country in each year on every CEDAW treaty article and then aggregate that information to indicate whether a country has one of more reservations in place each year.

A state was coded as a zero if it did not ratify CEDAW, one if it ratified CEDAW with reservations, and a two if it ratified CEDAW with no reservations. This ordinal scale was used to generate two dummy variables*: States with Reservations* and *States without Reservations*. As noted earlier, thirty one percent of states ratifying CEDAW place reservations on their treaty commitments. Overall, non-ratifying states make up twenty four percent of our state year observations (1981-2019), *States with Reservations* comprise twenty four percent of our observations, while *States without Reservations* make up fifty two percent of the cases. Because states can choose to enact or retract reservations at any point in time, we capture these behavioral shifts in our state year dataset.

We include several control variables following other studies that assess the effect of CEDAW commitments on women's rights (Hill 2010; Lupu 2013). This includes measures for civil war and interstate war, population size (natural log), regime type (Polity IV -10 to +10 scale), wealth (real GDP per capita), women's involvement in civil society organizations, and

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domestic legal traditions (common law, civil law, Islamic law).[13] We anticipate that democratic and wealthier states will have better women's rights, while larger states participating in wars will have worse rights. Common law states have better human rights in general than other legal traditions (Simmons 2009; Mitchell, Ring, and Spellman 2013).

We test hypothesis 1 with two modeling strategies. First, we use an ordered logit model which captures the ordered nature of the CIRIGHTS dependent variables. We cluster the standard errors by country and include a variable for year to capture non-independence in our data. For the analyses using the V-Dem social rights measure, we estimate a GLS random effects regression model. Using an empirical estimation strategy like Simmons (2009), we also estimate an instrumental variables model (Table A1) with CAT ratification as an instrument. Second, we estimate a Heckman selection model to capture the non-random selection process by which countries join human rights treaties like CEDAW. Stage one captures ratification of CEDAW (0/1), while Stage two codes states' women's rights levels on the CIRIGHTS or V-Dem scales. The correlation between the two stages of the model captures the relationship between unobserved factors that influence treaty joining and women's rights. For example, a negative correlation between the models' errors would imply that unobserved factors that promote joining CEDAW are negatively related to factors that promote better women's rights. A negative correlation is consistent with at least some countries joining human rights treaties for expressive or "window-dressing" purposes (Hathaway 2002).

[13] Civil and interstate war measures are from the Major Episodes of Political Violence Dataset; https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/MEPVcodebook2018.pdf. Population size and wealth are updated through 2019 using Whitten-Woodring's (2015) replication dataset. The women's civil society organizations measure is taken from V-Dem. Legal tradition data comes from Mitchell and Powell (2011), while Polity data comes from https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

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To evaluate hypothesis 2, we compare states' average political, social, and economic women's rights based on the articles that receive reservations in the CEDAW commitment process. Our expectation is that states with better women's rights will use non-core or procedural reservations more often, while states with worse women's rights will place reservations on articles that are central to the overall mission of the CEDAW treaty. If confirmed, the use of reservations is most detrimental to countries most in need of treaty-induced improvements.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our study seeks to determine how different levels of commitment under CEDAW influence compliance with the treaty in terms of states' overall record on women's human rights. In Table 3, we present baseline models with the CEDAW commitment independent variables but include no other control variables. Consistent with our theory (Hypothesis 1), we find that countries ratifying CEDAW without reservations have significantly higher political and social rights for women compared to states who do not ratify the treaty. The coefficients for *States with Reservations* are also positive and significant in the first two models, showing that CEDAW members have better women's human rights records overall than non-CEDAW members. Yet the coefficients are smaller than those observed for *States without Reservations.* Therefore, we can conclude that states that ratify CEDAW without reservations are more likely to see improvements in women's human rights than states that ratify with reservations or states that do not ratify. However, the effects for economic rights show are distinct; countries ratifying CEDAW with reservations have better economic rights for women than those ratifying without reservations. Our empirical findings suggest that for political and social rights, the opposability

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perspective holds, and for economic rights, the permissibility perspective holds. This also reflects different support levels for second generation economic rights that emerged in the Cold War.

Table 3: Baseline Models for CEDAW Commitments and Women's Rights

	Political Rights	Social Rights	Economic Rights
States w/o Reservations	1. 563***	0.090***	0.670*
	(0.280)	(0.020)	(0.260)
States with Reservations	1.073***	-0.026	0.866**
	(0.277)	(0.017)	(0.266)
Year	0.041***	0.003***	-0.020**
	(0.008)	(0.000)	(0.006)
Observations	6,449	7,133	6,399

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 4: Full Models for CEDAW Commitments and Women's Rights

	Political Rights	Social Rights	Economic Rights
States w/o Reservations	0.685*	0.034*	0.061
	(0.293)	(0.014)	(0.237)
States with Reservations	0.476	-0.016	0.603*
	(0.284)	(0.014)	(0.238)
Year	0.052***	-0.000	-0.062***
	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.008)
Women's CSOs	0.809***	0.066***	0.573***
	(0.145)	(0.015)	(0.109)
Civil Conflict	0.026	-0.020***	-0.008
	(0.060)	(0.004)	(0.042)
Interstate Conflict	0.166	0.001	-0.029
	(0.272)	(0.003)	(0.167)
Population	-0.076	-0.008	-0.762***
	(0.127)	(0.015)	(0.086)
Polity Score	0.017	0.010***	0.018
	(0.020)	(0.002)	(0.016)
GDP Per Capita	0.176	0.005	0.579***
	(0.101)	(0.007)	(0.084)
Common Law	-0.627	-0.033	0.397
	(0.513)	(0.052)	(0.311)
Civil Law	0.133	0.027	0.527
	(0.425)	(0.019)	(0.269)
Islamic Law	-1.466**	-0.042	-1.075**
	(0.535)	(0.036)	(0.391)
Observations	5,332	5,813	5,291

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Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 4 presents the ordered logit (political, economic) and regression (social) models with control variables added. Like the results in Table 3, countries most committed to CEDAW (*States without Reservations*) have significantly better political and social women's rights. However, the states that place reservations on their commitments do not have significantly different human rights behaviors from states that do not join CEDAW. Thus, once we control for other factors that influence human rights behavior, countries that join CEDAW with reservations are not that different from non-CEDAW joining states in the protection of women's political and social rights. Economic rights show a similar pattern to the baseline model, whereby countries that place reservations have higher economic rights on average than states that fully ratify or eschew the treaty.

Substantive Effects

We present the substantive effects for our key independent variables in the full model (Table 4) in Figures 1 (Political Rights), 2 (Social Rights), and 3 (Economic Rights).[14] First, the probability of some enforced political rights for women increases across the level of commitment categories. States ratifying CEDAW without reservation are 6.6 percent more likely to observe some enforced political rights for women than states who do not join CEDAW (and 2.4 percent more likely than states who join the treaty with reservations). We also see movement in the "Some Unenforced Rights" political rights category, with non-ratifying states being seventy three percent more likely to be in this category than countries who ratify CEDAW without reservations. Those who ratify with reservations are thirty two percent more likely to have some

[14] These graphs are generated using the margins command in Stata and setting all other variables at their mean.

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unenforced political rights for women than states ratifying without restrictions. We see some movement in the "No Rights" and "Full Rights" categories even though there are fewer countries in those categories (forty six percent and eighty six percent; see Table 2). As anticipated by the opposability perspective, the use of reservations reduces states' compliance with CEDAW provisions.

<Figure 1 here>

Figure 2 shows similar patterns for social rights. States that ratify CEDAW without reservations see eight percent higher social rights, although states not ratifying CEDAW have slightly better social rights. For economic rights (Figure 3), the likelihood of enforcing some rights increases across treaty commitment levels. States ratifying without reservations are eighteen percent less likely to have no rights and four percent less likely to have some unenforced rights. While some enforced economic rights increase across treaty commitment levels, full rights are slightly less likely to be observed at the highest level (although the differences are small).

This demonstrates that commitment level matters for women's political, social, and economic rights. Consistent with the opposability school of thought, the use of reservations reduces states' compliance with the CEDAW treaty. However, we also observe that states that join with reservations often have better women's rights than states who do not support the treaty. Consistent with Goodliffe and Hawkins' (2006) theory of "lock-in," states may want to signal to the international community that they value this communal idea that women should be treated as equals, but they may also use reservations on articles that are inconsistent with their preferences. When they ratify with reservations, they are holding themselves responsible, in some parts, to the

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CEDAW Committee and must show how they are improving women's rights within their state, leading to the increases shown in Figures 1-3.

<Figure 2 here>

<Figure 3 here>

Illustrative Cases

Several cases in our dataset are consistent with our theory. Several states that had not previously ratified CEDAW, then ratified the treaty without reservations, improved their women's political rights. For example, San Marino fully ratified CEDAW in 2003 and moved from a one to a two on the women's political rights scale the following year. The same was also found in Kenya in 1984 when the country ratified CEDAW without any reservations and moved from a one to a two on the CIRIRIGHTS political rights scale in 1985. This trend can be seen in other ratifying states such as Georgia, the Ivory Coast, Peru, Paraguay, and Spain. All countries fully ratified CEDAW and experienced improvements in women's political rights within two years of their ratification.

Our theory is also exemplified by states that ratify with reservations, then remove those reservations, achieving higher CIRIGHTS women's political rights scores after full ratification. This is exemplified by Belgium, who ratified with reservations in 1985 with a score of two on the women's political rights scale and then fully ratified the treaty in 2002, gaining a ranking of three on the women's political rights scale in 2003. Austria also ratified CEDAW with reservations in 1982, and then fully ratified the treaty without any reservations in 2015. The following year, Austria moved from a two to a three on the CIRIGHTS women's political rights scale. This trend can also be seen in the Czech Republic and Luxembourg both moving up on the CIRIGHTS scale shortly after full ratification. In summary, we see dynamic patterns in CEDAW

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members' protection of women's rights that show how a permissibility approach to the treaty can improve compliance over time.

