

The Scope Expansion of International Organizations

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Abstract

Global challenges like climate change and artificial intelligence evolve rapidly, yet international organizations (IOs) respond unevenly. When do IOs adapt to new challenges, and why do some expand while others do not? I argue that although states create IOs to address specific cooperation problems, bureaucracies reshape what organizations do by changing staff expertise and tasking. IO bureaucrats' entrepreneurial incentives are structured by state power. They selectively expand organizational scope toward issues prioritized by the major principals to maintain relevance. I compile an original dataset of 630,500 job postings from 234 IOs (2007-2024) to measure operational scope. Using a difference-in-differences design exploiting the rising salience of climate and AI, I show that IOs expand only when the major principals prioritize an issue and contract when priorities shift away. Organizational adaptation thus occurs beneath formal mandates. Through bureaucratic incentives, state power reshapes IO expertise and tasking, thereby shifting the global governance agenda.

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1 Introduction

Global challenges such as climate change and artificial intelligence constantly reshape the need for global governance. Yet international organizations (IOs) differ strikingly in how they respond. For example, among multilateral development banks confronting climate change, the Asian Development Bank has rebranded itself as “Asia’s Climate Bank,” whereas the Islamic Development Bank devotes substantially less attention to climate issues and the World Bank’s engagement has fluctuated over time. Similar variation appears beyond climate change. Following the rise of artificial intelligence, some IOs rapidly developed new activities related to AI governance, while others did not. Why do some IOs adapt to emerging challenges while others do not?

Existing theories argue that states design IOs to solve specific cooperation problems (Keohane, 1984; Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001), yet new global challenges emerge, and the salience of cooperation problems changes over time.¹ 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. Yet we know much less about when IOs expand into new issue areas and why such adaptation varies across organizations and over time.

Adapting to emerging challenges requires IOs to develop new expertise, assign personnel to carry out new activities, and integrate those activities into routine operations. Existing research, however, focuses primarily on formal mandates, implicitly assuming that expertise and tasking are predetermined by them. Some studies show that IO bureaucracies may engage in mission creep in certain cases, but they assume that IOs do so with existing organizational expertise and operations, and when and where expansion occurs remains unknown without cross-IO and cross-time comparison.²

I argue that IOs adapt to emerging challenges by changing staff expertise and tasking, but they

1. See, 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.

2. For example, Einhorn (2001). Or the IO creates a separate organization to deal with the issue (Johnson, 2014; Lugg, 2024)

do so selectively. Bureaucracies change organizational capabilities by hiring personnel with new expertise and assigning staff to new issue areas, particularly those prioritized by the organization's major principals. Without immediate expansion in total capacity, this adaptation often entails reallocating work from existing issue areas. Thus, scope expansion is not automatic. IOs expand their operational scope when major principals prioritize an issue and contract when those priorities shift away.

The study bridges two strands of literature on IOs. Research on bureaucratic autonomy argues that IO bureaucracies possess agency that allows them to sometimes expand beyond formal mandates (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Weaver, 2008; Johnson, 2014; Lall, 2023; Clark and Zucker, 2024), but it remains unclear when and where IOs expand as well as how they achieve this change. Another group of studies emphasizes the influence of powerful states over IO resources, membership, and governance (Hawkins, Lake, Nielson and Tierney, 2006; Stone, 2011; Copelovitch, 2010; Dreher, Sturm and Vreeland, 2009; Dreher and Sturm, 2012; Davis, 2023), but pays less attention to what issues IOs choose to work on. I argue that because bureaucrats' job security, career advancement, and professional fulfillment depend on maintaining organizational relevance, they strategically develop expertise and reallocate staff toward issues prioritized by the major principals. Bureaucratic expansion is neither fully autonomous nor universal. Whether and where the bureaucracy expands depends on the priorities of powerful states in the IO.

To test this argument, I examine how IOs' operational scope changes over time. Existing measures of IO behavior (mandates, treaties, reports, etc.) capture formal scope but not what organizations actually do. I therefore introduce job postings as a new measure of bureaucratic operations. Job postings describe concrete tasks and required expertise, providing a direct measure of operational focus. I compile an original dataset of 630,500 postings from 234 IOs between 2007 and 2024.

Focusing on climate change and artificial intelligence, two challenges whose salience increased sharply during the period of analysis, I show that IOs whose core mandates did not include these issues nonetheless increased new expertise and staff tasking devoted to them by more than 20%

when their major principal prioritizes the issue and contract when those priorities shift away. Elite interviews with senior IO leaders from different IOs suggest that these expansions originate from high-level bureaucratic initiatives that anticipate principal priorities.

The paper makes three contributions. First, it develops a dynamic theory of how state power shapes the agenda of international organizations. Existing studies show that major principals influence how IO bureaucrats implement delegated responsibilities (Clark and Dolan, 2021). I argue that they also shape what issues IOs work on in the first place. Rather than expanding out of independent internal logic, IO bureaucracies selectively broaden their scope toward emerging issues prioritized by the major principal. The paper therefore shifts attention from variation in delegated policy implementation to variation in *what* issues the IO works on.

Second, the paper identifies a distinct mechanism through which political institutions change. Existing work argues that domestic institutions expand the issues they govern through bureaucratic “turf wars” (Moe, 1984; Carpenter, 2002; Wilson, 1989). Building on this insight, I show that IOs can fundamentally change what they do by developing new expertise and incorporating new tasks into routine operations without formal mandate reform or the creation of new organizational bodies. Beyond viewing institutional change primarily through the creation, reform, or decline of organizations (Gray, 2018; Johnson, 2014; Abbott, Green and Keohane, 2016), I show that institutions can change their function by having bureaucratic leaders redirect hiring, expertise, and day-to-day work, consistent with theories of gradual institutional change (Streeck, Thelen, et al., 2009). Changing organizational expertise and staff tasking thus constitute an important mechanism through which powerful states reshape international organizations from within.

Third, I introduce job postings as a new measure of IO operations, offering three key advantages: *completeness* (capturing the full spectrum of IO activities), *unbiasedness* (drafted for recruitment rather than political signaling), and *comparability* (following similar templates across IOs and time). By building and analyzing an original dataset of IO job postings, this study introduces a novel empirical approach to understanding how international organizations operate and how their scope evolves over time, processes that are difficult to observe using traditional ap-

proaches.

2 Bureaucratic Incentives, Power, and Scope Expansion of IOs

2.1 IO Scope Expansion Beyond Formal Mandates

Traditional theories of international organizations emphasize that states design institutions to address specific cooperation problems and delegate tasks accordingly (Keohane, 1984; Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001; Koremenos, 2016). Studies therefore typically treat the set of tasks an IO performs as given and evaluate performance within those delegated domains (Downs, Rocke and Barsoom, 1996; Chayes and Chayes, 1998; Goldstein, Rivers and Tomz, 2007; Lipsy and Lee, 2019; Glaser, 1993).

