# Between Trade and Human Rights

## An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Human Rights Clause in EU Trade Agreements


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**Summary**

The EU has made international human rights standards a top priority of its trade strategies. The essential human rights clause is the operative policy tool to introduce human right standards as conditions in trade agreements, but previous research has demonstrated a lack of effectiveness of international trade agreements to influence domestic state practices. This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of the human rights clause by investigating the research question: what is the effect of ratifying a trade agreement including the human rights clause with the EU on a country's human rights performance? The main theoretical argument underlying this thesis holds that because the EU usually has a position of dominant commercial leverage vis-à-vis its trade partner, it can make the gains from trade conditional on compliance with human rights standards. Therefore, the main hypothesis expects that if a country has ratified a bilateral trade agreement with the EU, it will demonstrate improved human rights performance. In order to measure the influence of EU trade agreement ratification on human rights performance, the analysis involved a time-series cross-sectional (or panel) multivariate regression with control variables, comparing 126 countries over a 15-year period from 1997 to 2011. No significant influence was found of ratifying the human rights clause on personal integrity rights violations, which indicates the absence of a direct relation between EU trade agreement ratification and human rights performance. Given the inconsistent findings compared to the literature, it is important that future research continues to investigate how treaty commitments are translated into policy action. Other than studying trade negotiations and the state-level characteristics that influence human rights reforms, researching the institutions for monitoring and scrutinizing how a government applies international human right standards to its domestic policies would be a valuable contribution.

**Acknowledgements**

Since stepping into the IMP program, I have encountered and studied many topics that were new to me. I am especially happy I familiarized myself, at least theoretically, with some of the big developments happening within international institutions around the world. Human rights as a governance area was interesting to me because it seemed to encompass so many different aspects of global governance at the same time. Puzzling aspects. How do countries 'make policy' on something so fundamental? How do institutions deal with non-compliance of standards so vital? How 'seriously' are human rights treated by world leaders in the face of crimes against humanity happening every day? Of course, these questions are too big to answer here, but they do signal some of the curiosity underlying this thesis. This, combined with my historical interest for Europe and how the EU acts internationally today, stirred the first questions on the topic.

Throughout the process I kept encountering content that interested me but also issues that challenged me. I am all for an academic challenge, but this research presented issues with which I was far from familiar in the beginning. In these situations, I received some help from the people around me who I would like to thank. Marco, rowing both in the same boat for a while, thanks for taking the time to discuss our research. Louis, you were even quicker to jump in than me asking you to; thanks very much for your opinions. Andrea, I can only very deeply appreciate you for taking out your time to put up with my questions. Big thanks.

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## List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| EU | European Union |
| CIRI | Cingranelli-Richards |
| DESTA | Design of Trade Agreements |
| FTA | Free Trade Agreement |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HRA | Human Rights Agreement |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| PTA | Preferential Trade Agreement |
| PTS | Political Terror Scale |
| UN | United Nations |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

## List of Statistical Abbreviations and Notations

| | |
|---|---|
| *DW* | Durbin-Watson statistic |
| FE | fixed effects |
| *H* | hypothesis |
| $H_0$ | null hypothesis |
| $H_a$ | alternative hypothesis |
| *M* | mean |
| *Mdn* | median |
| *Min* | minimum |
| *Max* | maximum |
| *n* | sample size |
| OLS | ordinary least squares |
| *p* | probability |
| *r* | Pearson's correlation |
| $R^2$ | R-squared test value, or coefficient of determination |
| RE | random effects |
| *SD* | standard deviation |
| *SE* | standard error |
| *t* | T-test value |
| VIF | variance inflation factor |
| $\chi^2$ | Chi-square test value |

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Problem Definition

The proliferation of international cooperation through trade and partnership agreements has enabled the European Union (EU) to press for increasingly thorough changes in partner countries' domestic areas. The EU's bilateral and multilateral relationships with other countries have exploded in number and variety since the 1990s, which illustrates its growing role as a global actor (Dür & Zimmermann, 2007). Because trade partners have a lot to gain from the EU's exports and the single market, they are likely to accept conditions that the EU imposes on trade agreements. This often brings the EU into a leverage position from which it can introduce non-trade issues such as environmental and human rights standards that trade partners are likely to comply with (Sandbu, 2019). However, research has found that discussing non-trade issues is often downplayed when they clash with commercial gains (Leeg, 2014; Sicurelli, 2015). This offers reasons to question how well trade agreements can actually ensure compliance with non-trade standards such as human rights.

Discussing non-trade issues has for a long time gone hand in hand with the EU's commitment to multilateralism. The EU traditionally supports multilateral cooperation through platforms such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In these settings the EU can discuss human rights, environmental and labour standards under the auspices of improving free trade and mutual cooperation (Sandbu, 2019; Farrell, 2020). However, whereas the EU has been a leading global actor in these multilateral settings, it must now navigate through an increasingly complex international system where new types of relations between states are challenging the traditional multilateral order. As the institutions on which the EU traditionally relies are changing, the EU faces the challenge of revising its strategies that relied on those institutions as well.

Exploring the intentions behind the EU's global strategy, one can see that achieving non-trade reforms through trade has been publicized more and more explicitly in the policy statements of the EU. Sustainable development achieved a prominent position on the foreign agenda. Leeg (2014, p. 338) traces this back to the early days, when the Treaty of Rome already declared the objectives of trade policy as both to "ensure the sustainable development of the Earth and contribute to free and fair trade." As this global strategy developed over time, however, an inconsistency emerged between the EU's commitment to contribute to global sustainable development and the lack of actual impact resulting from the policies and agreements meant to do so.

### 1.1.1 The EU Global Strategy

Inspired by the broad objectives set out in the treaties, talk of sustainable development has been increasingly published in the EU's strategic plans, such as the 2001 introduction of *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development*. This strategy was one of the first announcements of the EU's renewed commitment to sustainable development,

which it defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (European Commission, 2001, p. 2). The EU started to focus more on external representation to effectively address issues such as resource scarcity and global health in bilateral relations and multilateral institutions. The operative intention was to open up global markets and trade relations that can facilitate such cooperation, as is specified in *Working together for growth and jobs: A new start for the Lisbon Strategy*. This means to reduce trade barriers and converge on regulations to lower the costs of international trade efforts (European Commission, 2005).

The idea of placing trade at the service of sustainable development continued to gain traction. A communication about economic growth in 2006 explicitly announced the intention to contribute to "economic prosperity, social justice and sustainable development in the world" (European Commission, 2006, p. 2). Trade liberalization was to be met by stronger engagement with emerging regions and their barriers to trade (Leeg, 2014). The importance of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to open markets is emphasized strongly in this communication, based on their capacity to address issues that are difficult to treat multilaterally, such as competition and labour standards (European Commission, 2006). The impact of trade on sustainable development became a standard aspect in impact assessments of trade agreements as well as a driving factor in trade negotiations.

The revision of the treaties in 2009 further solidified references to sustainable development and human rights into the EU's strategy. The promise that "the Union's actions on the international scenes shall be guided by the principles which inspired its own creation" seem to signal an altruistic global character (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 23; Leeg, 2014). With a similar sound, the 2016 *Global Strategy* for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy aimed to strengthen the resilience of partners under the auspices that "my neighbour's and my partner's weaknesses are my own weaknesses" (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 4). These intentions show that EU continues to promote democracy, human rights and respect for international law in the rules-based multilateral system as well as in new formats of cooperation with new partners.

### 1.1.2 From Multilateralism to Bilateralism

Most commonly, multilateral institutions such as the WTO provide the channels through which the EU pursues its trade (and non-trade) interests, but such multilateral platforms for cooperation have been criticized for lacking the restraining power to enforce states' compliance (Simmons, 1998). Accordingly, states retain too much discretion to interpret and apply the rules they formally agreed upon and overarching authorities in turn lack the means of enforcement to raise the costs of non-compliance. For this reason, multilateral institutions can be viewed to merely serve a role of bringing states together where they otherwise would not cooperate, but in fact lacking the ability and the legitimacy to secure compliance (Genschel & Zangl, 2014).

Besides this scholarly critique, recent developments in international politics also emanate signals of the declining trust in multilateral approaches to cooperation. Recently in the area of public

health, for example, U.S. President Trump has withdrawn his administration's funding to the World Health Organisation while criticizing the organisation's alleged mismanagement of the Covid-19 outbreak (Ollstein, 2020). Having lost his trust in the organization's capacities, Trump claims to feel forced to look for alternative ways of cooperation with other nations on public health issues. Additionally, in the area of security, the EU has moved towards more unilateral and within-Europe solutions to coordinate its Member States' expenses, equipment and troops regardless of international arrangements in NATO (Barigazzi, 2016). Another sign of multilateralism's decline, in the area of trade, is the ongoing crisis within the Appellate Body of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism. After the recent exit of two Appellate Body Members, countries can't seem to converge on new appointments to the panel, which disables it to rule over trade disputes leaving a stalemate in this traditionally vital organ in the multilateral trade regime (Pauwelyn, 2019).

Clashing interests within settings such as the WTO challenge the traditional liberal institutions that rely on Western commitments to free trade, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. For this reason, bilateral Free and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) between the EU and third parties or groups of countries have become more common in the EU's trade strategy (Leeg, 2014). In bilateral relations the EU has more discretion to shape the terms of agreements and it can tailor the non-trade conditions in PTAs specifically to its trade partners (Woolcock, 2014). As persuasion or socialization processes are often not effective enough to change state behaviour, making the benefits of trade gains conditional on state practices can generate compliance to common standards in areas such as the environment and human rights (Hafner-Burton, 2005).

It is not a new policy measure for the EU to make trade relations conditional on standards pertaining to democratic development and human rights performance. Bartels (2015) traces the use of bilateral trade agreements to raise non-trade standards back to conditionality in the earlier accession agreements. Spain, for instance, was initially denied access to the European Economic Community in 1962 because it did not meet democratic standards (Bartels, 2015). Only later, this condition was extended to non-Member States. The 1990 Cooperation Agreement with Argentina, for instance, included an operative human rights clause and this was followed by the formal announcement of the Council to adopt human rights clauses in all cooperation and trade agreements from then onwards.

### 1.1.3 The Essential Human Rights Clause

The commitment to improve global human rights conditions has been an integral part of the EU's sustainable development approach to bilateral trade since at least 1995 (Miller, 2004; Leeg 2014; Bartels, 2015). Given its favourable bargaining position, the Union ensures that its trade and partnership agreements include a so-called essential human rights clause. To illustrate the essential human rights elements of the EU's trade agreements, Bartels (2015) looks at the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America. In the very first article on Principles, the centrality of human rights in the EU's global strategy is reflected as follows:

> "respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and for the rule of law, underpins the internal and international policies of both Parties and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement." (EU-Central America Association Agreement, 2012, p. 6)

The clause is meant to ensure that "the Parties shall cooperate to achieve full compliance with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are universal, indivisible, inter-related and inter-dependant, as well as building and strengthening of democracy" (EU-Central America Association Agreement, 2012, p. 13). At first glance, the effect of the essential human rights clause is that the benefits from trade and cooperation are allowed to be suspended if sufficiently severe human rights violations occur (Miller, 2004). This allows the EU to observe and discuss the domestic policies of partner countries. Not only do foreign firms start adhering to the conditions of trade such as human rights standards when selling within the EU's internal market, but also in their own national markets when governments enforce those conditions domestically in order to decrease future adjustment costs and increase opportunities for expanding cooperation (Farrell, 2020).

However, there is much doubt about whether states' practices are actually affected under the human rights clause. For obligations from agreements to be effective, they need to produce detectable improvements in state practices that should be visible to the international community (Creamer & Simmons, 2019). Adherence to international commitments should for instance be reflected in domestic policies or civil society mobilization. The problem is that it is difficult to know whether pressure from the international community amounts to any change in state practices. One reason for this, known as policy substitutability, is that government's coercive practices often happen on the ground without much international attention, which can offset more favourable policy changes they announce in public (Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999). Additionally, countries that do openly sign conditional agreements and raise their domestic standards are often the states that can afford to do so because they had high standards in the first place (Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013).

It is in this context that the essential human rights clause has been criticized for being merely an expressive or rhetorical tool to satisfy sustainable development demands originating from civil society (Leeg, 2014). The clause promotes the importance of human rights, but how well does it enforce compliance with them? If the clause is an effective tool to drive compliance, it should have a detectable relation to actual human rights performance. The criticized effectiveness of non-trade discussions gives reason to question the EU's strategy to improve human rights conditions through trade agreements.

### 1.2 Aims & Research Questions

Scholars have not yet reached consensus on the effectiveness of trade agreements to manage non-trade issues through conditionality, and the merits of the human rights clause remain uncertain. This thesis aims to contribute to existing knowledge by evaluating whether trade partners of the EU display a

relationship between their commitment to the trade agreement and their human rights performance. In light of the perceived gap between EU sustainable development intentions and the effectiveness of trade agreements to ensure compliance with non-trade standards, it becomes relevant and even necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the human rights clause in EU trade agreements. For that purpose, the main research question of this study is:

> What is the effect of ratifying a trade agreement including the human rights clause with the EU on a country's human rights performance?

This question rests essentially on an empirical basis and requires observational methods be evaluated. In support of that attempt, the following sub-questions aim to apply the results of previous empirical assessments of human rights performance to this more specific EU-focused context:

1) What models have been used in previously conducted measurements of human rights performance of states?
2) To what extent are the differences in human rights performance of states attributable to the effect of the EU human rights clause?

### 1.3 Research Design

The main research question is an explanatory outcome-oriented question that aims to evaluate the effect of EU trade agreements on human rights performances. For that purpose, a non-experimental or observational research design is selected to study the relationship between the main independent variable EU trade agreement ratification and the dependent variable human rights performance. The latter is indicated by personal integrity rights (PIRs), a set of human rights including freedoms from unlawful imprisonment, torture, and the right to a fair trial, which is commonly used in empirical research and legal documents as an indicator for human rights performance (Henderson, 1991; Neumayer, 2005). The data on which countries have ratified a type of trade agreement with the EU stems from the Design of Trade Agreements Dataset (Dür, Baccani & Elsig, 2014) and countries' performance on personal integrity rights is measured through the Cingranelli-Richards scale, as an indicator of human rights (Cingranelli & Richards, 2010).

This study examines 126 United Nations (UN) Member States over a 15-year period from 1997 to 2011, with the country-year as the unit of analysis. The time frame coincides with the emergence of the essential human rights clause as a standard feature of EU trade agreements, and the period is limited to the availability of data for every country-year on every included variable. The method of estimation involves a multivariate regression analysis in a panel format that combines time-series analysis with cross-sectional comparison between countries (Northrop & Arsneault, 2008). The model used for this estimation follows from researching previous human rights analyses, the intention of the first sub-question, which will also reveal relevant control variables to be included to account for

as much of the variation as possible. This method allows to analyse the second sub-question by estimating how much of the variation in human rights performance is attributable to the main independent variable of EU trade agreement ratification.

## 1.4 Relevance

### 1.4.1 Societal Relevance

Previous research has by and large pointed to the pressing nature of human rights governance. Hill (2010), for instance, argues that it is vitally important to empirically test the state-level characteristics that we suspect to influence a government's propensity to repress the population, because exposing them can explain non-compliance to UN human rights treaties. Similarly, Henderson (1991) argues that since international institutions like the UN and Amnesty International have focused on tackling personal integrity violations, studying the factors through which those violations operate can offer ground for future policy interventions.

The findings of the current study may also offer support for possible governance reforms that can change or reaffirm the EU's approach to the human rights clause. If we find a positive effect of trade agreement ratification on personal integrity observance, it can mean that the human rights clause can in fact induce policy reforms that raise human rights standards. Knowing that compliance leads to higher standards can motivate a closer look at improving the monitoring and enforcement mechanisms that evaluate non-compliance to trade agreements, in order to tighten the grip of treaty regulations on state practices. Alternatively, if we find no or a negative effect of the human rights clause on governments' respect for personal integrity rights, the evidence can offer reasons to rethink whether bilateral trade conditionality is a policy approach that the EU should be pursuing. If this is the case, perhaps other means hold more promise to achieve improvements on human rights performance.

### 1.4.2 Scientific Relevance

This study aims to further develop previous research by evaluating the effect of ratifying bilateral trade agreements with the EU on improvements in the human rights records of partner countries. With respect to previous research, this is a relevant angle because it combines research that has been conducted on different but related topics and with varying methods, leaving some gaps open to be explored. On the one hand, the effectiveness of the EU human rights clause has been examined mainly qualitatively through case studies of negotiations and enforcements, but less so quantitively (see for instance Sicurelli, 2015). This leaves reason to apply to the bilateral European setting some of the quantitative models introduced in previous research that focused on the effectiveness of human rights agreements in a multilateral setting. On the other hand, human rights agreements and treaties have been examined quantitatively but not so much with a focus on a European setting, which is where the current study comes in.

As briefly touched upon already, the EU seems to recognize the limits of multilateral human rights institutions because of flaws related to insufficient monitoring and enforcement abilities (Simmons, 1998). This is why there is ample reason in real life to deploy other diplomatic means to achieve human rights improvements, such as bilateral trade conditionality. Therefore, the evidence for the lacking effectiveness of human rights provisions in multilateral agreements may not be representative for the specific setting in which European Free and Preferential Trade Agreements are the main operators of those provisions. This leaves reasons to research the effectiveness of the EU bilateral human rights clause and assess to what extent it differs from the already established ineffectiveness of the multilateral human rights regime.

### 1.5 Reading Guide

This thesis is divided into six chapters of which the first three lay the groundwork of the research. The Introduction has established the boundaries of the research problem and introduced the main question of interest. Chapter 2 presents an evaluative literature review on three topics: the EU as an international actor, the effectiveness of trade agreements, and the factors that influence human rights performance. The gap in the prevailing knowledge on the effectiveness of the essential human rights clause, as explained in this chapter, will demarcate the relevance of this thesis. Chapter 3 will elaborate on the main theoretical argument underlying the hypothesized positive relationship between the independent variable EU trade agreement ratification and the dependent variable human rights performance.

The subsequent chapters move into the actual quantitative analysis conducted for this research. Chapter 4 first explains the selection and operationalization of the data used in the analysis and it elaborates on the validity and reliability of the research design. It then justifies the deployed methods with reference to the Appendices and ends by specifying the model that is to be tested. Chapter 5 presents the results of the regression analysis and their interpretations. The concluding chapter discusses the significance of the results with respect to the research questions and the theoretical expectations, and it presents openings for future research given the limitations of this study.

# Chapter 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The point of departure for the analysis is to review the main findings and models of existing studies on the effects of international trade agreements on domestic policies. This involves reviewing what factors have been found to significantly mediate change in human rights performance from studies that assessed the effectiveness of multilateral human rights arrangements, the findings of which will help answer the first sub-question. Additionally, as the intention here is to apply the models of human rights analyses to the EU setting, the first part sets out some key concepts that explain how the EU operates as an international actor.

What follows is an evaluative review of the prevailing knowledge about a possible relation between trade agreements and human rights performance. The review combines the theoretical insights on the EU's potentially normative influence in international trade on the one hand, with the capacity of quantitative models to delineate through which factors this normative influence operates on the other. This is the basis for pointing out the opportunity to apply quantitative explanations of human rights performance in general to the more specific setting of EU trade.