However, our empirical findings also show that such reservations are designed to limit full compliance with the treaty. Countries must provide reports on how they are enforcing the treaty and working to improve women's rights overall. If a state has "unenforced" norms of treating women a certain way, they may not want to put the infrastructure and cost into changing those norms into laws. This helps us understand why states place reservations on the articles of the treaty in areas where they have "unenforced" norms, and why their overall human rights' protections for women are worse than countries joining CEDAW without reservations.

Aggregate Dynamic Patterns for Women's Human Rights' Protections

While true noncompliers may ratify a human rights treaty as a signaling ("window-dressing") mechanism to the international community, such states may improve compliance levels with the treaties over time due to institutional and membership pressures (Avdeyeva 2007; Englehart and Miller 2014). To explore these aggregate dynamic patterns of the permissibility approach, we plot the average women's rights scores globally for political (Figure 4a), social (Figure 4b), and economic (Figure 4c) rights. Consistent with our theory, we see that political rights show stronger improvements over time for the set of countries that ratify CEDAW fully without reservations (by a half point on the zero to three scale in total). States that exemplify this pattern include Rwanda and Uganda, as both countries ratified CEDAW without reservations and achieved significant gains in women's rights over time. On the other hand, states that employ reservations do not see the same improvements in political rights. For example, Tunisia ratified CEDAW with four reservations (articles 9, 15, 16, and 29) and experienced no significant improvements in women's rights over time.

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Average social rights are similar in the early years of the CEDAW treaty, but we see divergence over time as states that joined the treaty with reservations show declines in average protections of women's social rights (by a tenth of a point on the V-Dem scale). The aggregate patterns for economic rights (Figure 4c) are consistent with our ordered logit model in that states with reservations tend to have higher economic rights on average, although the trend reverses in more recent years. We see though that the treaty has the desired effect on all states over time, manifesting mostly improvements in the protection of women's rights. In this regard, allowing reservations in the permissibility perspective may improve human rights protections in true noncomplier states, but not fully close the gap with true compliers.

<Figure 4a here>

<Figure 4b here>

<Figure 4c here>

How Women's Rights at Treaty Formation Influence Dynamic Patterns

To see how initial women's rights at CEDAW treaty formation influenced dynamic changes in rights over time, we estimated time series graphs separately for states that had lower women's political rights scores in 1981 (zero and one) and states that had higher women's rights scores the same year. We traced changes in women's rights over time for these groups broken into the three CEDAW commitment levels. Countries that had lower political women's rights when the CEDAW treaty was first signed show similar patterns to the overall sample in Figure 3a for political rights (Figure A1a). States that ratified CEDAW without reservations show continual improvements over time and maintain higher average levels of women's political rights than states that ratified CEDAW with reservations. Among states in the lower human rights group in 1981, social rights improve steadily for states ratifying without reservations, while

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countries joining with reservations see erosion of social rights over time (Figure A1b). Finally, economic rights show similar patterns to the all-states sample, with rights being higher for states with reservations (Figure A1c). Figures A2a-A2c show similar time series patterns for countries that were higher on women's rights when the CEDAW treaty opened for signature. Among this set of states, there are more improvements for political and social rights over time for the fully ratifying (without reservation) countries compared to the states ratifying with reservations (Figure A2a, A2b). Economic rights do not show noticeable gains for this group though, and often show states with reservations having better human rights (Figure A2c). This fits with our theory about distinct behavior for true compliers and true noncompliers in human rights treaties.

Selection Effects

However, states do not randomly join human rights treaties. In Table 5, we present Heckman selection models that control for state selection into CEDAW in stage one, while examining how reservations influence women's rights protection in stage two (among the ratifiers). Consistent with our ordered logit and regression models, we observe that CEDAW states with reservations have worse political and social rights than countries that fully support the treaty. Economic rights for ratifying states with reservations are better than for those ratifying out reservations, consistent with our earlier analysis (Table 4). Countries that participate in interstate, have higher GDP per capita and are common law states are less likely to ratify CEDAW, while democratic and civil law countries with more women's civil society organizations are more inclined to join. In Table A1, we present results for our main models using CAT ratification as an instrument for CEDAW ratification. We get similar results, namely that states without reservations have better political and social rights but see no significant improvements in economic rights.

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Table 5: Heckman Selection Models of CEDAW Commitments and Women's Rights

Stage 2: Women's Rights	Political Rights	Social Rights	Economic Rights
States with Reservations	-0.082***	-0.044***	0.119***
	(0.019)	(0.005)	(0.023)
Year	0.011***	-0.002***	-0.009***
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Women's CSOs	0.180***	0.112***	0.175***
	(0.011)	(0.003)	(0.013)
Population	-0.039***	-0.054***	-0.215***
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.009)
Polity Score	-0.000	0.013***	0.009***
	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.002)
Common Law	-0.157***	-0.019*	0.128***
	(0.031)	(0.008)	(0.038)
Civil Law	=0.030	-0.060***	0.181***
	(0.027)	(0.007)	(0.034)
Islamic Law	-0.315***	-0.028**	-0.275***
	(0.036)	(0.010)	(0.044)
GDP Per Capita	0.055***	0.041***	0.174***
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Constant	-20.046***	5.298***	18.798***
	(2.088)	(0.505)	(2.481)
Observations	4,485	4,602	4,469
Stage 1:CEDAW Ratification			
Year	0.108***	0.108***	0.101***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Women's CSOs	0.297***	0.306***	0.295***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Civil Conflict	-0.003	0.013	-0.006
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Interstate Conflict	-0.098*	-0.080	-0.106**
	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.041)
Population	0.168***	0.155***	0.110***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Polity Score	0.017***	0.018***	0.013**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
GDP Per Capita	-0.120***	-0.131***	-0.064**
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Common Law	-0.168	-0.170	-0.101
	(0.099)	(0.098)	(0.096)
Civil Law	0.489***	0.525***	0.517***
	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.089)
Islamic Law	-0.517***	-0.515***	-0.495***
	(0.107)	(0.106)	(0.104)
Constant	-214.984***	-215.357***	-200.813***

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	(6.497)	(6.471)	(6.464)
Rho	0.056	0.134**	0.641***
	(0.060)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Observations	5,696	5,813	5,680

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Testing Hypothesis 2

In Table 6, we present information on each CEDAW article that has one or more state reservations, along with the mean women rights' scores for CEDAW ratifiers with (Yes) or without (No) reservations. We expect true compliers (with better women's rights) to implement reservations on procedural (or non-core) articles, while true non-compliers with worse rights will be more likely to place reservations on the core articles of CEDAW, or those that specifically focus on the improvement of women's rights within the country (e.g., Articles 2, 7, 9, 16).

The data supports this pattern. First, we note that Article 28, which is a procedural article about reservations, is used by countries with better political, social, and economic rights. On the other hand, Article 29 shows the reverse pattern, with reservations employed by countries who score lower on average on women's rights. Although high rule of law states might seek to limit arbitration or ICJ adjudication for disputes arising in the context of the treaty, it appears that states with worse women's rights also seek to limit the role of outside authorities for dispute settlement. Given that only a third of countries accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ (Mitchell and Powell 2011), it is not surprising that Article 29 receives the largest number of reservations overall. Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee has viewed reservations on Article 29 as a violation of a core provision of the treaty (De Pauw 2013), thus it follows that countries with worse women's rights would be more likely to employ such a reservation.

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Second, we also see that countries with worse women's human rights records are significantly more likely to place reservations on CEDAW articles that are seen as core to the treaty's success. Article 2 reservations demonstrate this pattern, often being used by Islamic law states who seek to limit any conflicts between protection of women's political rights and Sharia law. In addition to Egypt employing an Article 2 reservation as described earlier, many other Islamic law states such as Iraq, Libya, and Morocco have similar reservations on this clause. We see a similar pattern for Article 9 (nationality rights). States that use reservations on Article 7 (political rights) or Article 16 (marriage and family relations) have worse political rights than states ratifying CEDAW without reservations. States with better economic rights use reservations in 8 or 12 cases, which fits with our discussion earlier of these second-generation rights being supported by a distinct group of countries, although not as often on core CEDAW articles.

Our empirical analyses demonstrate that level of commitment is important when looking at the effectiveness of CEDAW within a state, and that states with worse human rights records more often place reservations on the important articles that comprise the fundamental values of the convention. This information also addresses an issue with looking at ratification of human rights treaties. Often, social scientists find that states that are likely to ratify human rights treaties are democratic in nature and share the values of the institutions that create these treaties. These states already have these values; therefore, we should see higher human rights levels. The same can also be said for states that do not share the values of these institutions, they will likely not ratify these treaties. While we show that states with worse human rights use reservations to prevent CEDAW from having far reaching effects in domestic society, we do observe that such states have better records compared to non-ratifying states. Furthermore, a lot of movement in human rights occurs for states in the middle of the CIRIGHTS scales. The process of removing

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reservations over time can significantly improve the chances that CEDAW members will see genuine improvements in the political, social, and economics rights for women citizens.

