

Appendix A (Chapter 4)

1 Action/Severity Codes

UPR Info hand-labeled each recommendation with an *Action* code based on the first verb and the overall action contained in the recommendation, as follows:

- Level 1.** Recommendation directed at non-SuR states, or calling upon the SuR to request technical assistance, or share information (Example of verbs: call on, seek, share).
- Level 2.** Recommendation emphasizing continuity (Example of verbs: continue, maintain, persevere, persist, pursue).
- Level 3.** Recommendation to consider change (Example of verbs: analyze, consider, envisage envision, examine, explore, reflect upon, revise, review, study).
- Level 4.** Recommendation of action that contains a general element (Example of verbs: accelerate, address, encourage, engage with, ensure, guarantee, intensify, promote, speed up, strengthen, take action, take measures or steps towards).
- Level 5.** Recommendation of specific action (Example of verbs: conduct, develop, eliminate, establish, investigate, undertake as well as legal verbs: abolish, accede, adopt, amend. implement, enforce, ratify).

I re-coded this variable as an ordinal rank from 1 (minimal action, most likely accepted), to 3 (most specific, least likely to be accepted) and renamed it *Severity*, as follows:

Table A1: Action and Severity Codes

<i>Action Code</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent accepted</i>	<i>Severity Code</i>
1	662	95.92	1
2	9191	95.42	1
3	4516	56.91	3
4	22549	84.63	2
5	20769	54.27	3

2 Issue Codes

Table A2: Issue Codes and Frequency

Asylum-seekers - refugees	1047	International humanitarian law	712
Civil society	947	International instruments	12714
Corruption	1081	Justice	4337
Counter-terrorism	307	Labor	2827
CP rights - general	207	Migrants	2681
Death penalty	2541	Minorities	2610
Detention conditions	3624	National plan of action	628
Development	1076	NHRI	2142
Disabilities	2177	Other	1607
Elections	1846	Poverty	1119
Enforced disappearances	343	Public security	379
Environment	1250	Racial discrimination	2434
ESC rights - general	283	Right to education	2935
Extrajudicial executions	314	Right to food	357
Freedom of association and peaceful assembly	1053	Right to health	1814
Freedom of movement	118	Right to housing	311
Freedom of opinion and expression	1683	Right to land	231
Freedom of religion and belief	1350	Right to water	246
Freedom of the press	1301	Rights of the Child	10104
General	953	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	1462
HIV - Aids	337	Special procedures	1917
Human rights defenders	837	Technical assistance	1374
Human rights education and training	2209	Torture and other CID treatment	4530
Human rights violations by state agents	848	Trafficking	2029
Impunity	478	Treaty bodies	1541
Indigenous peoples	992	UPR process	814
Internally displaced persons	237	Women's rights	10705

Value on the right indicates the total number of recommendations about a given issue in the dataset.

3 Model Specifications

3.1 Table 4.3: Determinants of Recommendation Severity

This analysis examines the behavior of reviewer states. The unit of observation is an individual recommendation ($n = 57,867$) and the dependent variable is the level of *Severity* of that recommendation.

The models include several potentially confounding variables. First, I include an indicator for whether the reviewing country was undergoing a review during the same session as the target. Reviewing states who themselves undergo a UPR in the same year may wish to be seen as participating, but they might shy away from politically sensitive commentary due to expectations of reciprocity.¹

In addition, many observers note that co-regionals face more pressure to deal tactfully with one another. Shared region is strongly correlated with UN voting patterns and may thus confound relationships between our variables of interest. Therefore, the models control for whether the target and reviewer countries come from the same region using classifications from the Correlates of War (COW) project.

Another possibility involves the tendency for norm-abiding states to shame norm-violating states in harsher terms. Given that some of the hypothesized explanatory variables are plausibly correlated with human rights records, I include measures of *Physical Integrity Rights Protections* for both the reviewer and target.² The models lag country-year variables by one year to mitigate simultaneity issues and lessen any incorrect direction of inference.

I also control for the thematic *Issue* involved in each recommendation. Some countries may consider some human rights issues, such as torture or genocide, as particularly

¹ Appendix 8 examines reciprocity or tit-for-tat behavior.

² Fariss 2014. Data coverage up to 2013.

serious, demanding stronger actions. For this reason, I include all 54 issue categories as dummy variables in the models.

Finally, there are likely unobserved characteristics of reviewer and target states that affect their propensity to receive and send recommendations. All models include fixed reviewer and target country effects, which control for un-modeled and stable state characteristics. They also include fixed effects for the year in which the UPR review took place in order to control for possible learning effects or unobserved contextual factors that shape the review process at particular times. Notably, more recommendations were made in the second round of the review process than in the first.³

Table 4.3 reports results from OLS models that include each of the hypothesized explanatory variables as well as a cumulative model.

