**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Effects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on child mortality and vaccination rates: a synthetic control analysis

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 10 Sep 2018

**Reviewer:** Mariana Chilton

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an important paper, and will contribute to the international attempts to demonstrate effectiveness of ratification of international human rights treaties. While the time horizons are challenging, the authors use a number of possible tests, and describe their methods, and limitations very well. There are some serious questions as to the inclusion of particular dummy variables, and there are a few things that need clarification.

There is no rationale given for why a dummy variable was "Islam dominant" the juxtaposition of this framing with that of civil war, polity and trade could be construed as discriminatory. This framing needs more careful explanation and justification - as it's unclear how religious differences would affect child immunization rates/child mortality.

Additionally, the "British legal origin" choice is also lacking justification. It suggests that there was no legal origin before the British colonized those countries. This also could be construed as discriminatory, and suggests that the authors have a clear bias toward Anglo/Christian ideals/views. What about the countries colonized by the Belgians, the French, Portuguese, and Spanish? I suggest the authors reconsider their methods and be careful of how white supremacy is infusing these methods and hypotheses.

Throughout the authors use "adoption" of the CRC (without distinguishing signed vs. ratified). I think there should be a clarification that adopted signifies "ratified."

Throughout the authors infer that the CRC itself is an agent of change, whereas it's simply a piece of paper/document. The language throughout should be ratification of CRC or state/govt adoption of the CRC.
The discussion begins with a sentence suggesting that scholars criticize the effectiveness of the treaties due to lack of enforcement. Please provide evidence/citation.

The discussion merits more narrative about effectiveness of public health workforce & infrastructure, assistance from other countries, access to clean water, etc.

More is needed about the meaning of "momentum" that was identified in the methods.

For child mortality, make it explicit that the rate is 10 per 1,000 throughout to ensure that all readers can understand the metric.

Table 1, consider adding some categorization or signal of treatment vs. control.

Table 2. Clarify the meaning of the N. (Country years?)

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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