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Table 6: Difference of Means Tests for Women's Rights Scores by CEDAW Reservation Articles

		Political Rights[15]		*Social Rights*		*Economic Rights*	
Reservation Article[16]	Description	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Article 1	General HR	1.91	1.97	0.76***	0.68	2.05***	1.32
Article 2	Political	1.82	1.98***	0.58	0.68***	1.21	1.34***
Article 5	Social	2.02	1.78	0.77***	0.67	1.73***	1.32
Article 7	Political	1.80	0.82***	0.82***	0.67	1.81***	1.32
Article 9	Social	1.60	2.00***	0.56	0.69***	1.17	1.35***
Article 10	Social	1.73	1.97**	0.87***	0.67	2.09***	1.33
Article 11	Economic	2.00	1.96	0.88***	0.67	1.98***	1.30
Article 13	Economic	1.93	1.97	0.84***	0.67	1.93**	1.32
Article 15	Political	1.82	1.98***	0.69	0.68	1.41**	1.32
Article 16	Social	1.74	2.01***	0.67	0.68	1.34	1.33
Article 28	Procedural	2.50***	1.96	0.95***	0.68	2.14***	1.33
Article 29	Procedural	1.81	2.01***	0.54	0.71***	1.24	1.36***

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[15] The values represent the means for each group among CEDAW ratifying members with (Yes) and without (No) the reservation on the listed treaty article. An asterisk indicates the t-test for the difference of means between groups produces a calculated value greater than the 90 percent critical t-score; two asterisks indicate significance for the difference of means test at the ninety five percent level, while three asterisks indicate significance for the difference of means test at the ninety nine percent level. Articles in italics are considered by the CEDAW Committee to be core articles (De Pauw 2013).

[16] Omitted articles (e.g., Articles 3, 4, 6, 8, and 17-27) have no CEDAW member state reservations.

CONCLUSION

We demonstrate that the level of legal commitment to an international human rights treaty matters for assessing states' compliance with the treaty. Our results are consistent with the opposability view of treaty reservations whereby states that ratify CEDAW without reservations have better women's political and social rights than states that fully ratify with no reservations. These countries also maintain a gap in terms of better rights' respect over time compared to countries ratifying CEDAW with reservations. However, we also show that the flexibility of the CEDAW treaty regime encourages participation and improves rights over time, consistent with the permissibility perspective of reservations. States with reservations have better economic rights, which is consistent with a permissibility perspective and reflects different level of support for the second generation of economic rights that emerged in the Cold War. We also find that CEDAW members using reservations often remove them in the face of international pressure, showing how the regime can improve behavior even for countries that use reservations. High rule of law countries also take advantage of the treaty's flexibility to place reservations on procedural aspects of the treaty's implementation.

While studying CEDAW reservations is valuable given that it has the most reservations among any human rights treaties, future research would also benefit from exploring reservations in other human rights treaties such as CAT and ICCPR to see if there is a detrimental impact of reservations on treaty compliance. Many studies suggest these treaties do not have significant effects on human rights practices in the states that ratified them. However, between ten and fifteen percent of CAT and ICCPR treaty signatories place reservations on their treaty commitments (Neumayer 2007). It would be useful to compare states with and without reservations in other human rights treaties to see if states ratifying with reservations have more

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frequent torture or worse political rights. This research could also be furthered by seeing where reservations are placed in CAT, ICCPR, or other human rights treaties and whether such reservations are on core provisions of the treaties or on general or other procedural articles. As shown with our CEDAW analyses, reservations on core articles of the treaty are more often used by non-compliant states.

Future research should also examine the content of article provisions because the provisions of human rights treaties can vary in terms of the obligations they entail (Zvogbo, Sandholtz, and Mulesky 2020). Although we acknowledge their importance to reservations held on CEDAW, we did not explore how the content of different provisions may factor into how and when states place reservations. Using text analysis or a specific subset of reservation type could help human rights scholars understand why reservations are placed and why they are removed, building upon recent work in this area.

It would also be useful to examine the timing of reservations in more detail. Helfer (2006) argues that the timing of reservations can show a lot about how the state is willing to commit. A state that puts reservations on a treaty as soon as they sign signals they will cooperate, but only on their terms. Helfer (2006) also explains that states that ratify the treaty sometime after its creation are more likely to put more reservations on it than states that ratified immediately. This could possibly explain the level of commitment from states and what to expect depending on when they ratify. The timing of reservation removal is also an interesting topic to explore, with research showing that other states' objections on CEDAW reservations create incentives for the partial removal of states' reservations to the treaty (Kreutzer 2023). We could also examine domestic enforcement mechanisms beyond legal traditions such as rule of law and judicial independence (Powell and Staton 2009).

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Human rights treaties, such as CEDAW, are imperative for improving women's rights. We show, though, that states' levels of legal commitment to human rights treaties have significant consequences for their willingness to improve human rights practices and that the use of treaty reservations undermines state members' compliance. Our research adds to the overall narrative of human rights and aids in the fight for more freedoms for underrepresented populations around the world.

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CEDAW map

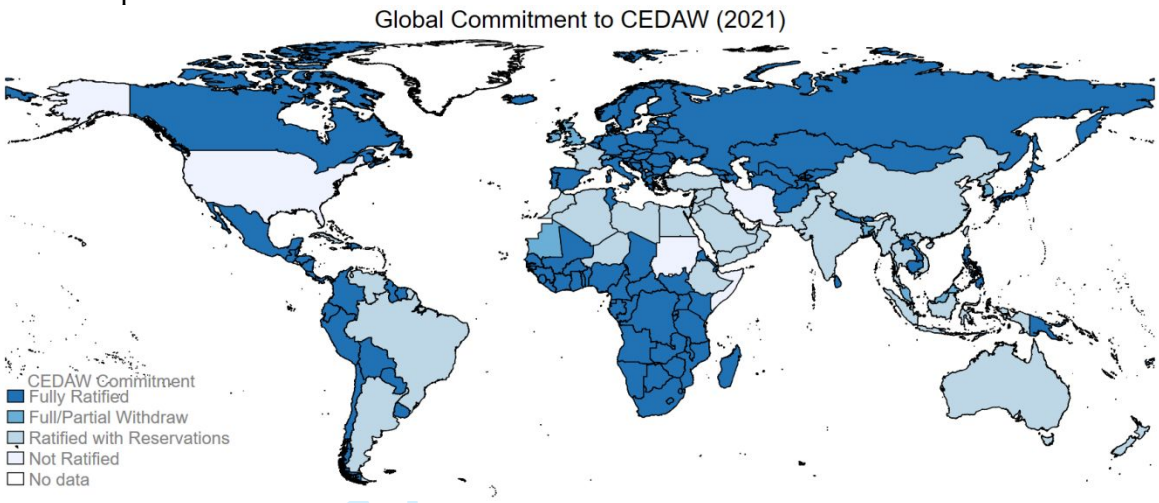

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Figure 1: Substantive Effects of CEDAW Ratification Levels on Women's Political Rights

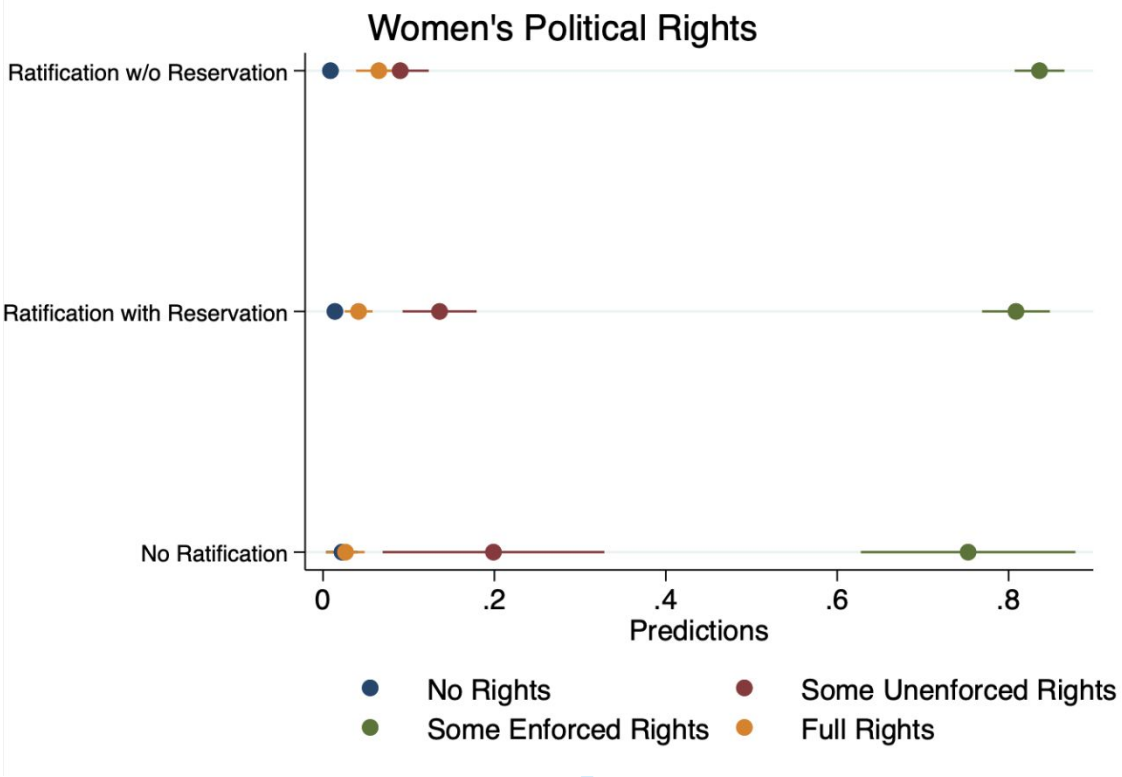

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Figure 2: Substantive Effects of CEDAW Ratification Levels on Women's Social Rights