## 2.2 The EU as an International Actor

Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe? This question posed by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger back in the 70s has now been solved according to the Foreign Ministers of Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden (Bonino, Sikorski, García-Margallo & Bildt, 2013). Institutional developments such as the emergence of the European External Action Service and the global strategies have solidified the position of the EU as a global actor, offering one face that represents all Member States. In time, after putting arrangements in place to make actionable foreign policy, the Union could start to act on the broader competencies related to sustainable development as envisaged in the Lisbon treaty.

What explains the emergence of the EU as a unified external actor is how it successfully managed to delegate the authority of external representation away from the Member States to the Commission (Dür & Zimmermann, 2007). The authority to initiate and conduct trade negotiations now lies with the Directorate-General Trade and the Trade Commissioner. Notwithstanding some difficulty in coming to common internal consensus, it is convenient to represent the interests of all Member States in one seat at the negotiation table. It has allowed the EU not only to maintain ties with former colonies through special agreements, but also to expand a network of PTAs with the European neighbourhood to stabilize the area as well as to exert regulatory influence in trade negotiations (Dür & Zimmermann, 2007).

Such expanding influences are the result of what Meunier and Nicolaïdis (2005) call the EU's power through trade. This concept explains how the EU uses its leverage of market access as a bargaining chip to introduce normative conditions pertaining to issues such as human rights and

environmental degradation in trade negotiations (Meunier & Nicolaïdis, 2005). By adopting simultaneous strategies of promoting liberalization on the multilateral front and promoting reciprocity on the bilateral front, trade has become a tool that expands European regulatory preferences as some form of model for good governance. Compliance with European norms is therefore a result of the leverage position and institutional capacity of the EU in trade negotiations.

Throughout the institutional development of the EU, the European Parliament has received the power to review, issue opinions and approve or reject trade agreements ever since the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 marked sustainable development as a trade priority (Leeg, 2014). Given this new authority, the Parliament announced that it would not be prepared to give consent to agreements that do not include the essential human rights and democracy clause (Leeg, 2014). Therefore, besides the Commission acting centre stage in trade negotiations and securing commercial interests, the Parliament and civil society voices can now bring issues to the table pertaining to fundamental human rights. Many scholars have attempted to build a conceptual framework to understand the trade-related and non-trade consequences of EU external actions. The two concepts of Managed Globalization and Normative Power Europe have useful theoretical implications that should be unpacked briefly.

### 2.2.1 The EU & Managing Globalization

The concept of Managed Globalization ties together the efforts of international actors to institutionalise states' commitment to liberalization and to make globalization more acceptable to citizens (Jacoby & Meunier, 2010). The actors interested in trade liberalization are driven by the incentive to ensure that other market players and governments adhere to the formal practices required to free up trade flows. The envisaged goal is to expand international policy regimes and make more actors commit to them, in order to enhance the legitimacy of globalization (Abdelal & Meunier, 2010). The theory typically contrasts Managed Globalization to ad hoc globalization, which is approaching trade liberalization purely in service of one's own interests, ignoring the commitment to rules and processes of market integration through overarching international institutions (Abdelal & Meunier, 2010; Jacoby & Meunier, 2010). Ad hoc globalization prioritizes bilateral and unilateral trade relations over multilateral arrangements.

Pascal Lamy, the EU's Director-General for Trade in the early 2000s, used the Managed Globalization concept to pinpoint sustainable development and social justice objectives the EU would pursue through multilateralism, but soon after, the *Competing in the World* strategy announced a range of new bilateral FTAs with emerging markets (Leeg, 2014). When fitting EU external trade policy to these concepts, it follows that the EU overall strives for Managed Globalization, but that this is backed up by mixed trade policy including ad hoc measures to expand a global regulatory framework that consolidates market integration. Jacoby and Meunier (2010) identify five mechanisms in this mixed approach, signifying the EU's simultaneous commitment to multilateral and bilateral actions as mentioned earlier. It includes multilateral measures of empowering international institutions and

exercising global regulatory influence, as well as uni- and bilateral actions to expand the EU's own policy scope, to enlarge its territorial sphere of influence, and to redistribute the costs of liberalization through trade agreements.

The EU typically aims to liberalize trade by putting in place rules that lay down the terms on which countries commit to open trade relations (Adbelal & Meunier, 2010). The most common strategy for this runs through converging rules and settling disputes in the WTO. Managed Globalization, therefore, provides a slightly paradoxical explanation in that it links liberalization or the relaxation of control on trade flows, with management or the extra control on the rules that enable liberalization. The authors discussed next treat these trends of rule-making and standard-setting in a way to conceptualize the EU's influence on trade partners as a form of power.

### 2.2.2 The EU & Normative Power

The core defining feature of the EU's influence as an international actor is the ability to shape global conceptions of what is considered to be 'the normal' (Manners, 2002). The community relations between its Member States, their capacity to pool resources and their common commitment based on the EU's founding principles allow for a clear presentation of European norms as well as their effective distribution. Manners (2002) distinguishes these core norms including peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, from minor norms embedded in the EU's treaties and practices such as social solidarity, anti-discrimination and good governance.

What connects the Normative Power concept to EU external trade policy is how norms are diffused through institutional means and policy measures. According to Manners (2002), political actors exchange norms and ideas with different degrees of intentionality. Trade relations can generate procedural norm diffusion, which institutionalizes the EU's norms by way of formalizing a relationship between the EU and a partner in a cooperation or trade agreement (Manners, 2002). Common ground on norms is also solidified when a relation contains a transference of goods, aid or sanctions. These processes show how trade relations can generate deep convergence between countries over the principles that underly their relationship and this way the EU generally embeds its own principles into the provisions of international agreements.

In response to the Normative Power concept, however, some scholars have questioned whether spreading European norms of good governance through international agreements is sufficient to constitute a form of normative power. According to Sjursen (2006), a normative power strengthens the legal system by introducing new norms to other actors and also binding itself to those norms. However, as a non-state entity the EU will always face the problem of lacking legitimacy in the eyes of other states, which makes convergence of norms difficult. Sjursen (2006) does not deny that the EU imprints its values of freedom, equality and other human rights onto the legal system, but he questions whether that should be understood as normative power.

The concepts of Managed Globalization and Normative Power present evidence of the EU's interest to use trade policy for non-trade objectives, although disagreements remain over the degree of normative influence this produces. Orbie (2011) also identifies a normative intention behind the EU's trade actions. By focusing on labour standards in trade negotiations, he finds that the EU continues to achieve objectives of sustainable development by implementing trade policy in service of non-trade objectives. This can be explained by the socialization capacity of international agreements to not only communicate but also internalise normative information (Creamer & Simmons, 2019). By establishing norms of what is good and bad practice in formal provisions of trade agreements—and international treaties at large—countries start shaping commonly held understandings of good governance. When countries comply to the provisions of the agreement with an eye to reap its commercial benefits, they also acknowledge their obligations to be transparent as to how they plan to apply possible reforms. Whether those reforms actually happen is not necessarily guaranteed by ratification alone because it requires non-trade issues to be addressed in the trade partner's domestic politics and civil society. The next section recounts some findings on to what extent this has happened in the past.

### 2.3 The Effectiveness of Trade Agreements

The studies that have been conducted on the effectiveness of trade agreements in achieving non-trade objectives range from using quantitative to qualitative methods and produce evidence that affirm as well as deny the effectiveness. Besides studies of trade agreements, studies of human rights treaties also offer findings pertaining to the compliance of states to human rights standards, which are relevant to the EU setting. What follows is a brief overview of findings relevant to the European setting.

#### 2.3.1 Evidence Affirming the Effectiveness

Hafner-Burton (2005) conducted a qualitative comparison between Human Rights Agreements (HRAs) and PTAs with respect to their capacity to influence state behaviour. In light of lacking enforcement or incentive mechanisms in the human rights regime, she finds that the introduction of material or political rewards for compliance can improve the effectiveness of cooperation agreements. This means that "international institutions have the greatest influence over state compliance with human rights principles when they offer substantial gains with some kind of coercive incentives, perhaps coupled with strategies of persuasion, to change the costs and benefits of repressive actors' behaviours" (Hafner-Burton, 2005, p. 624). Based on this finding, she predicts an opportunity to link human rights clauses to terms of trade in the WTO in order to tighten the grip on state repression. This confirms the potential of PTAs to gain incremental improvements of states' human rights observance.

In a similar vein, Neumayer (2005) observes a broad set of multilateral human rights treaties and estimates their related effects on personal integrity rights and civil rights. The strength of his model is the inclusion of several control variables that prove to have relatively large explanatory power for human rights observance. This leads to the conclusion that treaty ratification by itself rarely

has an unconditional effect on human rights. This effect is often conditional on state-level characteristics including democratic regimes and NGO activity that create opportunities to pressure a government into making reforms.

Hill (2010) estimates the effect of three main UN human rights treaties on state behaviour from which he receives mixed results. On the one hand, ratification of the *Convention Against Torture* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* surprisingly impaired respect for integrity of the person, while on the other hand the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* did have a positive effect on women's rights. More importantly, the countries displaying positive changes on human rights scores tended to be the countries that already performed well on those measures, which reveals a selection bias (Hill, 2010). This finding therefore does not entirely reject the predicted capacity of HRAs to enforce human rights improvement, but it does expose a flaw in the human rights regime.

With a more explicit focus on PTAs of the EU, Woolcock (2014) finds that whether non-trade issues are translated into PTA provisions depends on what kind of trading partner sits on the other end of the agreement. As the EU increasingly deploys PTAs to conduct foreign trade, it has the discretion to tailor the content of the agreement to the partner. Woolcock (2014) finds a difference between the EU's PTAs with emerging and least-developed countries. PTAs with emerging countries tend to mutually reciprocate commercial gains, because the EU is interested in trading with their lucrative markets earlier than its competitors, whereas PTAs with least-developed partners contain regulatory conditions meant to balance the short-term, less attractive commercial benefits (Woolcock, 2014).

What becomes clear from both quantitative and qualitative findings is that the capacity of HRAs and PTAs to influence state behaviour towards improving their human rights records is dependent on a variety of other, state-level characteristics. In some cases, human right performance only undergoes marginal change or no change at all as a result of agreement provisions. The following findings continue to present evidence that refutes the predicted influence of EU trade agreements on human rights.

### 2.3.2 Evidence Questioning the Effectiveness

Similar to the selection bias found in UN human rights treaties in Hill (2010), Spilker & Böhmelt (2013) identify a selection process preceding the conclusion of PTAs. Herein, a government pre-calculates whether it will be able to abide by the human rights conditions that will rule under the agreement. For this reason, PTAs with effective human rights clauses paradoxically only work in the cases where they are needed the least, because countries with low standards and an inability or unwillingness to improve human rights performance are less likely to enter into these agreements. This would mean that PTAs don't reflect pathways for domestic change but instead reflect the state of already existing human rights conditions and power relations between states.

Sicurelli finds two additional explanations that question the effectiveness of the EU's PTAs (2015). The negotiations about the PTA with Vietnam presented an opportunity for the EU to introduce the human and social rights dialogue. However, the peculiar outcome of the negotiations was that the human rights clause ended up not mentioning any form of suspensions of trade obligations. The official reason for excluding a suspension clause, as reported by EU officials, was that the implementation of the proposed labour standards was viewed as incompatible with the Vietnamese domestic environment. According to Sicurelli (2015), however, it was because the issues pertaining to trade and those relating to human rights commitments were negotiated at different tables. This allowed the Commission to secure trade interests and downplay human rights interests as promoted by the European Parliament and collaborating NGOs.

Leeg (2014) conducted a study of FTA negotiations, in his case between the EU and India, from which he concludes that between trade interests and human rights interests, human rights are systematically neglected when they trump commercial gains. As the Commission requires the Parliament to give consent on the terms, non-ratification is an ex-post measure of control that the Parliament can use to pressure the Commission into discussing non-trade issues. In the first place this allowed the EU to take a hard-line on human rights, labour and environmental conditions, because the Commission could pressure India to make concessions for the sake of reaching a deal. But this resulted in an enduring back-and-forth between India's rejection to give in on social standards and the EP's threat to reject the agreement entirely. India maintained that the labour conditions intruded its sovereignty over domestic issues and would damage its competitive advantage vis-à-vis other emerging economies (Leeg, 2014). In the end the Commission stopped pressuring India on sustainable development chapters of the FTA, because they disturbed commercial gains. The EP followed suit to settle for an agreement that included sustainable development and human rights articles, but without binding consequences. Leeg (2014) concludes from this case that strategic and commercial interests gain systematic privilege over normative objectives in EU trade policy.

These findings counter the image of the EU as an international normative actor. This in turn rhymes with the criticism that the Normative Power conception of EU foreign policy as primarily value-driven lacks precision in explaining exactly how those presumed normative intentions come to affect trading countries. As such, the Normative Power concept runs the risk of being a political rather than an analytical concept, reflecting the very image with which the EU identifies its own foreign policy (Sjursen, 2006; Leeg, 2014). The big agenda topics of sustainable development and human rights from the strategy documents discussed in the introduction indeed contain striking similarities with the Normative Power image as pressing value-driven objectives on the agenda. But it neglects the institutional reality wherein strategic and commercial interests gain systematic privilege over non-trade objectives, especially in cases when the Commission is willing to exclude social clauses that find resistance with trading partners (Leeg, 2014).

This signals an issue that remains unresolved in the literature, namely the question of further specifying what the factors are through which the effect of EU trade agreements on domestic human rights performance operates. Additional research on this could reveal whether the human rights clause is a merely rhetorical tool or if it actually leads to policy actions that raise human rights standards. This in turn can offer evidence to understand the established gap between the EU's foreign intentions and its achievements. Previous quantitative research has already developed methods and results as to the effect of international agreements on human rights performance as well as other factors that influence human rights performance. The following discussion characterizes some common approaches and findings in quantitative human rights analyses.

### 2.4 The Factors that Influence Human Rights Performance

In studying to what extent international human rights treaties and trade agreements can ensure that states comply to transform their policies to agreed-upon standards, it is important to evaluate state-level characteristics prevailing within a country that determine the conditions favourable to human rights improvements (Hill, 2010). Important quantitative research has evaluated characteristics within the state that function as factors associated with human rights performance, in order to explain variations in compliance to international agreements across countries. Recent as well as older studies argue that human rights performance co-vary with certain socio-economic, political and cultural conditions prevailing in a country (Park, 1987; Hill, 2010). The logic underlying these studies is that changing these characteristics through government action and international policymaking can change human rights practices. A common denominator among quantitative studies of human rights performance, therefore, is a state-centric approach: analysing the effect of government actions on human rights conditions as well as analysing factors present within society that influence human rights conditions or a government's ability to alter them. This thesis will use a similar approach, as will be explained in the next chapter.

Analysing human rights performance with this state-centric approach has built on much theoretical evidence found by researchers of state repression. Human rights performance is often indicated negatively: measuring a country's respect for human rights through its violations of them. Therefore, state or political repression can indicate how well a country complies with human rights standards. Political repression can be defined as a government's use or threat of coercion against political opponents or civilians to weaken their resistance, mainly including actions amounting to disappearance, unlawful detentions, torture and political killings (Henderson, 1991; Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013). Given that policymakers in different countries decide to deploy such coercive measures to varying degrees and for various reasons, the logic behind studies of state repression is to analyse the conditions that induce governments to state repression, such as the level of democracy or economic development.

State repression conceptualized as coercive governance to diminish resistance or induce compliance is directly associated to human rights, because these actions violate the integrity of the person in the most severe ways (Poe & Tate, 1994). For this reason, personal or physical integrity rights have been used in research as a subset of human rights particularly vulnerable to state repression and it includes rights such as the freedom from torture, from political imprisonment, from unlawful physical harm as well as the right to a fair trial (Henderson, 1991; Neumayer, 2005). Violations of these rights are most often committed by government officials, which makes them relevant to investigate because this also means their violations can be solved by a change in government policy (Poe & Tate, 1994).

Poe and Tate's (1994) cross-sectional time-series model comparing countries' human rights performance has been a basis for reference of many later studies. They found that the level of democracy and regime type of countries, the size and growth of their economy, their population size and their involvement in wars are important indicators of human rights violations. Before them, Mitchell and McCormick's (1988) model also yielded explanations that would be relevant today if it weren't for the limited data available at the time. Even though they prove that personal integrity rights are accurate representations of a state's repression of human rights, they could only analyse this through indicators of political prisoners, torture and killing, which covers a smaller portion of these rights compared to more valid measures available today. As time passed, more accurate data on personal integrity rights could be gathered with a broader scope. In these later studies, the level of state repression was found to be related to the distribution of resources in a country as indicated by inequality and socioeconomic needs (Henderson, 1991), to the form of civil society activity as indicated by the number of NGOs (Neumayer, 2005) and political instability (Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013), as well as to the characteristics of the state institutions such as the independence of the judiciary (Hill, 2010). Significant factors such as these were in turn used to evaluate the differences between countries' human rights performance as a result of treaty ratification (Keith, 1999 and Hathaway, 2002 as cited in Neumayer, 2005), and this thesis will attempt a similar evaluation.

### 2.5 Conclusion

Overall, the reviewed literature has revealed previous findings on three phenomena related to the relationship between EU trade agreements and human rights performance: (1) the foreign policy intentions and capabilities of the EU to influence domestic environments of partner countries, (2) the effectiveness of international human rights and preferential trade agreements, and (3) the factors that influence human rights performance. Previous research has shown evidence affirming some ways in which the international community can deploy cooperation agreements to achieve change in domestic areas of individual countries. One of those ways is how the international human rights regime binds countries to multilateral commitments through HRAs in order to raise the global standards of human

rights performance. However, these multilateral agreements often lack the concomitant monitoring and enforcement mechanisms as well as economic or political incentives to secure compliance.

What has received stronger theoretical evidence is how bilateral trade agreements can be deployed to achieve human rights improvements in trade partners' domestic area. Trade agreements can deploy commercial gains as economic incentives to affect government behaviour, by making the benefits of PTAs conditional on compliance with human rights standards. More specifically, the dominant views on the EU's behaviour as an international actor hold that the EU has the institutional capacity as well as the intentions to pursue value-driven, non-trade objectives in its trade relations, which is embodied by the essential human rights clause. But whether the EU's trade agreements amount to any real improvements in human rights performance remains a contested question. This points to an opportunity to apply the methods of measuring human rights performance to the specific EU setting, which is the aim of this thesis. Do the quantitative predictions that were previously applied to the multilateral human rights regime offer explanations to account for any specific EU effects? This question drives the following chapter, which presents the theoretical argument underlying the main hypothesis and the predictive model chosen to test it.

# Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

This thesis aims to assess the importance of a state's commitment to the human rights clause in EU trade agreements as a predictor of its human rights performance. Explaining the theoretical understanding of the relation between EU trade agreement ratification and human rights performance should help determine expectations about the nature of their relation and how it could be influenced by other explanatory factors (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The literature discussed in the previous chapter draws on concepts of compliance and conditionality to come to an institutionalist understanding of how trade and human rights commitments between states emerge and how they are implemented. This chapter will explain how this main theoretical argument informs a compliance approach to predicting the effect of EU trade agreements on partner states' human rights performance.

