

The Scope Expansion of International Organizations

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Abstract

Global challenges such as climate change and AI safety evolve rapidly, and the salience of different issues shifts over time. When do international organizations (IOs) respond to global challenges? States design IOs to solve cooperation problems within specific issue areas, but bureaucracies operationalize these mandates and can redefine what IOs do in practice. I argue that IO bureaucracies adapt selectively: they expand into new issue areas only when doing so increases their relevance to powerful principals. Bureaucrats are not passive implementers or insulated entrepreneurs, but relevance-seeking actors who anticipate and align with the shifting priorities of their major principals. I create an original dataset of 630,500 job postings from 234 IOs (2007-2024), and track changes in IO operations across issue areas. A difference-in-differences design exploiting the rising salience of climate and AI challenges shows that only IOs whose major principals prioritize these issues expand their operational scope, while others remain unchanged. Evidence from funding dynamics and elite interviews suggests that these expansions originate within bureaucracies rather than from direct state mandates. The study reveals that bureaucratic entrepreneurship in IOs is power-structured: IO bureaucracies adapt to global challenges only when expansion keeps them relevant to powerful states.

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1 Introduction

Global challenges such as climate change and artificial intelligence constantly reshape the agenda of global governance. Yet IOs differ strikingly in how they respond. Some IOs move quickly to address new global challenges: the Asian Development Bank has rebranded itself as Asia's Climate Bank. Others, facing the same challenges, remain cautious. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has paid less attention to climate issues, and the World Bank's engagement has fluctuated over time. These contrasts are puzzling. All of these organizations confront the same global challenges and were designed under similar core mandates. However, some adapt dramatically while others do not.

States design IOs to solve specific cooperation problems (Keohane, 1984; Koremenos et al., 2001), yet global challenges frequently emerge and the salience of existing problems can wax or wane.¹ How IOs respond to these shifting global priorities is central to understanding both the adaptability and the limits of global governance. In practice, IOs frequently operate beyond their core mandates: the IMF engages with gender and climate, UNESCO works on health, and many IOs now address artificial intelligence. Why do certain IOs expand into certain new issue areas?

I argue that IO bureaucracies adapt selectively to global challenges. Bureaucrats are not passive implementers of state orders or fully autonomous entrepreneurs. Instead, they are relevance-seeking actors who act strategically to preserve and enhance their organization's standing with powerful principals. IO bureaucracies expand into new issue areas only when doing so increases their relevance to major principals whose priorities have shifted toward those issues, and they contract when those priorities shift away. When powerful principals remain indifferent, bureaucracies have little incentive to adapt, and IOs stay within their original mandates.

This logic of *relevance-seeking* bureaucratic adaptation explains why global shocks do not

¹See, for example, "Why we need a world environment organisation," The Guardian, 28 October 2009, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cif-green/2009/oct/28/world-environment-organisation> and the 2024 APSA panel on "The Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence": https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/apsa/apsa24/index.php?program_focus=view_session&selected_session_id=2146356&cmd=online_program_direct_link&sub_action=online_program.

automatically translate into institutional change. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship exists, but it is structured by power: The bureaucracies initiate changes in scope, yet only in ways that sustain their relevance to the powerful principal states. As a result, adaptation in global governance is selective and power-structured.

To test this argument, I analyze how IO staff tasking evolves across issue areas over time. While charters and mandates outline what IOs are designed to do, their real function lies in the tasks their staff actually perform. Staff composition and tasking define an organization's *de facto* scope. As bureaucracies change expertise and redirect daily work, they redefine the function and role of an IO. Traditional measures of IO behavior (mandates, treaties, reports, etc.) capture *de jure* scope but not what IOs actually do. I therefore introduce job postings as a new source of evidence. Job postings specify concrete tasks and required skills, providing a direct window into bureaucratic operations. I compile an original dataset of 630,500 postings from 234 IOs (2007-2024) and show that IO staff frequently work on areas outside their formal mandates, with issue priorities shifting over time.

Focusing on climate change and artificial intelligence, two salient and rapidly evolving global challenges, I demonstrate that IOs not originally mandated in these domains nonetheless expand into them, but only when their powerful principals prioritize these issues. Elite interviews confirm that these expansions originate in high-level bureaucratic initiatives anticipating principal preferences, rather than direct state directives.

This study shows how sociological logics of IOs may be systematically structured by principal-agent relationships. Classic models depict agents as either faithful executors of state preferences or autonomous actors guided by internal norms (Moe, 1984; Hawkins et al., 2006; Nielson and Tierney, 2003). Principal-agent accounts on IOs emphasize powerful state control and portray IOs as passive tools (Hawkins et al., 2006; Stone, 2011; Copelovitch, 2010; Dreher and Sturm, 2012; Dreher et al., 2009), while sociological and organizational approaches stress bureaucratic autonomy and internal norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Weaver, 2008; Johnson, 2014). Recent research shows that autonomy and principal influence can coexist, and that IO performance

depends on their balance (Clark and Dolan, 2021; Lall, 2023). I advance a different view: bureaucratic entrepreneurship that is conditional and power-structured. Bureaucrats act proactively to reshape organizational scope, but the direction of their initiative follows the priorities of major states. The shadow of the principal’s preferences incentivizes IOs to chase their priorities to increase relevance. I show how these adjustments are not just opportunism, nor does the principal directly order change.

This helps explain the trajectory of agenda setting in global governance. Recent work has suggested that bureaucratic expertise helps explain cases like the IMF’s engagement with climate issues (Clark and Zucker, 2022; Carnegie et al., 2024). However, the change of scope varies greatly across IOs, issues, and over time, and we still lack a general explanation for this variation. This paper develops such an explanation and substantiates it with empirical evidence. IO scope expansion is not random. It is systematic, selective, and power-structured, occurring only in domains valued by major principals. This links the study to broader debates about agenda-setting in global governance (Frieden, 2016). I show that IO functions evolve in practice as bureaucrats redirect resources toward issues prioritized by powerful principals.

This pattern resonates with, but also extends, theories on bureaucratic entrepreneurship. Johnson (2014) shows how IOs create “progeny” to expand their influence, while Lall (2023) highlights how bureaucracies adapt performance under principal oversight. I show that scope expansion inside existing IOs is itself a form of entrepreneurship. Rather than creating new bodies, high-level officials redirect staff tasking, cultivate new expertise, and rebrand their organizations around emerging issues. In doing so, they open a new channel of IO entrepreneurship: the redefinition of organizational scope through personnel and daily operations.

This study highlights personnel tasking as the core of institutional function. What IOs do is defined not only by charters but by the day-to-day work of their staff. Job postings offer three advantages: completeness (they cover the full range of IO work), unbiasedness (written for recruitment rather than political signaling), and comparability (similar templates across IOs enable systematic cross-IO analysis). By building an original dataset of 630,500 postings across 234 IOs,

I provide a new empirical approach for studying how IOs function and how their scope evolves.

The findings reveal how global governance adapts to emerging challenges. First, IO scope expansion is driven not by functional demand or bureaucratic expertise alone, but by state power: expansions occur where powerful principals prioritize new issues. Second, powerful states influence IOs not only through formal rules and budgets but also through the composition and tasking of their bureaucracies. Third, IO bureaucrats are entrepreneurial but power-structured. They act to maintain relevance to powerful principals. This conditional logic explains the selective evolution of IOs and how the broader regime complex adapts unevenly to the shifting interests of powerful states.

2 Bureaucratic Incentives, Power, and Scope Expansion of IOs

2.1 The IO Bureaucracy's Proactive Expansion

States create IOs to solve specific cooperation problems (Keohane, 1984) and design them accordingly (Koremenos et al., 2001; Koremenos, 2016). IO performance is conventionally evaluated in terms of its formal mandate: for instance, the World Trade Organization is judged by its ability to promote trade (Goldstein et al., 2007). In this traditional view, bureaucracies execute the tasks delegated to them, and IOs remain confined to their formal scope. Yet in practice, IOs frequently work well beyond their core mandates.

Although each IO is founded with a core issue area, there is considerable variation in how far they stretch into new domains. The IMF illustrates the puzzle. One might argue that agriculture, health, and education all influence macroeconomic stability and thus fall within its scope. But as an Australian Treasury paper observed, “The challenge is knowing when to stop, since virtually every aspect of an economy can be said to be macroeconomically relevant.” The real question, then, is not whether issues are related, but why IOs emphasize some issues and not others, and why these emphases differ across time and organizations.

Many IOs now address issues outside their core domains. The IMF has launched the Resilience

and Sustainability Trust to support financing for climate and health challenges, and it has also taken on governance, social spending, and gender issues.² The World Health Organization has framed climate change as a major health threat and called for climate finance,³ while the World Bank has incorporated climate and gender goals across its operations.

Crucially, these expansions often originate within the bureaucracy itself, while powerful states sometimes view them as overreach. The IMF provides a clear example. In 2025, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent argued that “we must make the IMF the IMF again,” warning that climate, gender, and social policy were crowding out core macroeconomic tasks.⁴ Even during the Biden administration, which supported multilateral cooperation on climate, the United States publicly criticized the Fund for “mission creep.” In 2023, Under Secretary Jay Shambaugh urged the IMF to “focus on macroeconomic issues,” stating that “the IMF should not be experts on climate issues.”⁵ These episodes underscore that expansions are bureaucratic initiatives responding to perceived shifts in principal priorities, not direct state orders.

The traditional principal-agent model cannot account for this pattern. If IOs merely implemented principal instructions, they would not expand beyond what states explicitly demand. Bureaucrats would have little incentive to pursue new work outside established mandates. Empirically, scope expansion also does not track earmarked contributions, the main mechanism of direct state control beyond core mandates. Instead, elite interviews consistently point to initiative from high-level bureaucrats. Senior officials, often in the managing directors office, strategy, fundraising, or external relations departments, adapt organizational operations through staffing and tasking

²The Chair’s Summing Up Independent Evaluation Office - The Evolving Application of the IMF’s Mandate, Executive Board Meeting, June 10, 2024, IMF, retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2024/06/17/The-Chairs-Summing-Up-Independent-Evaluation-Office-The-Evolving-Application-of-the-IMFs-550573>.

³“We must fight one of the worlds biggest health threats: climate change.” World Health Organization, November 3, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/we-must-fight-one-of-the-world-s-biggest-health-threats-climate-change>.

⁴“Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent Remarks before the Institute of International Finance,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, April 23, 2025, retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0094>.

⁵“Remarks at the Center for Global Development on the IMF and Support for Developing Countries,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 7, 2023, retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1715>.

to position their organizations in issue areas they perceive as increasingly salient to powerful states. They do so because bureaucratic survival, resources, and professional advancement depend on remaining relevant to those principals.⁶

Sociological and organizational theories, by contrast, expect bureaucracies to adhere rigidly to procedures or internal norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999). If that were true, expansions should follow global salience or technical expertise rather than state power. Yet the empirical pattern shows otherwise: IOs expand only when major principals elevate an issue and retreat when those priorities fade. Interviews confirm that initiative is highly uneven within IOs: lower-level staff may exercise discretion in research or reporting, but decisive scope changes originate with senior managers concerned with the organization’s relevance and survival. Table 1 illustrates what the two existing theories can and cannot explain.

Table 1: Theoretical Predictions and Observed Patterns of IO Scope Expansion

Empirical Fact (Observed)	P-A	Sociological	Relevance-Seeking
Expansion follows major principal priorities	Yes	No	Yes
High-level IO bureaucrats initiating expansion	No	Yes	Yes
Expansion sometimes exceeds principal tolerance (mission creep)	No	Yes	Yes

2.2 Bureaucratic Relevance-seeking: Explaining Scope Expansion

I advance a logic of relevance-seeking in the principal-agent relationship to explain IO scope expansion. Bureaucrats are not neutral public servants. Like domestic agencies (Moe, 1984; Niskanen, 1971; Wilson, 1989), they seek to preserve and enhance their organization’s standing. For IO officials, organizational survival, prestige, and career advancement depend on remaining relevant, which means being viewed by powerful principals as a useful instrument for addressing salient global problems.

Crucially, what counts as “relevant” is not defined within the bureaucracy itself. It is shaped by the shifting priorities of powerful principals. Bureaucrats continuously seek to demonstrate value,

⁶Interviewees often noted that states warn IOs not to expand too far, yet high-level officials still push boundaries to demonstrate organizational relevance.

but their efforts translate into value much more easily when they work on issue areas that major principals view as important. This dependency creates selective, power-structured adaptation: bureaucrats initiate change, but its direction is conditioned by principal interests.

IO bureaucracies operate in a crowded governance marketplace. States can pursue cooperation through many venues, including alternative IOs, informal platforms, or bilateral channels. To maintain funding and influence, bureaucrats must show that their IO can deliver on the issues powerful states care about most. Staff composition and tasking are the primary tools of adaptation: even without formal mandate change, senior bureaucrats can alter staff expertise and daily work to address new issue areas, effectively reshaping what the organization does in practice. Just as managers in firms make strategic investments that entrench their importance to shareholders (Shleifer and Vishny, 1989), IO leaders change the organization's staff and expertise toward issues that enhance their organization's importance to powerful principals.

Elite interviews confirm that this mechanism is observable in the ways high-level bureaucrats describe their own work. A former IMF senior official explained that in times without crises, IO leadership “need to look for other things to do” and thus push into areas like climate and health because they “always need to be relevant.”⁷ At the International Labour Organization (ILO), fundraising leaders described climate initiatives as the “future” that would sustain organizational vitality.⁸ At the World Bank, senior officials filter lower-level proposals through the lens of principal priorities and then lobby major shareholders to support them..⁹ Conversely, issues not backed by principals, for example, private-sector lending at the Caribbean Development Bank, struggle to gain support even when staff and member states favor them.¹⁰ This highlights that scope expan-

⁷The IMF “needs to look for other things to do because it has few clients (when there is no crisis),” and it expands into climate and health issues because “(an official in the IMF leadership) always needs to be a relevant person.”

⁸The senior leader of the department is enthusiastic about climate issues because “that is where the future lies, not these labor issues,” and “we must think about the future of the ILO.”

⁹In this process, there may be variation among IOs. In some IOs, principal states may have more power while bureaucracies have greater autonomy in others. Medium to low-level staff may play a role in reporting issues and conducting research, but they rely on the high-level bureaucrats who interact with principal states for filtering what is politically favorable and for setting the operational agenda.

¹⁰For example, one former senior staff at the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) mentions that many member states, as well as the bureaucracy, were interested in adding projects related to the private sector. However, Canada was not interested in the issue, and it was very difficult to get it on the agenda. Meanwhile, Canada prioritized gender issues, so that CDB has increasingly worked on gender.

sion is concentrated at the high-level IO bureaucracy, where bureaucrats interact with principals, anticipate their attention and interests, and adapt organizational scope to stay aligned with their priorities.

The same dynamic is evident in organizational changes. The IMF's trajectory in the 2000s illustrates the mechanism, when global lending demand fell and the organization risked irrelevance. The former French finance minister described it as an institution that "works well, with dedicated people and very high-level staff, but it is a factory to produce paper."¹¹ The former managing director Strauss-Kahn then emphasized the need to "keep the IMF relevant" when traditional clients no longer needed its core services.¹² In response, senior officials pushed work on trade and oil, and later climate and health—all areas that resonated with major shareholder concerns.¹³ Similarly, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) shifted its focus to health during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing health services and delivering vaccines as shareholder attention shifted from infrastructure to public health (Zaccaria, 2024). President Jin Liqun explained this shift to resonate with major shareholder priorities.¹⁴

Of course, IOs could engage with adjacent issues in more limited ways: by deferring to specialized organizations (Pratt, 2018), creating new bodies (Johnson, 2014; Lugg, 2024), or linking new topics to existing mandates (Davis, 2004). Yet these strategies rarely enhance organizational relevance as effectively. To build visibility and secure major principal support, bureaucracies must directly perform tasks in the new issue area. This is why organizations rebrand around salient problems. The Asian Development Bank, for example, has increasingly positioned itself as "Asia and the Pacific's Climate Bank," pledging to devote half of its lending to climate-related projects by 2030. As strategy director Tomoyuki Kimura put it: "We want to be the climate change bank in the

¹¹"IMF Plans to Cut Jobs, Lift Income, The Wall Street Journal," Dec 7 2007, retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB119697366200516166>.

¹²IMF Plans to Cut Jobs, Lift Income, The Wall Street Journal, Dec 7 2007.

¹³IMF senior officials described Iraq, Lebanon, and Gaza as "the Argentinas and Brazils of today."