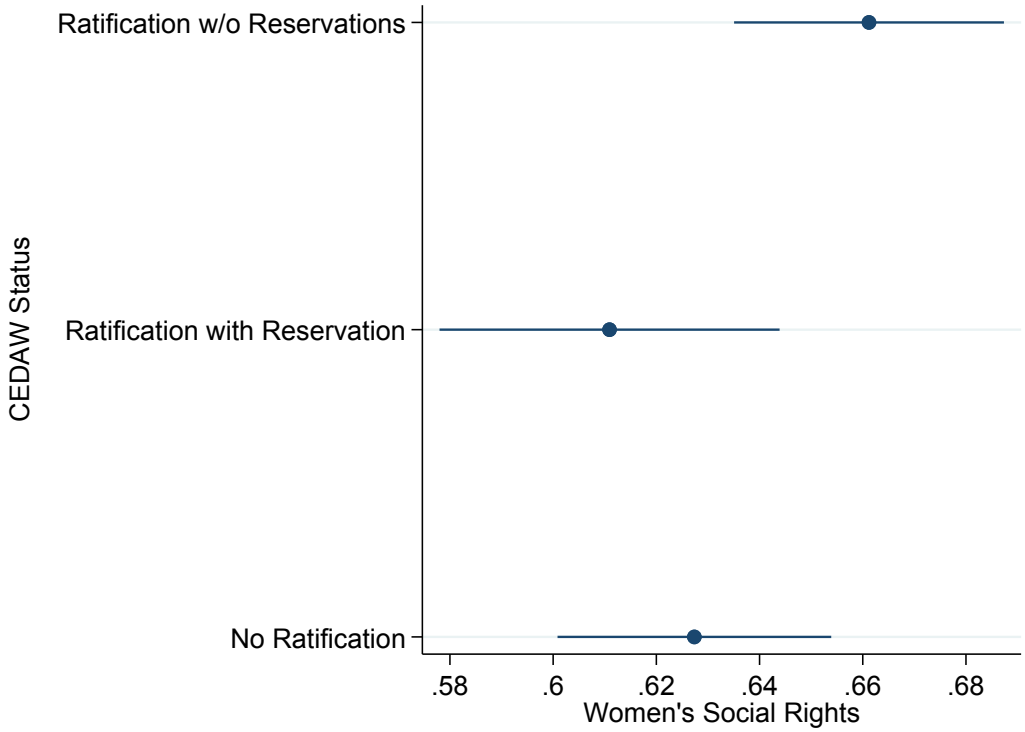

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Figure 3: Substantive Effects of CEDAW Ratification Levels on Women's Economic Rights

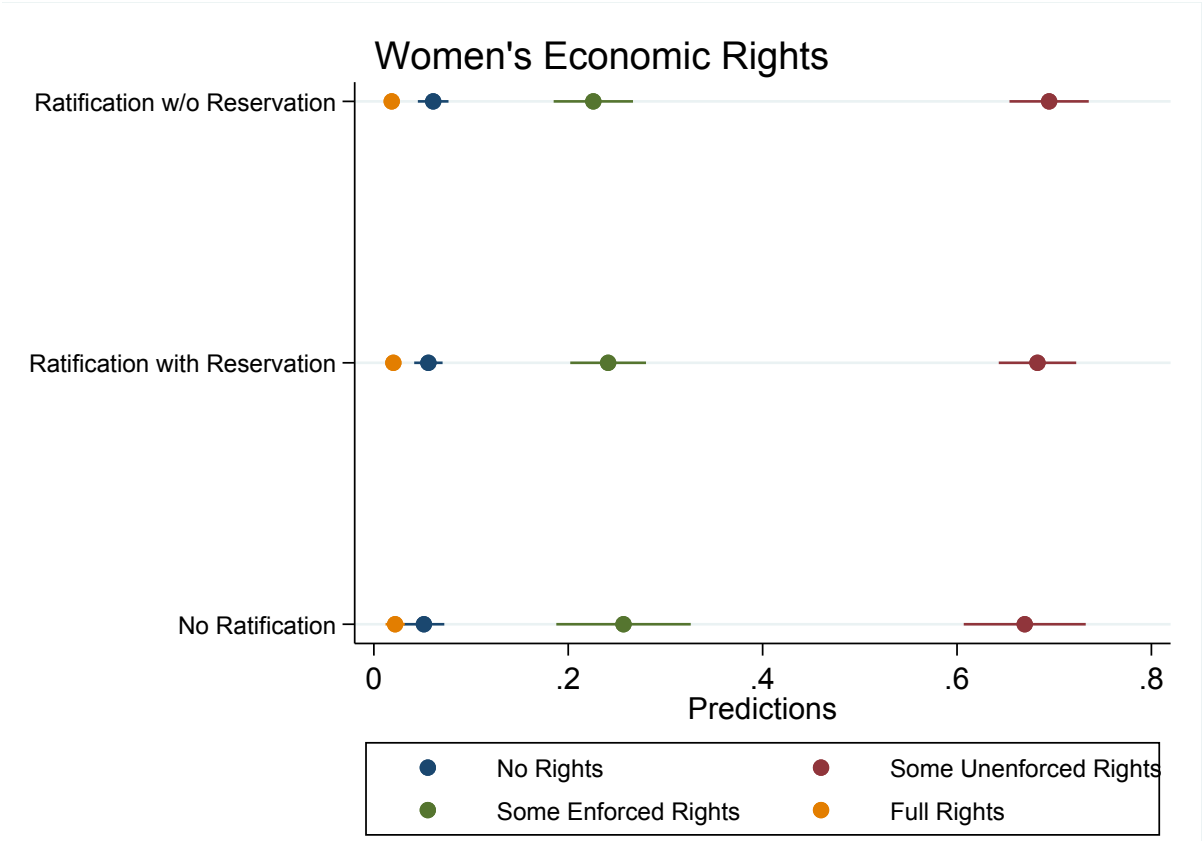

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Figure 4a: Women's Political Rights by CEDAW Commitment Levels

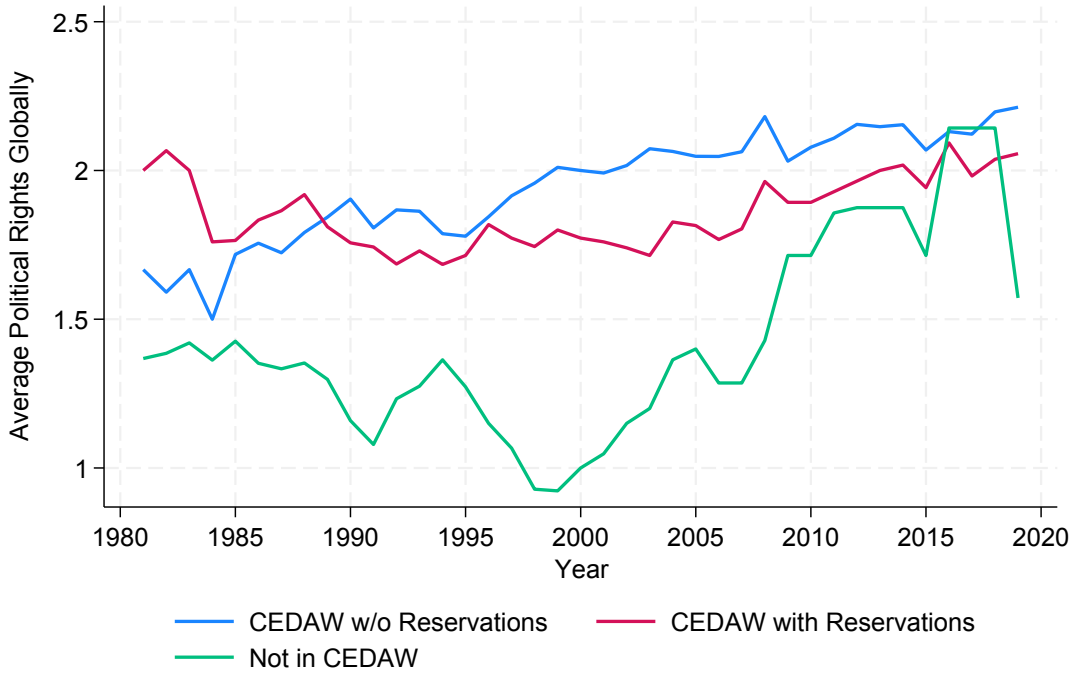

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Figure 4b: Women's Social Rights by CEDAW Commitment Levels