## 3.1 EU Trade & Human Rights Performance: A Compliance Approach

The main theoretical argument underlying this research is that as the EU usually finds itself in a position of dominant commercial leverage vis-à-vis its trade partner, it is able to introduce conditions on trade gains that depend on compliance with human right standards. Bilateral trade agreements, in particular, offer a potential instrument to withhold benefits or impose sanctions when a trade partner violates the human rights standards specified in the agreement with reference to multilateral treaties (Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013). It is therefore expected that the EU's favourable position in trade relations allow it to push the non-trade issue of human rights practices on the otherwise exclusively trade-centred agenda of negotiations. Particularly in the bilateral setting, the extent to which the involved parties fulfil their commitments is monitored by review committees consisting of their own representatives. This supports the expectation that the EU can exert a real influence on trade partners' domestic policies of human rights practices.

The strength of this theoretical argument especially comes forward when placed in comparison to the observed weaknesses of the multilateral human rights regime to enforce compliance. As human rights regimes lack competitive incentives to drive compliance as well as monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, their effectiveness depends quite heavily on the likelihood of leading states to take an interest in improving compliance with the standards (Neumayer, 2005). However, although powerful states can take on a leading role in pressing compliance in the multilateral setting and have done so in the past, this depends on their arbitrary incentives to do so. On the one hand, it is unlikely for a powerful state to spend resources on solving the issue of non-complying states, because this does not immediately affect its own citizens. On the other hand, the participation of weaker states with low human rights standards does not by itself ensure their substantive compliance to new standards, because the cost of their participation is very low given the regime's lack of means to flag or punish non-compliance (Neumayer, 2005). It follows that ratification in the multilateral setting merely has an expressive role: ratification communicates to the world that a government is willing to commit to

improving its human rights performance, without a guaranteed follow-up in terms of policy actions. This can easily deflect the pressure for real change from international actors or a domestic constituency. Rather, ratification of multilateral treaties mainly serves the advantage of setting long-term, ambitious goals for countries to aspire to, rather than tackling deliberate non-compliance.

In the bilateral setting of EU trade, on the contrary, whether the leading state is interested in the human rights of other states is a different case. What sets the EU apart from other international actors are its motivations to improve human rights practices around its own borders and in other countries. This has been shown in the findings on the EU's intentions as an international actor, both in its values of liberal democracy and human rights as well as its institutional structure that enables it to introduce human rights issues to trade negotiations. Some of the case studies discussed in the previous chapter confirm these intentions, such as the EU's deliberate involvement in labour and human rights law in the PTA negotiations with Vietnam as observed by Sicurelli (2015). Additionally, if states are generally not interested in the compliance of other states because its own citizens are distanced from such issues, it can also be argued that the EU, being responsible for a large group of different populations, very much cares about how EU citizens are treated across the world.

Furthermore, the relation between EU trade agreement ratification and countries' human rights performance leans on theoretical roots that can be traced back to some of the tenets within institutionalist theory of International Relations. Broadly speaking, international institutions, be it multilateral groups or bilateral arrangements, serve as instruments to facilitate cooperation between states who could always have preferences that incentivize them to deviate from cooperation. Institutionalist theories examine the conditions in which preferences can converge and cooperation can be locked-in so that partner countries can reap mutual benefits (Moravcsik, 1997; Neumayer, 2005). To that end, international institutions can heighten a sense of obligation to abide by shared rules and, upon receiving the legitimacy from constituting parties, they can deploy authoritative procedures to spot the gaps between the formal commitments and real actions of governments (Simmons, 1998). This theoretical aim rhymes well with the intention of the current research to observe whether there is a gap between the EU's rhetoric of upholding high global standards in the human rights arena on the one hand, and on the other hand the actual effectiveness of the essential human rights clause to raise those standards.

### 3.2 EU Trade & Human Rights Performance: A Quantitative Approach

Across studies on compliance with trade agreements and factors of human rights performance, aims of analysis tend to vary and with it their methodological approaches, and it is useful to situate the current research in this regard. Some researchers focus on the ex-ante formation of the agreement to analyse its effectiveness, such as the case studies of trade negotiations that look at the issues motivating the negotiations, the involved actors and their preferences. The case studies and power analyses seem to converge on the normative power implications of the EU's behavior as an international actor, such as

studies that demonstrate how the role of the EU Parliament changed into a contributor to trade negotiations interested in the social issues of trade besides the Commission (Leeg, 2014; Sicurelli, 2015). However, these discussions that often revolve around the EU's economic leverage, sometimes fail to specify further which parts of civil society or which parts of EU foreign policy influence human rights performance and whether that be positive or negative influences.

Other researchers focus on the ex-post conditions underlying treaty effectiveness, comparing the characteristics of countries with varying records of compliance, such as the type of governments involved, the presence of international organizations to monitor, or bottom-up efforts in civil society to mobilize domestic change. Especially quantitative models that include multiple factors to explain variation in human rights performance—as will be discussed in the next chapter—have the capacity to compare the degree of dependence of human rights on different circumstantial characteristics. Neumayer (2005), for instance, concludes that the effect of agreement ratification on potential human rights improvements are often conditional on other factors, such as the presence of NGOs to pressure the government to make policy changes. That is where the strength of quantitative analysis of human rights and trade conditionality lies: these models have shown to be capable of splitting up the effect into different factors and testing these factors for their individual importance. This quantitative approach is useful for the current analysis in order to compare a possible effect of the human rights clause to other factors that influence human rights.

### 3.3 Main Hypothesis & Conceptual Model

Review of the theory shows there is reason to expect human rights performance to be affected by a variety of factors. As pertaining to the first sub-question on previous methods used to explain human rights performance, the comparisons show that quantitative methods using multivariate predictive models can be favourable to the aim of testing the effect of EU trade agreement ratification on a country's human rights record. This study seeks to contribute to the literature by bridging the knowledge on the EU's foreign influence in the world to knowledge of general human rights conditions, by testing whether the leverage the EU is expected to have in trade and human rights issues is also reflected in the data. Taking account of the selected control variables and their expected effects on human rights performance, this study tests the following main hypothesis:

> H: If a country has ratified a bilateral trade agreement with the EU, it will demonstrate improved human rights performance.

In order to test this relationship between the main independent and dependent variable, this study will include a selection of control variables that are expected to predict human rights performance, as will be justified in the next chapter. Together the expected relationships to be tested can be expressed by the following model:

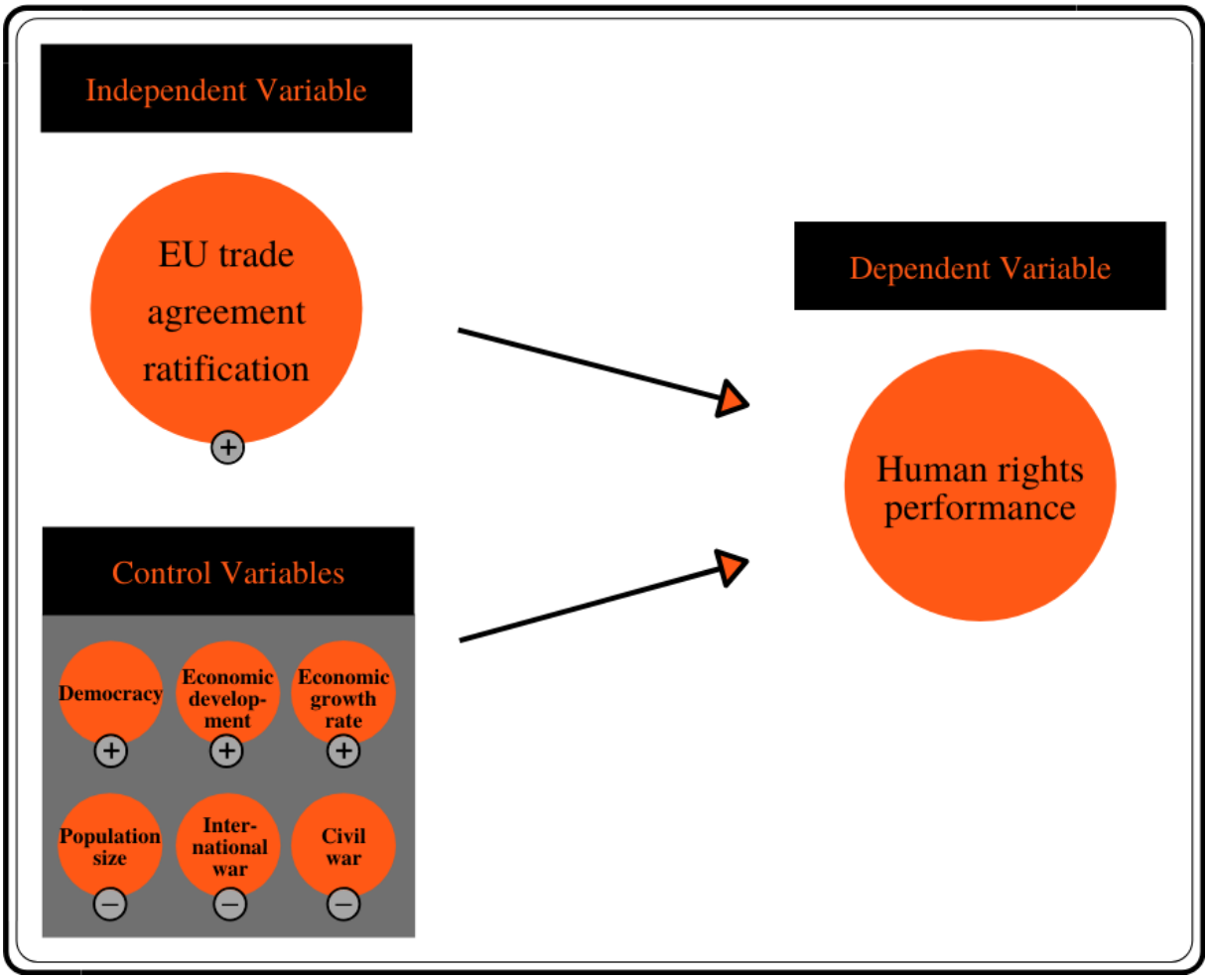


**FIGURE 1.** ***Conceptual Model***

Having established this framework in basic terms, the next chapter will specify the research design chosen to translate the selected variables into measurable components.

# Chapter 4. Research Design & Methods

This chapter explains the characteristics of the research design underlying this thesis and the procedures required for the analysis. The first part presents the data selected to measure the variables of interest and the second part formulates the predictive model used to test the relation between EU trade agreement ratification and human rights performance.

## 4.1 Data & Operationalization

### 4.1.1 Research Design

This study uses a non-experimental or observational design, including quantitative methods with a large-N. Observational research designs make comparisons between units existing in the world, without having the power to manipulate the values of the variables (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). With the aim to accurately represent the phenomena of interest in a model, this study scans the available data on how countries behave in terms of the selected variables in order to observe whether there are relations between the variables. The choice was made to use quantitative data to measure how countries behave in terms of human rights performance and trade agreement ratification. The advantage of quantitative data comes from the explicit definitions of observations, with specified meanings of different values, which allow the researcher to aggregate and compare observations to spot trends over time or differences between subjects (Babbie, 2013).

Most often, observational designs use either cross-sectional or time-series comparisons, but this current study goes beyond this distinction. A cross-sectional study compares individual subjects within a cross section of social reality on a certain dependent variable and aims to describe or explain the variation existing between different units (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). In contrast, a time-series comparison observes one unit and seeks to describe or explain the observed variation over time. The current study combines these two types of comparisons in the form of panel data observation. This involves comparing a set of units within a population that is measured at multiple moments in time (Northrop & Arsneault, 2008). This serves the dual purpose of analysing trends over time as well as comparing patterns of change or persistence between individual units over time (Babbie, 2013). In other words, a panel design can reveal how the development over time differs between subjects originating from a heterogenous population. Applied to the research problem at hand, this involves comparing how countries score on human rights performance throughout the years. The unit of analysis is therefore the country-year.

### 4.1.2 Population & Time Frame

In order to estimate a possible effect of EU trade agreement ratification on countries' human rights performance, countries that are part of such an agreement need to be compared with countries who are

not. Therefore, the population under study consists of all the countries in the world. The sample used to perform the analysis consists of 126 UN Member States, which is the maximum amount of countries for which available data existed on all the variables measured in the analysis. In a panel setup the unit of analysis is the country-year, so the sample observed in this study consists of the UN Member States observed over the years from 1997 up to and including 2011.

As to the time frame, the analysis aims to include all the EU's trade agreements signed after it became standard procedure to include the essential human rights clause, but there is no clear cut-off point to mark the start of this period. Bartels (2015), for instance, finds the first operative human rights clause in the 1990 EU-Argentina agreement, whereas Miller (2004) notes down the year 1995. Adoption of the clause can therefore be understood as a gradual development. Moreover, there are important practical limitations pertaining to data collection to determining the time frame. This analysis uses data gathered from separate sources across the variables and not all organizations collect data consistently over the same sample or the same period. Generally, the farther back in time, the more countries have missing data. The starting year of 1997 was chosen because going back earlier would decrease the sample size, and the end year 2011 is determined by the time frame of the CIRI scale, which measures the dependent variable of interest, personal integrity rights.

### 4.1.3 Dependent Variable: Personal Integrity Rights

Similar to some of the reviewed quantitative studies on human rights performance, countries' performance in this research is indicated by how it treats personal or physical integrity rights (PIRs). This subset of human rights includes the freedoms from torture, extrajudicial killing, disappearance and imprisonment for political beliefs (Cingranelli & Richards, 2010). The strength of the personal integrity rights variable as an indicator for human rights is twofold. For one, they are evidently linked with excessively coercive and abusive behaviour of government officials, so it is likely that after demonstrating their violation, state action can improve how officials operate on the ground. Additionally, the category of PIRs serves an analytical purpose of separating the concept of human rights from other, related phenomena that may also be associated with human development, for instance how well people have access to institutions such as education or voting, or to what extent people live in poverty or famine (Poe & Tate, 1994).

In order to measure PIRs, the analysis includes data from the *Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project*. CIRI ranks countries' violations of PIRs per year until as recent as 2011, which defines the end of the time frame of this analysis. The CIRI personal integrity indicator uses a 9-point additive scale that ranks countries with the most severe violations at 0 and countries with the best record at 8 (Cingranelli & Richards, 2014). In other words, these scores negatively reflect human rights by the number and severity of their violations. A higher score means less violations and therefore better human rights performance. This directionality should be considered when interpreting the results of the analysis. What follows are explanations of the expected effects of the predictor

variables on the outcome variable personal integrity rights. The interpretative logic of the directionality in the hypothesis should be understood as illustrated in Figure 2.

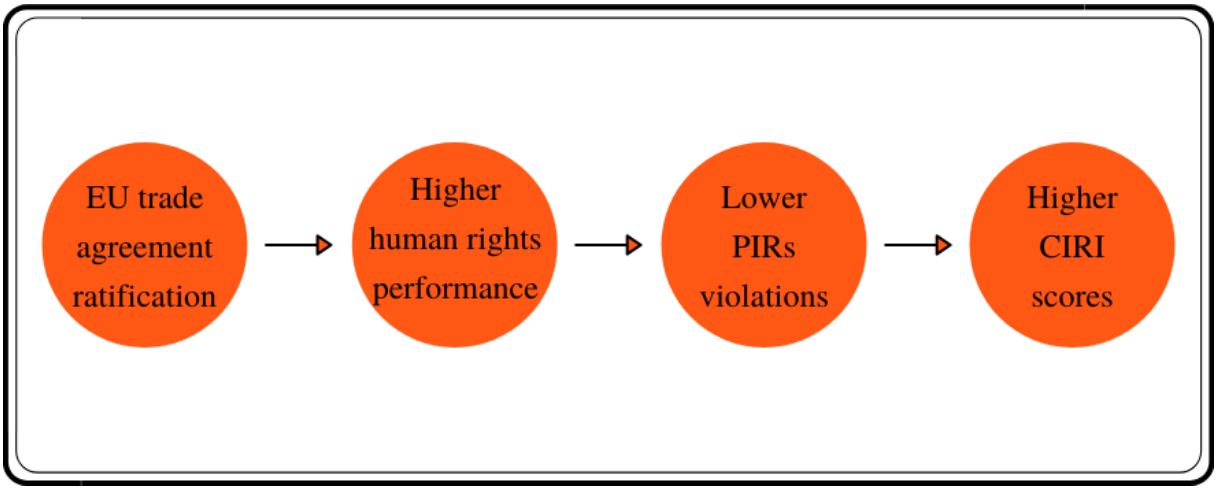


**FIGURE 2.** ***Directionality in the Hypothesized Relation***

### 4.1.4 Independent Variable: EU Trade Agreement Ratification

The main independent variable of interest within this study is whether or not a country is party to a trade agreement with the EU, which will be referred to as EU trade agreement ratification. The EU has different types of preferential trade agreements with different partner countries. Hix and Høyland (2011) categorize them by the degree of liberalization or access to the European internal market they provide. This ranges from full access to the market as given by the European Economic Area all the way to smaller benefits specific to bilateral trade agreements. All of these different agreements include the essential human rights clause and a suspension clause that could activate a withdrawal of trade benefits when standards are violated (Miller, 2004). Therefore, the membership and status of trade agreements should be identified in order to test the expected effect that a country which has ratified an EU trade agreement shows improved human rights performance as a result.

In order to analyse membership to EU trade agreements over time and across countries, this thesis uses data from *The Design of Trade Agreements* (DESTA) dataset (Dür, Baccani & Elsig, 2014). The DESTA list of trade agreements reports which countries were part of a ratified agreement in what years. From this, the EU trade agreement ratification variable is quantified into a non-interval, nominal variable. At this level of measurement, the values express a category to which the observations are assigned, but there is no meaningful order between different assignments (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The value of 1 denotes a country is party to a ratified EU trade agreement for a given year and 0 denotes it is not. Therefore, the associated regression coefficient resulting from the analysis should be interpreted as the average change in the CIRI score for PIRs as a result of having ratified an EU trade agreement rather than not. Given the hypothesized positive effect of EU treaty ratification on PIRs scores, the regression coefficient is expected to be positive.

### 4.1.5 Control Variables

The current analysis will include several variables to account for additional factors that are expected to influence human rights performance besides EU trade agreement ratification. Controlling the values of the outcome variable will improve the predictive capacity of the model. It means to rule out the possibility that if the results indicate that countries who ratified an EU trade agreement are significantly more likely to score higher on human rights performance, this influence is not due to some other phenomena present in reality that were not included in the model (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013).

The two main aims of the regression model used for the analysis are to explain the variation in human rights performance and to evaluate the strength of the explanatory variables. How well the model predicts human rights performance would improve when considering more and stronger predictors (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The included control variables, therefore, were selected based on whether they have had a statistically significant and substantially important effect in previous studies. Appendix A displays the range of considered predictors, their respective evidence found in the reviewed literature, and the following decision to include or exclude them. This leads to the following selection: democracy, economic development level as measured by GDP per capita, economic growth rate, population size, participation in international war, presence of civil war (see Table A1, Appendix A). What follows are brief explanations of the expected relation of each control variable to the main phenomenon of human rights performance as well as discussions of their operationalization, a summary of which is displayed in Table 1.