¹⁴Jin Liqun: "Covid helped our shareholders to understand that when we develop infrastructure for tomorrow, we should not neglect healthcare systems." See "AIIB swivels to climate and private-sector financing ahead of COP26," Euromoney, 26 October 2021, retrieved from <https://www.euromoney.com/article/298jhh0zz4wk1bw2h375s/esg/aiib-swivels-to-climate-and-private-sector-financing-ahead-of-cop26>.

region.”¹⁵ The comparison across these choices underscore the core mechanism: direct operational expansion is the most effective way for bureaucracies to signal value to powerful principals.

Because the IO works on issues the major principal cares about, the principal often tolerate or even welcome such expansions when they occur in IOs they influence. Such expansions provide convenient channels for pursuing preferred outcomes since this is where their leverage is strongest. Once bureaucracies establish capacity in a new area, states may find it efficient to continue using them, lowering the cost of future cooperation. For example, Japan has a significant influence over the Asian Development Bank and has substantially shaped its development policies (Wan, 1995; Lim and Vreeland, 2013; Kilby, 2011). When it comes to climate change, the ADB also provides a channel for Japan to cooperate with other countries in the region in a preferred way. The Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), a bilateral carbon market mechanism initiated by the Japanese government, is embedded into the ADB to support projects that deploy advanced low-carbon technologies. Japan’s other ministries also work closely with the ADB on climate policies. In contrast, Japan may find it difficult to promote such policies through other IOs like the World Bank.

Yet bureaucratic incentives to remain visible and important do not necessarily align with principals’ concerns about efficiency or technical specialization. Bureaucracies may expand more aggressively than principals prefer, since their metric of success is organizational relevance rather than outcome maximization. The IMF, for example, was required to undergo a scope evaluation by its Independent Evaluation Office in 2024, following sustained US warnings about its drift from its core mandate. Although systematic evidence on these limits lies beyond the scope of this study, episodes of criticism, often labeled “mission creep,” are consistent with this logic: they mark the outer boundary of relevance as defined by powerful principals and reveal potential tension between bureaucratic entrepreneurship and principal preferences.

¹⁵“ADB to devote half its lending to climate finance by 2030,” Reuters, 6 September 2024, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/adb-devote-half-its-lending-climate-finance-by-2030-2024-09-06/>.

Based on the arguments above, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Following global challenges, IO bureaucracies expand their operational scope to address them, but only when their major principals prioritize the issue.

In contrast, the IO will not expand beyond its mandate when the concerned members are not powerful principals. When the powerful principal shifts attention away from an issue, the IO will contract from the issue area.

3 Descriptive Patterns: The Scope of IOs Over Time

To examine how international organizations (IOs) adapt to global challenges, I construct a new measure of their *de facto* operational scope. Existing datasets capture what IOs are formally authorized to do, but not what their bureaucracies actually do in practice. Yet the theory developed above centers on bureaucratic adaptation—how IOs change staff tasking and expertise to remain relevant. This section introduces a new measurement and dataset that captures those behavioral shifts and documents how IOs’ operational scope evolve over time.

Most existing data classify IOs by their *de jure* design. For instance, they classify the World Health Organization as a “health” IO, the World Bank as a “development IO,” and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a “security IO.” The most comprehensive such effort, the Measuring International Authority (MIA) project (Hooghe, 2017; Hooghe et al., 2019), codes the formal policy scope of 76 IOs based on institutionalized policies like treaties, protocols, declarations, and constitutions. Figure 1 plots MIA’s scope scores for the WHO and UNESCO. According to these *de jure* measures, both organizations’ policy domains remain nearly constant over 70 years and issues not explicitly written into the mandate are coded as outside their scope.

While useful for studying institutional design, such measures capture only formal authority, not bureaucratic behavior. They observe the rules that specify what IOs may do, but not how they adjust staff daily tasking across issues in practice. Questions of bureaucratic adaptation, however, concern precisely these *de facto* activities.

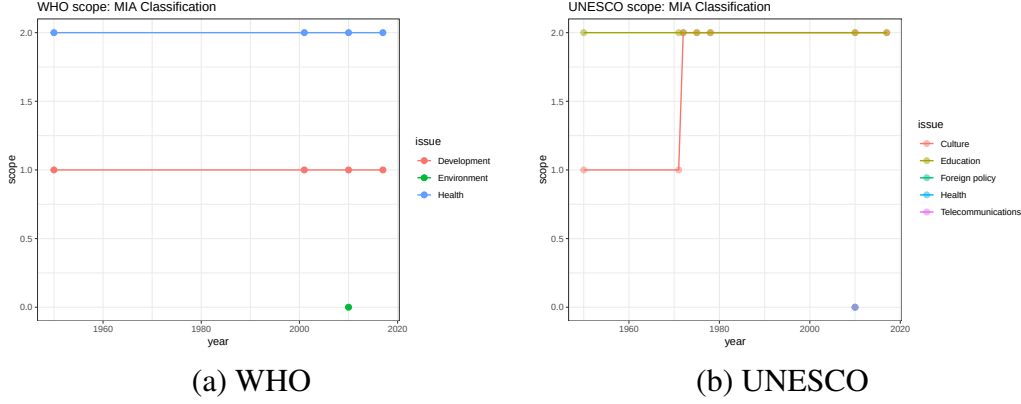


Figure 1: MIA Policy Scores Over Time

Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is policy scope scores coded by the MIA project.

3.1 Constructing the IO Job Postings Data

To capture IOs’ operational activities directly, I compile an original dataset of 630,500 job postings from 234 intergovernmental organizations between 2007 and 2024. Job postings provide a near real-time record of what IO bureaucracies do: they specify the tasks, expertise, and responsibilities that define staff work. Because bureaucratic adaptation occurs through the change of staff tasking and expertise, job postings offer a direct window into that process.

Consider a 2024 posting by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist.¹⁶ The post instructed the officer to “support climate-smart agri-food system transformation” and “enhance climate resilience and adaptation.” Tasks included developing loans and grants, leading policy dialogues, and coordinating regional cooperation. The job’s required qualifications emphasized expertise in sustainability and environmental economics—subjects distinct from ADB’s original poverty reduction mandate. Such postings show bureaucratic reorientation in real time: IOs staff with the corresponding expertise working to address emerging global challenges. This logic motivates the dataset: by observing how IOs outline their staff expertise and tasking, we can measure how bureaucracies expand their functional scope in response to global events.

¹⁶Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, Asian Development Bank, April 10 2024, retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/careers/240222>. Two additional example job postings from the ICAO and ILO can be found in Section E in the Appendix.

Your Role:

As a Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, you will assess and recommend operation strategies for agriculture, food, nature, and rural development in East and Southeast Asia and Pacific countries, engage developing member country (DMC) governments in policy dialogues and reforms, and conduct ADB operations to support climate-smart agri-food system transformation, and enhance climate resilience and adaptation. You will lead and/or support in identifying and developing loans, grants, technical assistances (TAs), and knowledge products, and provide technical support and backstopping to other staff. You will also administer loan, grant and TA projects, and non-lending products and services. This role will also contribute to the analyses and formulation of policies, strategies, and technical guidelines for the AFNR sector of DMCs.

You will:

- Lead and/or support the development of national, subregional and regional sustainable development and management of AFNR sector in DMCs in consultation with relevant government agencies, ADB RMs, and development partners.
- Lead and/or support the analyses of country economics and AFNR policies in selected DMCs and contributes to the AFNR sector assessment and business development including policy-based loans.
- Lead and/or support in the development, processing, and administration of loan, grant and TA projects, and ensure key technical, economic, financial, and crosscutting issues are incorporated into projects, including project economic and financial analyses and cost estimates.
- Lead and conduct economic and sector work in AFNR in the context of inclusive, gender-sensitive and environmentally sustainable economic growth.
- Identify and promote evidence-based policymaking and results-oriented investments towards sustainable and resilient agri-food systems in DMCs.
- Contributes to regional cooperation and integration for sustainable agriculture and food security.
- Liaise with development agencies and partners on collaborative sector, policy, and knowledge works and co-financing.
- ...

Qualifications:

- Master's degree or equivalent, in Environment, Sustainable Development, Finance, Economics or related fields; or University degree in Environment, Sustainable Development, Finance, Economics with additional relevant professional experience can be considered.
- Minimum of 8 years of relevant professional experience with strong policy focus including the below elements.
- Direct experience in originating and structuring infrastructure projects or PPP transactions.
- ...

A potential concern is whether job postings reflect staff's actual work. Multiple forms of evidence suggest the validity of this measure. Interviews with human resources (HR) officials emphasize that postings must accurately describe duties to attract qualified candidates and misrepresentation would produce costly mismatches. HR officers note that postings are bound by internal

rules to ensure they reflect real operations after the staff is hired. Staff members themselves report that their day-to-day activities correspond closely to their job descriptions, and several observed that postings often reveal politically sensitive or emerging work not visible in official reports. In this sense, job postings are an unusually transparent record of bureaucratic operations: they describe the activities IOs actually do, not those they choose to publicize. The production process of job postings reflects bureaucratic agency. Job posts reflect operational needs, and the content of the posts are written mostly by departmental leadership. Meanwhile, member states approve the larger budget and hiring headcounts, but there has been little attention or interference from states in the actual hiring process because of its technical nature.¹⁷

I collect job postings from official IO job sites, third-party recruitment platforms, official IO Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and others.¹⁸ Coverage extends the 73 IOs in the MIA project to 234 organizations listed in the Yearbook of International Organizations.¹⁹ I match IO names across different sources and remove duplicate postings. The data collection process covers as many IOs that actively recruit staff to operate as possible, thereby covering the target population of IOs that this study is concerned with, which are those that have a reasonably sized bureaucracy and are actively engaged in program implementation and service delivery²⁰

Each record includes the post date and full text (tasks and responsibilities, qualifications, education requirements, and other notes).²¹ Using a subset of my data, I show that job postings

¹⁷The top organizational leadership hiring may be an exception.

¹⁸This crowd-sourcing approach is the common practice for job postings data used by labor economists. I summarize the data collection details and the number of job postings over time in Table A and Figure A1 in the Appendix. More data was available in 2015. However, the distribution of job postings across sources is technical and not systematically correlated with the distribution of issue topics. Figure A2 shows that the topic distribution of IOs in the data remains consistent around 2015.

¹⁹The dataset includes 52 of the 73 IOs still active in the MIA project. For the UN system, all departments are aggregated under “United Nations” unless they are specialized agencies or funds (e.g., IMF, UNESCO). IOs with only a handful of staff, such as the Benelux Union, are excluded. Robustness checks removing 5 percent of European postings yield consistent results (Appendix Section D).

²⁰The complete list of IOs covered in this paper is in Section A in the Appendix. Table A8 lists the top 30 IOs accounting for the most job postings. IOs not covered are likely those that are close to treaties or platforms and only keep a handful of staff. For example, the job postings data does not include the Benelux Union, an organization with only 49 staff members based on the Treaty of Union by Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. I test the robustness of the analysis to potential missing data and the presence of many European IOs by removing 5% of the European IO job postings. The results are shown in Section D in the Appendix.

²¹I remove preambles shared across most posts in an IO because they contain little information about the job.

respond rapidly to known real-world changes.²²

3.2 Identifying the Scope of International Organizations

To classify the issue area of each job, I fine-tune a pre-trained transformer language model RoBERTa (Liu et al., 2019) using a hand-coded training set of 3,106 postings.²³ By fine-tuning with hand-coded data, I adapt the model to recognize the specific kinds of language that indicate the issue areas an IO job belongs to. This approach ensures that the classification reflects the actual work described in the job rather than superficial mentions. For instance, it helps the model distinguish between a job focused on providing social welfare programs versus a job posting that mentions IO employee benefits, or between substantial climate work and a generic reference to “sustainable development.” This precision is crucial for measuring IO scope expansion. Each posting can belong to multiple topics among 27 categories, including the 25 from MIA plus “Artificial Intelligence” and “Administrative Support.”²⁴

Overall, the models perform well according to conventional standards. The model’s overall accuracy on the test set is 0.95, and the average precision, recall, and F-1 score are all over 0.95. 25 out of 27 topics have an F1-score over 0.9.²⁵

After obtaining the fine-tuned model, I use it to classify all job postings. The model identifies whether each job posting is within each issue area or not. Again, each job post can belong to multiple issue areas. Within each job post, I calculate the proportion of focus the staff has on

²²See Figure B5 in the Appendix. After the Russian invasion and the Taliban took over Afghanistan, there was an immediate surge in related mentions in IO job postings. This shows that IO job postings reflect immediate changes in IO behavior.

²³RoBERTa is a state-of-the-art language model that has already learned general patterns of English from a very large text collection.

²⁴The 25 topics are: (1) Development and poverty reduction, (2) Environment and climate, (3) Regional policy, (4) Social and welfare system, (5) Education, (6) Agriculture, (7) Health, (8) Culture and Media, (9) Justice and security, (10) Research policy, (11) Migration and immigration, (12) Human rights, (13) Transportation, (14) Foreign policy, (15) Commercial Competition regulation, (16) Fisheries and maritime, (17) Industrial policy, (18) Energy, (19) Taxation and macroeconomic policy, (20) Telecommunication, (21) Humanitarian aid, (22) Trade and tariffs, (23) Financial stabilization, (24) Financial regulation, and (25) Military and defense.

²⁵Table B1 in the Appendix shows the performance of my fine-tuned model on the test set. The hand-coded dataset is partitioned into training and test sets using an 80-20 split. All F-1 scores are higher than or equal to 0.84, which is far above the 0.7 conventional threshold.

each issue area. For example, if a job post focuses on three topics: Agriculture, Development, and Trade, the focus of this staff in each issue area will be $1/3$. Then, I average the focus on each issue area within an organization over a time window and obtain the proportion of job focus on a topic for each IO.²⁶ Within any time window, the sum of an IO's focus on all issues will be 1. This measure is easy to interpret. For instance, an IO scoring 0.18 in Transportation during time t means that an average staff has an 18% focus on transportation or that 18% of its staff focuses exclusively on transportation issues during this period.

Since I use a new data source and a new measurement, I address several potential issues in the Appendix. First, I analyze whether job postings data correlate with IO policy outputs. Theoretically, IO job postings should be much more objective than other information we observe from IOs, which is supported by interviews with IO HR staff. I conduct two sets of analyses to examine the correlation between the focus of job postings and measures of policy outputs, including IMF policy reports and individual policy acts from the Intergovernmental Policy Output Dataset (IPOD) (Lundgren et al., 2024). Overall, job postings and policy outputs correlate in expected ways but not perfectly. It suggests that job postings capture organizational priorities that shape outputs, while also providing distinct leverage on IO behavior.²⁷ Second, I show that while job postings only describe tasks of new staff members, they also reflect the entire organization's operational focus.²⁸ Finally, although institutional rules limit staff to tasks listed in job descriptions, I consider the possibility of shifting relative focus within those responsibilities. Analysis of skill substitutability indicates this has only a minimal effect on the results.²⁹

²⁶In each step, the focus on pure administration tasks is removed.

²⁷Figure B1 and Figure B2 shows the results.

²⁸This is because, compared to many other professions, IO job contracts are relatively short-term. Using information on job post terms where it is available, I show that the change of scope in the entire organization is only slightly lagged compared to the job postings. The result is in Figure B3.

²⁹We can infer skill substitutability from the coexistence of issue topics in observed job postings. See Figure B4. Since issue co-existence is not highly prevalent, especially for issue areas we focus on in the empirical section, shifting focus is unlikely to be prevalent.