3.2 Figure 4.1: Effect of *Geopolitical Affinity* on Recommendation Counts, by Issue

I first transformed the UPR data into a directed dyadic structure. The sample consists of all dyads between states undergoing a review in a given year and states that offered at least one recommendation in that review, totaling 20,130 observations. Because participation as a reviewer is optional, not all potential dyads are observed; a potential reviewer offered at least one recommendation in 27 percent of cases. Among those who did participate as reviewers, delegations offered an average of 2.8 recommendations per review. See Appendix 4 for robustness tests that address potential sampling bias.

I then estimate 54 models, one for each of the 54 issue categories. For each model, the dependent variable records the count of recommendations addressing a particular issue offered by a given reviewer. The main explanatory variable is the degree of geopolitical affinity between reviewer and target (*Geopolitical Affinity*). Higher numbers indicate

³ Dyadic fixed effects are impossible in this context, given that individual dyads occur once or twice in the data.

greater levels of affinity between the reviewer and target, while lower numbers indicate more hostility.

The models include the following controls described above: *Reviewer UPR*, *Shared Region*, and *Physical Integrity Rights Protections* for reviewer and target. They also include two additional controls: (1) the total number of recommendations offered by a given state during a review, as this is proportional to the number of recommendations about any given issue; and (2) the mean level of severity in those recommendation(s). Again, I include fixed effects for reviewer, target, and year. The figure reports results from OLS models for ease of interpretation, though see Terman and Byun (2021) for replications using zero-inflated Poisson and hurdle count models.

3.3 Figure 4.2 and Table 4.4 on Target State Response

The second analysis examines the actions of the target (i.e., state under review). The unit of observation is an individual recommendation ($n = 57,867$), and the dependent variable is a dichotomous *Response* variable indicating whether the target state accepted the recommendation.

Countries are likely to support or reject recommendations based on the topic involved. For this reason, I include all 54 issue categories as dummy variables in the models. Similarly, because states are more likely to support recommendations that are more lenient, I control for the *Severity* level of recommendations in the analysis of SuR response.

Again, the models control for the reviewer and target's *Physical Integrity Rights Protections* and *Shared Region*, and include fixed effects for reviewer, target, and year. In addition, I include an indicator for whether the state under review sits on the Human Rights Council (HRC), as council members may be incentivized to accept more recommendations, all else equal.

I report estimates from linear probability models in order to facilitate interpretation (see Appendix 5 for logit estimations). Table 4.4 presents results from OLS models that include each of the hypothesized explanatory variables as well as a cumulative model. Figure 4.2 reports results from Table 4.4—Model 2, showing the marginal effect of each issue on the probability of target support, controlling for other factors.

4 Potential Selection Bias

As I described in the book, participation in the UPR is voluntary for reviewers. While all UN states are invited to offer feedback in every review, they are not forced to do so. A potential reviewer offered at least one recommendation in 27 percent of cases. This raises the possibility of selection bias skewing the results.

To address selection bias, I estimate a two-step Heckman selection model. Here, the sample consists of all directed dyads between states undergoing a review in a given year and a *potential* reviewer (i.e., all UN member states), totaling 74,112 observations.⁴ The selection variable is *Participation*, a binary variable indicating whether a potential reviewer offered at least one recommendation to the SuR (true in 27 percent of cases). The outcome variable is the mean level of *Severity* in the recommendation(s) offered by a reviewer state. The exclusion criterion is whether the reviewer state is a member of the Human Rights Council at the time of a review. The reasoning is that states sitting on the HRC typically have human rights delegations in Geneva that are expected to participate in UPR sessions. Thus, HRC members are much more likely to participate in the UPR, but there is no reason to expect they will request more or less severe recommendations, all else equal.⁵

⁴ In the regression analyses, some targets in the UPR process, such as Palestine and the Vatican, drop out because they are not UN member states.

⁵ Only comments presented orally during the working group sessions are entered into the record. McMahon 2012, 13. If states are themselves undergoing a UPR review in the same session, they may be more likely to give softer reviews, but I include an indicator for this possibility as a control.

Diagnostic tests confirm the appropriateness of the Heckman model: both the likelihood ratio test (first stage model) and the Wald test (whole model) are significant at high levels, which allows for a rejection of the null hypothesis that all coefficients jointly equal zero. Further, ρ is negative, suggesting that the Heckman approach is an appropriate way to model this data. I estimate two models, with and without *Geopolitical Affinity*, given that shared foreign policy interests is likely collinear with the other relational variables.

Table A3: Heckman Selection Models on UPR Participation and Severity

VARIABLES	(1)		(2)	
	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Severity</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Severity</i>
Geopolitical Affinity	0.03** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.01)		
Alliance	0.30*** (0.04)	-0.04** (0.02)	0.30*** (0.04)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Arms (Target to Reviewer)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.10*** (0.03)
Arms (Reviewer to Target)	-0.19*** (0.06)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.18*** (0.06)	-0.04 (0.03)
HRC Member (Reviewer)	0.35*** (0.02)		0.36*** (0.02)	
Reviewer UPR	0.10*** (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.10*** (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)
Physical Integrity Rights Protections (Reviewer minus Target)	0.08** (0.04)	0.04* (0.02)	0.08** (0.04)	0.04* (0.02)
Shared Region	0.63*** (0.02)	-0.04*** (0.02)	0.65*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.01)
Constant	1.12*** (0.19)	2.54*** (0.10)	0.98*** (0.18)	3.17*** (0.09)
Rho		-.18		-.17
Sigma		.50		.50
Wald Chi Sq		8821***		8300***
N	57,491	14,093	57,491	14,093

*** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .1$

Note: Fixed effects for target, reviewer, year are omitted. Standard errors in parentheses.