#### A) Democracy

The first control variable included in the model is the degree of democratic development assigned to a given country-year. It is expected that the more democratic a government is, the less likely it will be to resort to political repression as a means to maintain order (Henderson, 1991; Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999; Neumayer, 2005; Hill, 2010; Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013). This rests on the expectation that democratic states likely provide means for peaceful conflict resolution and political representation for the population to bring forward interests and demands, making public dissent unnecessary.

In order to indicate the degree of democratic development, this thesis uses the data from the *PolityIV Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions* (Marshall, Gurr & Jaggers, 2016). PolityIV creates a score from the characteristics of dominant regimes such as the independence of the executive and channels for political opposition, and this is relevant because PIRs violations are directly linked to the operations of the main authoritative regime of a country. The outcome is a 20-point scale ranging from -10 (strongly autocratic) to 10 (strongly democratic), to indicate a degree of democracy. Democracy is thus operationalized as a non-interval, ordinal variable, which is a measurement level that expresses scores in terms of rank values between which the order is clear and meaningful (Graddy & Wang, 2008). Given the hypothesized relation that more democratic states will demonstrate less

PIRs violations and a higher CIRI score, the regression coefficient associated with democracy is expected to be positive.

**B) Economic Development (GDP per Capita)**

Next, countries in which the government is less often obliged or willing to use coercive actions as policy measures typically perform better with regards to economic development. Indicated by a country's level of GDP per capita, this offers the second control variable that is expected to predict a portion of the variability in human rights performance. The underlying logic is that scarcity over goods and income can lead to violent dissent and this can make governments more prone to intervene through repressive means (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988; Henderson, 1991; Poe & Tate, 1994; Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999; Neumayer, 2005; Hill, 2010; Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013).

Economic development is quantified by the data of countries' GDP per capita (in current US$) from the *World Bank Development Indicators*, and the variable will be referred to as GDP per capita in the analysis that follows. Higher GDP per capita indicates higher economic development. Therefore, to test the hypothesized relation in which higher economic development is associated with lower levels of PIRs violations and higher CIRI scores, the resulting coefficient is expected to be positive. As will we shown later, the GDP per capita variable will be used in its log-transformed version in the regression analysis due to the results from the assumptions tests.

**C) Economic Growth Rate**

Besides economic development, a country's economic growth rate is also expected to be associated to its human rights performance. Even though the associations between growth and human rights has a similar effect compared to the relation with economic development, their logic is slightly different. In principle two likely conceptions of this association seem theoretically sound. On the one hand, economic growth could induce a government to resort to repression as a means to counter mobilization from the less fortuned parts of the population, if the benefits from growth are disproportionately distributed (Henderson, 1991; Poe & Tate, 1994). On the other hand, rapid growth can expand the resource base in a country and increase the size of the pie so that people's needs are satisfied more easily. This in turn reduces the stress on resources that would otherwise induce state terror as a means of quenching resistance and this has received significant support compared to the other proposed association (Henderson, 1991; Poe & Tate, 1994; Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999).

Based on this relation, the model includes a control variable for growth in the form of annual percentage growth of GDP per capita that uses data from the *World Bank Development Indicators*. In line with the hypothesized relationship, the coefficient denoting the relationship between economic growth rate and human rights performance is expected to be positive, as high growth rates should generate less PIRs violations.

**D) Population Size**

Following a similar argument, the size of a country's population has proven to be related to stress on economic resources and by extension to the presence of government repression and violations of personal integrity rights. Heightened competition over domestic resources and the increased probability of overly crowded places in situations of public dissent are expected to necessitate repressive interventions to subdue the unrest (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988; Poe & Tate, 1994; Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999; Neumayer, 2005; Hill, 2010; Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013). For these reasons, countries with higher population sizes than others are expected to demonstrate more PIRs violations and therefore lower CIRI scores. The data used to indicate population size was taken from the *World Bank Development Indicators*. Due to the results from the assumptions tests for the regression analysis, a log-transformed version of the population size variable will be used in the analysis.

**E) International War**

If a country is involved in an ongoing violent conflict, it is expected to suffer more violence within its own borders too and therefore worsen its human rights record (Neumayer, 2005; Hill, 2010). Especially in an international war that involves armed forces from at least two opposing parties affiliated to a state, the actions of state leaders are likely to be more violent (Poe & Tate, 1994). This suggests a positive association between involvement in an international war and domestic levels of state repression, which likely leads to worse human rights performance. Involvement in international war in a given country-year is therefore expected to be linked with lower CIRI scores. The data used to test this relation originates from the same dataset as used for the last control variable, presence of a civil war.

**F) Civil War**

The expected effect of involvement in a civil war is in many ways similar to the explanation associated with international conflict, but it refers to different situations and should therefore be qualified separately. Presence of a civil war occurs in those situations where a dominant regime authority is challenged by an armed, organized resistance that is affiliated to a competing claim to authority (Poe & Tate, 1994). When a government is preoccupied with violence in this way, it is expected to resort more easily to violence to maintain order, which likely leads to less regard for respecting personal integrity rights.

Both the international war and the civil war variables will be measured with data from the *Armed Conflict Dataset* (Pettersson, Högbladh & Öberg, 2019). The dataset measures the duration, type and actors of state-based armed conflicts, and it ascribes either one out of four categories to the observed conflicts. The distinction between involvement in international war or in civil war is based on the definition of these categories. The civil war variable is compiled of country-years categorized as an internal conflict or an internationalized conflict, and the international war variable includes the

extra-systemic conflict and the interstate conflict categories (Pettersson, 2019). As to internationalized internal conflicts, the parties directly involved in these conflicts were coded as involved in a civil war, whereas the international supporting parties were coded as involved in an international conflict for that year. Both variables are categorical with the value 0 denoting no involvement in a conflict and the value 1 denoting involvement. Therefore, the associated regression coefficients shall be interpreted as the average difference in CIRI scores between country-years with and without an armed conflict. The relations with PIRs scores are expected to be negative for both, indicating that involvement in a conflict should be associated with a poorer human rights record.

**TABLE 1.** ***Summary of the Predictors***

| Predictor | Code | Function | Expected effect | Indicator | Database |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU trade agreement ratification | eurat | Main independent variable | Positive | Categorical indicator, 0 = *not ratified*, 1 = *ratified* | The Design of Trade Agreements (DESTA) |
| Democracy | dem | Control variable | Positive | Twenty-point scale | Polity IV |
| GDP per capita, for economic eevelopment | gdp | Control variable | Positive | GDP per capita (current US$) | World Bank Development Indicators |
| Economic growth rate | growth | Control variable | Positive | GDP per capita growth (annual %) | World Bank Development Indicators |
| Population size | pop | Control variable | Negative | Total population size | World Bank Development Indicators |
| International war | intwar | Control variable | Negative | Categorical indicator, 0 = *not involved*, 1 = *involved* | UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset |
| Civil war | civwar | Control variable | Negative | Categorical indicator, 0 = *not involved*, 1 = *involved* | UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset |

*Note.* Predictor values are observed over a time frame from 1997 until and including 2011.

### 4.2 Methods of Estimation

Having established some theory-driven expectations about the relationships between the selected variables, the next step involves elaborating on the methods used for empirical estimation of these unknown relationships. The methods will inform the basic structure of the model used for estimation. The size, direction and statistical significance of these estimations will determine the validity of the theoretical expectations against actual trends in the observed data (Greene, 2003).

According to Babbie (2013), the best research design relies on more than one method of estimation and uses the different strengths of varying methods. This thesis follows that recommendation to obtain the best possible understanding of the distributions of observations within the variable groups as well as the relationships between the outcome variable PIRs and its predictors. Therefore, the utilized methods range from univariate analysis to describe the variables individually, to correlational analysis to describe the associations between variables, and multivariate regression analysis to compare the relations of each predictor to the outcome variable.

### 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Before conducting an analysis to make inferences about the relationships between the variables in the model, it is useful to explore some of the trends in the data. Descriptive statistics can reveal preliminary information about how countries develop over time in terms of the variables and how the scores of the variables are spread throughout the sample. Descriptives will include information about the frequencies of observations, the central tendencies in distributions and the dispersion of observations around the central values (Babbie, 2013). Without offering any sound evidence to make inferences about the significance of relationships, this in turn can enhance the confidence with which we make expectations about the direction and the strength of variable relationships.

### 4.2.2 Pooled Ordinary Least Squares Estimation

At the point of departure, the empirical analysis relies on the method of Pooled Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation in order to identify the variable relationships. This method aims to express those relationships in terms of a linear equation, producing the straight line that best describes the relations in the observed sample. In the multivariate form of the regression equation, the model can include more factors that can account for the variation in the outcome variable PIRs, so as to control for confounding influences on the main relationship of interest (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The basic regression equation can be used for explaining the variation in the outcome variable as well as predicting its outcomes depending on its association with each predictor and looks as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \cdots + \beta_k X_{kit} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

$i = 1, 2, ..., k$

$t = 1, 2, ..., k$

Here, $Y$ denotes the dependent variable, $X$ the independent variables, and each $\beta$ represents a coefficient that captures the effect of its associated predictor on the outcome (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The regression coefficients $\beta$ indicate the direction and size of the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable, and if they are trustworthy, they can represent values for the whole population (Field, 2013). The error term $\varepsilon$ captures the residuals in the model, the portion of deviation

that it cannot explain due to random influences and measurement errors. The aim of OLS estimation is to minimize these residuals in order to obtain the best fitting model to the data.

To determine how well the model generates trustworthy estimates, the results of the regression analysis will be evaluated on three aspects (Graddy & Wang, 2008). Firstly, goodness of fit evaluates how well OLS regression minimizes the unexplained deviation in the outcome variable from its sample mean. Secondly, the analysis will show how well the coefficient estimates fit the expected relationships. This can inform how well the expectations following from the first sub-question on predicting human rights performance are confirmed by the current analysis. It also pertains to the second sub-question on to what extent variation in PIRs are due to the influence of the main independent variable, because the regression coefficient associated with EU trade agreement ratification will reflect the average change in human rights performance resulting from ratification. Thirdly, the results can to some extent reveal the relative importance of predictors in explaining the variations in the outcome, which is relevant to compare the influence of the main independent variable to that of the other predictors.

The actual trustworthiness of the coefficient estimates depends on three properties of the beta coefficients that depend on how well the distribution of the sample data conforms to the assumptions of OLS (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The first property is unbiasedness, which means that when taking repeated samples, the beta coefficient from each sample should on average approach the true population value. The second property is the consistency of the estimates, which means that as the sample size increases and tends to infinity, the sample estimate should approach the population value. The third property is the efficiency of the estimates, which occurs if the variance in the sampling distribution of the estimator is relatively small or in other words how well the estimated beta value represents the individually observed effects in the sample. If the underlying data satisfies the assumptions of OLS, these three conditions will occur and ensure that the model generates the best estimates for the variable relationships.

### 4.2.3 Assumptions of OLS Regression Analysis

Appendix B to F present the assumptions that should be met for OLS to generate the best linear unbiased estimators. Several diagnostic tests determine whether the data fits the assumptions of normality, linearity, no perfect multicollinearity, no autocorrelation and homoscedasticity of errors. Issues of skewness with GDP per capita and population size were observed and therefore logarithmic transformations were applied to these variables in order to obtain normality in their sampling distributions. Additionally, an issue of kurtosis with economic growth rate and a deviation from normality with the democracy variable were observed, as for democracy its sampling distribution approached a bimodal shape with two separate peaks rather than a bell-shaped curve. However, given the normally distributed errors and the large sample size, these issues were not problematic enough to violate the assumption of normality. As a result of the assumption checks, the analysis will proceed to

predict the dependent variable PIRs with the original independent variables EU trade agreement ratification, democracy, economic growth rate, international war and civil war, and with the transformed versions ln_GDP per capita and ln_population size.

Furthermore, the results of the tests demonstrated some violations that give reason to use alternative methods of estimation. Among allt the assumptions, only the absence of multicollinearity has been fully verified. The violations of homoscedasticity and the absence of serial correlation introduce the threat that the model's estimates won't be optimally unbiased, inconsistent and inefficient. This is reason to consider two alternative methods of estimation. Fixed Effects and Random Effects methods will be considered next, together with the Hausman Test to specify the final model.

### 4.2.4 Fixed Effects & Random Effects Estimation

The pooled cross-sectional time-series design is an appealing method for hypothesis testing, but it may violate some of the OLS assumptions (Poe & Tate, 1994). Fixed Effects (FE) and Random Effects (RE) estimation make up for some of the violations of the OLS assumptions by including and explicitly accounting for a bigger portion of unobserved heterogeneity between the observations that could cause the coefficient estimates of an OLS regression to be inaccurate.

Panel regression assumes there is always some variation between time-series cross-sectional units that cause heterogeneity of observations (Greene, 2003). These individual, country-specific characteristics can be observed and measured such as country size or location, or unobserved such as cultural traditions. A panel data model can control for these unobserved factors. It can also control for factors that vary over time but not across countries (Torres-Reyna, 2007). The difference between using the Fixed Effects equation or the Random Effects equation depends on how the unobserved heterogeneity is manifested in the data, which will be evaluated by the Hausman Test.

Heterogeneity across units can be a crucial source of bias. A basic panel regression model specified as

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \cdots + \beta_k X_{kit} + \alpha Z_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

accounts for this heterogeneity by capturing the individual effects in $\alpha Z_i$, where $\alpha$ is a coefficient and $Z_i$ a constant term that represents the unobserved and observed heterogeneity. If $Z_i$ is unobserved and *correlated* with the predictors $X_{it}$, then the errors in the model would not be independently distributed, and the regression estimators would be biased and inconsistent (Greene, 2003). However, the Fixed Effects estimator model specified as

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \cdots + \beta_k X_{kit} + \alpha_i + u_{it} \quad (3)$$

takes into account all the unobservable effects in $\alpha_i$ as a constant term that expresses the unknown intercept for each country. The FE model effectively removes country-level, time-invariant effects that influence the variation between country-years in the outcome. This is because FE generates a within-estimator for each country, comparing a country's mean score $\overline{Y}_i$ to its score $Y_{it}$, which removes the time-invariant effects of $\alpha_i$. This makes that variations in Y must be due to influences other than the unobservable fixed effects (Torres-Reyna, 2007). Any bias due to unobserved heterogeneity from omitted variables is therefore not a problem with FE and the coefficient estimates are trustworthy.

Alternatively, if the unobserved individual heterogeneity can be assumed to be random and *uncorrelated* with the included variables $X_{it}$, the RE model would specify the equation as

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \cdots + \beta_k X_{kit} + \alpha_i + u_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

where $u_i$ is an element of unobserved heterogeneity that is identical at each period $t$ but also random across units $i$ (Greene, 2003). The model therefore predicts $Y$ as a function of the predictors $X$ and time-variant as well as time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity $\alpha$ and $u$.

### 4.3 Hausman Test & Model Specification

Applying the regression model (1) to the research problem by inserting the dependent variable, main independent variable, and control variables as operationalized through their respective observed data yields the following model:

$$\begin{aligned}&\text{Personal integrity rights}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{EU Trade Agreement Ratification}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Democracy}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{GDP per Capita}_{it} + \\ &\beta_4 \text{Economic Growth Rate}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Population Size}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{International War}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Civil War}_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5)\\ &i = 1, 2, \ldots 126\\ &t = 1, 2, \ldots, 15\end{aligned}$$

Here, $i$ denotes the individual countries observed in the sample, $t$ = 1 denotes the starting year 1997 and $t$ = 15 the end of the observed time frame in 2011. However, because the assumptions of OLS have been violated, the model should be specified as tailored to the Fixed or Random Effects estimation equations.

When applying either FE or RE estimation, the Hausman Test compares their strength with respect to the data. Random effects estimation assumes that the unobserved effects $\alpha_i$ are uncorrelated with the predictors, i.e. Cov ($\alpha_i$, $X_{i,t}$) = 0. If this assumption holds up in the observed dataset, the coefficient estimates of both FE and RE will be consistent, but the RE estimator generates smaller standard errors. This means the RE estimates would be closer to their population values and therefore more trustworthy. According to Greene (2003), however, RE estimation is often likely to suffer from inconsistent estimation because the unobserved country-level characteristics are often correlated with the observed predictor values, in which case the FE estimates will be efficient.

The aim of the Hausman Test is therefore to compare the consistency of FE estimates to RE. It tests the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between the unobserved heterogeneity $u_i$ and the predictor values $X_{it}$, which would be reason to use RE. The Hausman Test was performed in STATA and resulted in $\chi^2(21, N=1890) = 705.59$, $p < .001$, which is a significant effect that offers reason to reject the null hypothesis and proceed assuming that the unobserved heterogeneity is correlated to the predictors. This means that the method of FE estimation is suitable to the data. Having found sufficient violations of the assumptions of OLS regression, the model should instead be specified in the basic structure of the Fixed Effect equation as follows:

$$\text{Personal integrity rights}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{EU Trade Agreement Ratification}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Democracy}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{GDP per Capita}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{Economic Growth Rate}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Population Size}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{International War}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Civil War}_{it} + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (6)$$

$i = 1, 2, \ldots 126$

$t = 1, 2, ..., 15$

Given the FE model has been specified based on the data and assumptions checks at hand, the analysis was conducted using STATA of which the results will be presented in the next chapter. STATA requires a fully balanced dataset without missing values and therefore the number of countries in the sample equals 126, as announced earlier in the sections about the research design. Additionally, some remaining diagnostic tests were conducted pertaining specifically to the panel design of the data. Appendix G explains the additional assumption of stationarity for trustworthy time-series analysis as well as the unit root tests conducted to evaluate the data. As a result of these tests, all the variables satisfied the assumption of stationarity except for democracy and ln_GDP per capita. As per remedy, the analysis will proceed by using the differenced versions of these variables, denoted as 'first-difference' in the results, which do satisfy the assumption of stationarity (Appendix G).

### 4.4 Validity & Reliability

In order to have confidence that the research design produces trustworthy findings about the expected relationship between the main independent and the dependent variable, it should be constructed in a scientifically valid way. This concerns several aspects. Internal validity refers to how well the used variables actually reflect the phenomena they intend to measure (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). In this regard, all the predictors are quantified into variables that directly measure their phenomena. The Personal Integrity Rights variable is measured by the CIRI scale for PIRs violations which functions as an indicator of the phenomenon human rights performance, but based on its widely accepted use in human rights analyses it is argued that this is an acceptable indicator.