However, IOs frequently operate beyond the issue areas for which they were originally created. The IMF has expanded into climate, gender, and governance, the World Health Organization increasingly frames climate change as a health issue, and the World Bank has incorporated climate and gender objectives across its operations. Such expansion varies substantially across organizations and over time. The IMF illustrates the puzzle. Agriculture, health, and education can all plausibly affect macroeconomic stability, 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 macro-economically relevant.” Everything can be “finance” for a financial IO, but this also implies a changing definition of “finance.” The question is not whether new issues can be connected to an organization’s mandate, but why some become operational priorities while others do not. As a former senior IMF leader explained, “The mandate of the IMF has not changed. What has been constantly changing is the application of these principles and what has been defined as macro-critical.”³

Existing scholarship explains why expansion beyond formal mandates is possible (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Weaver, 2008; Johnson, 2014; Clark and Zucker, 2024), but offers less expla-

3. Interview 13.

nation for when expansion occurs, why some organizations expand while others do not, and why expansion varies across issue areas and over time.

2.2 The IO Bureaucracy and the Politics of Scope Expansion

Adapting to new challenges requires IOs to change what they do in practice. To address an issue effectively by themselves, IOs must develop new expertise, hire personnel with relevant skills, and incorporate new tasks into routine operations. The question is therefore not only whether bureaucracies can expand beyond their mandates, but also when they do so and why they develop expertise and staff tasking in some issue areas rather than others.

I provide a principal-agent logic to explain this variation. IO bureaucrats have both material and professional incentives to maintain organizational relevance. Organizational survival provides budgets and staffing, and therefore job security and career opportunities (Moe, 1984; Niskanen, 1971). In IOs, studies have shown that bureaucrats care about material benefits derived from the job (Gray, 2018; Clark and Dolan, 2021; Johnson, 2016). Bureaucrats also value participating in consequential rather than marginal policy work (Wilson, 1989; Carpenter, 2002; Johnson, 2016). Both incentives depend on whether the organization continues to receive attention, recognition, and resources from its major principal states.

IO bureaucracies operate in a competitive governance environment where states can pursue cooperation through multiple organizations, informal arrangements, or bilateral channels. IOs therefore have incentives to remain relevant by addressing issues valued by their major principals (Abbott, Green and Keohane, 2016). Bureaucrats then have incentives to develop expertise and reallocate staff toward those priorities.

A key mechanism through which IOs adapt is redirecting staff expertise and tasking. Formal mandates rarely change quickly, but bureaucracies can alter who they hire and what staff work on. These decisions redefine organizational expertise and what the organization does in practice. Research in labor economics emphasizes that skills are embodied in tasks (Autor, Levy and Murnane, 2003; Acemoglu and Autor, 2011), while principal-agent theories emphasize that expertise

shapes what agents can credibly supply to principals (Huber and Shipan, 2002; Epstein and O’halloran, 1994). By developing expertise and assigning staff to issue areas prioritized by the major principals, IO bureaucracies both change their organizational capabilities and their value to the principals. In doing so, they maintain organizational relevance and strengthen the attention, resources, and recognition they receive from the major principals. Similar logic exists in corporate governance, where managers make investments that increase their value to shareholders (Shleifer and Vishny, 1989). Bureaucrats’ ideological commitments may further reinforce these incentives, as officials whose policy beliefs align with the direction of expansion are more likely to support new initiatives (Chwioroth, 2015; Nelson, 2017).⁴

This argument does not require explicit instructions from principals. While it is possible that powerful states that have greater influence over IO decisions directly order bureaucrats to expand, this is neither necessary nor prevalent, according to interviews. Bureaucracies anticipate principal priorities, respond to political signals, or interact directly with senior state representatives. Regardless, the observable implication is the same. The IO bureaucracy systematically develops expertise and assigns staff to issue areas prioritized by its major principals. As new expertise accumulates, these changes may be reinforced through organizational learning and socialization (Clark and Zucker, 2024; Heinzl, Weaver and Jorgensen, 2025; Gerschewski, 2021).

Elite interviews support this mechanism. Across organizations, interviewees suggest that decisions about new initiatives, staffing, and expertise are guided by the priorities of influential member states. Initiatives frequently originate with senior bureaucrats, particularly in leadership, strategy, fundraising, and external relations offices, because maintaining organizational relevance depends on securing resources, attention, and recognition from major principals.⁵ A former senior official in the IMF leadership explained that the organization expands into areas such as climate and health because they “always need to be relevant.” Management looks outward and “tries to be the head of the turf,” addressing issues important to its shareholders.⁶ At the International Labour

4. Interviewees also noted that officials who disagreed with new organizational priorities often leave (Interview 3).

5. Dates and interviewee information are listed in Table B1.

6. Interview 3. The IMF expands into climate and health issues because “(high-level official in the IMF leadership) always needs to be a relevant person.”

Organization (ILO), senior officers described climate initiatives, as opposed to labor issues, as the “future” that would sustain organizational vitality.⁷ At the World Bank,⁸ while lower level staff has some freedom in exploring what they are interested in, the management level filter these proposals through the lens of principal priorities and then lobby for support.⁹ Conversely, issues not backed by the major principal state, for example, private sector lending at the Caribbean Development Bank, struggle to gain support even when staff and many member states favor them.¹⁰ This highlights that senior managers monitor the evolving priorities of major principals and adapt staff expertise and tasking accordingly. Rather than responding uniformly to all challenges, organizations selectively develop expertise and operate in issue areas that influential principal states regard as important.

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), linking new topics to existing mandates (Davis, 2004), or outsourcing. However, without developing expertise and staff tasking within the existing organization itself, they are less effective at positioning the organization as a relevant venue for addressing issues prioritized by the major principals.

Therefore, scope expansion depends on two conditions. First, emerging global challenges create opportunities to expand into new issue areas. Second, major principal priorities determine which opportunities organizations pursue. States value IOs that advance important objectives, provide useful expertise, and serve as effective venues for coordination and influence (Keohane, 1984; Stone, 2011). Since a small number of major principals disproportionately shape IO membership, resources, and governance (Davis, 2023; Ikenberry, 1996; Stone, 2011; Copelovitch, 2010), bu-

7. The 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.*” (interview 2)

8. Interview 12.

9. In this process, there may be variation among IOs. In some IOs, principal states may have more oversight while bureaucracies have greater autonomy in others. Medium to low-level staff may play a role in reporting issues and conducting research, and interviewees from lower levels and operational positions are less likely to feel the political pressure (interviews 7, 8).

10. For 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.

reaucracies have the strongest incentives to develop expertise and redirect staff tasking toward their priorities. For simplicity, I consider one major principal in an IO. Some studies on state power in IOs focus on a singular hegemon and others on a group of powerful states. In this case, bureaucratic incentives to follow major principal priorities should be stronger when the lead state has greater dominance. Therefore, I also examine variation in the relative strength of the major principal's power. Future research could more fully investigate how different power structures and decision rules condition bureaucratic adaptation.

Once IOs acquire expertise in a new issue area, major principals may find it efficient to continue using the IO as a governance venue because existing expertise lowers the costs of delegation and future cooperation. At the same time, bureaucracies may sometimes expand more aggressively than principals ultimately prefer because organizational relevance does not necessarily coincide with the optimal division of labor across institutions.¹¹ Criticism of the IMF's work on climate and gender illustrates these tensions. Although systematic evidence on these limits lies beyond the scope of this study, such episodes of "mission creep" are consistent with the argument developed here.