3.3 Patterns of Bureaucratic Adaptation Over Time

Figure 2 shows that IOs' aggregate issue focus shifts markedly over time. Attention to environmental issues has steadily increased, while emphasis on development and poverty reduction has declined. The rise of artificial intelligence has generated a surge in IO attention to its governance. Focus on development and poverty reduction declined, while attention to financial regulation, health, and humanitarian aid fluctuated with global shocks such as financial crises, pandemics, and humanitarian emergencies. These patterns illustrate a flexible global governance agenda: although the international regime complex is relatively fixed in terms of the number of active IOs and their formal mandates, IO bureaucracies redirect attention as global challenges emerge.³⁰

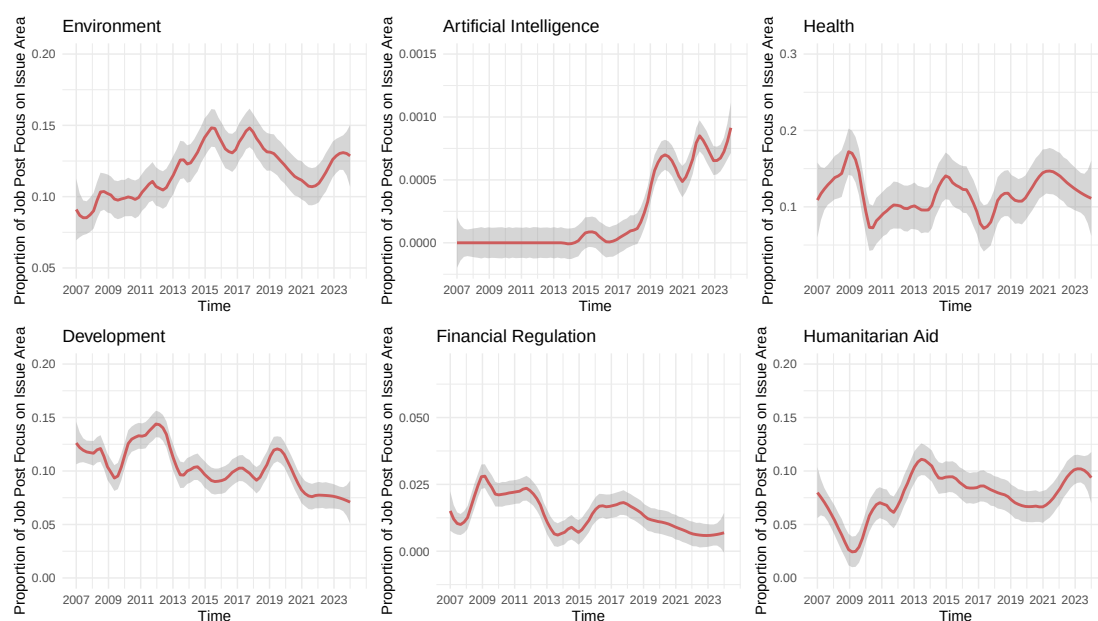


Figure 2: Aggregate IO Focus on Selected Issues Over Time

Note: Each panel plots the share of IO job postings devoted to an issue area (LOESS fit with 95% confidence intervals). A y-value of 0.1, for example, translates into all IOs' average job post having a 10% focus on an issue or 10% of the jobs being completely focused on an issue.

The changing agenda of global governance as a whole is driven by individual IOs stretching beyond their core mandates. Figure 3 shows the scope of six example IOs aggregated over time. The

³⁰Figure B6 plots the raw trend. Figure B7 in the Appendix presents time trends for all topics, confirming that the scope of IOs changes frequently over time.

core mandate of each IO appears as its top issue area. The International Civil Aviation Organization works on transportation, the World Trade Organization works on trade, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) works on energy. This confirms that the job postings data and language model successfully capture the core mandate of each IO.

However, IOs also work extensively outside of their core mandate. The first row shows three IOs that are more focused on their core mandate, and the second row shows three IOs that have worked on more issue areas. The World Bank and the IMF work heavily on environment, consistent with anecdotal evidence. Despite being a military organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has also worked on human rights, justice, environment, and migration. Even for relatively focused IOs like the IAEA, its total focus on energy, which is its core mandate issue, is only around 60%. 40% of its daily operations focus on other issues like health, environment, agriculture, etc. In fact, the IAEA works on using nuclear technologies to develop new seeds and climate smart agriculture.³¹ Cross-issue dynamics are evident not only within IOs addressing closely related issues (e.g., energy-climate), but also more broadly across the IO landscape.³²

Figure 4 further shows how different an IO's focus can be across time. The ADB, for instance, has shifted its scope in recent years to prioritize climate change over development.

Across IOs, this bureaucratic flexibility reshapes the composition of international regimes.³³ Issues once governed by a few specialized IOs now involve multiple bureaucracies: environmental governance includes development and financial institutions; AI governance increasingly spans economic and cultural IOs.³⁴ These expansions reflect bureaucratic adaptation to global challenges. However, as the next section demonstrates, such adaptation is selective: it occurs in IOs whose major principals prioritize the new issue.

³¹See Food Security in Kenya: Growing More with Nuclear Techniques, 16 November 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/multimedia/videos/food-security-in-kenya-growing-more-with-nuclear-techniques>.

³²See Figure B4.

³³Figure B8 shows four example regimes.

³⁴Figure B9 shows the emergence of the global AI governance regime.

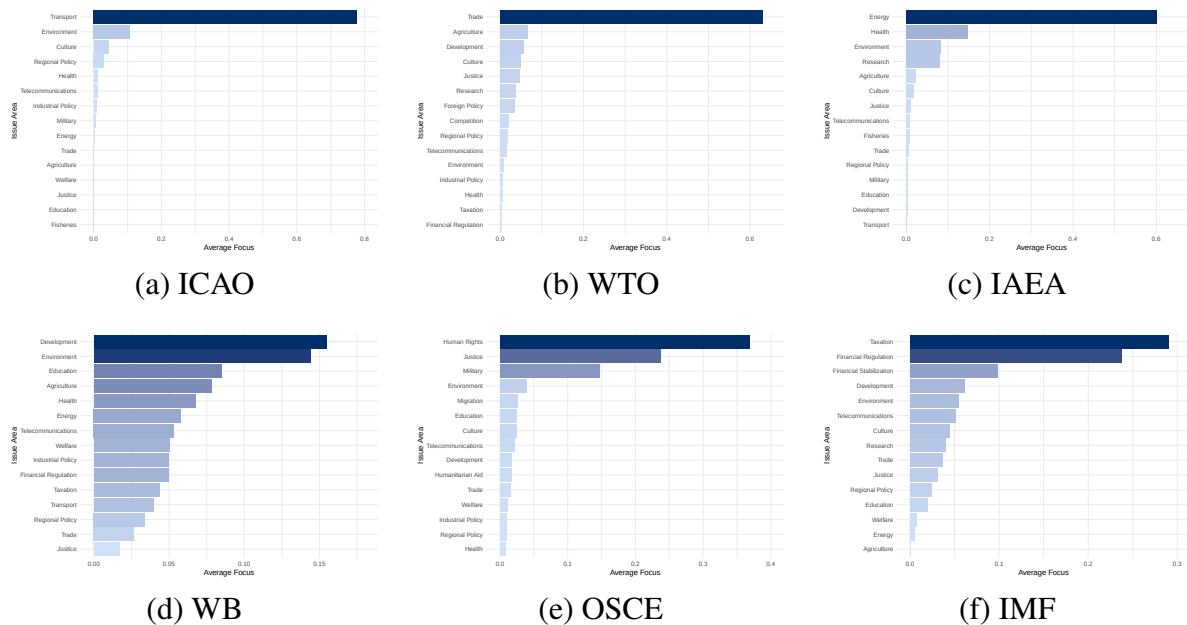


Figure 3: Issue Focus of Example IOs

Note: In each figure, the x-axis is estimated focus, and the y-axis is issue areas with top-15 average focus for each IO from 2007 to 2023. A score of 0.1, for example, translates into the IO's average job post having a 10% focus on an issue or 10% of the jobs are completely focused on an issue.

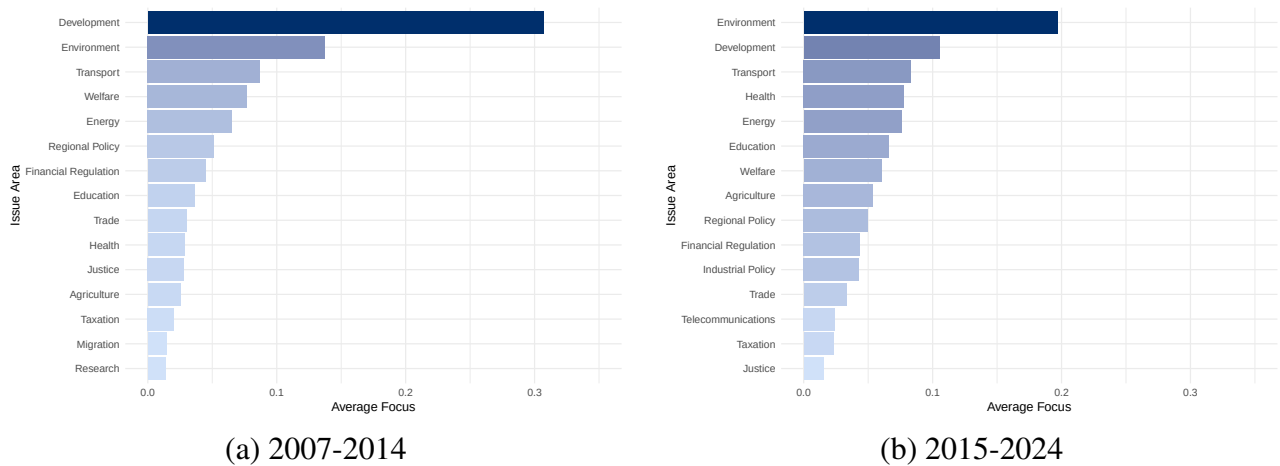


Figure 4: Asian Development Bank Issue Focus Over Time

Note: The figure shows the focus of the ADB. The x-axis is the estimated focus, and the y-axis is its issue areas with a top-15 average focus.

4 IO Scope Expansion and Powerful Principals

4.1 Research Design

International organizations regularly confront new global challenges, but their bureaucracies respond selectively. Some expand their operational scope to address emerging problems; others remain bound by their existing mandates. This section examines how IOs responded to two recent global challenges, climate change and artificial intelligence, and tests whether such adaptation depends on the priorities of powerful principals.

The 2015 Paris climate process marked the consolidation of climate change as a core issue of global governance. Through nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and high-profile diplomacy, governments publicly revealed the intensity of their commitments. For IOs, Paris therefore represented a turning point: it crystallized climate as a salient global challenge and revealed which states increased their priorities the most at that time. This revelation produced cross-IO variation in incentives for bureaucratic adaptation. I use the period when the Paris Agreement was being drafted and when the UN General Assembly convened as the treatment time. This is the moment when the global salience of climate change governance increased drastically: principals positions were revealed through NDC submissions, diplomatic statements, and UNGA speeches. During this time, IO bureaucracies observe the increased salience of climate issues and their principals' priorities, adjusting their activities accordingly.

The 2022 release of ChatGPT in November performed the same function for artificial intelligence governance. Governments expressed interest in international collaboration on AI governance, especially in European Union countries and the UK, while the United States and China emphasized informal or domestic approaches. The event elevated AI's political priority and exposed differences in how major principals viewed international cooperation. Both moments thus represent a rising salience of a global challenge, with a revelation of state priorities. This provides the opportunity to observe selective bureaucratic adaptation.

I use a difference-in-differences design to test my hypothesis. The analysis distinguishes three

types of IOs for each global challenge. For each shock, I subset a small group of IOs that are clearly distant from the shock and are unlikely to be affected. Then, I use them as the control group. For example, when analyzing expansion into AI, the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and 22 other IOs are used as the control group.

Among those that are treated, I further distinguish IOs according to the priority levels of their major principals. Each IO's dominant principal is identified using a combination of headquarters location, voting share, and largest donor information. I then measure whether that principal exhibited a high or low increase in attention to the issue when the global challenge became salient. For climate change, I quantify principal attention using the change in the frequency of climate-related references in states' UN General Assembly (UNGA) speeches between 2015 and previous years. States whose increase exceeds the global median are classified as having a large increase in climate priority; others are coded as having unchanged priority. For artificial intelligence, I code EU countries and the UK as prioritizing international cooperation on AI governance the most, which is also confirmed by patterns in the UNGA speeches.³⁵

Table 2: Classification of IOs by Treatment Status

Group	Definition
Treated (<i>high</i> principal priority)	IOs whose core mandates are connected to the new global challenge, and major principals displayed a large increase in attention
Treated (<i>low</i> principal priority)	IOs whose core mandates are connected to the new global challenge, but major principals showed little or no increase in attention.
Control	IOs whose mandates are distant from the new global challenge.

The unit of analysis is the IO-quarter. The dependent variable Y_{kit} measures IO i 's operational

³⁵The complete set of treated and control IOs is listed in Table C1, Table C2, and Table C3 in the Appendix. There can be multiple powerful principals in an IO (Copelovitch, 2010). For simplicity, I consider one for each IO in this study. See Figure C1 for trends in UNGA mentions.

focus on issue k at time t , derived from job postings content. I estimate:

$$Y_{itk} = \alpha + \beta \cdot (\text{Treated}_i \times \text{Post-Global Challenge}_t) + \gamma_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where Treated_i is an indicator of whether the IO is in the treatment group.

$\text{Post-Global Challenge}_t$ is an indicator of whether the IO-quarter observation is post-treatment. γ_i is IO fixed effects, and δ_t is quarter fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the IO level.³⁶ I test the parallel trends assumption by including pre-treatment periods. The results indicate that the assumption is generally satisfied across analyses.³⁷

Although the language model outputs show high accuracy compared to hand-coding, the slight difference between the two can be problematic if the prediction error is non-random. If the bias is produced in a systematic way, it could affect downstream hypothesis testing. Therefore, I use the design-based supervised learning (DSL) approach from Egami et al. (2024) to obtain valid estimates. All results shown in the main analysis are bias-corrected.

4.2 The Scope Expansion of Non-Climate IOs into Climate

Figure 5(a) shows a substantial increase in climate-related hiring among non-climate IOs whose major principals elevated climate priority—about a 55 percentage point rise in climate focus within three quarters. Examples include the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Pacific Islands Forum. This effect translates into all new staff having a 55% increase in their daily work related to climate issues, or approximately 51 new staff members who work exclusively on climate issues being hired in these IOs within three quarters.³⁸ Given that the affected IOs are small to medium-sized organizations where climate is not part of a core mandate, this is a meaningful increase. In contrast, no effect is observed among the other 64 non-climate IOs, where the major principals of the organization did not exhibit significant changes in their prioritiza-

³⁶This is equivalent to a DiD design because all treated units are treated simultaneously.

³⁷Figures on parallel trends are shown in Figure C2 and Figure C3 in the Appendix.

³⁸This estimate is based on their average number of new job postings.

tion of climate change. This pattern demonstrates selective bureaucratic adaptation: bureaucracies expanded only when their dominant principals revealed increased climate commitments.

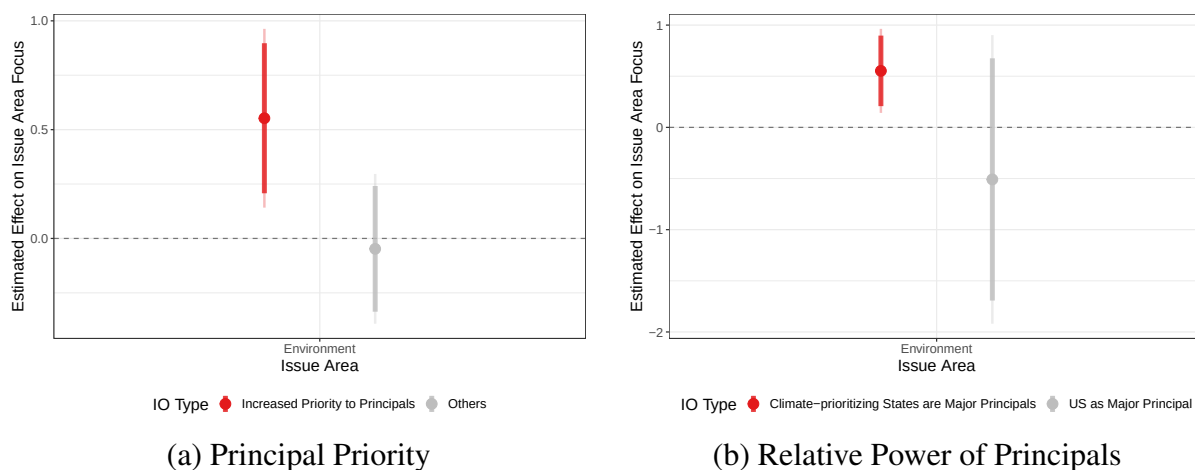


Figure 5: Bureaucratic Expansion into Climate Issues: Principal Priorities and Power

Note: Panel (a) compares non-climate IOs whose major principals increased versus did not increase attention to climate issues following the 2015 Paris process. Panel (b) restricts the sample to principals that prioritized climate and compares IOs dominated by these principals with those dominated by the United States. The y-axis shows estimated effects on IOs operational focus on climate; points are average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals.