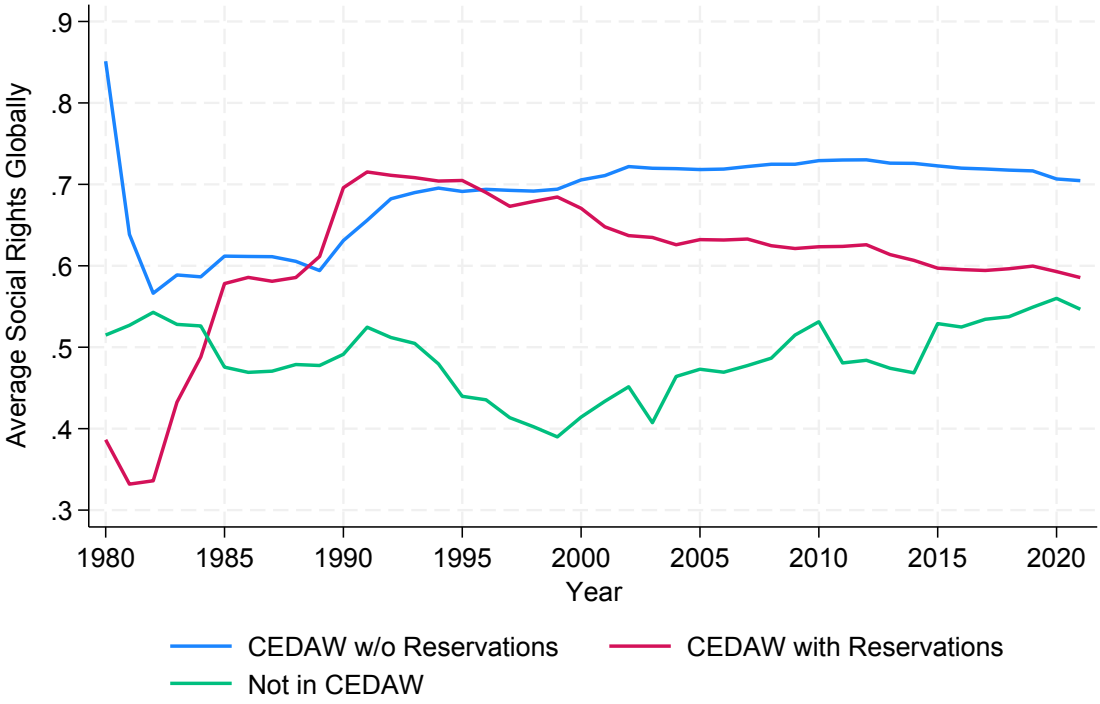

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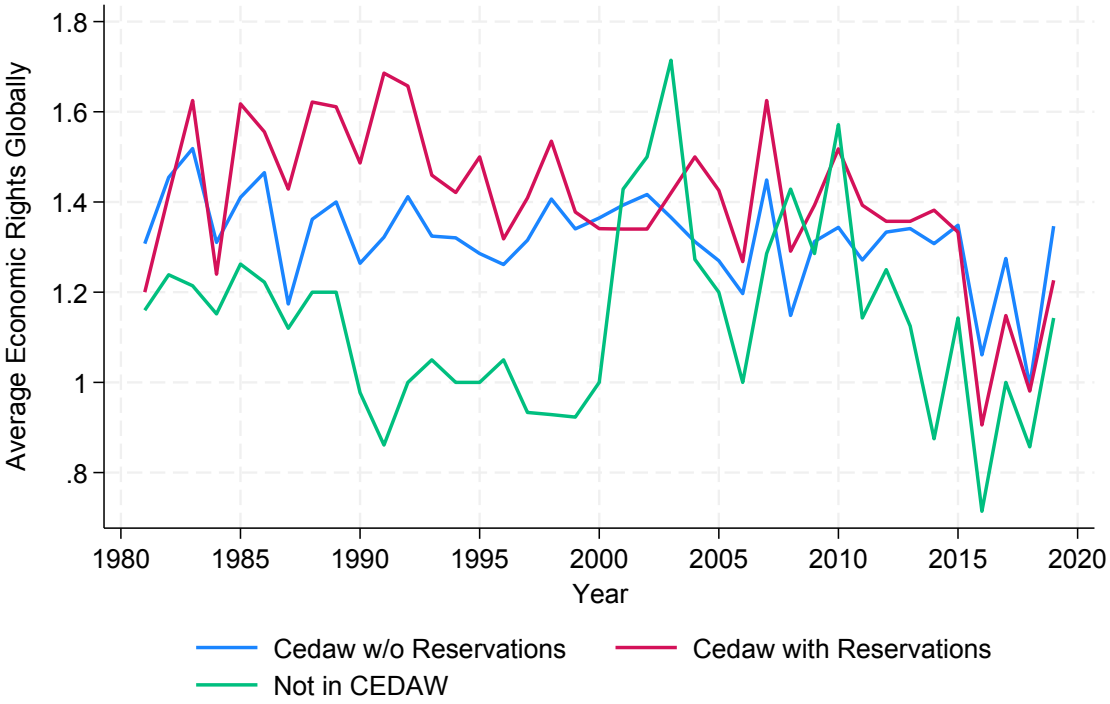
Figure 4c: Women's Economic Rights by CEDAW Commitment Levels



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Appendix: "The Three R's of CEDAW Commitment: Ratification, Reservation, and Rejection"

1) Tracking Average Women's Rights Scores for Low (Political) Women's Rights States in 1981

Figure A1a: Women's Political Rights for Low Women's Rights States in 1981

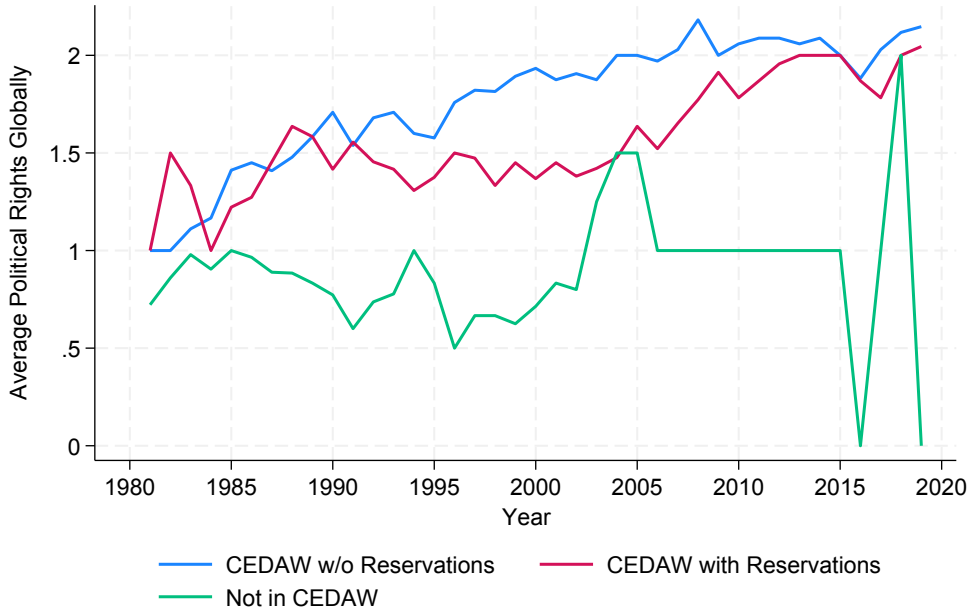


Figure A1b: Women's Social Rights for Low Women's Rights States in 1981

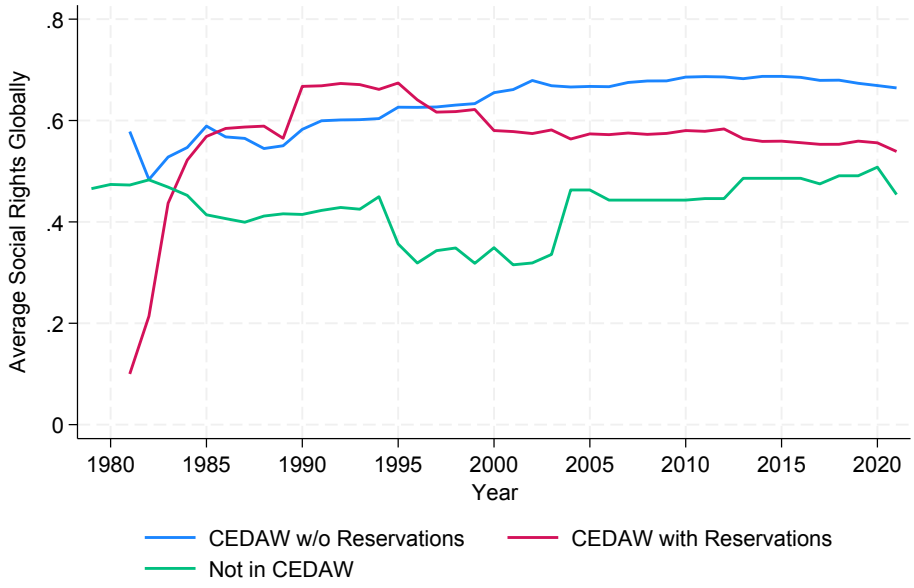
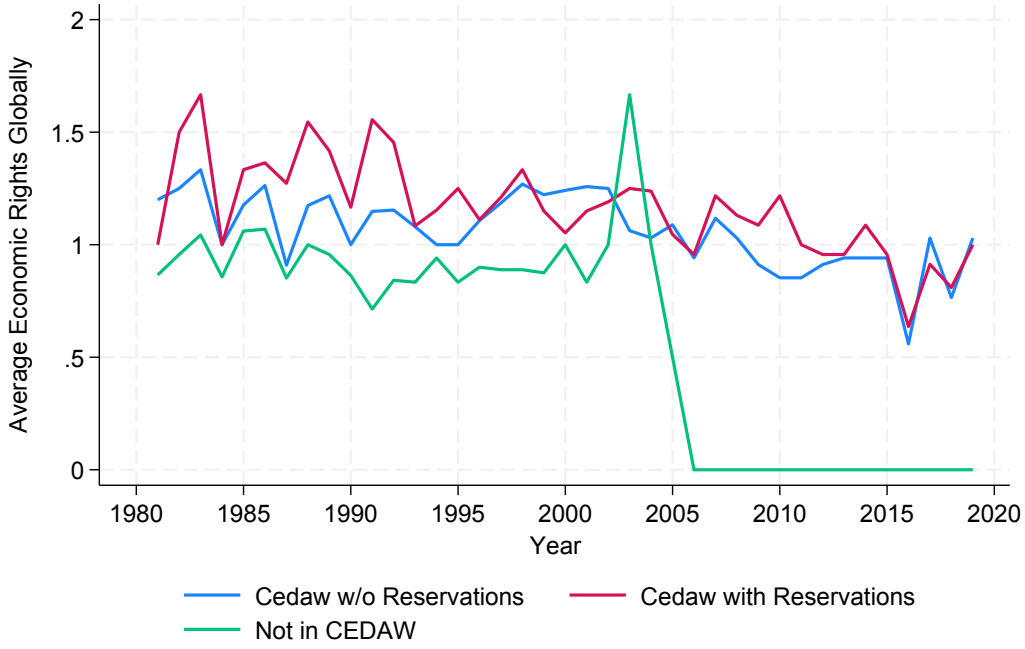