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

Hypothesis 1a: Following global challenges, when the major principal prioritizes the issue, IO bureaucracies expand their operational scope to address them.

In contrast,

Hypothesis 1b: Following global challenges, when the major principal do not prioritize the issue, IO bureaucracies do not expand to address the issue.

Finally, when a global challenge has already become salient, changes in principal priority will directly affect the scope of an IO:

Hypothesis 2: Given an existing global challenge, when the major principal shifts attention away from an issue, the IO will contract from the issue area.

11. Interviewees 2, 3, and 9 likewise noted that senior officials often push organizational boundaries while member states warn against expanding too far.

3 Descriptive Patterns: The Scope of IOs Over Time

Existing measures classify IOs according to their formal mandates. For example, they categorize the World Health Organization as a “health IO,” the World Bank as a “development IO,” and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a “security IO.” The most comprehensive effort, the Measuring International Authority (MIA) project (Hooghe, 2017; Hooghe, Lenz and Marks, 2019), codes the formal policy scope of 76 IOs using treaties, constitutions, and other institutional documents. Figures 1(a) and (c) illustrate these formal measures for the WHO and UNESCO. Their formal mandates remain remarkably stable over time.

However, IOs adapt by changing what they actually do. Figures 1(b) and (d) plot the operational scope measured from job postings. Compared with formal mandates, operational scope is much broader and changes over time. UNESCO, for example, has shifted away from education despite an unchanged formal mandate.¹² I discuss the construction of this measure in the next section.

12. “Has UNESCO lost its way?” Devex, September 27, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.devex.com/news/has-unesco-lost-its-way-95469>.

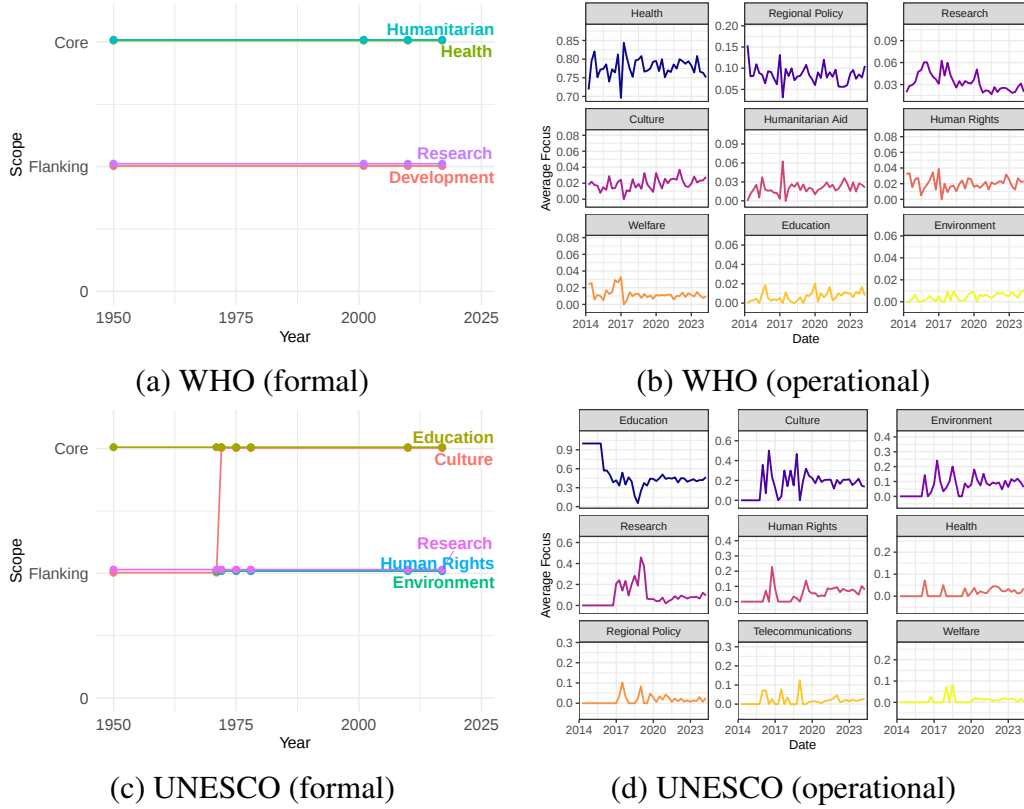


Figure 1: Comparison of Formal vs Operational Scope of Example IOs

Note: The left panels show formal scope as coded by the MIA project. The right panels show operational scope, measured by the share of job postings focus devoted to each issue area each quarter. The comparison highlights that organizations' formal mandates remain largely stable and narrow, whereas their operational activities are broader and evolve over time.

3.1 Constructing the IO Job Postings Data

To measure operational scope, I compile an original dataset of 630,500 job postings from 234 intergovernmental organizations between 2007 and 2024. Job postings specify the expertise organizations seek and the tasks staff are expected to perform, providing a direct measure of changes in IO operations.

Job postings are written by departmental leadership to meet operational needs. By hiring staff with particular expertise and assigning them specific responsibilities, IOs develop new capabilities and incorporate new issue areas into routine operations. Therefore, job postings capture how bureaucracies translate emerging priorities into ongoing organizational practice.

Consider a 2024 job posting below by the ADB for a Natural Resources and Agriculture

Economist.¹³ By assigning staff to these tasks and hiring corresponding expertise, the ADB incorporated climate-related activities into its routine operations. Such organizational decisions are difficult to observe from formal publications because they are fragmented and may never appear systematically in official documents.

Multiple sources confirm the validity of this measure. Interviews with human resources (HR) officers and staff emphasize that job postings accurately describe duties because inaccurate descriptions create costly hiring mismatches. Unlike many other labor markets, such as those for university faculty positions, IO recruitment operates in a broad and competitive market, making it particularly dependent on accurate descriptions of required expertise and responsibilities. Since job postings are directed at prospective applicants rather than member states, they are also less susceptible to political signaling than many official IO outputs. HR officers further noted that internal personnel rules generally require later staff responsibilities to correspond closely to posted duties. Interviewees also noted that job postings often reveal emerging or politically sensitive work that is missing from official publications.¹⁴ The production process of job postings further reflects actions taken by the bureaucracy. Job postings are drafted by departmental leadership to meet operational needs, while member states typically approve overall headcounts rather than individual job design.¹⁵

I collect job postings from official IO job sites, third-party recruitment platforms, official IO Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and others.¹⁶ Coverage extends the 73 IOs in the MIA project to 234 organizations that the Yearbook of International Organizations lists.¹⁷ I match IO names across different sources and remove duplicate postings. The data collection process covers as many IOs

13. Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, Asian Development Bank, April 10 2024, retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20240419171036/https://www.adb.org/careers/240222>. Section E in the Appendix provides two additional example job postings.

14. Interviews 2-13.

15. The top organizational leadership hiring may be an exception.

16. This 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 A1 and Figure A1 in the Appendix.

17. The dataset includes 52 of the 73 IOs still active in the MIA project. An organization is considered an IO if it is listed independently in the Yearbook as an intergovernmental organization. Organizational boundary depends on whether the organizations are separate entities that post job postings. For the UN system, all departments are aggregated under “United Nations” unless they are specialized agencies or funds (e.g., IMF, UNESCO).