Additionally, when we examine IOs in which these states are members but the US is the major principal instead, there is no significant change in organizational scope. Figure 5(b) presents this result. This reinforces the argument that scope expansion occurs only in IOs where the major principals themselves prioritize the issue.

Figure 6 plots the frequent words in the job titles of the climate-related jobs in IOs where principal priority on climate has increased. These positions were operational, not symbolic. These IOs created roles such as Program Manager (Climate Change), Operations Officer (Energy)-Economic Infrastructure Division Projects Department, and Senior Officer-Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, reflecting concrete bureaucratic reorientation. Importantly, this expansion is not limited to short-term hiring aimed at signaling responsiveness to states. Rather, it reflects bureaucratic intentions to bring about meaningful transformations within IOs. Figure 7 demonstrates this point, showing that the majority of climate hires in these IOs are mid- to senior-level

appointments for long-term positions.



Figure 6: Wordcloud of Climate-related Jobs in IOs with Increased Principal Priorities

Note: Word size reflects the frequency of terms appearing in the job titles of climate-related positions.

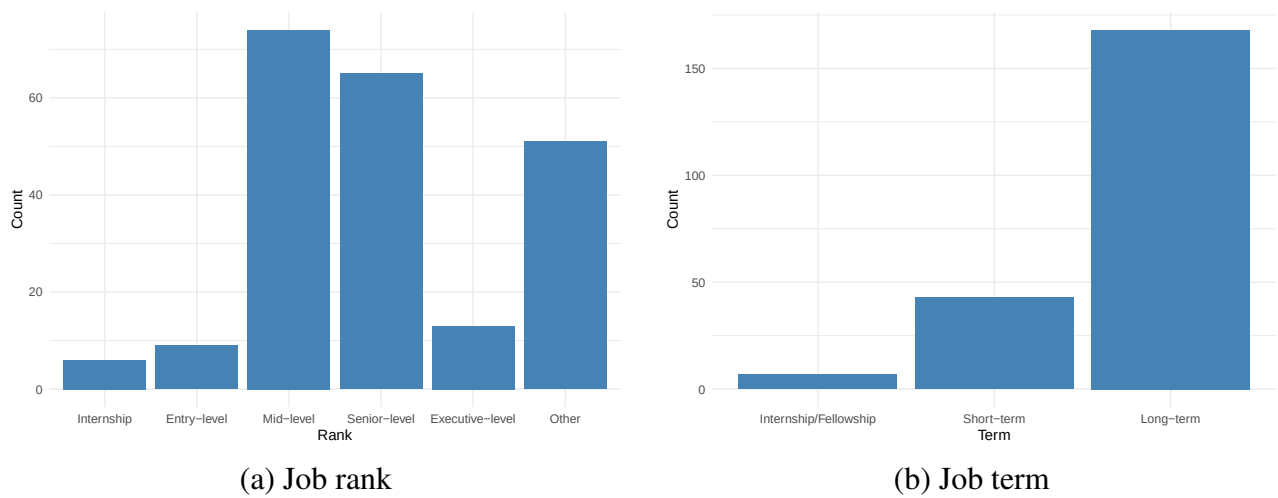


Figure 7: Rank and Terms of Climate-related Jobs in IOs with Increased Principal Priorities

Additionally, IOs are responding specifically to major principal interests, instead of concerns faced by all members. Figure 8 compares the frequency of climate-related keywords in UNGA speeches between the major principals of the treated IOs (Panel a) and all other member states of

those same IOs (Panel b). Major principals exhibit a pronounced increase in climate references during 2015, while other members show flatter trajectories mirroring global averages.

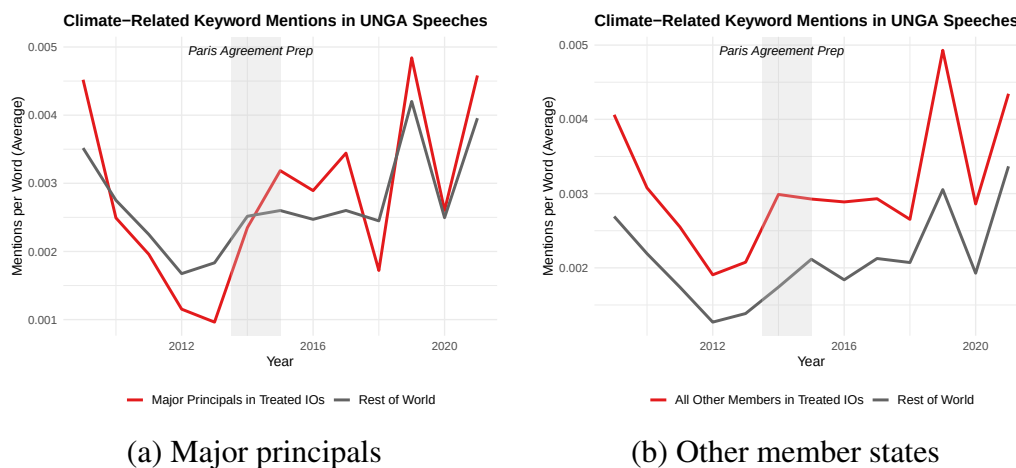


Figure 8: Climate Keyword Mentions at the UNGA (Members of Treated IOs)

Note: The figure plots the average frequency of climate-related keywords (climate, emission, environment) in UNGA speeches. The sharp rise among major principals in 2015 corresponds with IO bureaucratic expansion into climate activities.

These results illustrate that bureaucratic adaptation is neither autonomous nor universal. Bureaucracies act when dominant states signal increased interest, but the initiative to reorganize tasks and expertise originates internally. Adaptation is thus both reactive and anticipatory. Bureaucracies respond to principal signals and change the function of their IO through staff tasking.

The mechanism also implies contraction when principal attention declines. To explore this, I examine focus on climate after the US government announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in January 2017. Development IOs dominated by the United States significantly decreased their focus on climate by around 35.5%, while IOs dominated by other states see no significant change in their climate focus. Because the latter result is more imprecise, I treat them as suggestive rather than confirmatory.³⁹

³⁹See Figure C4. The seven treated IOs are: the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation, OPEC Fund for International Development, the World Bank Group, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The effect on all US-influenced IOs, regardless of original focus, is also negative but not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.13. This is likely because many of these IOs have less room to further reduce climate focus.

4.2.1 The Scope Expansion of Non-AI IOs into AI

Figure 9 (a) shows how the ChatGPT launch in 2022 changed the focus of IOs whose mandates are not centered around AI and telecommunications.⁴⁰ Figure 9 shows that 60 IOs with EU countries or the UK as major principals increased their focus on telecommunications and AI significantly after the launch of ChatGPT. The size of the effect is around a 25% increase in focus. This is true even given that these IOs do not have a relevant *de jure* mandate. Example IOs include the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Trade Centre, and the European Banking Authority. In fact, the EU has formally cooperated on AI governance through the European Commission; however, removing it does not change the results. This expansion into telecommunications and AI cannot be attributed solely to state orders. In contrast, no effect is observed in IOs dominated by other principal states. Again, if we restrict to IOs that are dominated by the US, even when EU countries or the UK are members of these IOs, no significant expansion is found.

Across both global challenges, the evidence shows a consistent pattern of selective, power-structured bureaucratic adaptation. When new global challenges emerge, IO bureaucracies expand their operational scope to address them only when their powerful principals elevate their priorities. When those priorities fade, IOs contract from the new issue. These changes occur through bureaucratic channels that shift expertise and alter daily operations.

⁴⁰I analyze the effect on the total focus on Telecommunications and AI here. This is because although AI is classified by the language model, not many positive cases have been found so far. Given that this is a new issue, states may be responding by increasing regulations on telecommunications more broadly, without explicitly referring to AI.

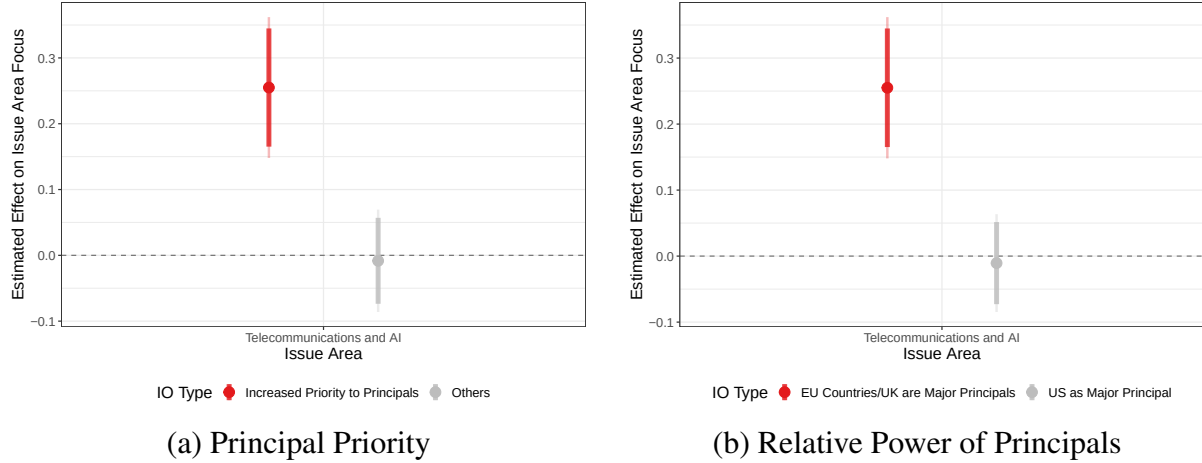


Figure 9: Bureaucratic Expansion into AI: Principal Priorities and Power

Note: Panel (a) compares non-AI IOs whose major principals are the EU countries/UK versus others. Panel (b) restricts the sample to principals including EU countries/UK and compares IOs dominated by these principals with those dominated by the United States. The y-axis shows estimated effects on IOs' operational focus on AI and telecommunications; points are average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals.

5 Mechanism: IO Bureaucracy Taking Initiative

IOs expand selectively in response to new global challenges when their major principals elevate an issue's priority. But who drives these expansions? Are bureaucracies acting first to reposition themselves, or are states directing expansion through funding decisions?

States increasingly steer IO activities through earmarked contributions, which restrict resources to specific issues or programs (Reinsberg et al., 2024). If scope expansion is directly state-driven, earmarked funding for a new issue should precede or coincide with the expansion of bureaucratic tasks. Conversely, if bureaucratic initiative plays a role, we should observe expansions even in the absence of new earmarked funding.

To assess this, I link the IO job posting data to 342,812 earmarked contribution records from Reinsberg et al. (2024). The issue areas in the earmark data are recoded to match the 26 topics used in the job postings analysis, resulting in 90 IOs that are covered in both datasets. Because earmarks primarily concern development-related organizations, I focus on their work on climate as the illustrative case.

Table 3: Earmarked Contributions and IO Scope

IO Focus on Climate				
Climate Disbursed	−0.0004 (0.0004)			
Climate Committed		0.0001 (0.0001)		
Prop. Climate Committed			−0.002 (0.032)	
Prop. Climate Disbursed				−0.081* (0.033)
Num.Obs.	899	899	899	899
R^2	0.758	0.758	0.758	0.760
R^2 Adj.	0.702	0.702	0.702	0.704
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
IO FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The analysis is conducted at the IO-year level. I estimate whether increases in climate-related earmarked contributions, measured as disbursements, commitments, or their shares of total contributions, predict greater bureaucratic focus on climate in the following year. Earmarked contributions and staff tasking reflect distinct dynamics: earmarks capture targeted principal directives, while job postings reveal internal bureaucratic allocations of expertise and staff tasking. If states were directly driving scope expansion, we should expect positive and statistically significant coefficients.

Table 3 reports two-way fixed-effects models with IO and year fixed effects and standard errors clustered by IO. The independent variable is the amount of climate-related earmarked contributions disbursed, committed, or the proportion of them to the total contributions that the IO obtains in a year. The dependent variable is the focus of an IO on climate in the following year. Across specifications, there is no consistent positive relationship between earmarked funding and subsequent scope expansion. In three specifications, the coefficients are even negative. This lack of alignment suggests that IO scope expansion is often supported through general budget resources and driven by bureaucratic initiative, rather than directly by states' earmarked contributions.

Moreover, if we zoom in and examine the climate focus and earmarked contributions of individual IOs, the expansion of IOs sometimes leads to a later change in earmarked contributions.

Figure 10 shows this pattern in eight example IOs actively expanding into climate. The operational scope of IOs expands earlier, followed by increased earmarked funding for climate issues. This suggests that while states may not initially demand the expansion of IOs into climate, the expansion of IOs may have proven their outstanding capability in this new area. Bureaucracy-led expansion also passes the initial starting investment barrier, making states more willing to accept their new role.⁴¹

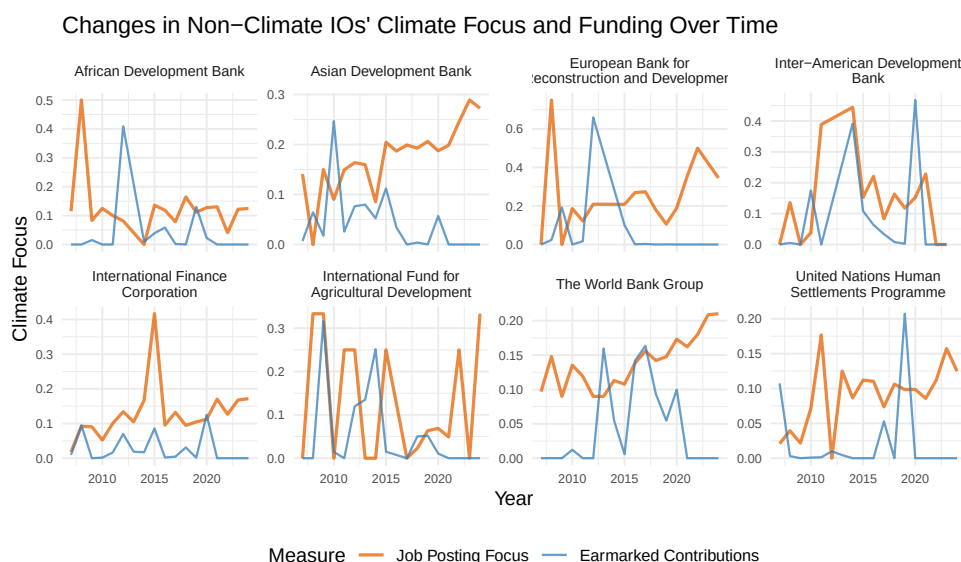


Figure 10: Example IOs: IO Scope Expansion in Climate Leading Earmarked Contributions

Note: Each plot is an IO. The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the focus of the IO on climate. The orange and blue lines represent changes in job posting focus and earmarked contributions, respectively.

6 Conclusion

International organizations are often portrayed as operating within narrowly defined, state-delegated mandates. This paper challenges that view. I argue that IOs frequently expand their operational scope beyond formal mandates through a logic of relevance-seeking: bureaucracies adapt to new global challenges in ways that maintain their relevance and utility to powerful principals. Bu-

⁴¹Note, however, that this pattern does not exist in every IO.

bureaucrats initiate expansion to pursue organizational relevance, not insulation or autonomy, by reshaping staff and expertise toward issues that major principals prioritize.

This logic shows how sociological perspectives of IOs can operate under the shadow of principal-agent relationships. Bureaucratic initiative arises from self-interest, yet it is systematically directed by power. IOs expand neither randomly nor uniformly; adaptation is selective and power-structured. When new global challenges arise, IO bureaucracies expand only when major principals prioritize the issue. When the major principal remains indifferent, IOs stay within their mandates.

Empirically, I introduce job postings as a new measurement of IO operations, capturing the de facto staff daily tasks and expertise, which is the core of IO functions. Using 630,500 postings across 234 IOs from 2007-2024, I show that operational scope is highly flexible over time. In the cases of climate change and artificial intelligence, IOs expanded into new areas only when their major principals raised the issue's priority, confirming the conditional, power-structured nature of bureaucratic adaptation.

Evidence from earmarked contributions clarifies the timing of mechanisms. Bureaucratic task expansion typically occurs before or without corresponding increases in earmarked funding. This indicates that IO bureaucracies expand effort quickly using general resources, instead of following direct principal orders. States may later validate or reward successful expansion, but bureaucratic initiative does not depend on such directives.

The findings shed light on a core question in international relations: How is the global governance agenda being set? States are not the only actors determining the landscape of global governance. Bureaucrats define IO functions in practice by reshaping staff tasking and expertise in anticipation of principal attention.