Furthermore, in order to establish a causal relationship between the main independent and dependent variables is found, the research design should account for several threats to causality (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). The hypothesis was first and foremost based on a credible relationship

between EU trade agreement ratification and human rights performance, due to the EU's leverage position in trade and human rights discussions as is supported by the theory. However, if indeed there is a relationship between the EU human rights clause and human rights performance, it should be acknowledged that it remains difficult to fully rule out a mutually reinforcing effect that the prevailing human rights standards in a country act as a precondition for signing the essential human rights clause. Also the likelihood of covariation between the predictor variables and the outcome variable was checked. The results of the assumptions tests show that there are overall bivariate associations to be found between PIRs and the predictor variables (see Table D1, Appendix D for confirmation). Additionally, in order to avoid spuriousness in the estimated relation between EU trade agreement ratification and human rights performance, a set of control variables was carefully selected based on previous research and their applicability to the EU setting. Besides control factors, the Fixed Effects model also accounts for unobserved variation between countries which minimizes spuriousness.

The outcome of this study should be representative for the whole population to be externally valid (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). This depends on the representativeness of the sample. Throughout the research, the sample size has amounted to 126 countries as a result of cases that were dropped from the analysis due to missing data, because data gathering organizations such as the World Bank and the Polity project can't observe them consistently and do not always cover the exact same sample. However, the remaining number represents a substantial portion of all countries, which contributes to the validity of the study.

At last, for this study to offer reliable knowledge, the procedures carried out should be able to produce similar results when repeated in different settings (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). Section 4.1 has explained that the variables have been quantified with publicly available data that was proven useful in previous research, so the model could be reconstructed in a different setting. Section 4.2 and 4.3 have carefully specified how these variables are applied to a multivariate model that will be tested using replicable procedures in SPSS and STATA. Altogether this should make sure that the analysis could be carried out reliably in future studies leading up to similar results.

Having characterized the research design and specified the model, the next chapter presents the result of the conducted analysis and their interpretations.

# Chapter 5. Analysis & Results

## 5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Before conducting any analysis to make inferences about the relationships between the variables in the model, it is useful to explore some of the trends in the data. Descriptive statistics can reveal preliminary information about how the scores of the variables are spread throughout the sample. Without offering any sound evidence as to the significance of variable relationships, this in turn can enhance the confidence with which we make expectations about the direction and the strength of the relationships between variables.

Table 2 displays the summary descriptive statistics of the observed data as generated from STATA. It contains information about the distribution of the 1890 observed cases throughout all the included variables in the model spread over 126 countries during 15 years in between 1997 and 2011. Their distributions are described by their properties of the mean values, the median, standard deviation, minimum and the maximum. What follows are brief descriptions of the observations within each variable, which can potentially reveal some patterns of behaviour across country-years.

**TABLE 2.** ***Descriptive Statistics Summary Table***

| Variables | Mean | Median | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personal integrity rights | 4.89 | 5.00 | 1.12 | 0 | 8 |
| EU trade agreement ratification | 0.46 | 0.00 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| Democracy | 4.02 | 7.00 | 6.43 | -10 | 10 |
| GDP per capita | 10 520.56 | 3 068.26 | 16 013.08 | 111.93 | 115 762.00 |
| Ln_GDP per capita | 8.08 | 8.02 | 1.65 | 4.72 | 11.66 |
| Economic growth rate | 2.77 | 2.83 | 4.27 | -18.491 | 33.00 |
| Population size | 45 474 331.43 | 10 193 087 | 155 122 439.19 | 419 450 | 1 340 000 000 |
| Ln_population Size | 16.25 | 16.14 | 1.48 | 12.95 | 21.02 |
| International war | 0.24 | 0.00 | 0.43 | 0 | 1 |
| Civil war | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.35 | 0 | 1 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1890 for all variables.

### A) Personal Integrity Rights

The observed scores of PIRs as measured by the CIRI scale from 0 to 8 show a mean of 4.89 and a median of 5. This suggests that countries on average can be expected to have a higher score than the mean. Although this may be counterintuitive, because the mean often acts as a yardstick for expected values, in fact 60.2% of the observed country-years score a 5 or higher, which suggests that violations of PIRs are less common than adherence to them. Additionally, 67 observed country-years score the

worst value of 0, which has happened in only 19 out of the 126 countries. 157 country-years demonstrated the highest score at some point in time, which has occurred in 33 countries.

**B) EU Trade Agreement Ratification**

Table 2 demonstrates that there is no big difference between the country-years that did denote a ratified EU trade relationship and those that did not. In 53.6% of the cases a respective country was not party to a ratified agreement; in 46.4% of the cases it was. This means that the two groups are fairly balanced through the dataset, which can be useful to draw conclusions about the difference between EU trade partners and non-partner countries.

**C) Democracy**

The democracy descriptives show variation on the ordinal PolityIV scale of scores ranging from -10 to 10. The distribution has a mean of 4.02, a median of 7 and a standard deviation of 6.43. This indicates quite a large spread around the mean but given that the minimum is -10, it shows that a big majority of the cases scores somewhere above the mean. It turns out that 66.3% of the cases have a democracy score of 4 or higher. Additionally, only 12.8% of the observations falls in between -4 and 4, which shows that the majority of the cases cluster in the tails of the distribution. Whether this is a good reflection of reality is hard to say; this tendency could also reflect a measurement pattern in the Polity scores where, for instance, state-characteristics that clearly indicate autocratic features or democratic features are weighted highly in the score, making it less likely for a country to be given a moderate score.

**D) GDP per Capita**

The summary table confirm the earlier observation that the data of GDP per capita were not normally distributed. The mean is approximately 10000, the median approximately 3000, and the mode (which is not reported in the Table 2) approximately 1600. This would form a big clustering of cases on the lower end of the distribution, but the differences between the few highest GDP values and the vast majority is so big that the mean gets pulled to the higher end of the distribution. This is also signalled by the large difference between the minimum and maximum values, and by how the difference between the minimum and the mean is much smaller than the difference between the maximum and the mean (i.e., differences of 10400 and 105240, respectively). The table furthermore shows that the transformation performed on the data of the GDP value indeed made the distribution conform better to normality, because the mean and median approximate the same value and the minimum and the maximum deviate from the mean by about two or three standard deviations.

**E) Economic Growth Rate**

Moving on to the growth variable, the descriptives show that, on average economies in the sample have a growth rate of 2.7% and a median of 2.83%. It is noticeable that only a few recorded country-years show very high growth rates. There were 10 observed cases with growth rates higher than 15%, and those ten vary up until the maximum of approximately 33%. This suggests that the maximum and the few scores immediately preceding it are not representative of the majority of the cases. Out of those ten cases, three occurred in the same country. This concerned Azerbaijan in the years 2005, 2006, and 2007, and afterwards this growth rate dropped substantially to 8.3%.

**F) Population Size**

The first observable tendency in the population sizes is an enormous spread around the mean, which is also indicated by the large difference between the minimum and the maximum. In reality it is India and China (with the highest number of over 1.3 billion) that far surpass any other country in population size and after them the differences become smaller. Similarly, the transformed version of the variable shows little distance between the mean and the median, both of them fairly in the middle of the minimum and maximum, which roughly describes the distribution in a histogram with a normally distributed shape.

**G) International War & Civil War**

Finally, the data denoting involvement in an international war or civil war can be discussed simultaneously because they show very similar central tendencies. Their means indicate that on average countries are not often involved in a war, and if they are, it is slightly more likely to be an international conflict than an internal conflict.

## 5.2 Regression Results

Having established a clear view of some of the central tendencies occurring in the data, this section presents the results of the regression analysis performed with the Fixed Effects estimation method in STATA. Table 3 displays the results of the regression analysis for the main independent variable, EU trade agreement ratification, the original predictors economic growth rate, international war and civil war, the log-transformed version of population size, and lastly the first-differenced versions of the democracy and the log-transformed GDP per capita predictors.

The first few lines display information about the fit of the model as a whole, namely the *F*-statistic and the R-squared value, which will be discussed first. Moving down, the table includes a wider range of components of which the functions should be briefly announced (Torres-Reyna, 2007). The Coefficient-column contains the regressor estimates that signal the estimated change in the Personal Integrity Rights score associated with a unit increase in the predictor. The *SE*-column highlights the use of robust standard errors, which is a remedy to the diagnosed heteroscedasticity

among the observed scores in the data. The *t*-column contains the test statistics associated with the null hypothesis that the beta coefficient estimate is equal to zero. If the absolute value of *t* is higher than 1.96 using a 95% confidence interval, the null can be rejected which implies that the coefficient denotes a significant relationship. To the right, the *p*-values are reported associated with the null that the beta coefficients are equal to zero. If *p* is lower then .05, the null can be rejected, similarly marking a significant relationship.

**TABLE 3.** ***Regression Results for Fixed Effects Estimation***

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $F$ (7, 125) = 8.13 | | | | | Number of observations = 1762 | |
| Prob > $F$ = 0.000 | | | | | Number of groups = 126 | |
| $R^2$ within = .071, between = .381, overall = .318 | | | | | | |
| Corr ($u_i$, $X_b$) = -0.348 | | | | | | |
| Personal integrity rights | Coefficient | Robust *SE* | *t* | $p > \| t \|$ | 95% Confidence interval | |
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| EU trade agreement ratification[a] | 0.0556 | 0.1835 | 0.30 | .763 | -0.3077 | 0.4188 |
| Democracy (first-difference) | 0.0005 | 0.0194 | -0.03 | .980 | -0.0389 | -0.0379 |
| ln_GDP per capita (first-difference) | -.3661 | 0.2394 | -1.53 | .129 | -0.8398 | -0.1077 |
| Economic growth rate | 0.0107 | 0.0095 | 1.13 | .262 | -0.0081 | 0.0296 |
| Ln_population size | -1.035 | 0.5065 | -2.04 | .043* | -2.0372 | -0.0324 |
| International war[b] | -.1110 | 0.1057 | -1.05 | .296 | -0.3202 | -0.0982 |
| Civil war[c] | -1.2977 | 0.2050 | -6.33 | .000** | -1.7034 | -0.8921 |
| Constant | 21.8737 | 8.2064 | 2.67 | .009** | -5.6323 | 38.1151 |

*Note*. [a] 0 = no ratification, 1 = ratification

[b] 0 = no involvement in international war, 1 = involvement in international war

[c] 0 = no involvement in civil war, 1 = involvement in civil war

*$p$ < .05, **$p$ < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 5% and 1% significance level, respectively.

Recall (from section 4.2.2) that the analysis will follow the three main aspects on which to evaluate the estimations from the model: how well the model explains the variation in the data, how well it confirms the expected relationships between the variables, and what it suggests about the relative importance of predictors (Graddy & Wang, 2008). The starting question pertains to the goodness of fit, which will be evaluated by looking at the *F*-statistic and R-squared.

**A) Model Fit**

The first measure of goodness of fit is the *F*-statistic, which indicates the ratio of the explained variation to the unexplained variation in PIRs. Table 3 reports that $F(7, 125) = 8.13$, $p < .001$. This indicates a significant result which implies the coefficients of the model successfully estimate the dependent variable. The second measure is the coefficient of determination, denoted by R-squared, which shows the proportion of variance in the outcome variable that is explained by all the predictors combined. R-squared ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating a perfect linear fit of the regression line to the observed data. Table 3 reports different versions of R-squared, which is to be expected from Fixed Effects estimation (StataCorp, 2019). R-squared *between* equals 0.381, which signifies the explained portion of the variability in the outcome variable between countries. R-squared *within* equals 0.071 and this indicates the explained variability in the outcome across time, within a country's time series. Because FE does away with time-invariant, country-specific effects, the R-squared *within* tells us how much of the change over time is accounted for by the model.

What these values reveal is that, as seen from the R-squared *within*, the model explains relatively little of the variation in one country's human rights performance over time. Evidently, the independent variables that change over time such as GDP per capita or population size do not substantially predict the concomitant change in PIRs scores. However, as seen from the R-squared *between*, the model performs better in explaining variations between countries as a result of differences in predictor values. This latter observation can be valuable to assessing the effect of EU trade agreement ratification on human rights performance, because it is a variable with less variation over time than, say, population size or GDP per capita. For ratification, all the counties undergo a change of at most one unit at one time in the observed 15 years, which is the possible ratification of an agreement. This could explain why the variability in EU trade agreement ratification does not substantially affect the PIRs scores: there is not much variability within the time series of one country to begin with. However, once a country has signed, it is a trade partner to the EU and commits itself to the human rights clause for a long time. It is during this time that the difference between a ratifying country and non-ratifying countries would have an effect on the between-variation in the outcome variable PIRs.

**B) Coefficient Estimates & Expectations**

The second aspect to evaluating the regression results is to compare the coefficient estimates to the expected relationships between the predictors and PIRs. The relationship between the main independent variable and the outcome variable is in the expected direction but insignificant. It was hypothesized that EU trade agreement ratification has a positive effect on a country's PIRs record. The results, however, estimate a coefficient of 0.0556 with an associated *p*-value of 0.763, which is not enough to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship. So even though the expectation that countries who ratify a trade agreement with the EU end up with improved human

rights performance seems to make sense given the small but positive estimate, it does not receive significant support from the observed sample. Possible explanations for this and the implications of this result will be discussed in the next chapter.

Predictors that do receive a significant regression coefficient are population size and involvement in a civil war. Countries with a larger population were expected to have a worse human rights record, and this is confirmed by a coefficient of -1.035 with a *p*-value of 0.043, which is a significant statistic that offers reason to reject the null hypothesis of no effect. What this effect means is determined by the logarithmic transformation which was applied to the population size predictor for it to meet the normality assumption of OLS. As is explained more elaborately in the appendix, when the predictor variable is log-transformed, it is interpreted as a *b*/100 unit change in the outcome variable as a result of a 1% change in the predictor variable (Appendix H). The results from Table 3 suggest that for every 1% change in population size, the PIRs score would decrease by (1.035/100 =) 0.01035 units, when holding the other variables constant. This confirms the expectation that larger populations are on average associated with more violations of PIRs.

Furthermore, involvement in a civil war was expected to make a government more prone to resort to coercive measures and make more personal integrity violations and this received quite some support from the data. Civil war predicts PIRs with a beta coefficient of -1.2977, which is highly significant with a *p*-value < 0.001. The effect also tips into the expected direction, as the relation now indicates that the difference between whether a country is involved in a civil war is -1.2977 points less on the PIRs scale, holding the other variables constant.

The remaining control variables demonstrate an effect in the expected direction, except for the GDP per capita predictor, but none of them have a significant relationship with PIRs. This means that for democracy, economic growth rate, and international war, the direction of the theoretically expected relation with PIRs scores was reflected by the regression, but these relations were not significant in the sample.

### C) Relative Importance of Predictors

Moving on to the third aspect of the evaluation, the relative importance of the predictors can be assessed by comparing the standardized beta coefficients associated with each predictor (Graddy & Wang, 2008). How well EU trade agreement ratification predicts PIRs scores compared to the other predictors cannot be derived from the raw coefficients, because these express the effect in terms of different units. When the observed scores are standardized, their value expresses how many standard deviations (SD) it differs from the mean score of a variable. The standardized regression coefficient associated with a prediction then expresses the effect in terms of SDs, so the average SD change in the outcome resulting from a one SD change in the predictor, holding the other variables constant.

The standardized coefficients were generated in STATA and reported in Table I1 (Appendix I). Their associated *t*-statistics and *p*-values are the same as those resulting from the main regression

output in Table 3, which signifies that the relationships between the predictors and the outcome variable are the same. The standardized coefficients show that EU trade agreement ratification has a smaller effect than all the other predictors except for democracy.

A noticeable caveat is disagreement between scholars who on one side argue that comparing standardized coefficients can indicate their relative importance (Landis, 2005), and on the other that predictors' contribution to estimating the outcome is impossible because SD change is difficult to interpret (Bring, 1994). The results suggest that one SD change in for instance GDP per capita impacts a bigger SD change in PIRs scores than does EU trade agreement ratification. However, this says little about reality because their real effect depends on what it would take to create a one SD change. It is difficult to know how likely such changes are to occur compared to each other, so standardized coefficients only indicate some degree of numerical importance to PIRs scores rather than a realistic prediction of change.

### 5.3 Conclusion of the Results

After considering whether the data used in this analysis conformed to the assumptions of OLS required to produce trustworthy results, this chapter has discussed what the statistical output means with respect to the hypothesized relations. There are both expected and unexpected findings. Against the backdrop of the EU's engagement with human rights promotion, it was expected that the effect of the essential human rights clause in the EU's bilateral trade agreements would be visible in improvements of human rights performance. The main finding cannot support this expectation given the insignificant effect of EU trade agreement ratification. The model has proven its expected utility to some degree, as reflected by the overall significant *F*-statistic, the explained *between* variability and some significant effects of the control variables. However, it has also become visible that the results are inconsistent with the expectation that the FE model would explain the *over-time* variation within countries. The final chapter will present the explanations and implications of these findings in a discussion of the research questions.

# Chapter 6. Discussion & Conclusions

The European Union has become an increasingly active player on the international stage and this thesis follows the attempts to study the global priorities of the EU and the type of actor it has become. The theory shows that the EU, as both a trade power and a human rights promotor, has found a way to combine these fields into its global strategy. In that context, this thesis has tested the expectation that the essential human rights clause in trade agreements of the EU binds ratifying states in such a way that they demonstrate improved human rights performance. The conducted analysis aimed to apply a model inspired by previous studies of human rights practices to this specific EU setting. The discussion that follows compares how the results of the analysis hold up against the main hypothesis and against previous research. This will inform an answer to the main research question as well as a view to the theoretical and practical implications of that answer. The chapter closes by looking back on how this research was conducted and discussing openings for future research given the limitations of this thesis.

## 6.1 Answers to the Sub-questions

With the aim of finding an effect of EU trade agreement ratification on countries' human rights practices, the point of departure was to investigate what other factors determine human rights performance, which starts with the first sub-question.

**1) What models have been used in previously conducted measurements of human rights performance of states?**

The reviewed literature revealed promising models to investigate what determines human rights performance and to what extent EU trade agreements can play a part in this. These studies demonstrate that improvements over time of data gathering and estimation methods have made it possible to create increasingly complex models. They evolved from simple bivariate correlational analyses mostly at the cross-sectional level, for instance in Park (1987) and Mitchell and McCormick (1988), on to more complex multivariate methods that also account for changes over time such as Poe, Tate and Keith (1999) and Spilker and Böhmelt (2013). Also the data used in these studies developed from numbers on separate indicators such as political prisoners and torture cases, into more complex measures that express PIRs in single scores by coding a wide variety of factors. These developments have informed this thesis in multiple ways. Importantly, the identification of personal integrity rights as an indicator has received wide support to be representative of the main phenomenon of interest, human rights. Selecting the time-series cross-sectional research structure and the other covariates analysed in this thesis was also informed by previous empirical evidence, even though the current analysis could not confirm the expected effects with significant results for all the variables. Altogether, the accumulated knowledge informed the model that was used to answer the other sub-question.

**2) To what extent are the differences in human rights performance of states attributable to the effect of the EU human rights clause?**

The coefficient estimate of the relation between EU trade agreement ratification and PIRs scores should show the average change in PIRs resulting from ratification, if the other influences are held constant. The insignificant result of this relationship does not support the view that there are significant differences in human rights performance between the EU's trade partners and non-partner countries. What's more, in comparison to the other effects found in the model, the ratification variable was not the only one with insignificant results, even though all the control variables were selected based on their proven significant findings in previous studies. Therefore, the mismatch between the hypotheses and the results could be attributable to faults in the model or in the measurements of the variables, rather than a misinformed expectation.