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.
- ...

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 delivery.¹⁸ For subsequent analysis, I also test its robustness to potential missing data.¹⁹

Each posting includes the date and full text describing tasks, responsibilities, and qualifications.²⁰ I show that job postings respond rapidly to known major world events, so that they reflect immediate changes in IO behavior.²¹

3.2 Identifying the Scope of International Organizations

To identify IO operational scope, I classify the issue area associated with each job. I fine-tune a pre-trained language model, RoBERTa (Liu, Ott, Goyal, Du, Joshi, Chen, Levy, Lewis, Zettlemoyer and Stoyanov, 2019), using a training set with 3,106 postings that I hand-coded.²² Fine-tuning helps the model recognize the specific language that indicates 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 role centered on delivering social welfare programs and a job posting that merely mentions IO employee benefits; between substantive climate work and a generic reference to “sustainable development”; and between policy work on data safety and routine administrative IT tasks. Each posting can belong to multiple topics among 27 categories (each job may involve tasks spanning several issue areas), including the 25 from MIA plus “Artificial Intelligence” and “Administrative Support.”²³

18. The 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 that the dataset does not cover are likely those that are close to treaties or platforms and only keep a handful of staff.

19. Coverage of job postings varies across organizations and years because historical recruitment records are not uniformly available. To assess whether this affects the findings, I randomly remove 5% of job postings from European IOs (the group with the highest data density) and obtain substantively identical results (Appendix Figure D5).

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

21. See Figure C5 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.

22. RoBERTa is a state-of-the-art language model pretrained on a large English corpus. The hand-coded sample is designed to cover all IOs and years. All postings are coded for IOs with fewer than 20 postings; otherwise, one posting is sampled from each year, with additional postings randomly sampled to reach 20.

23. The 25 MIA 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

Overall, the models perform well according to conventional standards. The 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 0.9.²⁴

I then apply the trained model to all postings. Again, each job post can belong to multiple issue areas. Within each post, I calculate the proportion of focus the staff has on each issue area. For example, if a job post focuses on three topics: Agriculture, Development, and Trade, the staff's focus 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.²⁵ Within any time window, the sum of an IO's focus on all issues will be 1. 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. I analyze topic proportions rather than raw posting counts, since raw volumes are sensitive to recruitment cycles. However, the average total staff growth rate in IOs is approximately 3%, substantially lower than the expansion effect identified in specific issue areas.²⁶ Scope expansion therefore mostly reflects the reallocation of expertise and tasking rather than independent growth in one issue area. In the short run, when organizational resources remain relatively stable, adapting to new challenges often requires shifting personnel and expertise away from other issue areas.²⁷

Using a new data source and measurement, I address several potential concerns. First, I examine whether job postings correspond to IO policy outputs. Interviews with IO staff suggest that job postings provide a relatively objective account of organizational activities, but I further validate this measure by comparing it with policy outputs. I examine the correlation between the focus of job postings and two measures of IO policy, including original data on the labels of all IMF

tariffs, (23) Financial stabilization, (24) Financial regulation, and (25) Military and defense.

24. Table C1 in the Appendix shows the performance of my fine-tuned model on the test set. I partition the hand-coded dataset into training and test sets using an 80-20 split. All F-1 scores are higher than or equal to 0.84, far above the 0.7 conventional threshold.

25. In each step, I remove the focus on pure administration tasks.

26. I use the UN-CEB data to calculate the average staff growth rate across UN organizations, which yields an average of 2.99%. Asian Development Bank (2014-2023) has the same average growth rate. See <https://unsceb.org/hr-organization> and <https://www.adb.org/documents/adb-annual-report-2023>.

27. *"These new climate economist hires are blocking the hiring pipeline, and we are no longer hiring traditional macroeconomists."* (interview 3)

policy reports and policy acts from the Intergovernmental Policy Output Dataset (IPOD) (Lundgren, Squatrito, Sommerer and Tallberg, 2024). Overall, job postings and policy outputs exhibit some correlation. The IMF reports are better correlated with the focus of job postings, as they are more directly related to policy implementation. Correlation with IPOD is noisier, as the latter includes resolutions, declarations, and statements that do not necessarily require IO operations. Together, this suggests that job postings capture organizational priorities that shape outputs, while also providing distinct leverage on IO behavior.²⁸ Second, although job postings describe new hires rather than existing staff, they capture precisely the organizational decisions through which adaptation occurs. IO employment is characterized by relatively short-term contracts compared with many other professions,²⁹ allowing bureaucracies to adjust their operations flexibly and making new hires a close approximation of the organization’s overall staffing profile.³⁰ Finally, like any measure, job postings may contain noise because positions may be unfilled, or although institutional rules largely limit staff to tasks listed in job descriptions, staff responsibilities may evolve after recruitment. I address this by removing likely reposts and checking skill substitutability.³¹

3.3 Patterns of Bureaucratic Adaptation Over Time

Figure 2 illustrates how IOs reallocate staff expertise and tasking across issue areas over time. Environmental activities increase steadily (with some disruption during the pandemic), while traditional development activities like poverty reduction decline.³² Following the emergence of generative AI, IO tasking related to AI governance also rises rapidly. These trends suggest that although

28. Figure C1 and Figure C3 show the results.

29. The short-term nature of IO jobs likely stems from its funding constraints and project-based work. Two articles discuss this issue: <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2021/03/ier-blog-series-in-search-of-staffing-flexibility-and-positive-working-conditions-at-the-icc>; <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/newsletter/2024/05/01/inklings-uns-short-term-workforce-problem>.

30. 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 C2.

31. Some advertised positions may be unfilled, and IOs typically repost such vacancies. We can infer skill substitutability from the coexistence of issue topics in observed job postings. See Figure C4. 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.

32. This is consistent with observations such as Ocampo and González (2024).

formal mandates remain largely stable, IO bureaucracies continually reallocate expertise and tasking as global challenges evolve.³³