For both *Geopolitical Affinity* and *Alliance*, the coefficient is positive for *Participation* but negative for *Severity*. This indicates that states are more likely to participate in the reviews of their strategic partners and allies, but are less severe in their commentary on average. This might stem from the design of the UPR process. Time constraints limit the number of states participating during the interactive dialogue, and commentators have a mere three minutes to make recommendations. This structure incentivizes the SuR to solicit the input of friendly states, which tend to eschew harsh criticism in favor of praise and positive feedback, often with the understanding of reciprocal treatment when it comes time for their own review. As one African diplomat put it, many states view the UPR as a means to “protect” and “support” each other from criticism, especially criticism emanating from Western Europe.⁶

The results also display interesting patterns for arms traders. Although states are no more likely to participate in the review of the arms suppliers, they are less likely to provide severe recommendations when they do. However, states that supply arms are *less* likely to participate in the review of their clients. To speculate, this may be because they want to avoid the image of “going soft” on repressive states to which they provide arms; the US-Egypt example is illustrative of this dynamic.

⁶ Ibid., 16.

5 Robustness Tests:

5.1 Severity Level 3

Table A4: State Response to UPR Recommendations (Severity Level 3)

	<i>Probability of Supporting Recommendation</i>			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Geopolitical Affinity	0.063*** (0.006)	0.064*** (0.006)		
Alliance	0.0003 (0.017)		0.018 (0.017)	
Arms (Reviewer to Target)	0.025 (0.018)			0.036** (0.018)
Arms (Target to Reviewer)	0.044* (0.026)			0.067*** (0.026)
HRC Member (Target)	0.020 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)
Same Region	-0.004 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.009)	0.025** (0.010)	0.030*** (0.009)
Physical Integrity Rights (Reviewer)	0.023 (0.022)	0.023 (0.022)	0.023 (0.022)	0.024 (0.022)
Physical Integrity Rights (Target)	-0.107*** (0.030)	-0.107*** (0.030)	-0.107*** (0.030)	-0.107*** (0.030)
N	16923	16923	16923	16923

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Results from linear probability models. Fixed effects for target, reviewer, year, and issue are omitted. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4 replicates Table 4.4 after removing recommendations with *Severity* levels 1 or 2. Note that models omit *Severity* as a control due to the lack of variance. The results demonstrate the influence of *Geopolitical Affinity* on target response. The effect of *Arms (Target to Reviewer)* remained significant, but *Arms (Reviewer to Target)* did not reach conventional levels of significance in one model. One plausible explanation is that geopolitical interests shape arms relationships, resulting in a correlation between these two variables and suppressing the effect of *Arms (Target to Reviewer)* in the full model. Along with the diminished power resulting from a smaller sample size, this could account for the

lack of significance in some models. As in the original analysis, *Alliance* did not reach conventional levels of significance among the subset of strong recommendations.

5.2 Logit Models

Table A5 replicates Table 4.4 using logit models instead of OLS. The results substantively mirror those in the main analysis, with the exception that *Alliance* showed a significant effect in Model 3.

Table A5: State Response to UPR Recommendations (Logit Models)

	<i>Probability of Supporting Recommendation</i>			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Severity 2	-0.967*** (0.074)	-0.971*** (0.074)	-1.091*** (0.073)	-1.082*** (0.073)
Severity 3	-2.180*** (0.074)	-2.184*** (0.074)	-2.313*** (0.073)	-2.303*** (0.073)
Geopolitical Affinity	0.478*** (0.028)	0.488*** (0.028)		
Alliance	-0.027 (0.078)		0.149* (0.077)	
Arms (Reviewer to Target)	0.169** (0.085)			0.267*** (0.084)
Arms (Target to Reviewer)	0.286** (0.113)			0.470*** (0.113)
HRC Member (Target)	0.240*** (0.071)	0.236*** (0.071)	0.238*** (0.071)	0.245*** (0.071)
Same Region	-0.101** (0.049)	-0.114*** (0.044)	0.102** (0.047)	0.147*** (0.041)
Physical Integrity Rights (Reviewer)	0.047 (0.107)	0.041 (0.107)	0.025 (0.106)	0.038 (0.106)
Physical Integrity Rights (Target)	-1.049*** (0.129)	-1.051*** (0.129)	-1.037*** (0.128)	-1.037*** (0.128)
N	39896	39896	39896	39896

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

Results from logit models. Fixed effects for target, reviewer, year, and issue are omitted. Standard errors in parentheses.