Flexibility may make global governance more responsive to emerging problems, yet it also raises concerns about accountability, efficiency, and coordination. Member states have joined IOs to cooperate on their mandate issues, but the operational scope of IOs tends to deviate towards issues that concern major states. Additionally, the bureaucracy is motivated by the pursuit of its own

organizational relevance instead of maximizing output. This can also divert resources from core mandates, duplicate efforts across institutions, and crowd new issues with overlapping initiatives. During interviews, many senior staff expressed this concern and worried about worsened performance on the core mandate issue. They also raise concerns about IOs competing in the same issue area instead of coordinating and developing a division of labor. Future research should investigate the international distributional consequences of IO scope expansion, its implications for efficiency, and coordination and competition among IOs.

Beyond the IO level, the logic of relevance-seeking bureaucratic adaptation may extend to other bureaucratic systems. Domestic agencies may similarly adjust their missions toward issues prioritized by elected officials, and NGOs may reorient programs toward donor agendas. IOs are unique in that they lack a central coordination mechanism across organizations. Yet similar dynamics can also arise in domestic or non-governmental settings where central coordination is weak. For instance, when issues emerge suddenly, cut across jurisdictions, or exceed existing administrative capacity. Future research can investigate when such decentralized adaptation exists, and whether it enhances responsiveness to new challenges or produces inefficiency, duplication, and competition across agencies.

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Appendix:

The Scope Expansion of International Organizations

A Data Collection

Source	Number of Postings	Organizations	Period
Inspira	139,924	UN Agencies	2010-2024
Devex	118,661	IGOs	2007-2024
Impactpool	234,272	IGOs	2015-2024
UNTalent	135,668	IGOs	2020-2024
HKS Career Office/Individual official websites/ Twitter/ Wayback Machine/Others	2,001	IGOs	2002-2024

Table A1: Data Sources

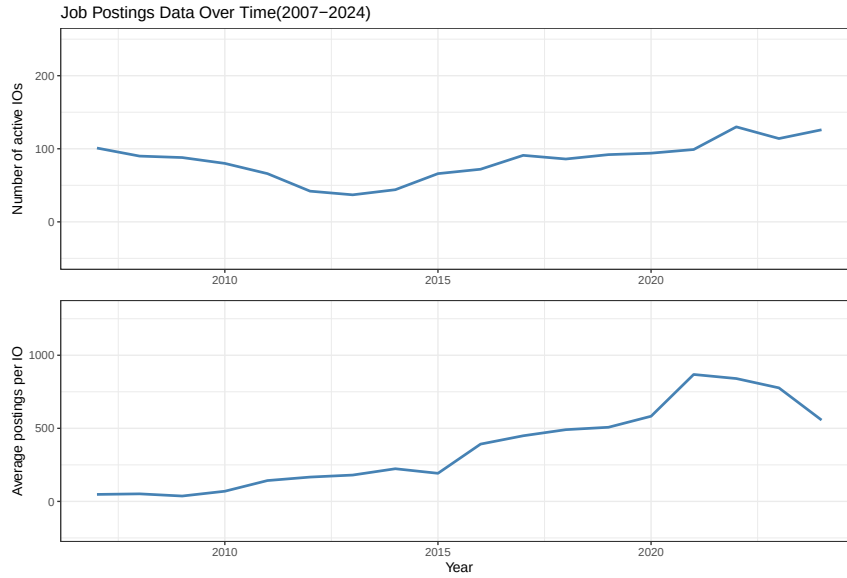


Figure A1: The Number of Job Postings Over Time

Note: The x-axis is time. The top panel shows the number of IOs that have posted jobs in a year. The bottom panel shows the average number of postings per IO.

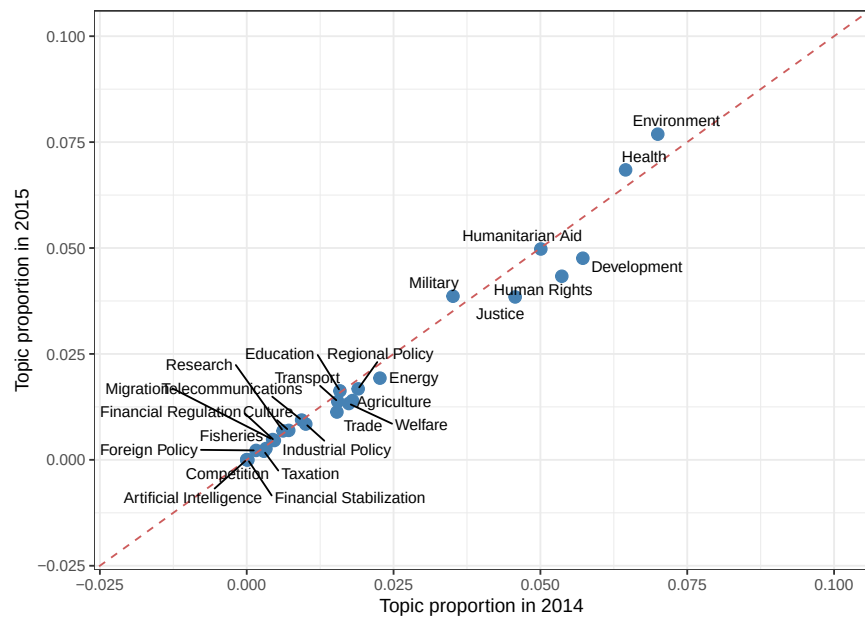


Figure A2: Job postings topics in 2014 and 2015

Note: The figure shows the topic proportions of IOs that were in the data both in 2014 (x-axis) and 2015 (y-axis). The dots falling closely around the 45-degree line indicate consistency of topic coverage in the data.

ID	Name
1	ASEAN Foundation
2	ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network
3	ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office
4	Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics
5	Adaptation Fund
6	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
7	African Development Bank
8	African Development Bank Group
9	African Development Fund
10	African Ministers' Council on Water
11	African Trade Insurance Agency
12	African Union
13	Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators
14	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
15	Asian Development Bank
16	Asian Development Bank Institute
17	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
18	Asian Productivity Organization
19	Association of South East Asian Nations
20	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission
21	Bank for International Settlements
22	Biobanking and BioMolecular resources Research Infrastructure
23	Black Sea Trade and Development Bank
24	Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications
25	Bureau International des Expositions
26	CABI
27	CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
28	CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality
29	CGIAR System Organization
30	Caribbean Community
31	Caribbean Development Bank
32	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
33	Central European Free Trade Agreement
34	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
35	Common Fund for Commodities
36	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
37	Commonwealth Secretariat
38	Conference of States Parties of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
39	Consejo Centroamericano de Superintendentes de Bancos, de Seguros y de Otras Instituciones Financieras
40	Council of Europe

Table A2: IOs Covered in the Data (1)

ID	Name
41	Council of Europe Development Bank
42	Council of the European Union
43	Counter-Terrorism Committee
44	Court of Justice of the European Union
45	East African Community
46	East African Development Bank
47	Economic Community of West African States
48	EUROCONTROL
49	Eurojust
50	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
51	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
52	European Banking Authority
53	European Central Bank
54	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
55	European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts
56	European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research
57	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
58	European Chemicals Agency
59	European Commission
60	European Council
61	European Court of Human Rights
62	European Data Protection Board
63	European Defence Agency
64	European Economic and Social Committee
65	European Economic Area
66	European Environment Agency
67	European External Action Service
68	European Fisheries Control Agency
69	European Food Safety Authority
70	European Forest Institute
71	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
72	European Free Trade Association
73	European Institute for Gender Equality
74	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
75	European Institute of Public Administration
76	European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority
77	European Investment Bank
78	European Investment Fund
79	European Labour Authority
80	European Maritime Safety Agency

Table A3: IOs Covered in the Data (2)

ID	Name
81	European Medicines Agency
82	European Molecular Biology Laboratory
83	European Ombudsman
84	European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites
85	European Organization for Nuclear Research
86	European Parliament
87	European Partnership of Supervisory Organisations in Health Services and Social Care
88	European Patent Office
89	European Police Office
90	European Public Law Organization
91	European Research Council
92	European Schoolnet
93	European Securities and Markets Authority
94	European Southern Observatory
95	European Space Agency
96	European Stability Mechanism
97	European Training Foundation
98	European Union
99	European Union Agency for Asylum
100	European Union Agency for Cybersecurity
101	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
102	European Union Agency for Railways
103	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
104	European Union Agency for the Space Programme
105	European Union Aviation Safety Agency
106	European Union Drugs Agency
107	European Union Institute for Security Studies
108	European Union Intellectual Property Office
109	European Union Satellite Centre
110	European University Institute
111	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health
112	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
113	Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency
114	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
115	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
116	Green Climate Fund
117	Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking
118	IMPACT - International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement
119	Inter-American Development Bank
120	Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

Table A4: IOs Covered in the Data (3)

ID	Name
121	Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice
122	Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs
123	International Agency for Research on Cancer
124	International Atomic Energy Agency
125	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
126	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
127	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
128	International Civil Aviation Organization
129	International Civil Service Commission
130	International Commission on Missing Persons
131	International Court of Justice
132	International Criminal Court
133	International Criminal Police Organization - INTERPOL
134	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
135	International Customs Tariffs Bureau
136	International Development Association
137	International Development Law Organization
138	International Development Research Centre
139	International Energy Agency
140	International Energy Forum
141	International Finance Corporation
142	International Fund for Agricultural Development
143	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
144	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
145	International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law
146	International Labour Organization
147	International Livestock Research Institute
148	International Maritime Organization
149	International Monetary Fund
150	International Network for Bamboo and Rattan
151	International Organisation of Vine and Wine
152	International Organization for Migration
153	International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation
154	International Renewable Energy Agency
155	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
156	International Seabed Authority
157	International Telecommunication Union
158	International Trade Centre
159	International Training Centre of the ILO
160	International Tropical Timber Organization

Table A5: IOs Covered in the Data (4)

ID	Name
161	International Vaccine Institute
162	Islamic Development Bank
163	Joint Committee of the Nordic Medical Research Councils
164	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
165	King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
166	Mekong River Commission
167	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
168	NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force Command
169	NATO Defense College
170	NATO Support and Procurement Agency
171	New Development Bank
172	Nordic Development Fund
173	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
174	OECD Development Centre
175	OPEC Fund for International Development
176	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
177	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
178	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
179	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
180	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
181	Organization of American States
182	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
183	OSCE - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
184	OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
185	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
186	Pan American Health Organization
187	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
188	Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
189	Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
190	SAARC Development Fund
191	SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre
192	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
193	Southern African Development Community
194	Southern Common Market
195	The Hague Conference on Private International Law
196	The World Bank Group
197	Trade and Development Bank
198	UN Tourism
199	UN Women
200	UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

Table A6: IOs Covered in the Data (5)

ID	Name
201	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
202	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
203	Union for the Mediterranean
204	United Nations
205	United Nations Children's Fund
206	United Nations Development Programme
207	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
208	United Nations Environment Programme
209	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - Secretariat
210	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
211	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
212	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
213	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
214	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
215	United Nations Office for Project Services
216	United Nations Population Fund
217	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
218	United Nations System Staff College
219	United Nations University
220	Universal Postal Union
221	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
222	World Bank Institute
223	World Customs Organization
224	World Food Programme
225	World Health Organization
226	World Intellectual Property Organization
227	World Meteorological Organization
228	World Trade Organization
229	Latin American Integration Association
230	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
231	Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail
232	Permanent Court of Arbitration
233	Pacific Islands Forum
234	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Table A7: IOs Covered in the Data (6)

IO	Freq	Share
United Nations	225531	0.358
United Nations Development Programme	83115	0.132
World Health Organization	35231	0.056
United Nations Children's Fund	30886	0.049
World Food Programme	30207	0.048
United Nations Environment Programme	28551	0.045
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	24261	0.038
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	20911	0.033
Asian Development Bank	19905	0.032
The World Bank Group	16298	0.026
United Nations Office for Project Services	16145	0.026
UN Women	12773	0.020
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	9377	0.015
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	9238	0.015
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	7110	0.011
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	5295	0.008
United Nations Population Fund	5012	0.008
International Organization for Migration	4644	0.007
International Atomic Energy Agency	4134	0.007
African Development Bank	3577	0.006
European Investment Bank	3287	0.005
European Space Agency	2743	0.004
International Finance Corporation	2736	0.004
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	2681	0.004
European Organization for Nuclear Research	1794	0.003
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	1371	0.002
International Civil Aviation Organization	1325	0.002
International Monetary Fund	1256	0.002
CGIAR System Organization	1146	0.002
African Union	1114	0.002

Table A8: Top 30 international Organizations by Number of job Postings

B Additional Tables and Figures on Data and Measurement

Table B1: Issue Prediction Model (fine-tuned RoBERTa) Performance on the Test Set by Topic

Issue Area	Precision	Recall	F1-score
Administration	0.97	0.97	0.97
Agriculture	0.99	1.00	0.99
Competition policy, mergers, state aid, antitrust	1.00	0.76	0.87
Culture and media	0.97	0.93	0.95
Education, vocational training, youth	1.00	0.97	0.99
Development, aid to poor countries	1.00	0.97	0.98
Financial regulation, monetary policy	0.96	0.96	0.96
Welfare state, employment, pensions	0.96	1.00	0.98
Energy (coal, oil, renewables)	1.00	0.95	0.98
Environment	0.99	0.99	0.99
Financial stabilization	1.00	0.88	0.94
Foreign policy	1.00	0.81	0.90
Fisheries and maritime affairs	1.00	0.98	0.99
Health	0.99	0.97	0.98
Humanitarian aid	1.00	0.97	0.98
Human rights and democracy	0.99	0.95	0.97
Industrial policy	1.00	0.97	0.98
Justice and security	0.99	0.98	0.99
Migration and refugees	1.00	0.94	0.97
Military and defense	1.00	0.96	0.98
Regional development	0.99	1.00	0.99
Research and science	0.99	0.95	0.97
Taxation and macroeconomic policy	1.00	0.96	0.98
Telecom, internet, postal services	1.00	0.96	0.98
Trade and IP rights	1.00	0.98	0.99
Transport (rail, air, shipping)	1.00	0.93	0.96
Artificial Intelligence	1.00	0.73	0.84
Micro avg	0.99	0.97	0.98
Macro avg	0.99	0.94	0.96
Weighted avg	0.99	0.97	0.98
Samples avg	0.96	0.95	0.95