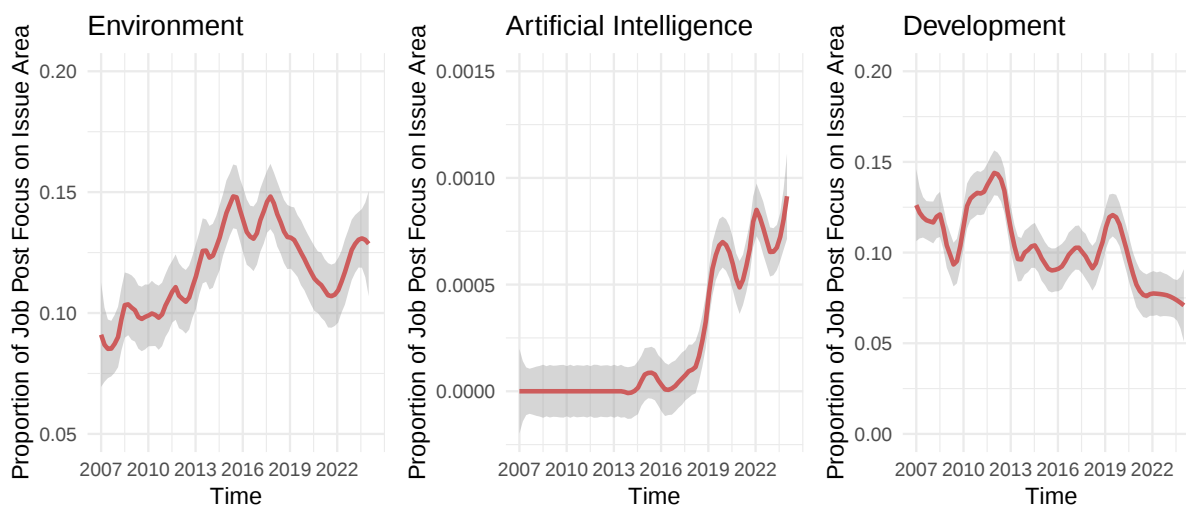


Figure 2: Aggregate IO Focus on Selected Issues Over Time

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 reflects how individual IOs stretch beyond core mandates. Figure 3 shows the average scope of example IOs. The core mandate of each IO appears as its top issue area. The International Civil Aviation Organization focuses on transportation, the WTO concentrates on trade, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deals with nuclear energy. The job postings data and classification successfully capture IOs' core functions.

At the same time, every organization allocates substantial staff tasking outside their core mandate. The World Bank and the IMF have a significant focus on environmental issues, 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, only about 60% of staff tasking is about energy, its core mandate. 40% of its daily operations focus on other issues, such as health, environment, and agriculture. For example, the IAEA works on utilizing nuclear technologies to develop new

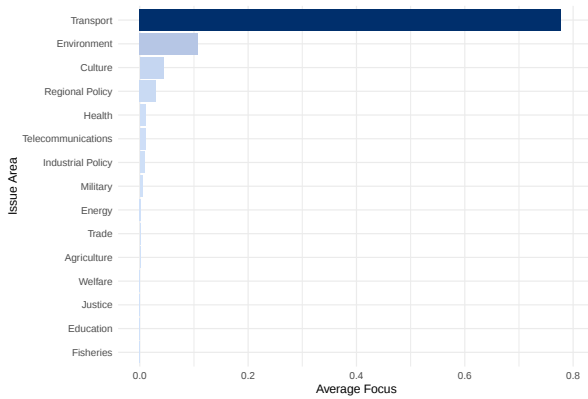
33. Figure C6 in the Appendix plots trends for all issue areas.

seeds and promote climate-smart agriculture.³⁴ Such expansion is not limited to closely related issue areas.³⁵ 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.

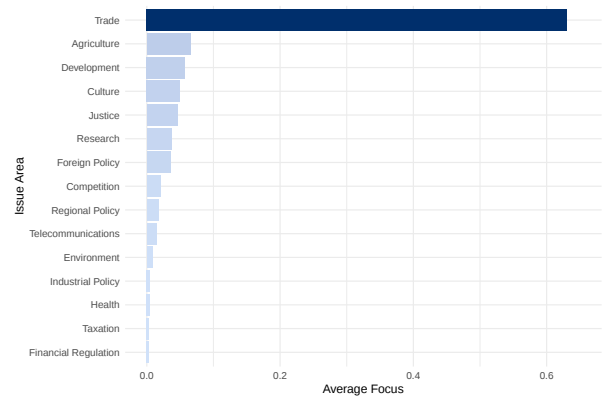
Across IOs, these changes reshape the composition of international regimes. Issues once governed by a few specialized organizations can later involve multiple IOs. The descriptive evidence suggests that IOs adapt to emerging challenges by changing staff expertise and tasking. The next section examines whether this expansion depends systematically on the priorities of the major principal state. Of course, IOs can vary in their capacity to adapt, depending on institutional design and the degree of bureaucratic discretion, which is an important direction for future research.

34. See 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>.

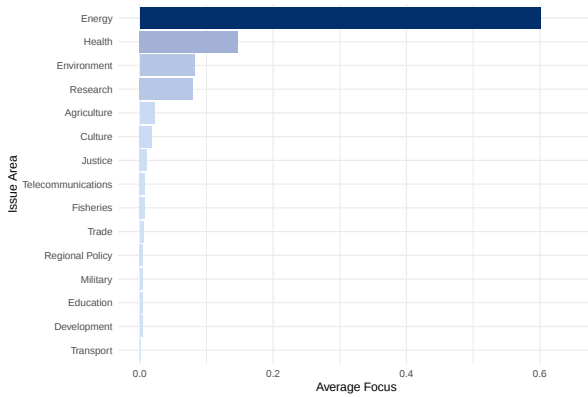
35. See Figure C4.



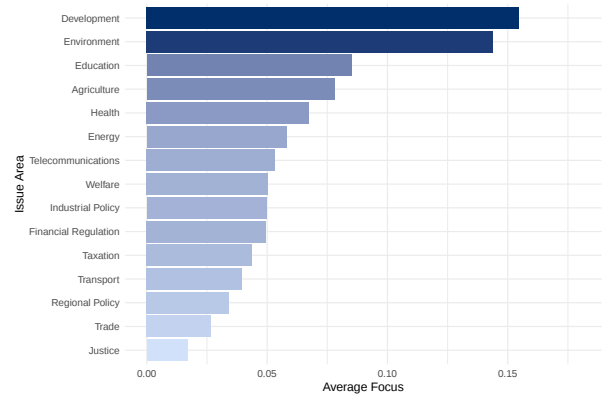
(a) International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)



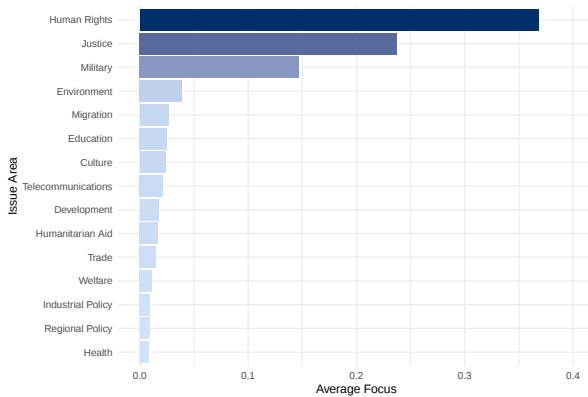
(b) World Trade Organization (WTO)



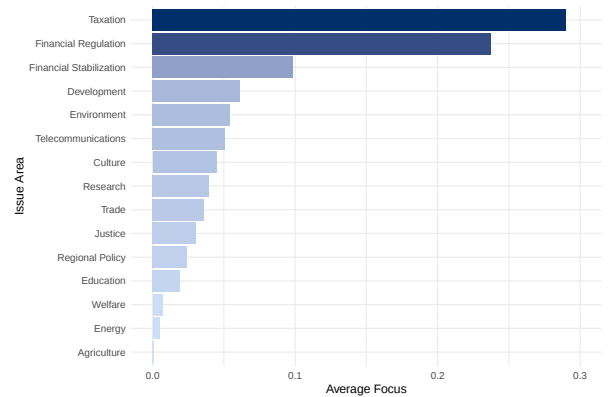
(c) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



(d) World Bank (WB)



(e) Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)



(f) International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Figure 3: Issue Focus of Six Example IOs

Note: In each figure, the x-axis is the estimated focus, and the y-axis represents issue areas with top-15 average focus for each IO from 2007 to 2024. 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.