Figure A1c: Women's Economic Rights for Low Women's Rights States in 1981



For Review Only

2) Tracking Average Women's Rights Scores for High (Political) Women's Rights States in 1981

Figure A2a: Women's Political Rights for High Women's Rights States in 1981

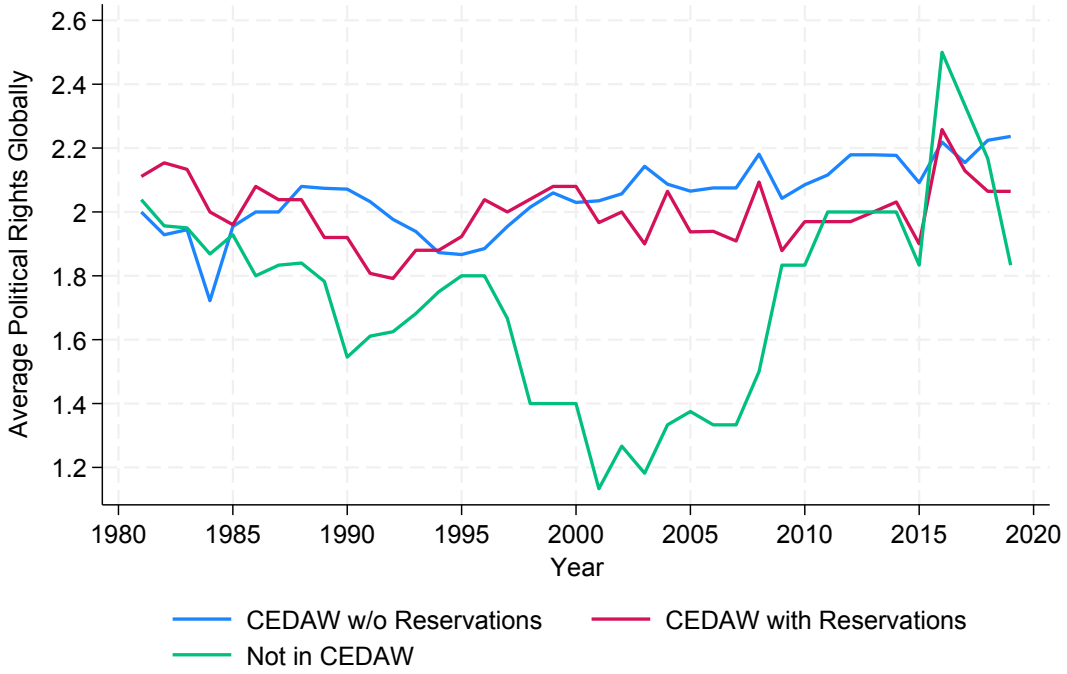


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Figure A2b: Women's Social Rights for High Women's Rights States in 1981

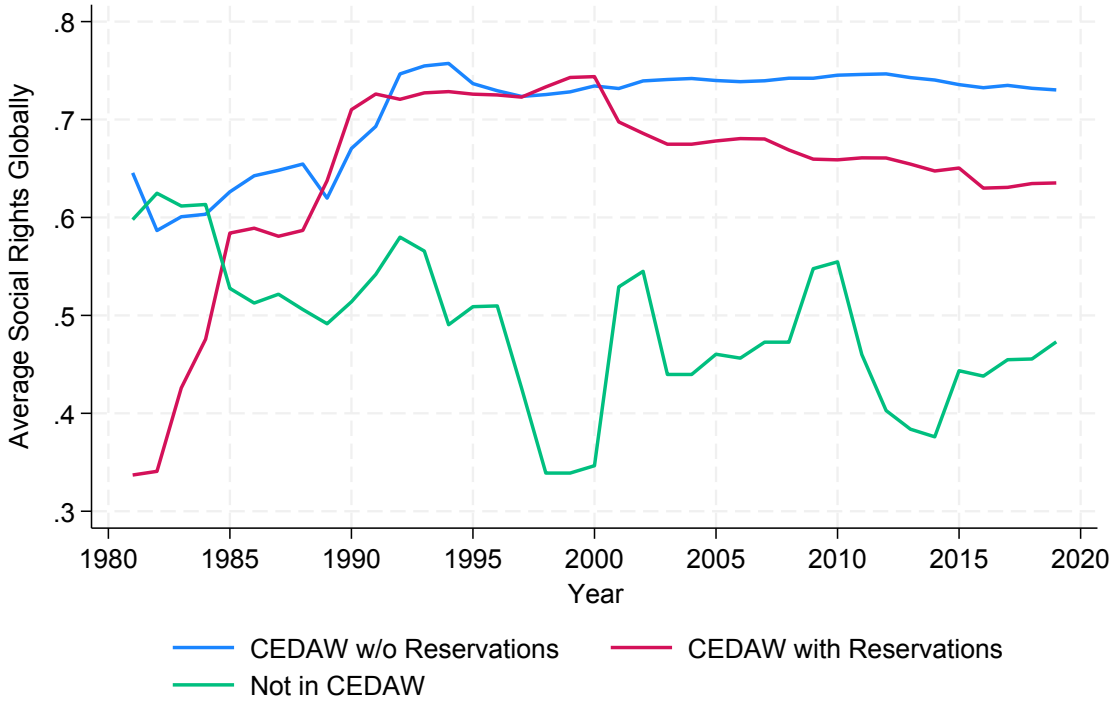

Figure A2c: Women's Economic Rights for High Women's Rights States in 1981

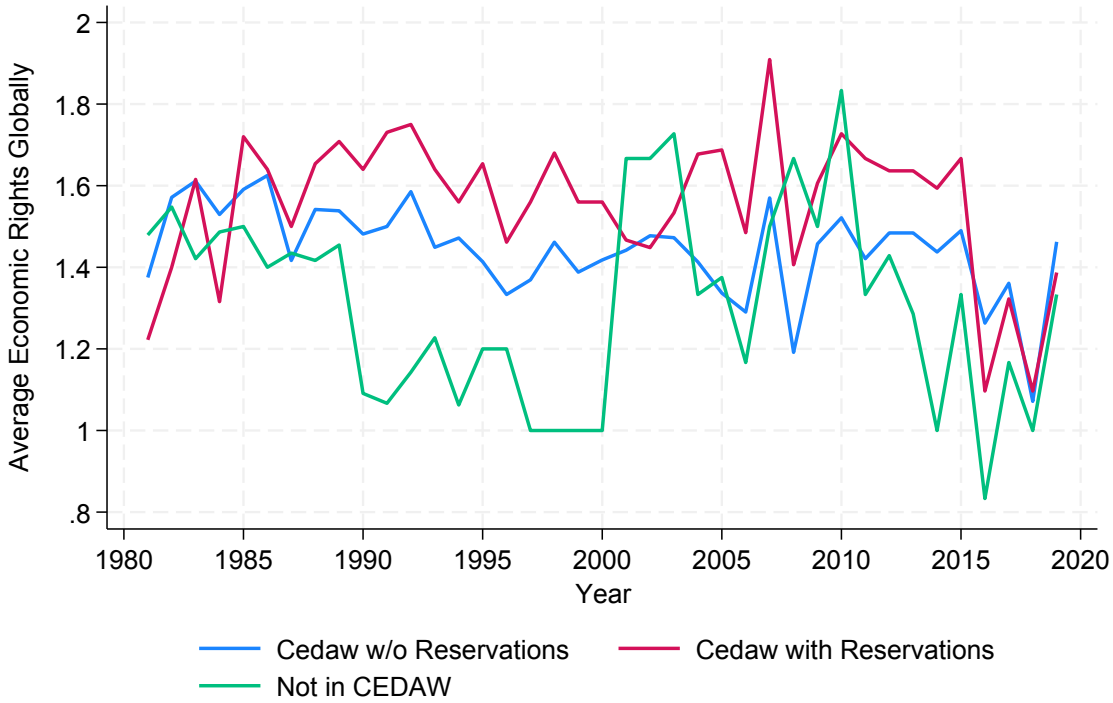

Table A1: Instrumental Variables Model with CAT Ratification as Instrument

	Political Rights	Social Rights	Economic Rights
States without Reservations	0.636**	0.244***	-0.132
	(0.150)	(0.041)	(0.159)
Civil War	0.004	-0.029***	0.001
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
International War	0.026	0.012**	-0.001
	(0.017)	(0.004)	(0.018)
Population	-0.017	-0.042***	-0.212***
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.011)
Democracy	0.003*	0.014***	0.005***
	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.002)
GDP	0.072***	0.051***	0.166***
	(0.016)	(0.004)	(0.017)
Common Law	-0.034	0.033***	0.131***
	(0.044)	(0.012)	(0.046)
Civil Law	-0.023	-0.067***	0.160***
	(0.034)	(0.009)	(0.035)
Islamic Law	-0.173***	0.035*	-0.281***
	(0.062)	(0.016)	(0.065)
Year	0.004	-0.007***	-0.012***
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)
Constant	7.694***	13.690***	25.455***
	(5.206)	(1.536)	(5.469)
Observations	4,677	5,121	4,633
R squared	0.24	0.63	0.37
First Stage Test+	86.99***	96.65***	78.74***

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$
+Null hypothesis is whether the instrument is weak.