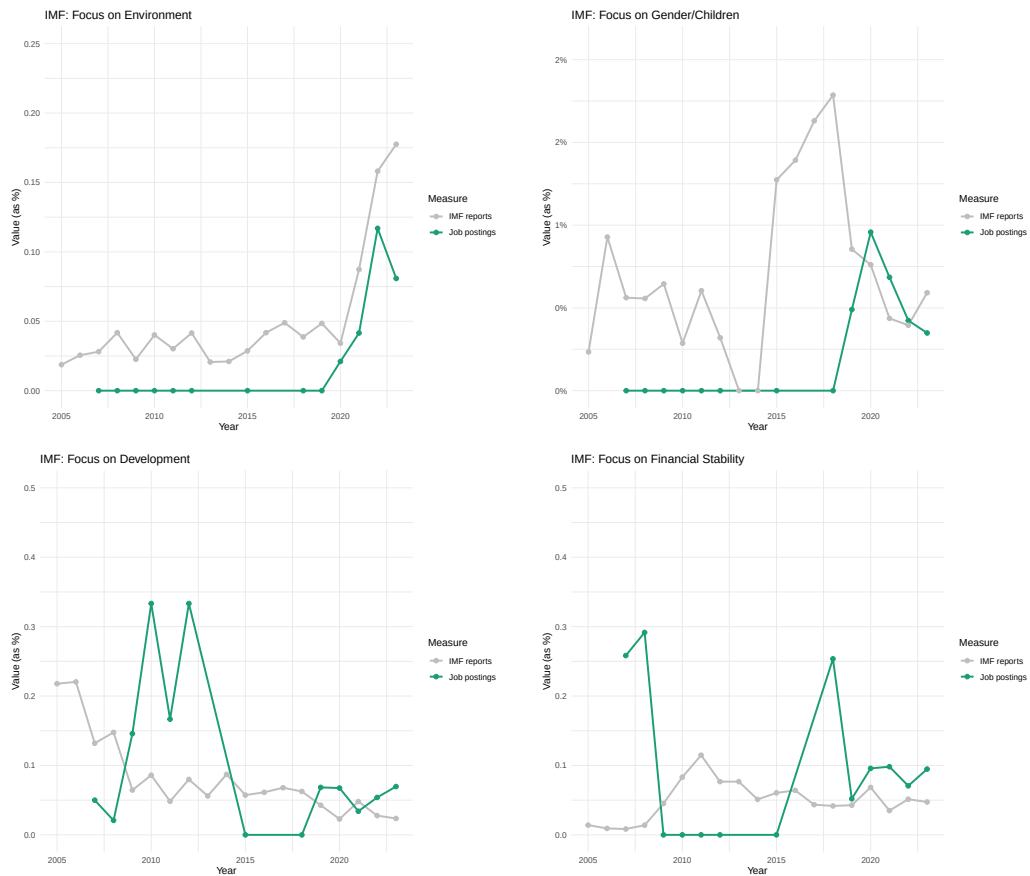
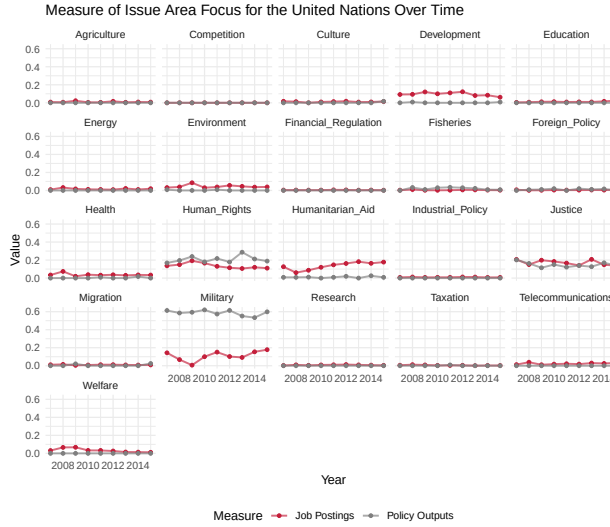
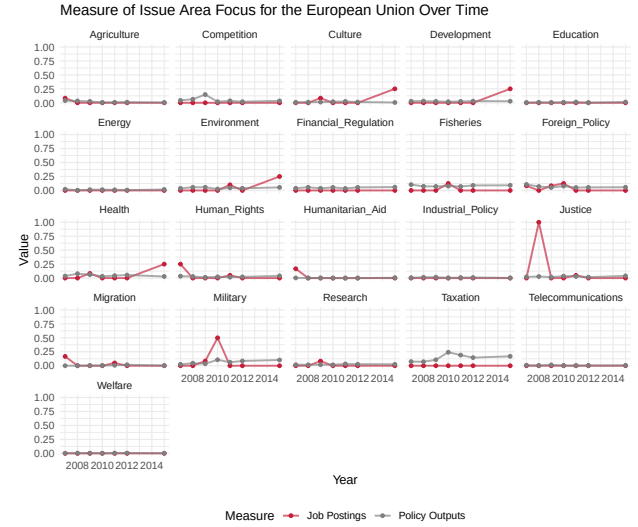


Figure B1: IMF Job Postings and Policy Reports

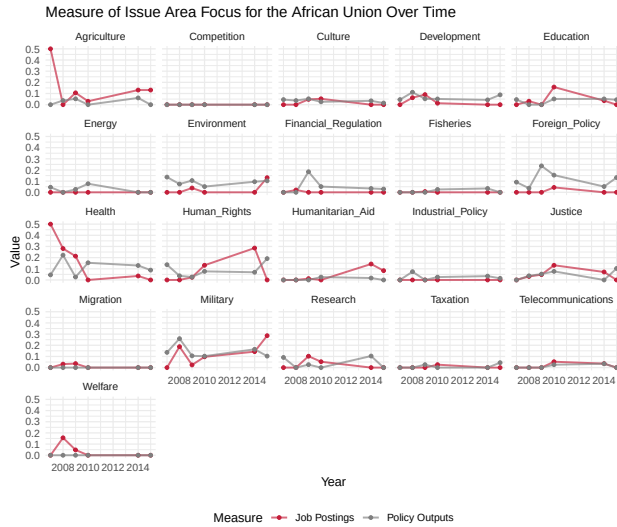
Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the average focus of the IMF on an issue (job postings) or the proportion of IMF policy reports with labels in an issue area. The green lines are job postings, and the gray lines are policy outputs.



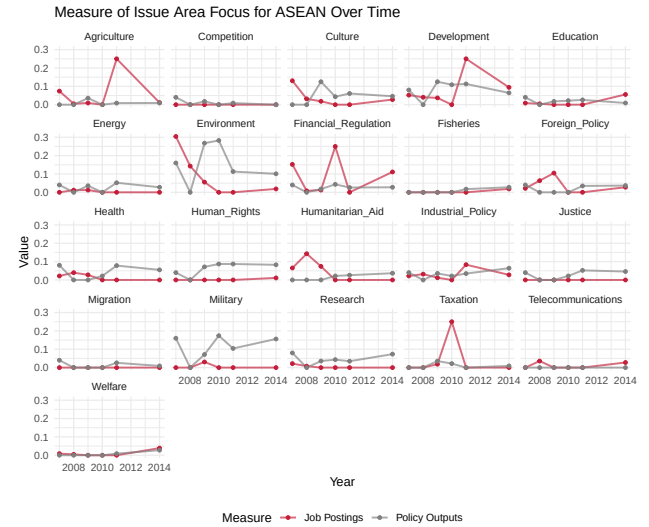
(a) UN



(b) EU



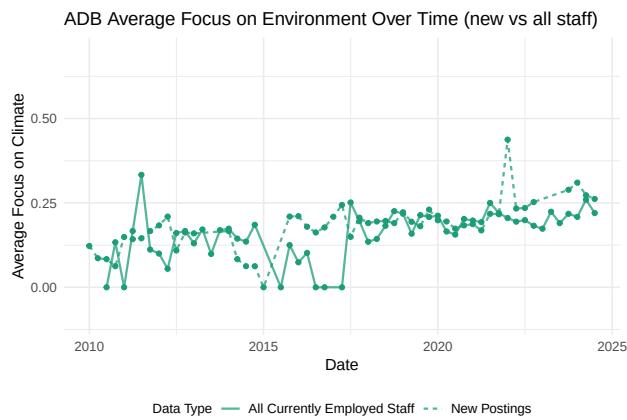
(c) AU



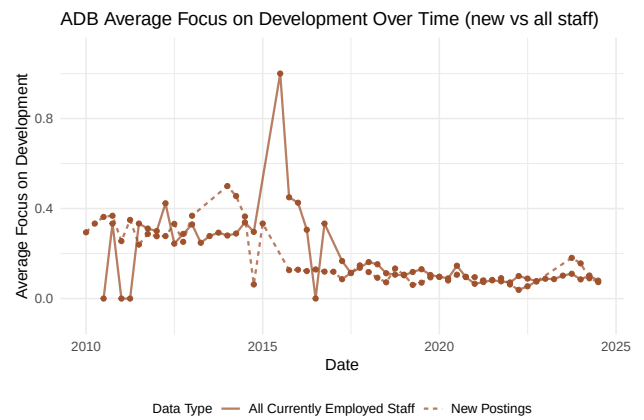
(d) ASEAN

Figure B2: IO Job Postings and Policy Outputs

Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the average focus of an IO on an issue (job postings) or the proportion of an IO's policy outputs in an issue area (policy outputs). The red lines are job postings, and the blue lines are policy outputs.



(a) Climate



(b) Development

Figure B3: The Focus of the Asian Development Bank on Climate: New vs All employed Staff

Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the ADB's average focus on climate/development over time. The dashed line is calculated based on the job postings posted during each current quarter on the x-axis. The solid line is calculated based on all currently employed bureaucrats up to the current quarter on the x-axis.

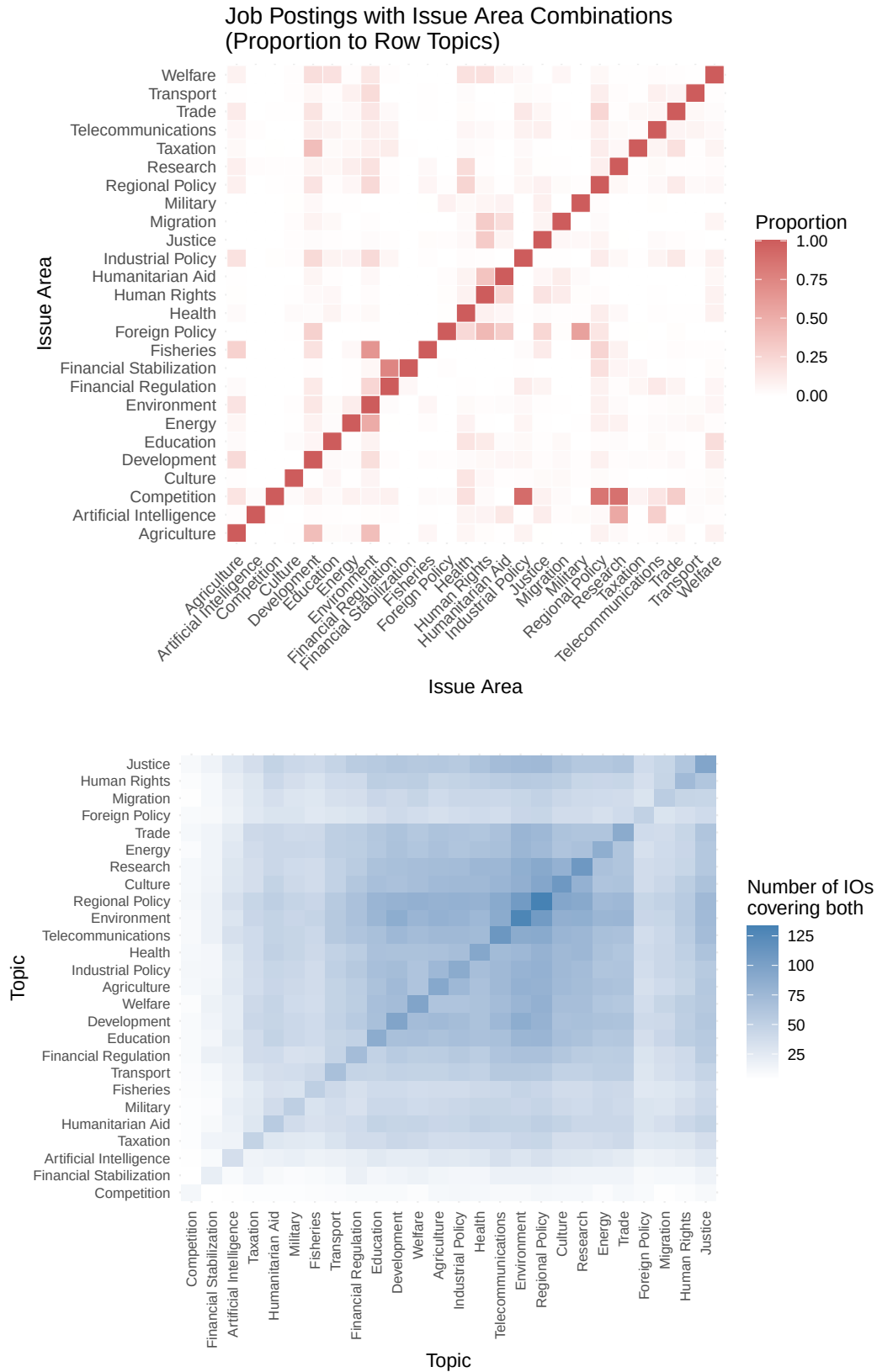


Figure B4: (Top) Heatmap on the prevalence of topic coexistence in job postings. (Bottom) Heatmap on the number of IOs focusing on topic combinations.

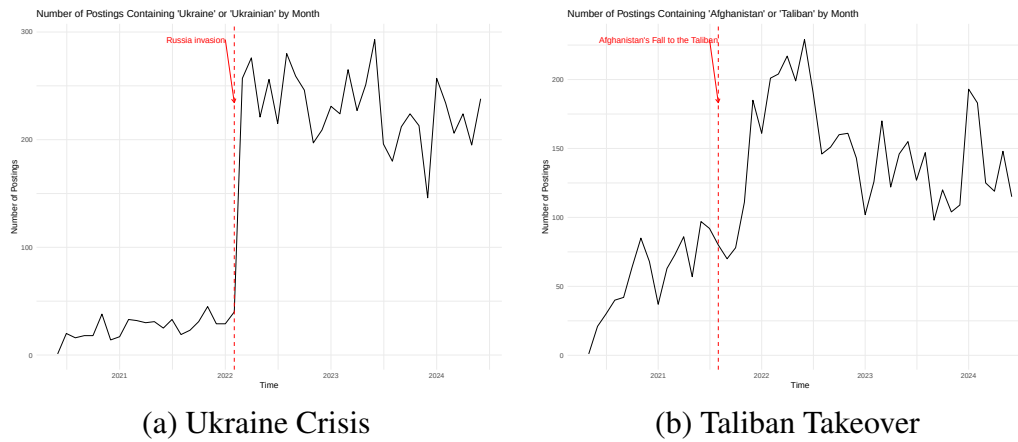


Figure B5: IO Shift in Focus on Specific Issues Over Time

Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the number of job postings mentioning relevant keywords by month. The dashed lines are the onset of the Russia- Ukraine war and Afghanistan’s fall to the Taliban. Both figures show that after salient world events, the prevalence of relevant keywords (“Ukraine”/“Ukrainian” in (a) and “Afghanistan”/“Taliban” in (b)) increases immediately in IO job postings. This validation figure is based on UNTalent data (2020-2024).

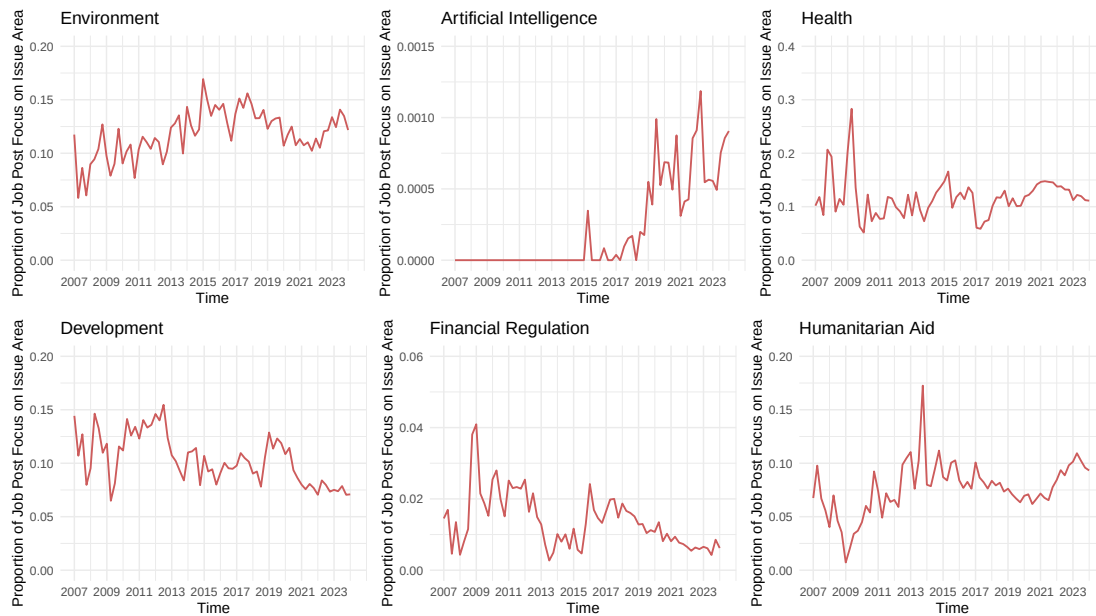


Figure B6: Raw Aggregated Focus of IOs on Issues Over Time

Note: Each plot represents an issue area. The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the aggregate IO focus on the issue. A y value of 0.1, for example, translates into all IOs’ average job post having a 10% focus on an issue or 10% of the jobs are completely focused on an issue.