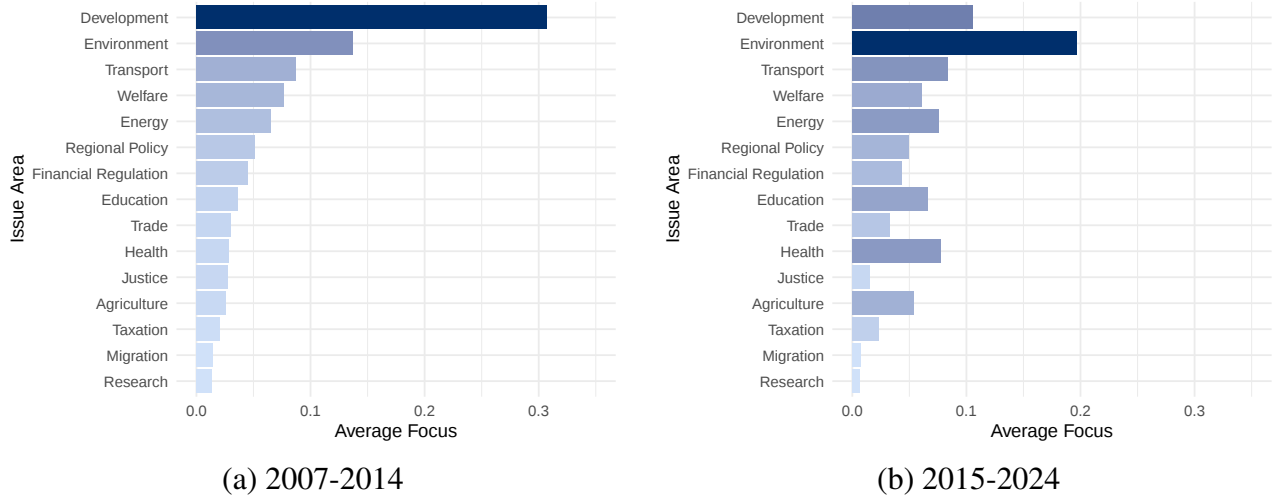


Figure 4: Asian Development Bank Issue Focus Over Time

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 in 2007-2014.

4 Rising Global Challenges and IO Scope Expansion

4.1 Research Design

International organizations regularly confront new global challenges, but their bureaucracies respond selectively. This section examines how IOs respond to two salient global challenges during the period of analysis, climate change and artificial intelligence, and whether adaptation depends on the priorities of the major principal state.

The November 2022 release of ChatGPT was an important moment signaling the emergence of AI as a global governance challenge. The rapid diffusion of a widely accessible generative AI system transformed the issue into an immediate and concrete governance problem. Governments responded unevenly to this shift. Some emphasized international coordination and regulation, whereas others devoted relatively little attention to the issue. The release thus increased the salience of AI exogenously while showing variation in major principals' priorities, providing a clean setting to examine selective bureaucratic adaptation.

The 2015 Paris climate process provides a complementary case. While climate change had long been recognized as a global challenge, the Paris negotiations and UN General Assembly debates

in 2015 marked a turning point that increased both the salience of climate governance and revealed variation in states' priorities. I therefore define the treatment period as the period during which states negotiated and drafted the Paris Agreement and the UNGA convened in September, when IO bureaucracies observed heightened principal attention to climate issues.

The AI case is the main empirical setting because ChatGPT generated a sharp and temporally concentrated treatment, facilitating precise estimation and extensive robustness checks. The climate analysis serves as a complementary test of whether the same logic applies when issue salience evolves through a longer and more politically negotiated process.

I use a difference-in-differences design to test the hypotheses. The focus is on how IOs' scope could expand to include the new challenge, so the analysis here includes only IOs that did not already have the challenge as part of their core scope. I distinguish three types of IOs for each global challenge (Table 1). For each shock, I identify a small group of IOs that are clearly distant from the affected issue area and thus unlikely to experience direct exposure to it. These IOs serve as the control group, allowing me to isolate general time trends in IO issue engagement that are unrelated to the specific emerging challenge.³⁶ When analyzing expansion into AI, for instance, the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and 22 other IOs serve as controls. I demonstrate that the results are robust to using alternative control groups.

Among the treated IOs, I further distinguish those whose lead state prioritizes the new issue. This separates the effect of principal priorities from the broader rise in the issue's global salience by comparing IOs with different levels of principal prioritization. Following Davis and Pratt (2021) and Davis (2023), I identify the lead state of each IO as the largest economic power (by GDP) in a given year.³⁷ Theoretically, there can be multiple powerful principals in an IO (Copelovitch, 2010).

36. For example, when assessing the impact of artificial intelligence, IOs may change focus on digital-related activities for other reasons (e.g., traditional infrastructure building), independent of the ChatGPT release. The control group helps account for such background trends.

37. GDP provides a transparent, though imperfect, proxy for principal influence that can be consistently applied across a large and heterogeneous set of IOs. Although voting share or budgetary contributions may better capture influence in some organizations, these measures are neither consistently available nor directly comparable because governance structures and decision rules vary substantially over IOs and time.

In the empirical analysis, I further examine whether the strength of the effect varies with power asymmetry between the lead state and other members. Future research should look more closely into how different power structures within the IO affect scope expansion.

Table 1: Classification of IOs by Treatment Status

Group	Definition
Treated a (<i>high principal priority</i>)	IOs exposed to the new global challenge, and major principal displayed a large increase in attention
Treated b (<i>low principal priority</i>)	IOs exposed to the new global challenge, but major principal 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_{itk} measures IO i 's operational 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 indicates whether the IO is treated. $\text{Post-Global Challenge}_t$ denotes whether the observation is post-treatment. γ_i and δ_t are IO and quarter fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by IO.³⁸ The parallel trends assumption is generally satisfied across analyses.³⁹

To measure principal priorities, I use issue attention in UNGA debate speeches. Prior research shows that UNGA behavior reveals states' preferences, while General Debate speeches capture the issues governments choose to emphasize publicly (Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten, 2017; Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov, 2017; Kentikelenis and Voeten, 2021). Therefore, I measure principal attention using changes in AI-and climate-related mentions in the lead state's UNGA speeches following the treatment.⁴⁰

38. All treated units are treated simultaneously.

39. See Figure D1.

40. The climate-related keywords are "climate", "environment", "environmental", "emission"; AI-related keywords are "artificial intelligence", "AI", "GPT", "chatgpt". Tables D2, D3, and D1 in the Appendix list the complete set of treated and control IOs.

Since even highly accurate language model predictions may introduce non-random measurement error, I apply the design-based supervised learning (DSL) estimator from Egami, Hinck, Stewart and Wei (2024), which corrects downstream inference. All results in the main analysis are bias-corrected.