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Table A2: Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Women's Political Rights	6449	1.86	.653	0	3
Women's Social Rights	7133	0.64	.236	.005	.984
Women's Economic Rights	6399	1.30	.754	0	0

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Table A3: Full Models, Adding Declarations

	Political Rights	Social Rights	Economic Rights
States w/o Reservations	0.680*	0.034*	0.052
	(0.295)	(0.014)	(0.237)
States with Reservations	0.431	-0.012	0.514*
	(0.311)	(0.013)	(0.242)
Declarations	0.177	-0.014	0.396
	(0.322)	(0.028)	(0.246)
Year	0.052***	-0.000	-0.062***
	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.008)
Women's CSOs	0.800***	0.066***	0.557***
	(0.149)	(0.015)	(0.111)
Civil Conflict	0.028	-0.019***	-0.006
	(0.059)	(0.004)	(0.043)
Interstate Conflict	0.169	0.002	-0.021
	(0.274)	(0.003)	(0.169)
Population	-0.078	-0.007	-0.771***
	(0.126)	(0.015)	(0.087)
Polity Score	0.018	0.010***	0.020
	(0.020)	(0.002)	(0.016)
GDP Per Capita	0.169	0.006	0.563***
	(0.103)	(0.006)	(0.085)
Common Law	-0.613	-0.034	0.433
	(0.518)	(0.052)	(0.305)
Civil Law	0.149	0.027	0.575*
	(0.428)	(0.019)	(0.263)
Islamic Law	-1.457**	-0.042	-1.048**
	(0.536)	(0.036)	(0.387)
Observations	5,332	5,813	5,291

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

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Table A4: Heckman Probit Selection Model of CEDAW Commitments and Reservations

Stage 2: Reservations	
Women's CSOs	-0.386***
	(0.033)
Population	-0.201***
	(0.023)
Polity Score	-0.016***
	(0.005)
GDP Per Capita	0.472***
	(0.020)
Common Law	0.851***
	(0.090)
Civil Law	-0.385***
	(0.081)
Islamic Law	1.365***
	(0.103)
Year	-0.051***
	(0.004)
Constant	93.176***
	(8.053)
Stage 1: CEDAW Ratification	
Women's CSOs	0.300***
	(0.032)
Population	0.160***
	(0.026)
Polity Score	0.020***
	(0.005)
GDP Per Capita	-0.133***
	(0.020)
Common Law	-0.143
	(0.097)
Civil Law	0.562***
	(0.091)
Islamic Law	-0.447***
	(0.106)
Civil Conflict	0.004
	(0.015)
Interstate Conflict	-0.067
	(0.043)
Year	0.107***
	(0.003)
Constant	-212.914***
	(6.589)
Observations	5,801 (4,590 selected)

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

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1) Tracking Average Women's Rights Scores for Low (Political) Women's Rights States in 1981

Figure A1a: Women's Political Rights for Low Women's Rights States in 1981

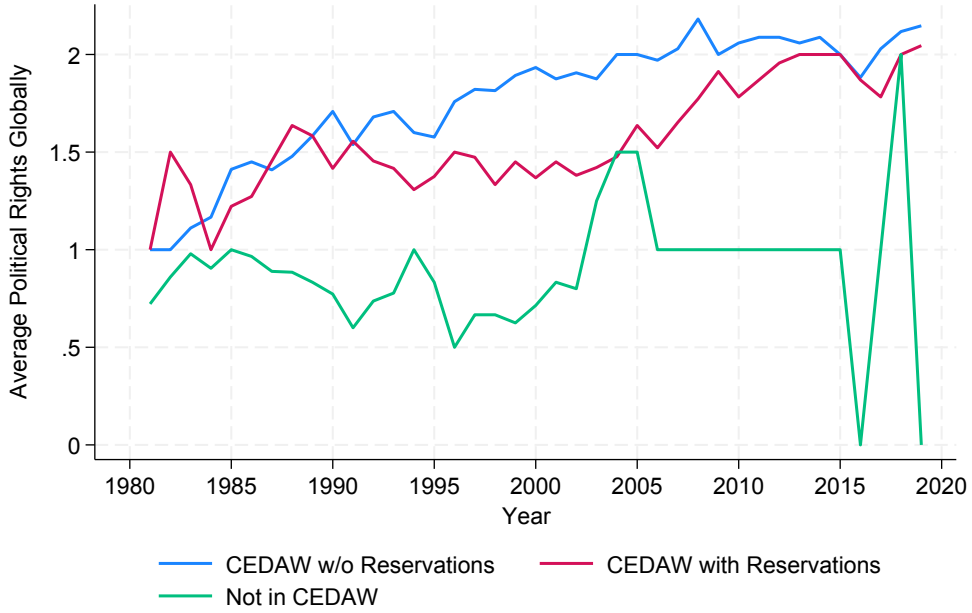
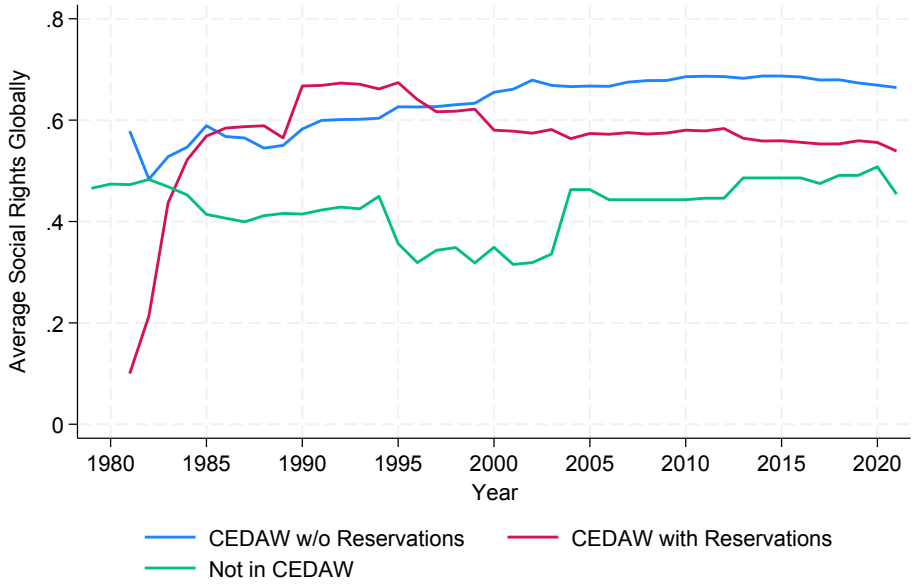


Figure A1b: Women's Social Rights for Low Women's Rights States in 1981



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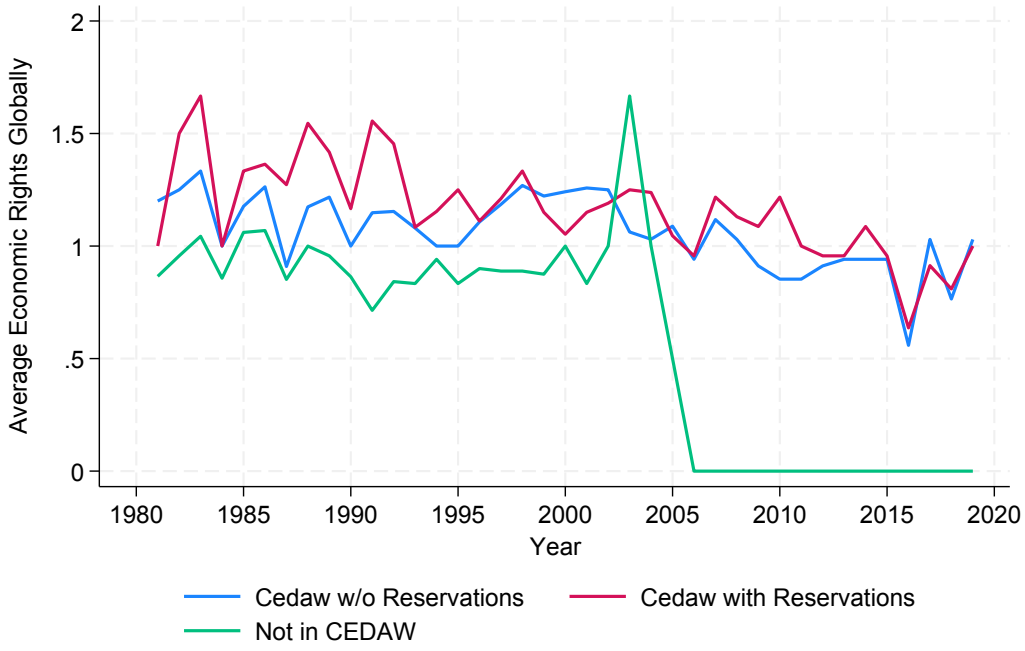
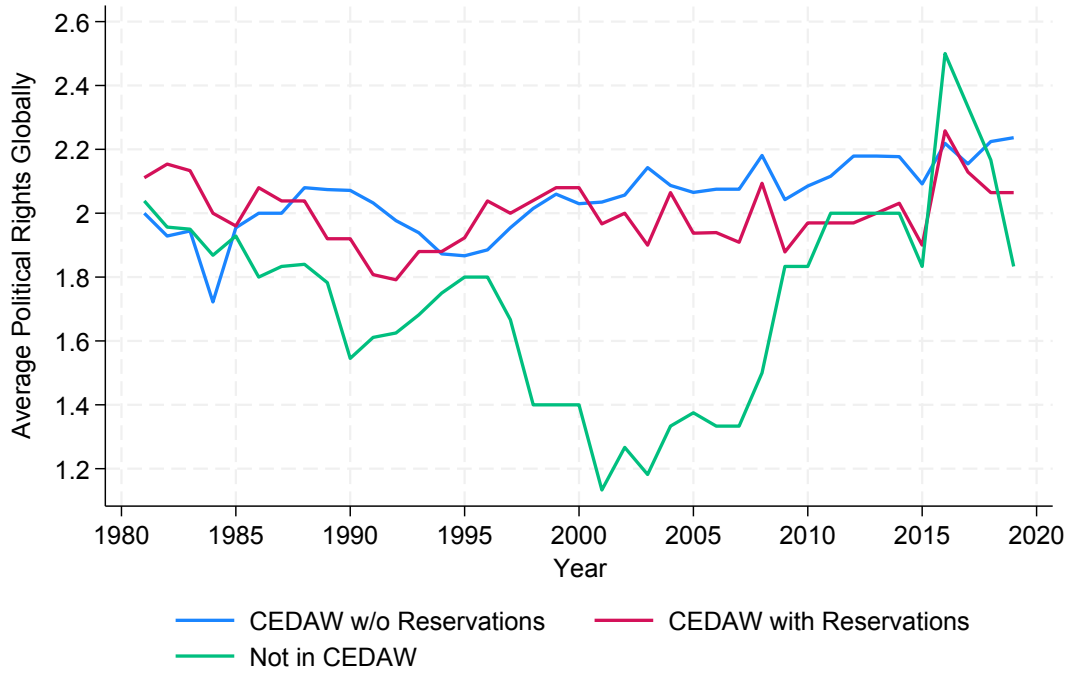