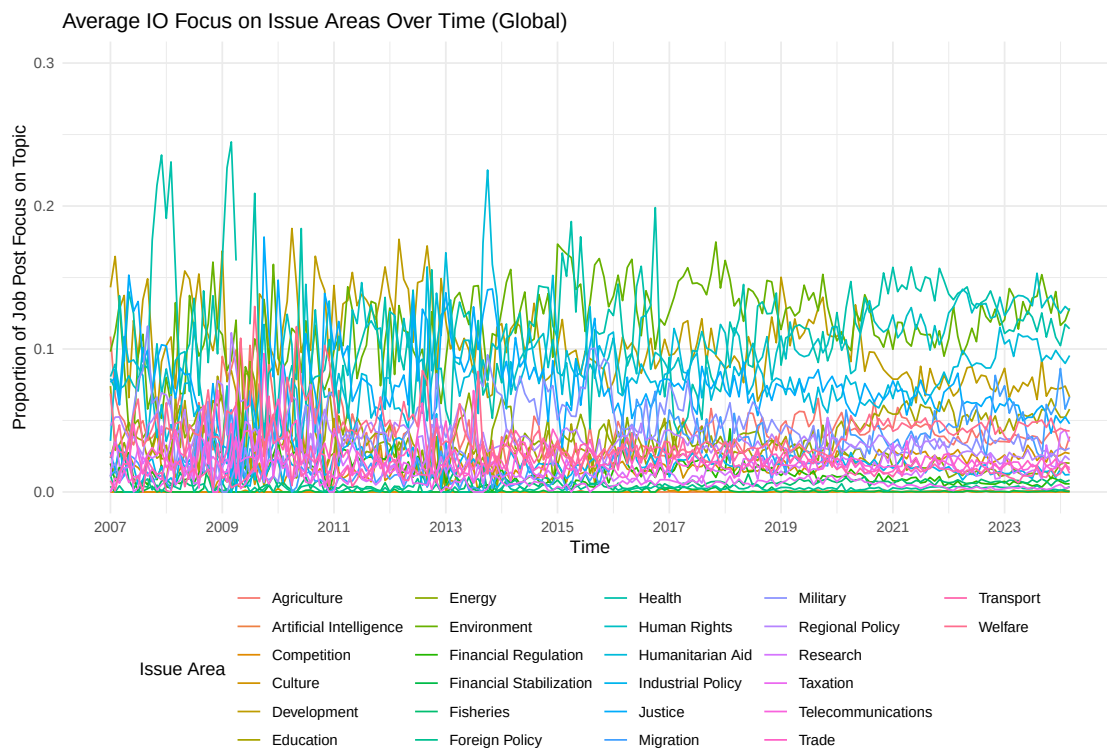
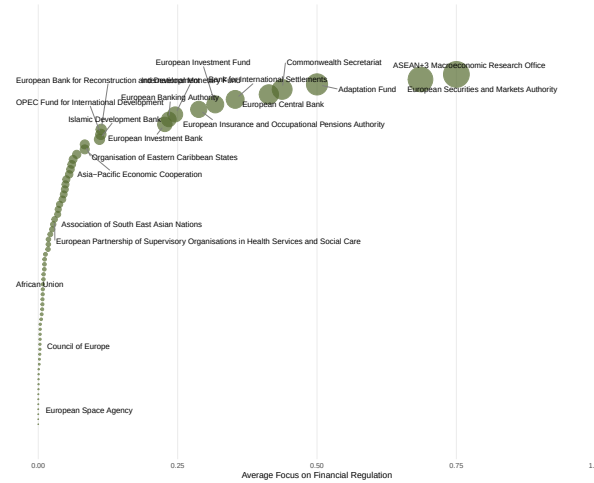


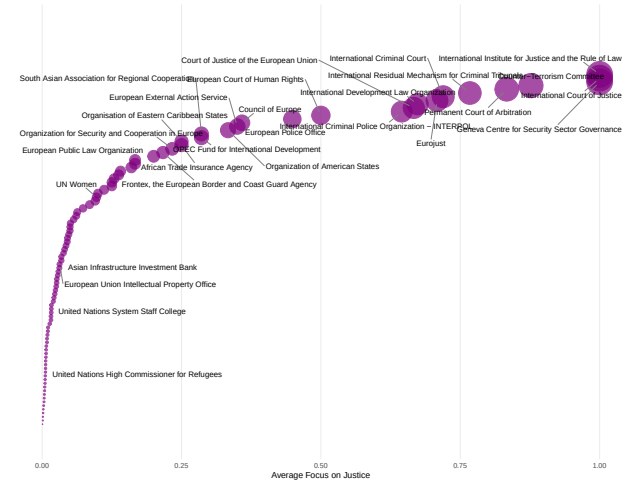
Figure B7: Aggregated Focus of IOs on All Issues Over Time

Note: The x-axis is time, and the y-axis is the average focus of all IOs on an issue area.

International regime on Financial regulation, banking regulation, monetary policy, currency
Bubble size represents the average focus on financial regulation



International regime on Justice, home affairs, interior security, police, anti-terrorism
Bubble size represents the average focus on justice



International regime on Telecommunications, internet, postal services
Bubble size represents the average focus on telecommunications



International regime on Education (primary, secondary, tertiary), vocational training, youth
Bubble size represents the average focus on education

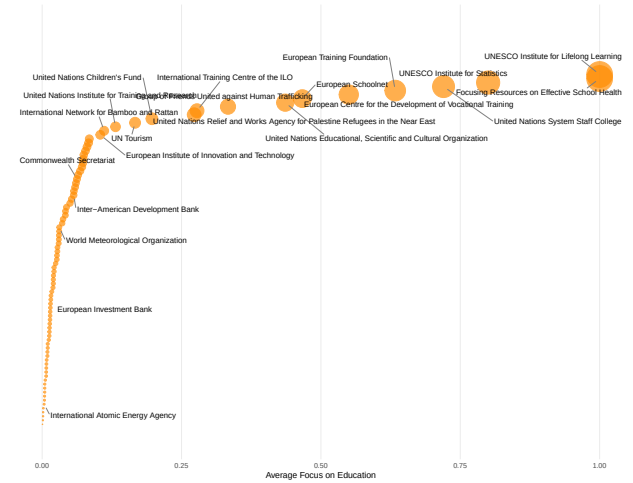


Figure B8: Example International Regimes Identified

Note: Bubbles represent IOs. The x-axis shows the average focus of the IO on this issue over time. All IOs are plotted, and the size of the bubbles represents the *relative* focus of an IO on an issue compared to other IOs. Only IOs with the highest focus and five other randomly sampled IOs are labeled with text due to space constraints. The limitation here is that only IOs with available job postings are covered.

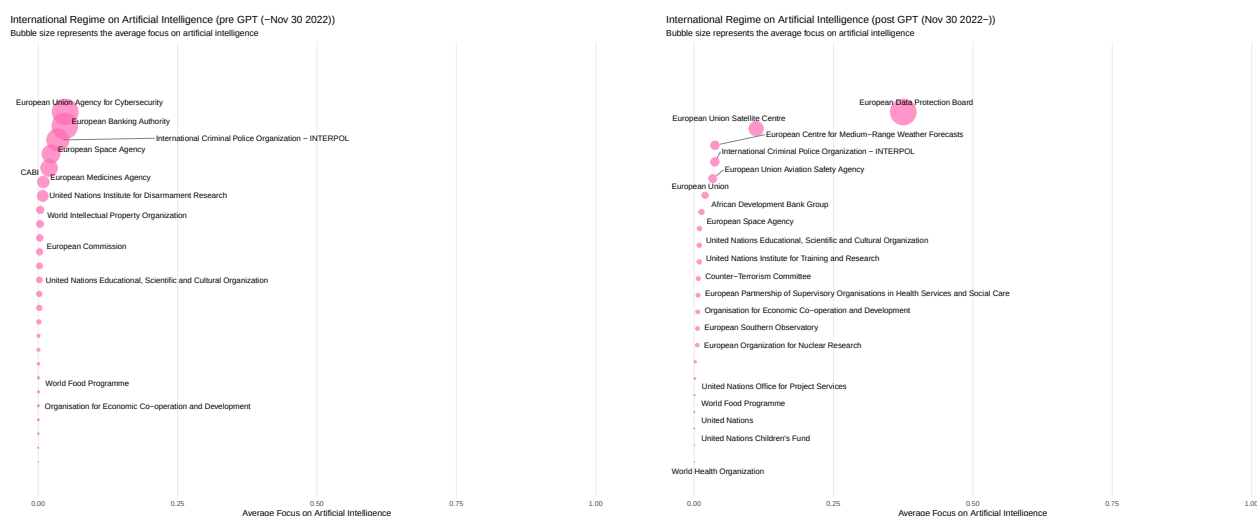


Figure B9: The Global AI Governance Regime

Note: Bubbles represent IOs. The x-axis shows the average focus of the IO on this issue over time. All IOs are plotted, and the size of the bubbles represents the relative focus of an IO on an issue compared to other IOs.

C Additional Analysis on Hypothesis Testing

Treated (Increased priority for major principals)	African Union; Association of South East Asian Nations; International Development Research Centre; Caribbean Development Bank; Pacific Islands Forum; International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law.
Treated (No change in priority for major principals)	Asian Development Bank; CGIAR System Organization; European Investment Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Finance Corporation; International Livestock Research Institute; International Organization for Migration; Pan American Health Organization; The World Bank Group; United Nations; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Office for Project Services; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; United Nations University; World Food Programme; World Health Organization; African Development Bank; European Commission; European External Action Service; European Forest Institute; Inter-American Development Bank; International Development Law Organization; International Labour Organization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; United Nations Population Fund; Commonwealth Secretariat; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics; OSCE - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; UN Women; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; World Trade Organization; European Union; International Fund for Agricultural Development; Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; Asian Productivity Organization; CABI; International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; International Telecommunication Union; Council of the European Union; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; European Council; European Institute of Innovation and Technology; European Stability Mechanism; Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; International Monetary Fund; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Islamic Development Bank; OPEC Fund for International Development; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; World Meteorological Organization; International Tropical Timber Organization; New Development Bank; Southern African Development Community.
Control (IOs distant from the shock)	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice; International Agency for Research on Cancer; International Commission on Missing Persons.

Table C1: Paris Agreement Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status

Treated (Decreased priority for major principals)	Inter-American Development Bank; International Finance Corporation; OPEC Fund for International Development; The World Bank Group; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
Treated (No change in priority for major principals)	African Development Bank; Asian Development Bank; Caribbean Development Bank; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; International Development Law Organization; International Development Research Centre; Islamic Development Bank; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; New Development Bank; Southern African Development Community; SAARC Development Fund; European Central Bank; European Free Trade Association; European Investment Bank; European Investment Fund; Nordic Development Fund.
Control (IOs distant from the shock)	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Table C2: Trump Entering Office Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status

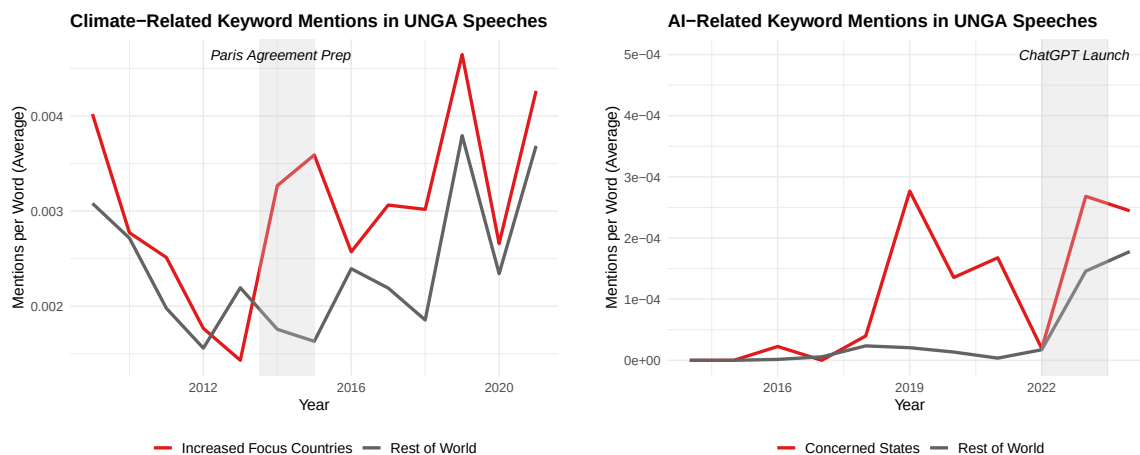
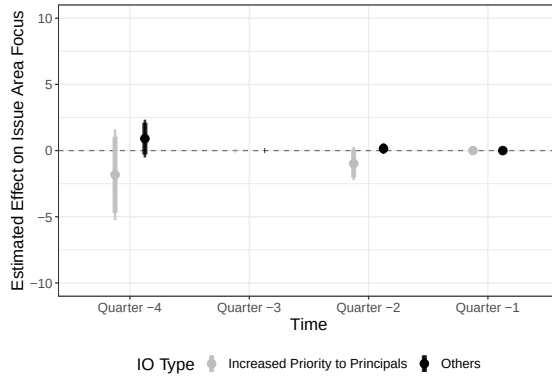


Figure C1: Keyword Mentions at the UNGA

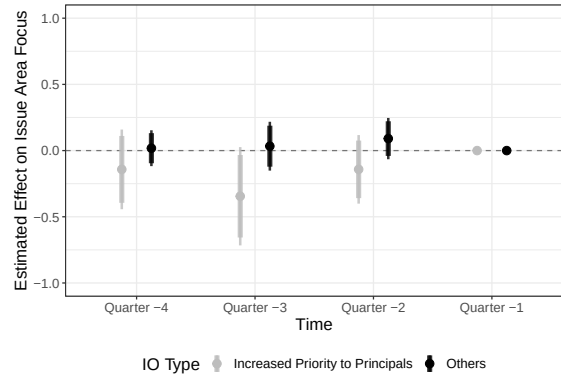
Note: The figure shows the frequency of climate keywords (climate, emission, environment) and AI-related keywords (artificial intelligence, AI, gpt) mentioned by states at the UNGA. The x-axis is year, and the y-axis is the average mentions of corresponding keywords per word. The red line is for countries identified as prioritizing the issue, and the gray line indicates other countries. The increased focus group on climate issues is identified by calculating the increase in mentions in 2014 and 2015 compared to 2013, and then subsetting to countries above the global median change.

Treated (Increased priority for major principals)	CABI; CGIAR System Organization; Council of Europe; EUROCONTROL; Eurojust; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Food Safety Authority; European Investment Bank; European Organization for Nuclear Research; European Research Council; European Securities and Markets Authority; European Space Agency; European Union; European Union Agency for Asylum; European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice; European Union Agency for the Space Programme; European Union Aviation Safety Agency; UN Women; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Council of Europe Development Bank; European Central Bank; European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research; European Commission; European Public Law Organization; European Union Intellectual Property Office; International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; International Development Law Organization; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century; European Banking Authority; European Environment Agency; European Fisheries Control Agency; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions; European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority; European Medicines Agency; European Patent Office; European University Institute; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; Union for the Mediterranean; Commonwealth Secretariat; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; European Chemicals Agency; European External Action Service; European Institute for Gender Equality; European Union Agency for Cybersecurity; European Union Agency for Railways; International Trade Centre; European Union Satellite Centre; International Criminal Police Organization - INTERPOL; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training; European Institute of Innovation and Technology; Nordic Development Fund; European Data Protection Board; European Union Drugs Agency; European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts; Court of Justice of the European Union; European Defence Agency; European Partnership of Supervisory Organisations in Health Services and Social Care; European Investment Fund; European Forest Institute.
Treated (No change in priority for major principals)	African Development Bank; African Union; Asian Development Bank; Association of South East Asian Nations; Bank for International Settlements; Caribbean Community; Caribbean Development Bank; Counter-Terrorism Committee; Economic Community of West African States; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Inter-American Development Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Civil Aviation Organization; International Criminal Court; International Finance Corporation; International Fund for Agricultural Development; International Labour Organization; International Monetary Fund; International Organization for Migration; Islamic Development Bank; New Development Bank; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Pan American Health Organization; Southern African Development Community; The World Bank Group; UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth; United Nations; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; United Nations Office for Project Services; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations University; World Food Programme; World Health Organization; World Intellectual Property Organization; World Meteorological Organization; World Trade Organization; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation; Asian Productivity Organization; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; Common Fund for Commodities; International Telecommunication Union; African Development Bank Group; Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail; OPEC Fund for International Development; Central European Free Trade Agreement; International Development Research Centre; Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance; Latin American Integration Association; Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs; International Court of Justice; OSCE - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; United Nations System Staff College; Trade and Development Bank; Universal Postal Union.
Control (IOs distant from the shock)	European Southern Observatory; Green Climate Fund; Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; International Livestock Research Institute; International Renewable Energy Agency; International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; International Seabed Authority; Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; UN Tourism; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; International Network for Bamboo and Rattan; SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre; Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics; Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators; Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency; Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

Table C3: AI Regime Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status



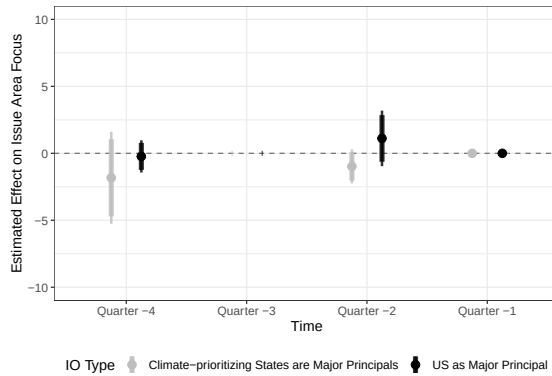
(a) Climate



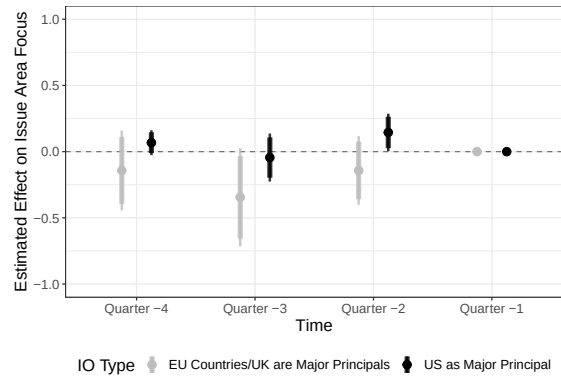
(b) AI

Figure C2: Parallel Trends Test: Principal Priorities

Note: Each plot is a parallel trends test for one analysis. The x-axis indicates each pre-treatment period. The y-axis is the estimated coefficient. All 95% confidence intervals crossing zero imply parallel trends pre-treatment.