4.2 Scope Expansion into Artificial Intelligence

Figure 5 shows how the ChatGPT launch in 2022 changed the focus of IOs whose mandates do not center around AI and telecommunications.⁴¹ IOs with a major principal who have increased their attention to AI significantly expand their operational scope into telecommunications and AI after the launch of ChatGPT.⁴² The size of the effect is around a 23.7 percentage point increase in focus. The effect is consistently significant at the 95% level, and the power analysis indicates that the result remains consistent as the number of hand-coded data increases. For example, these IOs include the European Investment Bank, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, and the European Banking Authority, etc.⁴³ IOs with and without an AI-concerned major principal are relatively similar in their type, so the latter cannot account for their differential reaction.⁴⁴ The findings are also robust to the use of alternative control groups and model specifications.⁴⁵

Among IOs whose major principal prioritizes AI, we expect the effect to be stronger when power is more concentrated in that principal. For each IO, I calculate a dominance ratio for the

41. I analyze the effect on the total focus on Telecommunications and AI here. This is because, although AI is classified by the language model, there are not many positive cases 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.

42. For AI, only three countries (the United States, China, and Indonesia) are manually reclassified because their increased references to AI in UNGA speeches did not reflect increased priority for multilateral AI governance. During the study period, the United States emphasized domestic regulation and private-sector participation rather than multilateral AI governance, while China's and Indonesia's references to AI focused on UN-only governance and redistribution, respectively, rather than general multilateral cooperation (Feijóo, Kwon, Bauer, Bohlin, Howell, Jain, Potgieter, Vu, Whalley and Xia, 2020; Luna, Tan, Xie and Jiang, 2024; Mokry and Gurol, 2024; Olugbade, 2025).

43. In fact, the EU formally cooperates on AI governance through the European Commission (EC)'s AI Office. However, removing the EC from the analysis does not change the results. Therefore, expansion into telecommunications and AI cannot be attributed solely to state orders.

44. See Figure D6. IOs with a concerned major principal include slightly more emanated IOs. However, emanated IOs without a concerned major principal also do not show any significant effect (see Figure D7).

45. Randomly removing some control IOs does not change the result, see Figure D8. Findings also remain consistent when using an interrupted time series design without control groups, see Table D4.

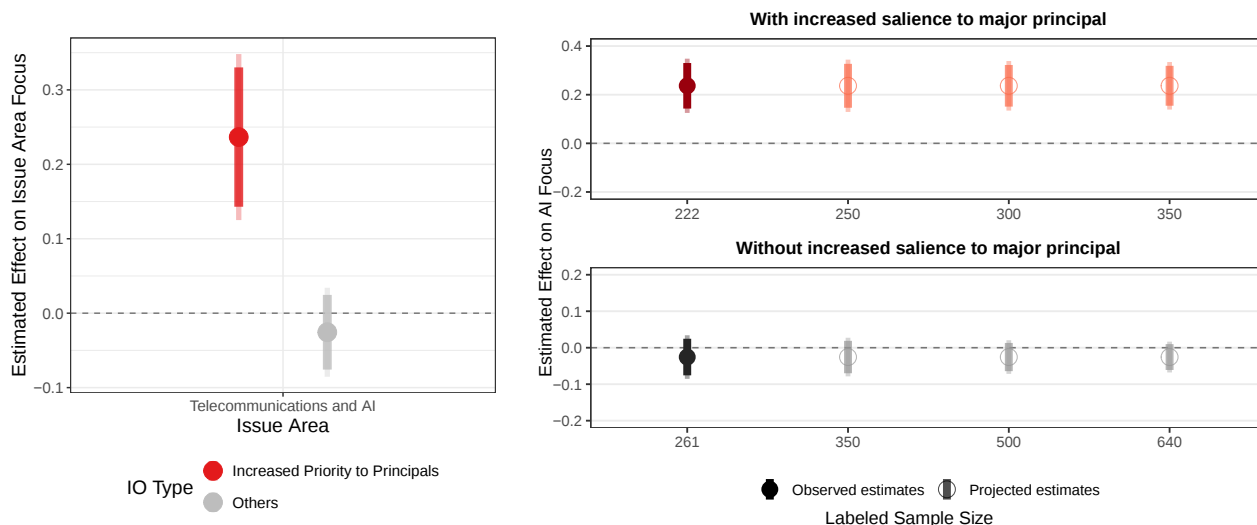


Figure 5: Bureaucratic Expansion into AI in Non-AI IOs

Note: The figure plots changes in non-AI IOs' AI and telecommunications focus following the ChatGPT release, relative to the control IOs. The left-hand-side figure shows the raw estimates, and the right-hand-side figure shows power analysis assuming additional hand-coded data. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. In the right-hand-side figure, estimates on the left (solid dots, in darker color) are based on the actual set of hand-coded data; the remaining estimates are projected values derived from the DSL power analysis, assuming additional hand-coded data (from left to right: more hand-coded data).

major principal, which is the proportion of its GDP relative to the average GDP of other member states.⁴⁶ Following prior research showing that IO authority is often already concentrated within a small group of powerful members (Copelovitch, 2010), I measure dominance both within a lead group and across the entire membership. I then include an interaction term for this dominance ratio and the treatment onset in the analysis. I also control for the proportion of states in the group that prioritize the issue. Figure D2 shows that as power becomes more concentrated within the IO's top group, the organization is more likely to respond to the challenge and expand its operational scope.⁴⁷

46. Ideally, we would also consider the decision-making rule of IOs. For instance, IOs that require consensus may be less likely to expand compared to those with weighted voting rules. However, the number of IOs in each group after classification is too small to support meaningful statistical analysis.

47. In contrast, dominance measured across all members has little effect. This pattern is intuitive: what matters for shaping bureaucratic adaptation is not general inequality among all members, but concentrated influence among the small set of states with the capacity and interest to steer organizational priorities.

4.3 Scope Expansion into Climate Issues

Figure 6 shows a substantial increase in climate-related hiring among non-climate IOs whose major principal increased climate priority.⁴⁸ For example, these IOs include the ADB, the International Organization for Migration, the Pacific Islands Forum, etc. This effect translates into all new staff having a 27.5% increase in their daily work related to climate issues, or on average, each IO hiring 121 additional staff members to work on climate issues across 43 IOs.⁴⁹ The effect is consistently significant at the 95% level, and the power analysis shows that the confidence interval further tightens as the number of hand-coded data increases. In contrast, there is no effect among the other non-climate IOs, where the major principal of the organization do not exhibit significant changes in their prioritization of climate change. This pattern demonstrates selective organizational adaptation: bureaucracies expand only when their major principal increases priority on climate.