With regards to comparing to which of the predictors the variation in PIRs scores can be attributed, this has become difficult to answer due to the large number of insignificant relationships. When using the standardized regression coefficients, all the predictors received a greater value than EU trade agreement ratification except for democracy, which suggests that relatively little variation is associated with the main independent variable. However, standardized coefficients only tell so much and the unit of the effects they indicate are difficult to interpret.

What seems more evident is the overall pattern of small magnitudes across all the (unstandardized) regression coefficients. This would suggest that none of the predictors by themselves have a large propensity to cause a change on the CIRI human rights scale. However, this is not unexpected because Poe, Tate and Keith (1999) found that the over-time effects of state-level factors of human rights performance always require a long time to develop and hardly amount to large effects. In their study for example, population size would require a 10 million increase to generate only a 0.7 increase on the 5-point political terror scale, while for most populations it takes a very long time to grow so substantially. Similarly, a 10-year lasting civil war was associated with only a 1.4 unit-increase in political terror. It follows that change in human rights practices, or the way in which such change is reflected in quantitative studies, seems very rigid and the regression results of this thesis confirm this. These small effects offer ways to rethink how to approach the phenomenon of human rights, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

### 6.2 Main Research Question & Conclusion

The quantitative analysis has generated evidence to answer the main research question of this study: what is the effect of ratifying a trade agreement including the human rights clause with the EU on a country's human rights performance? It was expected that the essential human rights clause serves as an instrument to enforce compliance with high human rights standards because the EU holds a leverage position in trade and is willing to suspend trade conditional upon compliance of partner countries. As it turns out from the analysis, however, no significant influence was found between

ratifying the human rights clause and the following measure of personal integrity rights violations. As PIRs violations represent the extent to which a state's government respects human rights, this result indicates the absence of a direct relation between ratifying an EU trade agreement and follow-up improvements of human rights performance. This finding can further inform how we understand the EU as a type of international actor and how we view ways for the EU to approach human rights as part of its global strategy.

### 6.3 Theoretical Implications

The analysis has failed to establish a noticeable influence of the human rights clause on countries' human rights performance and this does not align with some of the main theoretical views underlying this study. The first topic underlying the research problem consists of theories of the EU as an international actor. A large part of the literature on this topic discussed in Chapter 2 presented the predominant view of the EU as a trade power that has both the intention and the institutional structure that enable it to make the human rights discussion part of its trade policy. Making trade deals conditional on compliance with human right standards has been understood as a policy approach of the EU. The results of the analysis can call this approach into question due to the lacking effectiveness of EU trade agreements to influence human rights performance. This also aligns with previous findings about non-trade issues, namely that between interests of trade and human rights, the latter are often neglected in trade negotiations (such as in Leeg, 2014 and Sicurelli, 2015). If human rights standards indeed are part of a symbolic discussion rather than a policy aim of trade negotiations, this offers reason to think of alternative ways in which the EU can promote human rights standards.

The second main theoretical topic dealt with research on the effectiveness of international agreements to secure compliance from ratifying states. Multilateral treaties such as Human Rights Agreements theoretically serve an expressive role rather than an actual enforcing role, as ratifying countries can openly commit to new standards without facing the consequences of non-compliance. This current research expected EU bilateral trade to hold enough leverage that the threat of suspending gains from trade would convince governments to make the necessary policy changes, but this was not confirmed by the results. This is coherent with previous studies that fail to establish a causal link between human rights treaties and actual trends in state practices (such as in Keith, 1999 and Hathaway, 2002 as cited in Neumayer, 2005). It follows that the expectation that bilateral agreements can lock in better enforcement mechanisms than multilateral agreements is not reflected by the results.

### 6.4 Policy Implications

The stakes in discussing the effectiveness of the human rights clause have been set out in the beginning. If the analysis would have confirmed there is indeed an important influence of a country's trade agreement with the EU on its human rights record, this could have signified a degree of success of how the EU prioritizes human rights in its trade policy. However, this is not the case and the

practical implications of finding no significant relationship could be understood in different ways. One could see this result in the form of a warning to change EU trade policy: if human rights truly are crucial to the EU's sustainable development agenda, there should be some improvements to show for or otherwise that agenda should be revised. Part of the EU's strategy is refusing to participate in trade if the partner country does not implement good governance and international human rights standards to an acceptable degree, and therefore the EU should review whether this actually occurs after signing the human rights clause. This thesis finds that the leverage of trade gains is not sufficient to improve human rights performance after ratifying an agreement. This implies that the EU should pay more attention to how it can monitor how well the human rights clause is translated into government policy on the ground.

Alternatively, perhaps it seems easy to call for a change because the implications also depend on the causes for why an insignificant result was found in the analysis. It is possible, for instance, that the model itself contained inaccuracies but that the underlying theoretical expectations were sound. In that case one could see the result as a motivation to further investigate how the essential human rights clause operates as a policy tool. Exploring the limitations of the current analysis, therefore, is integral to deriving further implications.

### 6.5 Limitations & Future Research

Previous scholars have provided some popular explanations to account for why some studies find no improvements of human rights performance as a result of ratifying international agreements, but the conducted analysis is limited and does not offer evidence to critically engage with these explanations. One of those explanations found in the literature revolves around selection bias and argues that because states are aware of the shadow of the future, they will not be party to agreements that require them to improve their standards when they know they are not able to reach them (Hill, 2010; Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013). As the research design used for this thesis evaluates time-series trends of countries on average, it cannot account for this explanation in terms of the conditions surrounding a single country that chooses to join an agreement or not.

Additionally, some authors have argued that measurement of human rights violations are ineffective due to the problem of policy substitutability. This means that even though repressive governments can dial down coercive measures in order to deflect public criticism, they likely adopt less visible practices that will not be accounted for in measurements of human rights violations (Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999; Cingranelli & Richards, 1999). If data gathering operations indeed cannot account for all government practices, this limits the validity of the empirical results, because how well the analysis reflects trends in the real world depends on the data it uses.

It follows that the chosen research design has not been able to withstand all the challenges surrounding human rights analyses. Quantitative analysis was expected to be able to single out the effect of individual predictors of human rights performance, which was favourable for comparing EU

trade agreement ratification to other predictors. However, due to its research design, this study fails to offer a more detailed explanation of why trade agreements do not (according to the findings) motivate human rights improvements. Therefore, questions remain that this thesis cannot address. It is important that future research continues to investigate how treaty commitments are translated into policy action. Contrary to studies on negotiations and on state-level conditions surrounding the implementation of agreements, the stage of monitoring and scrutinizing how a government applies international standards to its domestic policy seems to have received less attention. This stage could be crucial, however, to see why promises made at the negotiation table do not land on the ground. Mapping out and assessing the effectiveness of the institutional frameworks put in place for scrutinizing commitments made to human rights improvements, therefore, seems a valuable follow-up to this study.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A
## Selection of Control Variables

**TABLE A1.** ***List of Reviewed Human Rights Predictors and Reasons for their Inclusion/Exclusion***

| Human rights predictor | Included/excluded as control variable | Appeared in | Effect on personal integrity rights score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Socioeconomic needs | Excluded | Henderson, 1991 | Insignificant effect |
| Inequality | Excluded | Henderson, 1991 | Significant effect |
| British cultural influence | Excluded | Mitchell & McCormick, 1988 | Moderate effect, which they attribute to income |
| | | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Insignificant effect |
| Political stability | Excluded | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Weak but significant effects |
| Imports and exports as share of GDP | Excluded | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Significant effects |
| Number of NGOs | Excluded | Neumayer, 2005 | Small effect, in combination with ratification |
| Population growth | Excluded | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Statistically insignificant and substantially unimportant |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Insignificant effect |
| Population density | Excluded | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Weak and statistically insignificant effect |
| Leftist regime | Excluded | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Statistically insignificant effect in the unexpected direction with one measure, and a significant expected effect in another |
| Military regime | Excluded | Poe & Tate 1994 | No significant effect |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | No significant effect |
| Totalitarian or authoritarian regime | Excluded | Mitchell & McCormick, 1988 | No significant difference between the two |
| Liberal regime | Excluded | Mitchell & McCormick, 1988 | Significantly higher personal integrity scores than non-liberal states |
| Lagged repression | Excluded | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Strongest, significant predictor of personal integrity rights score. |
| | | Neumayer, 2005 | Positively, significantly associated |

**TABLE A1 (CONTINUED).** ***List of Reviewed Human Rights Predictors and Reasons for their Inclusion/Exclusion***

| Human rights predictor | Included/excluded as control variable | Appeared in | Effect on personal integrity rights score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy | Included | Henderson, 1991 | Significant effect |
| | | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Strong, significant effect |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Strong, significant effect |
| | | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Significant effect |
| Economic development, through GDP per capita | Included | Mitchell & McCormick, 1988 | High-income countries show lower prisoner and torture levels |
| | | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Significant effect of development level, not of growth |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Significant effects of both economic development level and economic growth rate |
| | | Neumayer, 2005 | Statistically significant effect of income level per capita |
| | | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Significant effect of development level |
| Economic growth rate | Included | Henderson, 1991 | Significant effect of growth |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Significant but moderate effect of growth |
| Population size | Included | Mitchell & McCormick, 1988 | Small positive association with human rights violations |
| | | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Significant effect |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Significant effect |
| | | Neumayer, 2005 | Both significant and insignificant effects found in different parts of the analysis |
| | | Spilker & Böhmelt, 2013 | Strong, significant effect |
| International war | Included | Poe & Tate, 1994 | Substantively important, statistically significant effects |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Significant effect |
| | | Neumayer, 2005 | Positively, significantly associated |
| Civil war | Included | Poe & Tate, 1994, 1999 | Substantively important, statistically significant effects |
| | | Poe, Tate & Keith, 1999 | Significant effect |
| | | Neumayer, 2005 | Positively, significantly associated |

## Appendix B
## Diagnostics for Normality

The first assumption of OLS regression holds that the sampling distribution of the predictor variable and the error terms in the model are normally distributed. This is not necessary for the estimates to be efficient, but for the *p*-values to be trustworthy because the confidence intervals for the beta coefficients are based on assumed normally distributed errors (Graddy & Wang, 2008). If this assumption is violated and the distribution of errors deviates substantially from normal, the confidence intervals can become too wide or too narrow.

Satisfying the assumption of normality is closely related to the sample size. This is because the Central Limit Theorem states that as the size of the sample increases, it tends to follow a normal distribution, because with an increasing amount of observed values, their error terms increasingly tend to cluster around the mean regardless of the distributions within each individual variable (Graddy & Wang, 2008; Field, 2013). From this logic, it follows that if the sample of observations taken in this current analysis is large, and it is quite large, its sampling distribution will tend to normality. This is merely a logical expectation; the assumption can be tested by assessing histograms, outliers and probability plots.

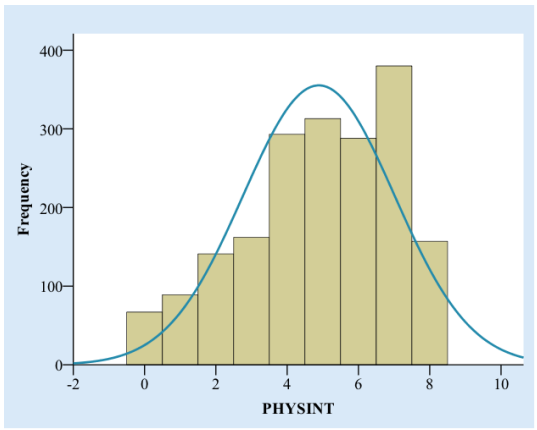
### A) Histograms

Histograms display the frequencies within each variable and among the error terms, showing that the observed values approach a normal distribution if they cluster around the centre, forming a bell-shaped curve. Figure B1 shows that according to the graphical representations generated by SPSS, only personal integrity rights and economic growth rate don't deviate as far from normal, but the remaining GDP per capita, democracy and population size variables do due to considerable skewness. As to economic growth rate, the distribution seems to deal with kurtosis as indicated by observations clustering disproportionately in the model compared to the tails, producing a high peak in the middle. This could indicate a deviation from normal, but whether this is problematic can be evaluated with the next test.

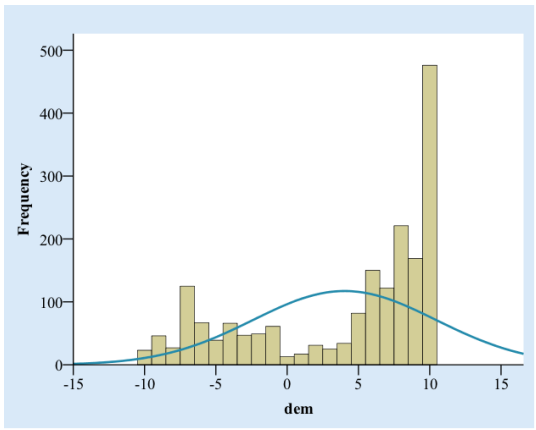
As per remedy, the non-normally distributed variables are log-transformed in order to create a more suitable distribution of the observed values. The natural logarithm is used rather than the $10^{th}$ exponential base because this will provide a convenient interpretation of the associated beta coefficient in the end. Figure B2 shows that the distribution of the log-transformed variables has improved substantially from their original shapes, leaving no more apparent tendencies of skewness or kurtosis as symptoms of deviations from the normal distribution.

The distribution of the democracy predictor has a particular shape compared to the other variables. The histogram displays something that approaches a bimodal distribution, which occurs when there are two separate peaks indicating that most common observations cluster around two

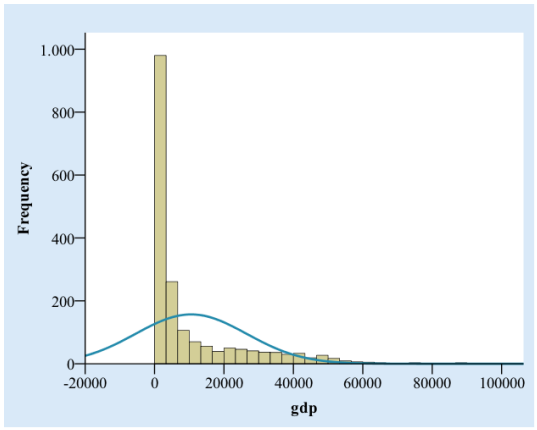
separate modes, albeit the peak at -7 is much smaller than the peak at 10. The distribution of this predictor did not improve towards normality due to any logarithmic or exponential transformations. However, given the large sample size and the normally distributed errors of the model, the democracy predictor was included without any transformation.



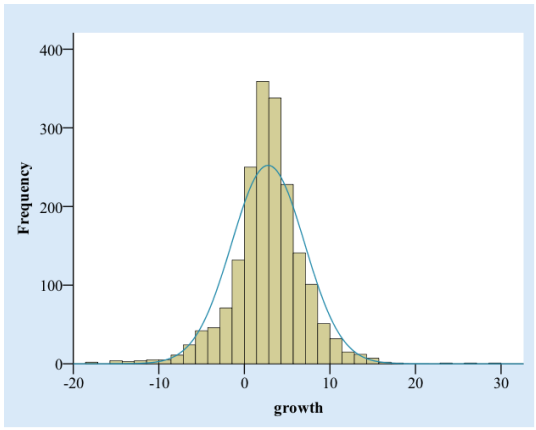

**Personal integrity rights**



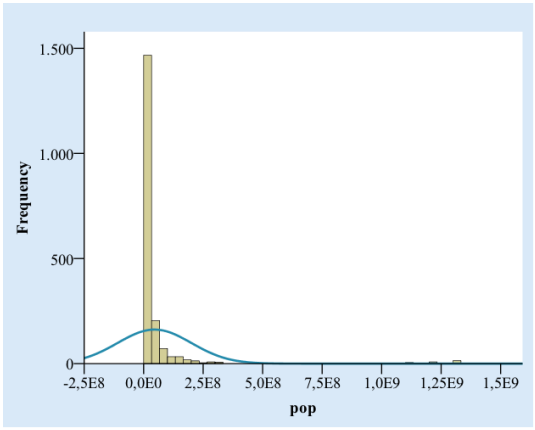

**Democracy**




**GDP per capita**



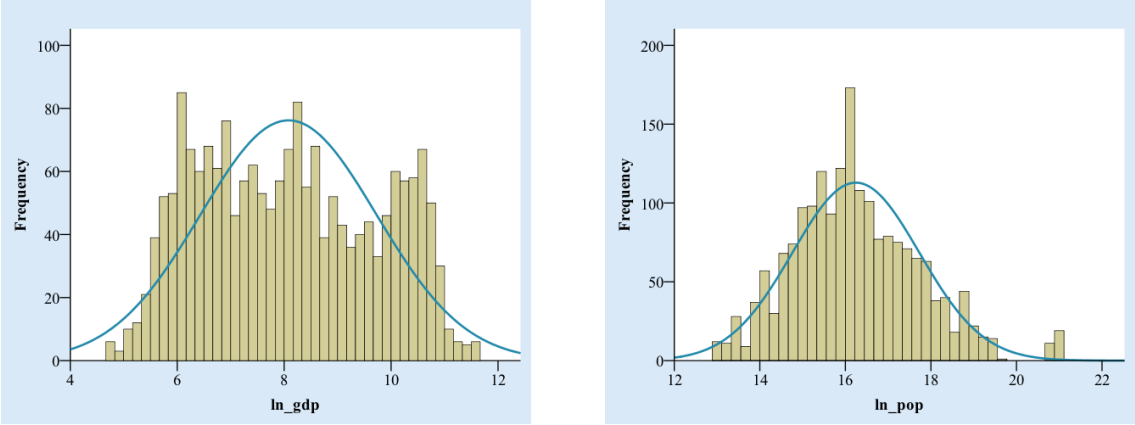

**Economic growth rate**




**Population size**

**FIGURE B1.** ***Histograms of Frequencies Associated with the Observed Variable Scores***

*Note*. The binary categorical variables in the model are not suited to be graphically represented by a histograms, because they do not produce continuous frequencies.




**ln_GDP per capita** **ln_population size**

**FIGURE B2.** ***Histograms of Frequencies Associated with the Observed, Log-Transformed Variable Scores***

Next, an evaluation of normality of the distribution of the error terms associated with the outcome variable PIRs is displayed in Figure B3. As the histogram approximates a bell-shaped curve, it follows that the assumption of normally distributed errors is satisfied.