(a) Climate



(b) AI

Figure C3: Parallel Trends Test: Relative Principal Power

Note: Each plot is a parallel trends test for one analysis. The x-axis indicates each pre-treatment period. The y-axis is the estimated coefficient. All 95% confidence intervals crossing zero imply parallel trends pre-treatment. There is a slight deviation at $t = -2$ for US-dominated IOs working on AI in (b). This deviation likely reflects early responses to growing US policy and geopolitical attention to AI in the first half of 2022.

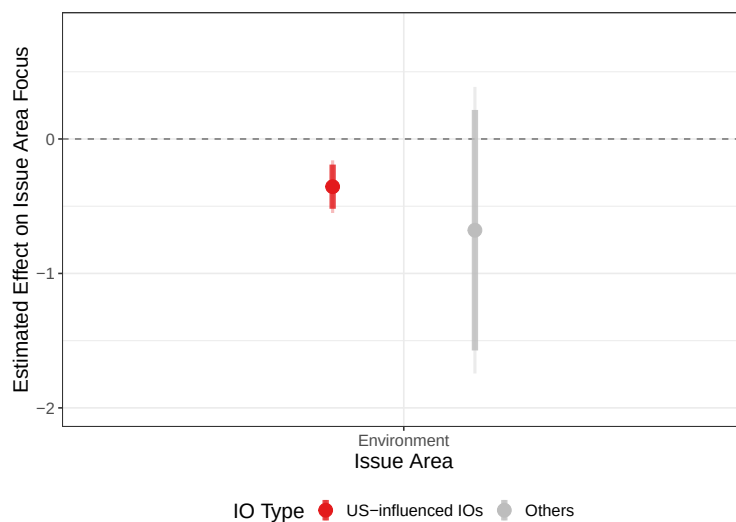


Figure C4: Trump Entering Office and Non-Climate IOs' Focus on Climate

Note: The x-axis represents different groups, and the y-axis is the effect of the treatment on the IOs' focus on climate. The dots are estimated average treatment effects, and the vertical lines are 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals.

D Robustness to Missing Data and European Organizations

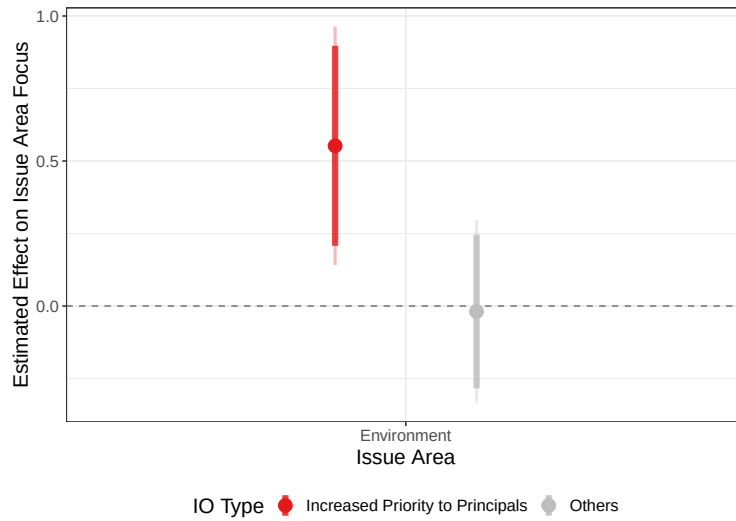


Figure D1: All Non-Climate IOs' Response to Paris Agreement Draft

Note: The x-axis represents different groups, and the y-axis is the effect of the treatment on the IOs' focus on climate. The dots are estimated average treatment effects, and the vertical lines are 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals.

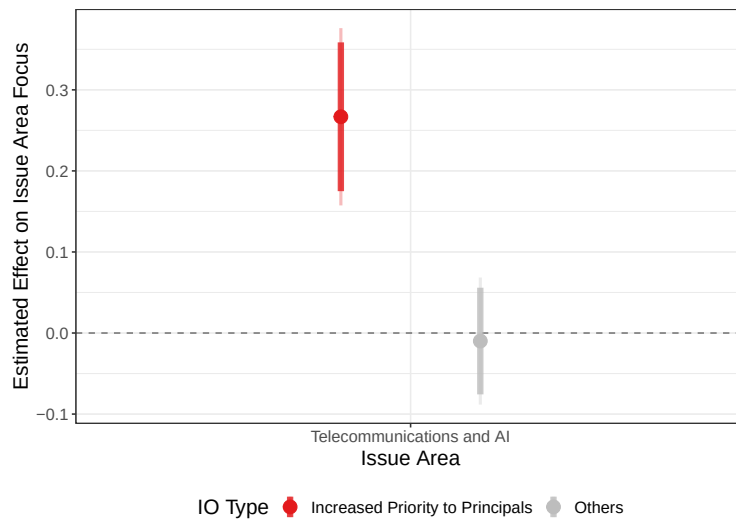


Figure D2: All Non-AI IOs' Response to ChatGPT Launch

Note: The x-axis represents different groups, and the y-axis is the effect of the treatment on the IOs' focus on AI and telecommunications. The dots are estimated average treatment effects, and the vertical lines are 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals.

E Additional Example Job Postings

E.1 Example 1: Technical Officer, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (ICAO)

- Organization: International Civil Aviation Organization
- Link: https://uncareer.net/vacancy/technical-officer-remotely-piloted-aircraft-systems-rpas-675478#google_vignette
- Date posted: May 06, 2024

Org. Setting and Reporting

The Air Navigation Bureau (ANB) is responsible for providing technical guidance to the Air Navigation Commission (ANC), the Council, and the Assembly. ANB provides technical expertise in aviation-related disciplines to States, industry and all elements of the Organization. The Bureau is also responsible for maintaining and implementing the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), including its aviation system block upgrades as well as producing yearly safety and air navigation status reports. The ANB develops technical studies and proposals for Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), and Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS) for further processing by the governing bodies of ICAO. The Bureau also develops related procedures and guidance material and manages the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) and Continuous Monitoring Approach that monitors all States on a continuous basis. The ANB is also responsible for the development of guidance material supporting optimized airspace organization and management, thereby maximizing air traffic management performance of airspace and international traffic flows and supporting the growth of traffic without compromising safety. The Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Section serves as the focal point for all RPAS-related matters at ICAO and is responsible for the development of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS) and guidance material related to the operation, certification and airworthiness of RPAS, C2 Links, detect and avoid system requirements, licensing and training of remote pilots and air traffic management integration issues, amongst others. The RPAS section also serves as the focal point within the Organization for unmanned/remotely piloted aviation and advanced air mobility (AAM) and is responsible for managing and coordinating developments in these areas. The Technical Officer, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) reports directly to the Chief, RPAS section, providing technical advice and services in relation to the development of Standards and Recommended Practices for Annex 1 - Personnel Licensing, Annex 2 Rules of the Air, Annex 3 - Meteorology, Annex 6 Operation of Aircraft, Annex 7 Aircraft Nationality and Registration Marks, Annex 8 - Airworthiness of Aircraft, Annex 10 Aeronautical Telecommunications, Annex 11 Air Traffic Services, Annex 14 Aerodromes, as well as guidance material for the Manual on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) (Doc 10019), the forthcoming Manual on C2 Links for RPAS, the Detect and avoid (DAA) Manual, the online Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Toolkit and related ICAO documents. The incumbent serves as the Secretary of the RPAS Panel and prepares briefing material and working papers. S/he carries out duties and responsibilities in support of related matters, as assigned to her/him by the Supervisor. He/she carries out duties and responsibilities in support of operations-related matters, as assigned to her/him by the Supervisor. The incumbent collaborates closely with other Technical Officers in the Air Navigation Bureau and other Bureaux, as well as with Regional Offices for all RPAS, UAS and AAM-related matters.

Responsibilities

- Function 1 (incl. Expected results) Contributes to the development of working papers on RPAS, UAS and AAM matters by providing technical input for the ICAO Council, Air Navigation Commission (ANC) and international meetings, achieving results such as: Provide technical input to working papers, State letters and other documentation required to present Annex and PANS amendment proposals to the ANC and ICAO Council. Prepare technical studies and working papers for the ANC and international meetings relating to RPAS, UAS, AAM and related subjects. Provide input to facilitate technical discussions during ICAO meetings and conferences. Participate in the discussion of such papers and provide support, information/documentation, as needed. Provide and support further development of the ASBU modules related to the integration of RPAS into non-segregated airspace and at aerodromes; and Provide comprehensive analysis of issues raised by States and international organizations and provide recommendations for appropriate solutions.
- Function 2 (incl. Expected results) Leads the development of technical provisions for RPAS, achieving results such as: Serve as Secretary of the RPAS Panel in the development of flight operations, airworthiness, safety management, air traffic management, C2 Link, detect and avoid, human factors and aerodrome provisions, amongst others. Prepare high-level technical working papers, information papers and briefings for the RPAS Panel and its working groups. Conduct necessary follow-up on actions resulting from the discussion of the papers and related recommendations, decisions or outcomes reached during the panel and working group meetings. Draft panel meeting technical reports in cooperation with Technical Officers, Rapporteurs and Panel Officers. Liaise between the RPAS Panel and the Aerodromes Panel (AP), Communications Panel (CP), Surveillance Panel (SP), Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP), Airworthiness Panel (AIRP), Aviation Security Panel (AVSECP), Trust Framework Panel (TFP), Cybersecurity Panel (CYSECP), Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), Dangerous Goods Panel (DGP), Navigation Systems Panel (NSP) Flight Recorder Working Group and Flight Operations Panel (FLTOSP), Safety Management Panel (SMP), Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP), the Legal Committee and all relevant ICAO expert groups, to ensure the harmonized and timely development of RPAS-related provisions. Provide technical input in the coordination and review of all draft guidance material provided; and Contribute to and/or develop relevant documentation for publication.
- ...

Competencies

- Professionalism: Knowledge of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and its Annexes, ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and their application. Thorough knowledge of unmanned/remotely piloted aviation and advanced air mobility. Ability to work in a team environment, ensuring that objectives and timelines are met. Ability to deal with complex issues with diplomacy, tact and maturity of judgment. Ability to produce reports and papers on technical issues and to review and edit the work of others. Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.
- ...

E.2 Example 2: Gender Specialist (ILO)

- Organization: International Labour Organization
- Link: <https://uncareer.net/vacancy/gender-specialist-665882>
- Date posted: February 29, 2024

Introduction

The position is located in the [ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office for India (DWT/CO-New Delhi)]. It is a centre of technical excellence, which supports seven countries in South Asia i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives; to realize decent work for inclusive growth and sustainable development. DWT/CO-New Delhi provides overall technical support for the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Decent Work Country Programmes. DWT/CO-New Delhi also provides strategic guidance in formulating policy and work programmes as required by the ILO country offices and the constituents in South Asia in close collaboration with the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RO-Asia and the Pacific), the Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific (DWT-Bangkok) and ILO headquarters technical departments.

The main role of the position is to provide technical advisory services and capacity building support to ILO constituents in South Asia, in collaboration with the other specialists in DWT/CO-New Delhi. The Gender Specialist also provides resource mobilization support and technical support to relevant development cooperation projects. The position is part of the ILO Gender Network and a member of the Conditions of Work and Equality Department's (WORKQUALITY) Global Technical Team. The role is also to promote gender equality and inclusion, and respect for diversity.

The incumbent works under direct supervision of the Director of DWT/CO-New Delhi. The incumbent also receives technical oversight and advice from the Chief of the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), of the WORKQUALITY Department at ILO headquarters. The incumbent will work in close collaboration with other DWT technical specialists, particularly international labour standards, fundamental principles and rights at work, employers' and workers' activities, labour administration, labour inspection and occupational safety and health, and social dialogue, and with the other ILO Country Offices in the sub-region, as well as UN bodies and other relevant sub-regional and national institutions and initiatives.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

- As primary specialist in the area(s) of [gender, equality, diversity and inclusion, the incumbent, is responsible for substantial segments of the work programme. Identify priorities for/on these technical areas, develop strategies, as well as deliver and coordinate high-quality technical support at sub-regional and national levels to advance the Decent Work Agenda and social justice, taking into account the integration of cross-cutting policy drivers, including international labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies. Lead work streams/teams involved in this work and ensure the effective management of staff and consultants in accordance with ILO standards, the results-based management framework and through timely and effective use of the Performance Management Framework (PMF) and other feedback mechanisms, as applicable.
- Review and facilitate the strengthening and effective implementation of inclusive institutional, legal and policy frameworks. Provide expert policy and technical advice in the areas of gender, equality, diversity and inclusion to ILO constituents and other concerned stakeholders with a view to promoting the formulation of inclusive and gender-responsive

policies and programmes, and their impactful implementation and monitoring to ensure equitable outcomes. Promote relevant international labour standards.

- Support ILO constituents in identifying their needs and provide adequate technical support, including through comparative policy analyses. Facilitate the effective participation and advocacy role of employers' and workers' organizations in policy design, implementation and evaluation of decent work programmes and projects.
- Provide technical inputs to the design and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) as well as UN and other development cooperation frameworks. Participate in multidisciplinary initiatives, efforts, developments, plans, reviews, activities with a view to ensuring an integrated approach for the delivery of the Decent Work Agenda.
- Initiate, design, conduct/commission and/or coordinate innovative and gender-mainstreamed research and analysis that meets the evolving needs of constituents and other key stakeholders in the world of work area and leads to the formulation of policy advice, recommendations, policy and technical guidelines, and the development of new and enhancement of existing methodologies and concepts to address gender equality issues, including with respect to (but not restricted to) the following areas: the care economy, the distribution of paid and unpaid work, the harmonization of work and family responsibilities, gender sensitive statistics, equal remuneration for work of equal value and the gender pay gap, care policies and measures including maternity protection, violence and harassment including sexual harassment, quantity and quality of women's participation in labour market, multiple discrimination/intersectionality and decent work for domestic workers and home based workers.
- ...

Required qualifications

- Education: Advanced level university degree (Master's or equivalent) in social sciences, public administration, law or economics with demonstrated technical expertise in the field of gender equality or other relevant field. A first-level university degree (Bachelor's or equivalent) in one of the afore-mentioned fields or other relevant field with an additional two years of relevant experience, in addition to the experience stated below, will be accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree.
- Experience: At least seven years of experience in the world of work issues with a particular focus on gender equality and non-discrimination, including at the international level.
- Languages: Excellent command of English. A working knowledge of another working language of the Organization (French, Spanish) or a language of the South Asia or Asia-Pacific region would be an advantage.
- Knowledge and technical/behavioural competencies: Excellent knowledge and understanding of theories, trends and approaches in the area(s) of gender, equality, diversity and inclusion including gender policies and issues, gender analysis, and mainstreaming gender into projects and programmes with the ability to plan, coordinate and guide the development and implementation of new concepts policies, techniques and procedures in response to evolving technical needs.

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