2) Tracking Average Women's Rights Scores for High (Political) Women's Rights States in 1981

Figure A2a: Women's Political Rights for High Women's Rights States in 1981



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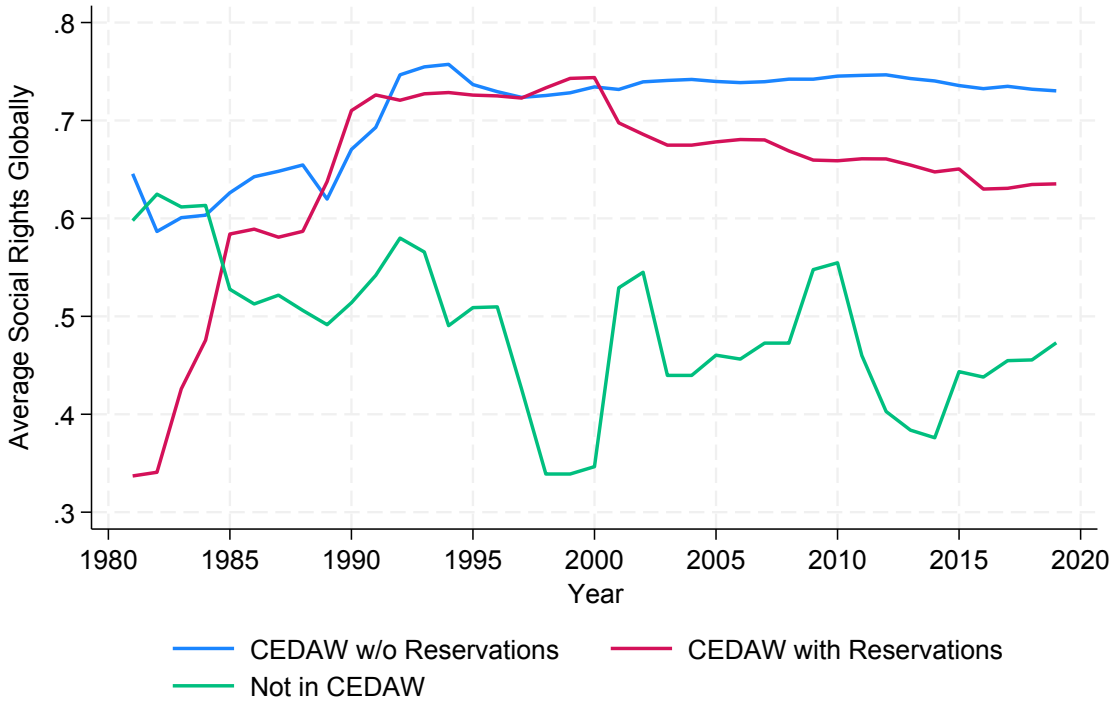

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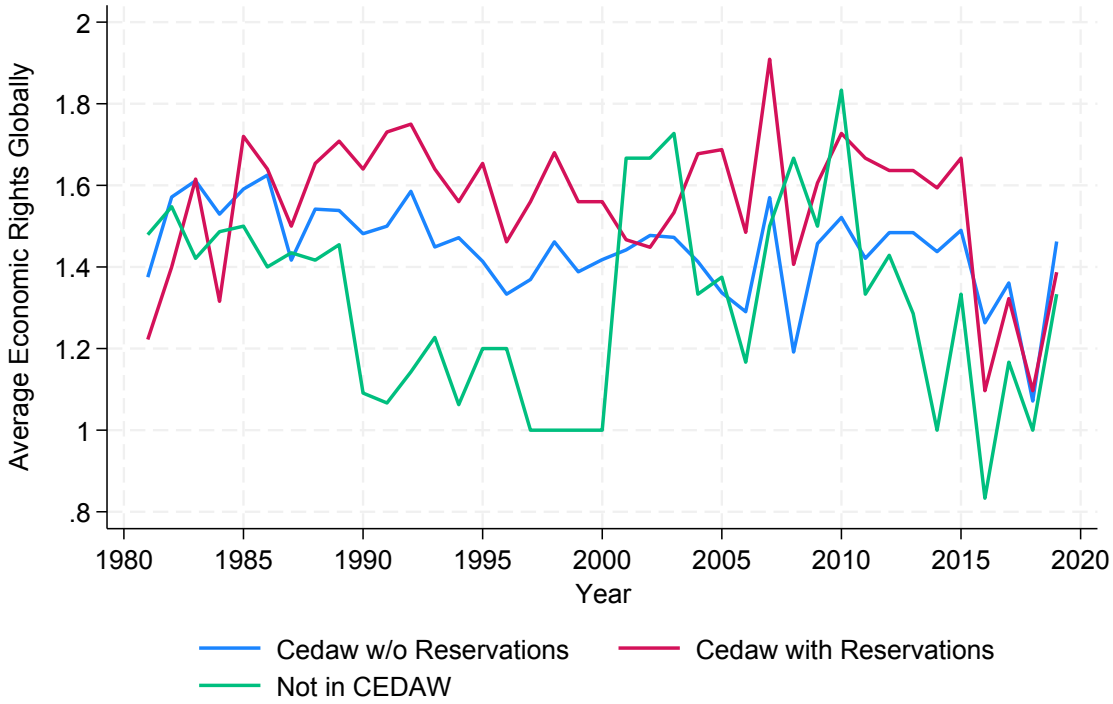

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	(0.020)	(0.002)	(0.016)
GDP Per Capita	0.169	0.006	0.563***
	(0.103)	(0.006)	(0.085)
Common Law	-0.613	-0.034	0.433
	(0.518)	(0.052)	(0.305)
Civil Law	0.149	0.027	0.575*
	(0.428)	(0.019)	(0.263)
Islamic Law	-1.457**	-0.042	-1.048**
	(0.536)	(0.036)	(0.387)
Observations	5,332	5,813	5,291

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

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Table A4: Heckman Probit Selection Model of CEDAW Commitments and Reservations

Stage 2: Reservations	
Women's CSOs	-0.386***
	(0.033)
Population	-0.201***
	(0.023)
Polity Score	-0.016***
	(0.005)
GDP Per Capita	0.472***
	(0.020)
Common Law	0.851***
	(0.090)
Civil Law	-0.385***
	(0.081)
Islamic Law	1.365***
	(0.103)
Year	-0.051***
	(0.004)
Constant	93.176***
	(8.053)
Stage 1: CEDAW Ratification	
Women's CSOs	0.300***
	(0.032)
Population	0.160***
	(0.026)
Polity Score	0.020***
	(0.005)
GDP Per Capita	-0.133***
	(0.020)
Common Law	-0.143
	(0.097)
Civil Law	0.562***
	(0.091)
Islamic Law	-0.447***
	(0.106)
Civil Conflict	0.004
	(0.015)
Interstate Conflict	-0.067
	(0.043)
Year	0.107***
	(0.003)
Constant	-212.914***
	(6.589)
Observations	5,801 (4,590 selected)

Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

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Memo for "The Three R's of CEDAW Commitment: Ratification, Reservation, and Rejection"
ID: 235185453.R1

We have revised the manuscript so that it conforms with ISA style guidelines. We left references to hypotheses and treaty articles as numeric, but changed all other numbers to text (e.g., two).

We moved the figures to the end of the document on separate pages for each figure.

We have compiled a replication dataset and do file in Stata format and emailed the files to iijournalpitt@gmail.com.

In response to reviewer 2, we note that on pages 16-17 that our dataset comes from CIRIRIGHTS. In footnote 11, we explain: "The social rights indicator in this table is from CIRIRIGHTS and not the social indicator from V-Dem used in our multivariate models. This measure only spans from 2005 to 2021, which is why we employ a V-Dem indicator in our broader analyses…" So yes, the reason we do not use the CIRIRIGHTS Social Rights data in our analyses is because the data does not exist before 2005, while our time period is 1981 to 2019 (as noted on page 16). We do, however, use CIRIRIGHTS in Table 2 because we want the three indicators to have the same ordinal scale for comparison. The V-Dem scale is a continuous latent measure and thus would be difficult to compare to the other two ordinal measures (descriptively).

In response to reviewer 2, we also added text to the first paragraph in the conclusion on page 32 to highlight our contributions more clearly. In terms of our patterns that vary across rights (political, economic, and social), we believe our literature review and empirical analysis sections adequately connect our patterns to those other findings.

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