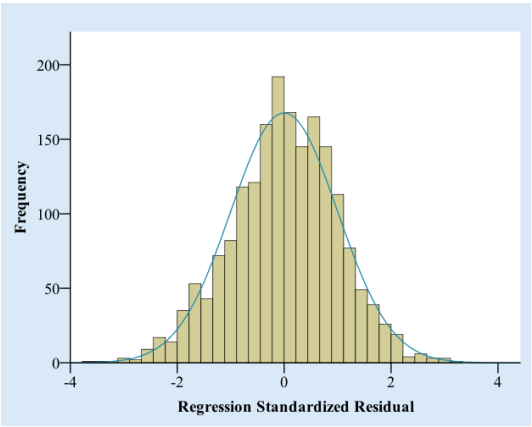



**FIGURE B3.** ***Histogram of the Residuals Associated with the Outcome Variable Personal Integrity Rights***

Additionally, the properties that determine the shape of the histograms can be evaluated statistically rather than graphically, which is reported in Table B1 (Appendix B). Skewness represents whether the data is asymmetrically distributed over the range of its values, with a value of 0 indicating perfect symmetry. A positive skew would mean an asymmetric clustering of observed scores on the lower end of the histogram and a negative skew follows from a clustering on the higher end (Field, 2013). Kurtosis refers the degree to which observed scores cluster at the tails or around the middle of the distribution. The kurtosis value of a perfectly normal distribution is 3 (Field, 2013). Table B1 displays a potentially problematic degree of kurtosis associated with the economic growth variable, at 7.572. This number reflects the image of the histogram in Figure B1, which shows a high peak in the middle of the distribution.

**TABLE B1.** ***Skewness and Kurtosis Values Associated with the Outcome Variable and the Continuous Predictor Variables***

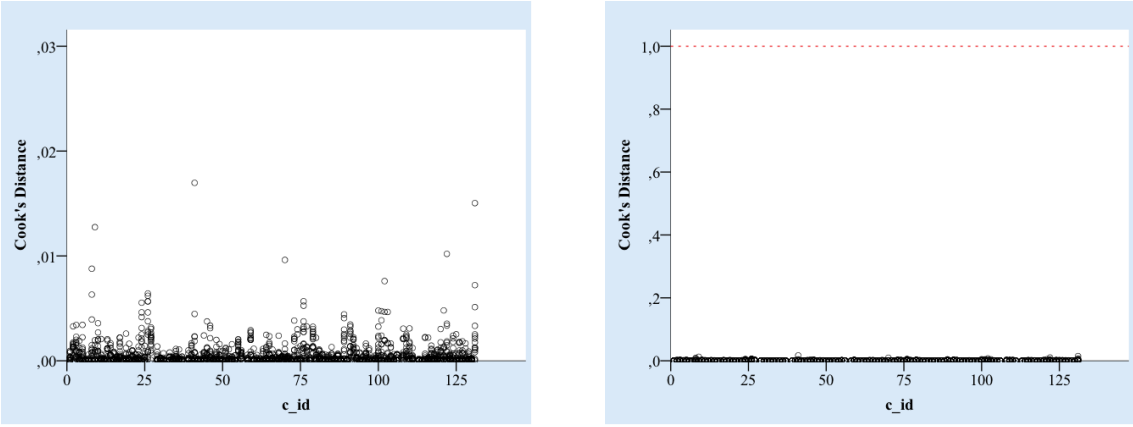
| Variables | | Personal integrity rights | Democracy | Economic growth rate | Ln_GDP per capita | Ln_population size | Residuals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 1890 | 1890 | 1890 | 1890 | 1890 | 1890 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Skewness | | -0.501 | -0.807 | 0.009 | 0.141 | 0.489 | -0.255 |
| Kurtosis | | 2.438 | 2.115 | 1.891 | 7.572 | 3.402 | 3.452 |

*Note.* The standard error of skewness equals 0.057 and the standard error of kurtosis equals 0.113.

### B) Outliers & Influential Cases

A cause for deviation from normality could be the presence of outliers and influential cases in the frequency distribution. Outliers are observed values in the sample that are particularly different from the rest of the sample as indicated by a large residual from the sample mean (Field, 2013). Outliers can influence the value of the sample mean, the standard deviation and the standard error by substantially impacting the spread of the observations. An influential case regards an observation that affects the fitted regression line to such an extent that when it is removed from the analysis, the coefficient estimates would turn out very differently.

To evaluate the potential influence of outliers, the Cook's Distance was generated from SPSS and reported in Figure B4 by scatterplots comparing all the observed cases. This is a measure of the influence of one observed case on the rest of the model, where a value greater than 1 denotes problematic influence (Cook & Weisberg, 1982, as cited in Field, 2013). The plot on a y-axis ranging from 0 to .3 shows the highest Cook's Distance equals 0.017. However, on a scale from 0 to 1, even though this is the highest case, it is too substantially close to 0 to be considered an outlier.




**Cook's Distances on a scale of 0-0.3** **Cook's Distances on a scale of 0-1**

**FIGURE B4.** ***Scatterplots showing the Cook's Distance of the Observed Values***

### C) Probability v. Probability Plots

An alternative graphical representation for normality is the probability-probability plot (P-P plot). The P-P plot shows a comparison of the standardized z-scores of the observes values to the expected z-scores if they would follow a normal distribution. If the observed values fit to the perfect diagonal line, they are normally distributed, and if they sag down the bottom of the line or form a curve above it, their distribution is skewed. Figure B5 displays the P-P plots for the observed values of the variables and Figure B6 for the residuals. The results reaffirm the previous checks. Democracy seems to deviate from normal according to the plots and all the other plots, including that of the residuals, show quite a good fit to the diagonal line.

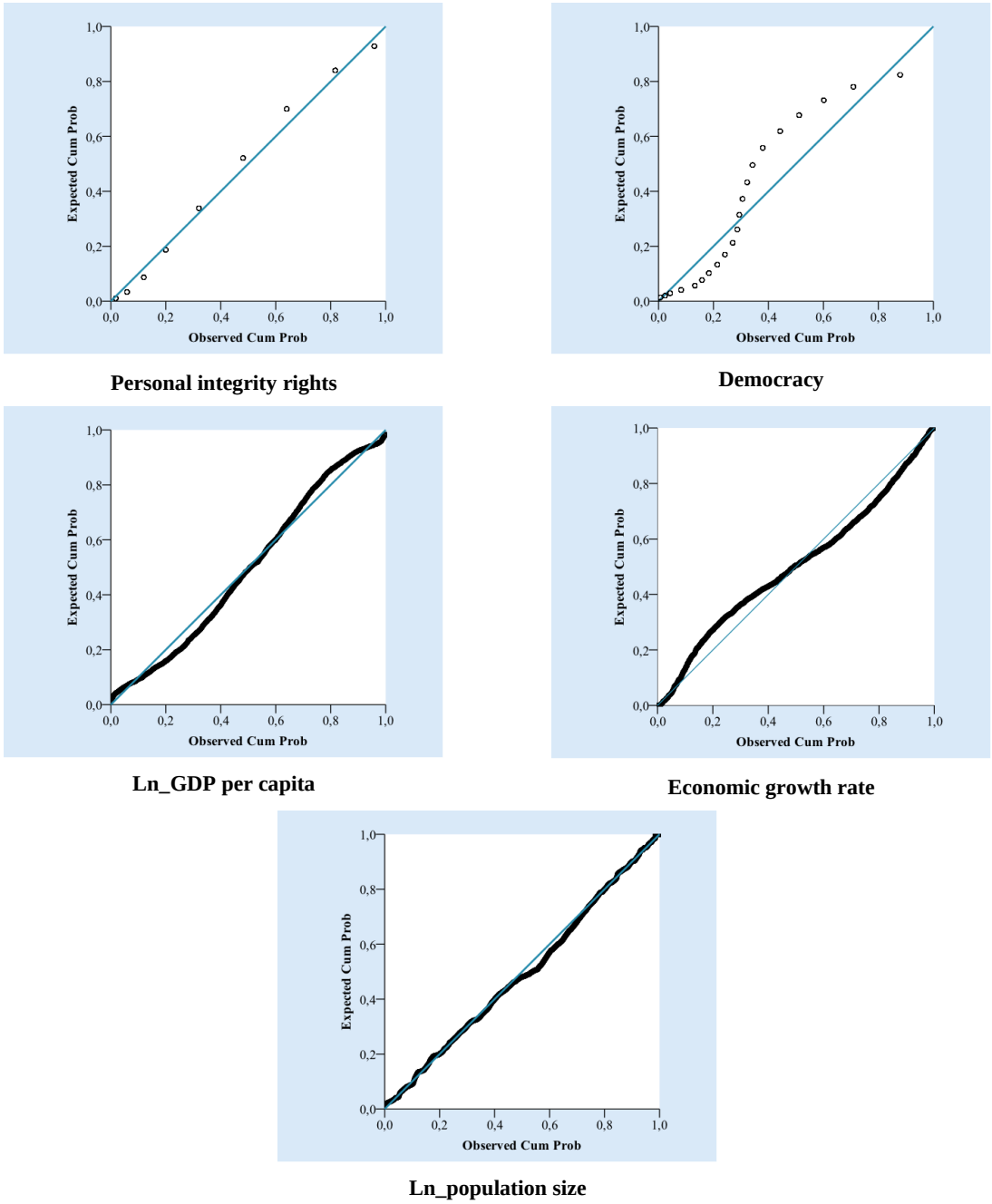



**FIGURE B5.** ***Normal P-P Plots of Observed Standardized Values Compared to Expected Standardized Values***

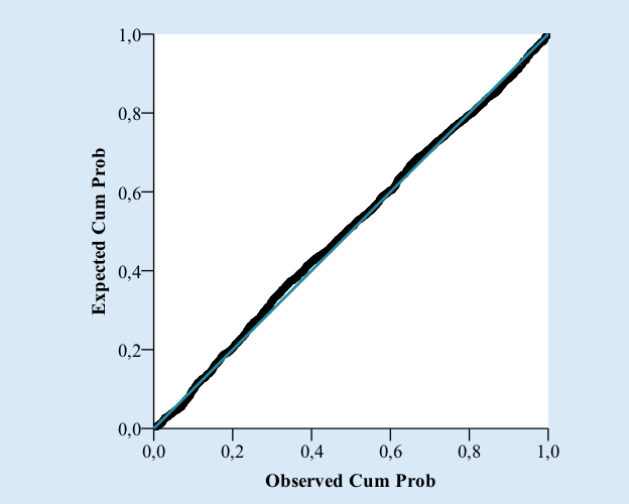



**FIGURE B6.** ***Normal P-P Plot of Standardized Residuals Associated with the Outcome Variable***

To conclude for the assumption of normality, notwithstanding the observed issues, the checks for histograms, outliers and p-p plots confirm that the errors in the model are normally distributed and together with the large sample size this makes sure that the regression analysis will generate trustworthy *p*-values and confidence intervals. After checking for further assumptions, the analysis will proceed with the original democracy and economic growth rate variables – the deviations from normality in their sampling distribution is not problematic enough to violate this assumption – and with the transformed variables ln_GDP per capita and ln_population size.

# Appendix C
## Diagnostics for Linearity

The second OLS assumption is that of linearity, which means that the expected relationships between the outcome variable and all of the predictor variables are in fact linear relationships (Field, 2013). This refers to each relationship individually, so while holding the other variables constant, the value of the outcome variable should follow from a linear function of the dependent variable. As OLS regression aims to minimize the residuals between the estimated line and the observed cases, the linearity assumption is necessary because a non-linear association between the outcome variable and the predictors would impede a good fit and would rule out a straight line overall.

### A) Scatterplots

Scatterplots of the observed values of the outcome variables at different levels of the predictor variables are used to check whether they share a linear association. These plots are reported in Figure C1. The way to interpret the scatterplots as a measure of linearity between the two variables is that the dots should be distributed in such a way that a line of fit would represent a linear relationship between the two axes. For instance, as to the relationship between population size and personal integrity rights, the dots are shaped in such a way that for every move upwards on the x-axis, the observed scores tend to move downwards on the y-axis in a systematic fashion. The binary categorical variables are assumed to satisfy the assumptions of linearity because plotting a variable with only two scores should amount to a straight line in general. Overall, none of the graphs seem to indicate a deviation from linearity, because the scattered dots do not display a curved shape and they are distributed roughly symmetrically across the axes. For these reasons, it follows that the assumption of linearity is met.

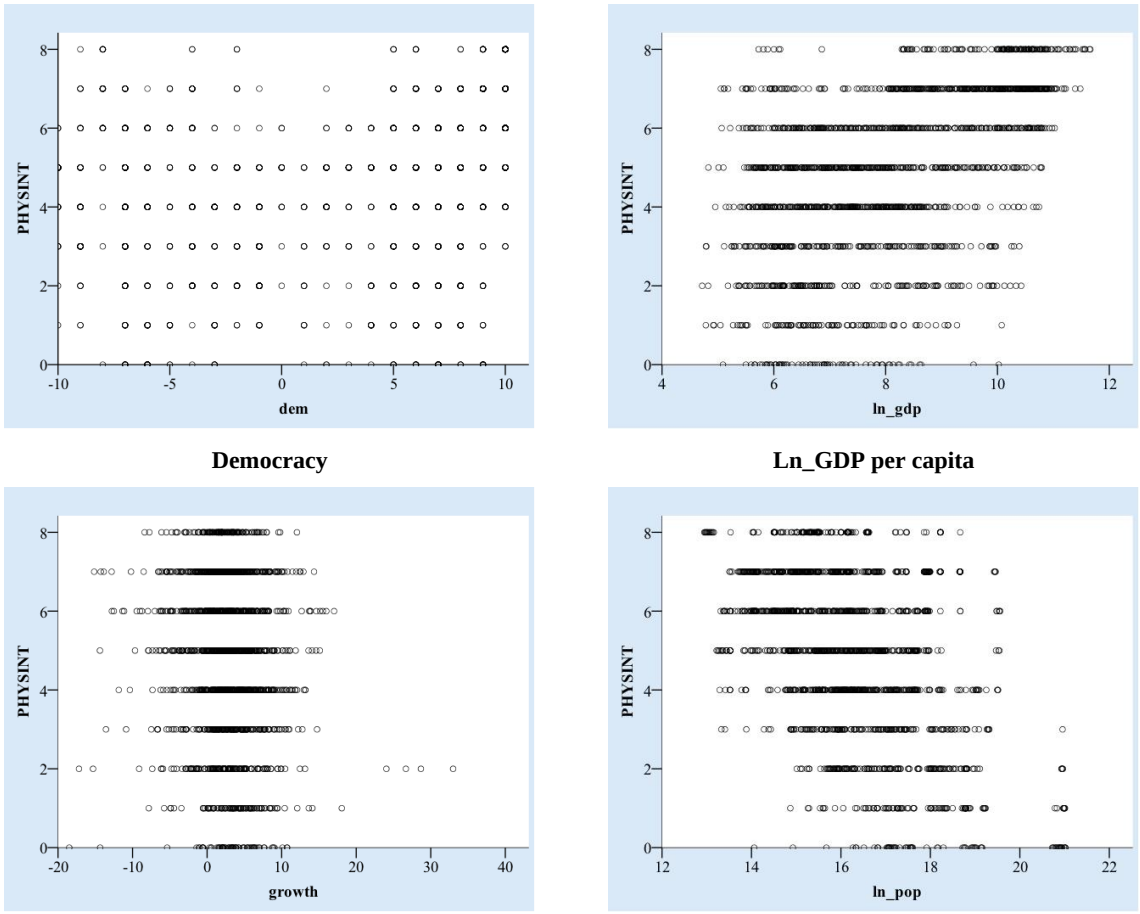



**FIGURE C1.** ***Scatterplots of the Observed Values for the Outcome Variable at Different Levels of the Continuous Predictors***

# Appendix D
## Diagnostics for Multicollinearity

The third OLS assumption of no perfect multicollinearity requires the predictor variables not to be too highly correlated to each other. Perfect multicollinearity would be indicated by a full correlation of 1, which means that one predictor is a perfect linear function of another (Field, 2013). The related problem is that the effect of each predictor on the outcome variable would be indistinguishable from the effect of its correlate, making it difficult to assess their individual importance. Multicollinearity can affect the efficiency of the coefficient estimates because it increases their standard errors (Field, 2013). Additionally, it makes it difficult to make inferences from the value of R-squared as two predictors may account for the same portion of variability in the outcome variable.

### A) Pearson's Correlation

The first check for multicollinearity is Pearson's correlation matrix, which is reported in Table D1. Correlation coefficients of 0.1 signify a small effect, 0.3 a medium effect and 0.5 or over a large effect and a cause for concern (Field, 2013). Table D1 displays no correlations equal to 0.5 or over between the predictor variables, which suggests that the assumption of no perfect collinearity is satisfied. The *p*-values of the correlation coefficients are not reported because the statistics software is likely to denote small coefficients as being significant at the 1% level, whereas the test statistics of large samples can turn out significant even when the effect is small and unimportant in reality (Field, 2013).

The matrix also includes the correlation between the predictors and the outcome variable PIRs. Out of the seven predictors, only two have a correlation coefficient smaller than 0.2, which reflects the overall association that was expected to occur between PIRs and the predictors that were selected based on theoretical evidence. Additionally, economic growth rate and international war have an unexpected sign compared to their hypothesized relationship with PIRs. If these unexpected signs should also be generated by the regression analysis this presents reason to question the theoretical expectations.

**TABLE D1.** ***Correlation Matrix***

| Variables | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Personal integrity rights | 1.000 | | | | | | | |
| 2. EU trade agreement ratification | .216 | 1.000 | | | | | | |
| 3. Democracy | .399 | .248 | 1.000 | | | | | |
| 4. Ln_GDP per capita | .518 | .254 | .405 | 1.000 | | | | |
| 5. Economic growth rate | -.091 | -.046 | -.050 | -.099 | 1.000 | | | |
| 6. Ln_population size | -.468 | -.083 | .055 | -.081 | .029 | 1.000 | | |
| 7. International war | .139 | .181 | .220 | .329 | -.006 | .114 | 1.000 | |
| 8. Civil war | -.570 | -.019 | -.111 | .038 | -.254 | .311 | -.014 | 1.000 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1888

### B) Collinearity Diagnostics: Tolerance & VIF Coefficients

The second diagnostic for multicollinearity involves checking the Tolerance and VIF coefficients. The variance inflation factor (VIF) indicates whether a predictor has a strong linear relationship with the other predictors. According to Field (2013) there is cause for concern over bias when the largest VIF is greater than 10 or if the average VIF is substantially greater than 1. Tolerance levels indicate a violation of the assumption when dropping below 0.1, which indicates a serious problem.

As rhymes with the preliminary conclusion drawn from the correlation matrix that none of the predictors seem to share a sufficiently high correlation, the collinearity diagnostics as displayed in Table D2 reveal that the VIF and Tolerance scores do not exceed the boundaries for concern. None of the VIF scores are substantially higher than 1 and none of the Tolerance scores come close to 0.1. The average VIF is approximately 1.173, which also is not sufficiently different from 1 to indicate a major correlation between any of the predictors. These results verify the assumption that the data displays no severe multicollinearity.

**TABLE D2.** ***Collinearity Diagnostics Associated with the Predictor Variables***

| Predictor | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|
| | Tolerance | VIF |
| EU trade agreement ratification | .887 | 1.128 |
| Democracy | .830 | 1.205 |
| Ln_GDP per capita | .760 | 1.315 |
| Economic growth rate | .986 | 1.014 |
| Ln_population size | .843 | 1.187 |
| International war | .860 | 1.163 |
| Civil war | .831 | 1.203 |

# Appendix E
## Diagnostics for Autocorrelation

In order to generate valid confidence intervals and significance tests as well as optimal coefficient estimates, the residuals between observations should be uncorrelated to each other (Field, 2013). This condition of independence of errors constitutes the fourth OLS assumption and it also depends on whether the observations are made independently of each other. The main problem when violating this assumption is inefficient parameter estimates because autocorrelation increases the variance in the error terms (Graddy & Wang, 2008).

### A) Durbin-Watson Test

In order to test for autocorrelation, SPSS outputs the results of the Durbin-Watson test. Its results can vary from 0 to 4, with the value of 2 indicating fully uncorrelated residuals, values lower than 2 reflecting positively correlated residuals and higher than 2 negatively correlated ones (Field, 2013). The outcome of the test was a Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.812, which is substantially different from the value of 2 which would indicate an absence of any autocorrelation. It follows that this assumption is violated, but this is an expected result. The observed data used for analysis includes observations that stretch across units within the sample as well as over time within the trends of countries. Time-serial data has no guarantee to be absent of serial correlation, because a random shock that causes a change in the error term at one period will likely also affect the error term at the next period. The fact that time-series cross-sectional or panel data cannot easily avoid this problem poses a reason to use an alternative method to OLS estimation, which is explored in section 4.2.4 and 4.3 of this thesis.

## Appendix F
## Diagnostics for Homoscedasticity

The fifth and last assumption of the pooled OLS regression analysis regards homoscedasticity: the condition of equal variances of the outcome variable across different levels of the predictor variables. In other words, the variation in the outcome scores around their mean should be roughly the same between different samples or between different groups within the predictor variable. In case of the current research, it would mean that the spread of PIRs scores should be roughly the same across observed values of the independent variables, so for instance at both levels of the main independent variable EU Trade Agreement Ratification. If the assumption of equal variances is violated, the standard errors of the coefficient estimates will be biased and inconsistent, making the confidence intervals less trustworthy (Field, 2013). Both graphical and statistical checks are used to evaluate this assumption.

### A) Predictions v. Residuals Plot

The first check uses a Zpred-Zresid plot, which compares the standardized predictor values to the standardized outcome values to see whether there is homogeneity of variance at different levels of the predictors. Figure F1 displays this plot. The distribution of observed values does not create a random cluster of dots because the outcome variable is not expressed in continuous values. Nevertheless, it could still be argued that the variances between the highest and the lowest standardized residuals at different levels of the standardized predicted values is roughly equal. If this were not the case, the scatterplot would display some sort of funnelled shape of dots.

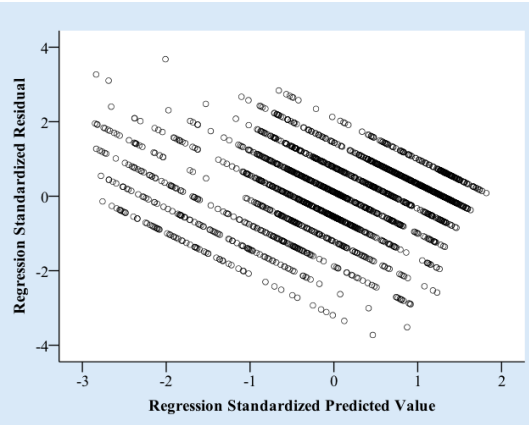



**FIGURE F1.** ***Predictions v. Residuals Plot***

### B) Factors v. Residuals Plot

Another visual inspection for heteroscedasticity is to plot the residuals against each of the predicted values from each independent variable. In these plots, if the variance of the residuals is the same

across the values of the independent variable, equal variances may be assumed (Graddy & Wang, 2008). Figure E2 shows mixed results across the variables. On the one hand, EU trade agreement ratification, democracy, international war and civil war display fairly equal variance between the residuals across different levels of the predictors. This is visible most clearly at the categorical binary variables for which the distance between the lowest and the highest unstandardized residual is almost the same at both levels of the predictor. On the other hand, ln_GDP per capita, economic growth rate and ln_population size demonstrate some level of heteroscedasticity, where the variance in residuals is not the same across levels of the predictor. For the GDP variable, for instance, the variance on the left-hand side of the x-axis is far larger than on the right-hand side. The other two show the same issue to some degree. From this, the scatterplots offer evidence to reject the assumption of homoscedasticity, because there are unequal variances in the data.

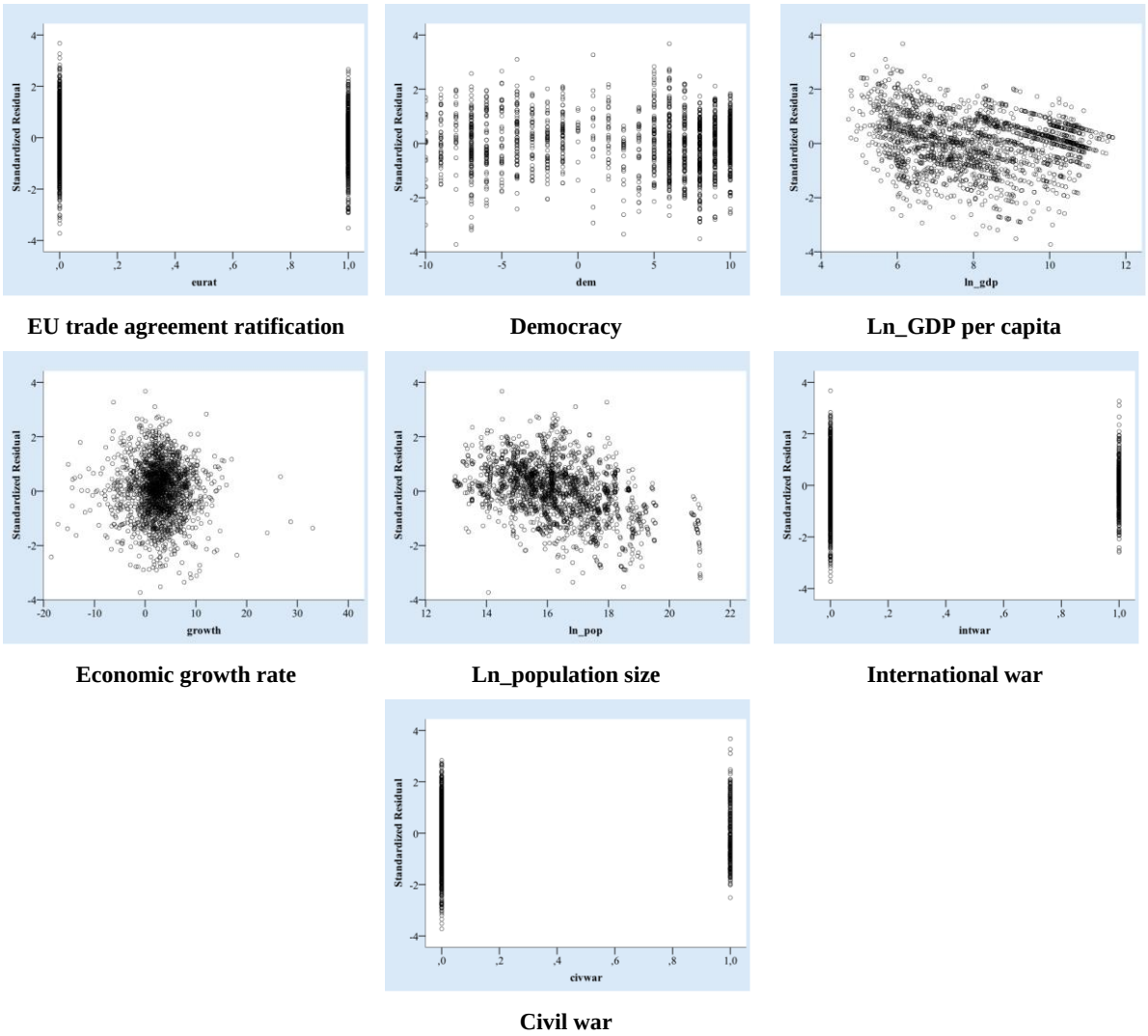



**FIGURE F2.** ***Scatterplots for Homoscedasticity***

**C) Statistical Test for Equal Variances**

Next, statistical inspections can offer a more formal and definitive way to verify the homoscedasticity assumption. A common test is the Levene's Test for homoscedasticity, but because not all the included variables have strict 'levels' of scores that group observations together but rather continuous scales of scores, this test is not optimally suitable. Alternatively, the post-estimation likelihood test for homoscedasticity in STATA was deployed to verify its null hypothesis that there are equal variances. The test resulted in $\chi^2(157, N=1890) = 711.77$, $p < .001$, which is a significant test statistic. This offers evidence to reject the null hypothesis and assume there is heteroscedasticity in the model, meaning the assumption is violated. This result plays a part in considering whether OLS still yields the best estimation methods, and violation of homoscedasticity will be remedied by applying robust standard errors in the regression analysis.

## Appendix G
## Diagnostics for Stationarity

An important condition for time-series analysis to avoid spuriousness in estimating the variable relationships, is for a process $X_t$ to be stationary in mean (Lyócsa, Vyrost & Baumöhl, 2011). This means that within a time trend of a phenomenon there can be variation, as the value of $X$ at one point in time can be lower in the next and higher again afterwards, but overall its mean throughout time remains constant. If the trend of $X_t$ were to be expressed in a regression equation as dependent on some intercept, a beta coefficient and an error term, a beta coefficient that is not equal to zero would indicate that the process $X_t$ is not stationary in mean. In such a non-stationary series, any random shocks to $X_t$ have a permanent effect on the series and can therefore substantially affect the mean over time. Alternatively, shocks to a stationary time-series change the values of $X_t$ shortly afterwards, but eventually decay as $t$ tends to infinity (Lyócsa, Vyrost & Baumöhl, 2011).

In order to draw conclusions about the relationships between two or more time processes, their regression requires both processes to be stationary in mean. If this is not the case and $X_t$ has a constant mean over time whereas $Y_t$ has a changing mean over time, then the relationship between these variables would take on a different form at different times. This means that their relationship could never be expressed by a single beta coefficient estimate that could predict $Y$ for a given $X$ at all points $t$ by the same effect. On the contrary, if both processes are stationary in mean, even though observations of $X_t$ and of $Y_t$ vary over time, their relationship could be captured by some beta factor because the *relationship* between the mean of $X_t$ and the mean of $Y_t$ is constant over time.

### A) Unit Root Tests for Stationarity

To evaluate stationarity, STATA tests whether the time series of the variables contain a unit root, which would indicate a non-stationary series. Multiple tests are available and their applicability depends on the properties of the data. The Levin-Lin-Chu test for unit roots was selected because it tests a null hypothesis for all panels simultaneously and it is suitable for data with a large N and a large set of $t$ (Lyócsa, Vyrost & Baumöhl, 2011). It tests the null hypothesis that all time series contain a unit root and are therefore non-stationary. The Levin-Lin-Chu test requires a modified version if the time series of a variable follows a linear trend, which is checked by regressing each variable with time. Tables G1 to G5 report the results of these checks and show significant $p$-values for GDP per capita, economic growth rate and population size, indicating they follow a linear trend in time.

Table G6 reports the output of the unit root test. The output shows that for personal integrity rights, economic growth rate and population size, $p < .001$, which denotes a significant test statistic and reason to reject the null of non-stationarity. Only the time series associated with the democracy and GDP per capita predictors show insignificant $p$-values which means they contain a unit root and are not stationary. The remedy for treating the non-stationary series is to produce their first-difference

trend in STATA and perform the unit root test again (Torres-Reyna, 2007). Table G7 demonstrates that the first-differenced series of democracy and GDP per capita do produce test statistics with significant *p*-values that offer reason to reject the null and assume they are stationary in mean.

**TABLE G1.** ***Trend Test for Personal Integrity Rights***

| Personal integrity rights | Coefficient | *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| Year | -0.0317 | 0.0113 | -2.81 | .005* | -0.0538 | -0.0095 |
| Constant | 68.3617 | 22.6110 | 3.02 | .003* | 24.0164 | 112.7069 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1889

**p* < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G2.** ***Trend Test for Democracy***

| Democracy | Coefficient | *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| Year | 0.0621 | 0.0226 | 2.74 | .006* | 0.0178 | 0.1065 |
| Constant | -120.79 | 45.4335 | -2.66 | .008* | -209.8772 | -31.7029 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1889

**p* < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G3.** ***Trend Test for Ln_GDP per Capita***

| Ln_GDP per capita | Coefficient | *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| Year | 0.0692 | 0.0049 | 14.18 | .000* | 0.0596 | 0.0788 |
| Constant | -130.6670 | 9.7951 | -13.34 | .000* | -149.8735 | -111.4605 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1889

**p* < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G4.** ***Trend Test for Economic Growth Rate***

| Economic growth rate | Coefficient | *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| Year | -0.0558 | 0.0157 | -3.55 | .000* | -0.0866 | -0.0250 |
| Constant | 114.5418 | 31.5204 | 3.63 | .000* | 52.7358 | 176.3479 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1889

*$p$ < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G5.** ***Trend Test for Ln_Population Size***

| Ln_population size | Coefficient | *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| Year | 0.0146 | 0.0049 | 2.98 | .003* | 0.0050 | 0.0241 |
| Constant | -13.0032 | 9.7961 | -1.33 | .184 | -32.2119 | 6.2054 |

*Note.* Number of observations = 1889

*$p$ < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G6.** ***Levin-Lin-Chu Unit Root Test for Stationarity***

| Variables | Unadjusted *t* | Adjusted *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal integrity rights | -31.65 | -10.89 | .000* |
| Democracy | -16.39 | -0.60 | .276 |
| Ln_GDP per capita | -22.00 | 0.48 | .683 |
| Economic growth rate | -39.15 | -16.67 | .000* |
| Ln_population size | -35.23 | -29.13 | .000* |

*Note.* $H_0$: panels contain unit roots, $H_a$: panels are stationary. The unit root tests assessed $n$ = 126 panels, over a period of 15 years.

*$p$ < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**TABLE G7.** ***Levin-Lin-Chu Unit Root Test for Stationarity with First-Differenced Results***

| Variables | Unadjusted *t* | Adjusted *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy (first-difference) | -33.25 | -8.99 | .000* |
| Ln_GDP per capita (first-difference) | -33.62 | -12.50 | .000* |

*Note.* $H_0$: panels contain unit roots, $H_a$: panels are stationary. The unit root tests assessed $n$ = 126 panels, over a period of 15 years.

*$p$ < .01, i.e. rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

**B) Balancing the Dataset**

Before executing the Fixed Effects regression in STATA, it requires a balanced dataset, which means that all countries have observed values for all variables in all years (Torres-Reyna, 2007). This is relevant to report because at this stage the dataset has undergone some changes. Out of the originally included UN Member States that together exceeded 160 countries, only 126 countries remain, which is the sample size reported in the introduction to this thesis. As data for the analysis was gathered from different institutions, it was to be expected that not all the variables were measured for the same sample and the same time frame. This explains the number of countries with which the analysis proceeds.

**C) Optimal Lags Selection**

The final diagnostic for running the FE regression is to inspect whether lags for each time series should be included in the model and if so, how many, in order to eliminate any effects of autocorrelation in the predictors' error terms. This ensures that the resulting beta coefficients will be efficient estimators, because it lets the model account for the variation from shocks originating from previous years (Lyócsa, Vyrost & Baumöhl, 2011). The *varsoc* command in STATA produces a number of lags for each panel which indicates the number of years that the impact of the shock from a score of $X_{1i}$ at $t$=1 has on its scores in the following years. A frequency count for the suggested number of lags by STATA for each predictor at each panel determined the most common lag length for the variables. The outcome was a lag length of zero for the all of the predictors.

Concluding from these checks, the assumption of stationarity has been met with the necessary modifications. The regression analysis will proceed can proceed with all the stationary variables as selected earlier except for the first-differenced versions of democracy and GDP per capita.

## Appendix H

## Interpreting the Regression Coefficient of Log-transformed Predictors

The regression equation associated with the outcome variable personal integrity rights (*PIRs*) and the log-transformed population size (*lnPop*) predictor variable looks as follows when including the beta coefficient resulting from the regression analysis:

$$PIRs = \alpha - 1.035 lnPop$$

To calculate the magnitude of change in the outcome variable resulting from a change in the predictor variable, we start by expressing the partial derivative of *PIRs* associated with *lnPop,* given the rule that the derivative of $lnx = 1/x$, as follows:

$$\frac{\partial PIRs}{\partial Pop} = -1.035 \left(\frac{1}{Pop}\right)$$

Changing this equation results in the expression for the change in *PIRs* associated with the change in population.

$$\partial PIRs = -1.035 \left(\frac{1}{Pop}\right) \cdot \partial Pop$$

$$\partial PIRs = -1.035 \left(\frac{\partial Pop}{Pop}\right)$$

Or in other words,

$$PIRs_2 - PIRs_1 = -1.035 \left(\frac{Pop_2 - Pop_1}{Pop}\right)$$

which, when multiplying both sides by 100, expresses the percentage change of the variables.

$$100 \cdot \partial PIRs = -1.035 \left(\frac{\partial Pop}{Pop}\right) \cdot 100$$

$$100 \cdot \partial PIRs = -1.035 \cdot \%\Delta Pop$$

Lastly, the equation can be expressed in terms of the unit-change in *PIRs* as a result of the percentage-change in *lnPop* as follows:

$$\Delta PIRs = -\frac{1.035}{100} \cdot \%\Delta Pop$$

which means that a 1% increase in the Population Size predictor will lead to a $b/100$ change in the personal integrity rights outcome. For instance, if *PIRs*=5 to start with, the outcome after a 1% population size increase can be calculated with the formulated expression as follows:

$$PIRs = 5 - \frac{1.035}{100} \cdot 1 = 4.98965$$

# Appendix I

## Standardized Regression Coefficients

**TABLE I1.** ***Regression Results for Fixed Effects Estimation with Standardized Coefficients***

| Personal integrity rights | Standardized coefficient | Robust *SE* | *t* | *p* > \| *t* \| | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | UL | LL |
| EU trade agreement ratification | 0.0131 | 0.0431 | 0.30 | .763 | -0.0723 | 0.0984 |
| Democracy (first-difference) | -0.0015 | 0.0588 | -0.03 | .980 | -0.1180 | 0.1150 |
| Ln_GDP per capita (first-difference) | -0.2845 | 0.1860 | -1.53 | .129 | -0.6527 | 0.0837 |
| Economic growth rate | 0.0216 | 0.0191 | 1.13 | .262 | -0.0163 | 0.0595 |
| Ln_population size | -0.7238 | 0.3543 | -2.04 | .043* | -1.4250 | -0.0227 |
| International war | -0.0224 | 0.0214 | -1.05 | .296 | -0.0647 | -0.0199 |
| Civil war | -0.2117 | 0.0334 | -6.33 | .000** | -0.2779 | -0.1455 |
| Constant | 0.0110 | 0.0080 | 1.38 | .170 | -0.0047 | 0.0267 |

*Note*. The *t*-values and *p*-values associated with the standardized regression coefficients of the predictor variables are the same as those resulting from the original regression analysis with the unstandardized coefficients, including the same significant results at *$p < .05$ and **$p < .01$, indicating reason to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% and 1% significance level, respectively.