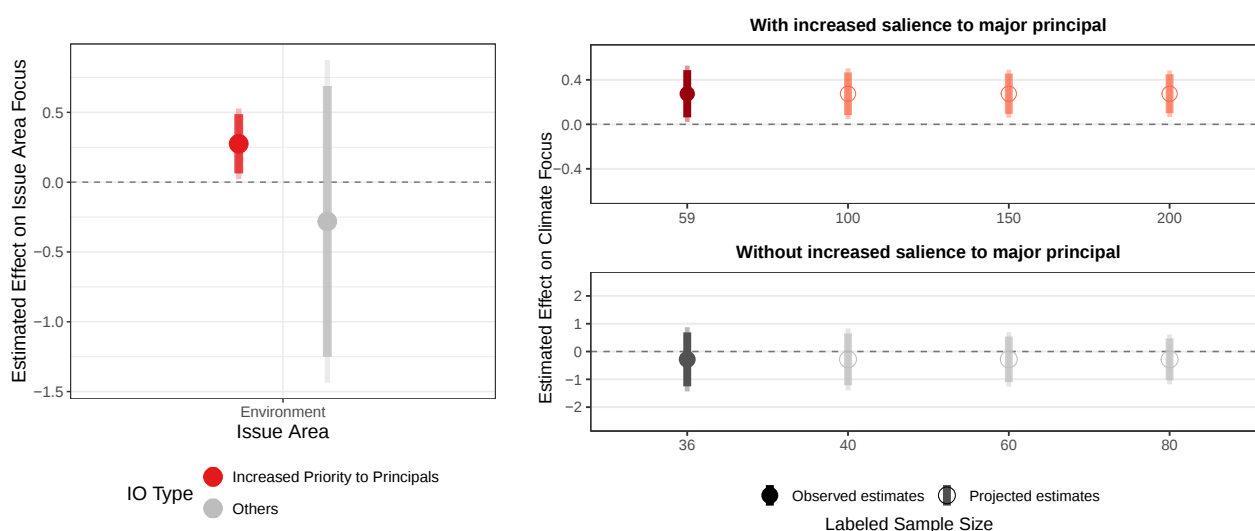


Figure 6: Bureaucratic Expansion into Climate Issues in Non-climate IOs

Note: The figure plots changes in non-climate IOs' climate focus following the Paris Agreement drafting period and the 2015 UNGA speeches in September, relative to the control IOs. The left-hand-side figure shows the raw estimates, and the right-hand-side figure shows power analysis assuming additional hand-coded quarter-IO units. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. In the right-hand-side figure, estimates on the left (solid dots, in darker color) are based on the actual set of hand-coded data; the remaining estimates are projected values derived from the DSL power analysis, assuming additional hand-coded data (from left to right: more hand-coded data).

48. The post-treatment window is set to one year to exclude distraction from the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

49. This estimate is based on their average number of new job postings in 2015 and 2016.

Climate-related roles in these IOs include Climate Change Risk Assessment Specialist, Environmental Affairs Officer, Senior Energy Consultant, etc. The majority of climate hires in these IOs are mid- to senior-level appointments for mid- and long-term positions, suggesting that organizations are developing sustained expertise rather than making symbolic or extremely temporary adjustments for “hype cycles”.⁵⁰

5 Changing Principal Priorities and IO Scope

The above analysis examines how IOs with differing major principal priorities respond to global challenges. Holding the global challenge constant, organizations should reduce expertise and staff tasking devoted to an issue when their major principal shifts attention away from it. To analyze this relationship, this section uses a different research design in which the global challenge itself remains stable, the treatment is a change in a state’s priority, the treated units are IOs where this state is the major principal, and the control units are other IOs. To examine this implication, I exploit the shift in US climate priorities following Donald Trump’s election in November 2016.⁵¹ The salience of climate change as a global challenge remains stable, but the U.S. decreased its priority on climate change.⁵² We therefore expect U.S.-led IOs to decrease their focus on climate after observing the election results relative to IOs led by other states. The treated units are U.S.-led organizations, while the control units are those led by other states.

Figure 7 reports the results. Development IOs are particularly active in expanding into climate issues. However, those under US dominance significantly reduced their climate-related expertise and tasking following Trump’s election, decreasing their climate focus by approximately 26.14 percentage points during the following year. Among all U.S.-led IOs, climate focus also declined by 8.61 percentage points, although the estimate is no longer statistically significant at the 95% level. Here, the analysis captures changes in continued investment in climate-related expertise

50. See Figure D4.

51. I use the GDP of countries in 2016 because the election is close to the end of the year, and Trump entered office in 2017. Using GDP in 2015 produces similar results.

52. See “Donald Trump’s Energy Plan: More Fossil Fuels and Fewer Rules,” New York Times, May 26 2016, retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/27/us/politics/donald-trump-global-warming-energy-policy.html>.

and tasking. Existing staff may continue working on climate issues. However, a reduction in new hiring still indicates a contraction in the organization’s future ability to work in the issue area.

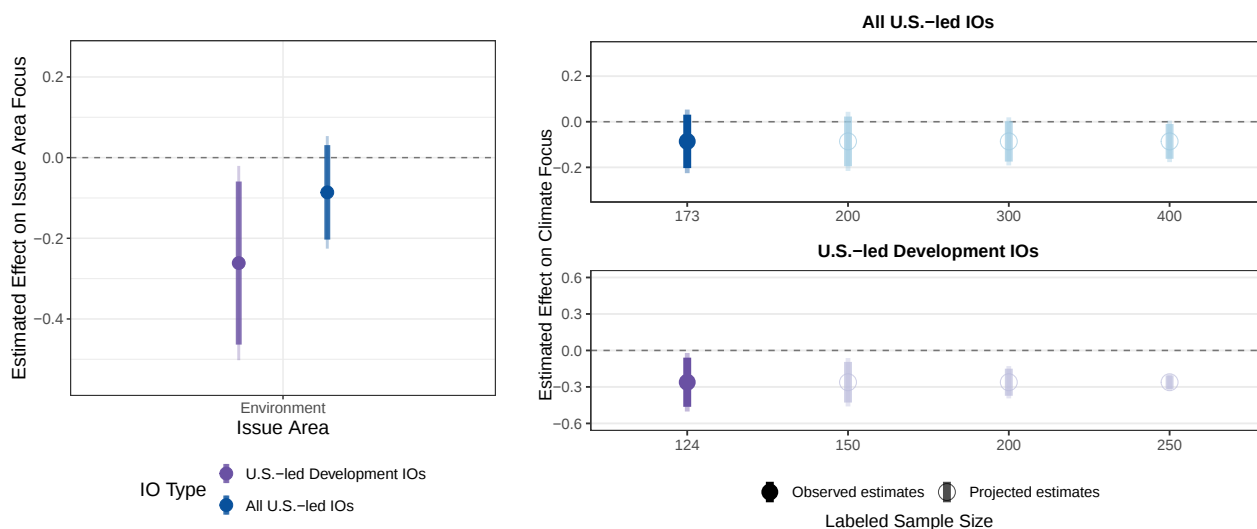


Figure 7: Bureaucratic Expansion into Climate Issues in Non-climate IOs: Trump Election

Note: The figure plots changes in non-climate US-led IOs’ climate focus after Trump won the election in November 2016, relative to IOs led by other states. The left-hand-side figure shows the raw estimates, and the right-hand-side figure shows power analysis assuming additional hand-coded quarter-IO units. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. In the right-hand-side figure, estimates on the left (solid dots, in darker color) are based on the actual set of hand-coded data; the remaining estimates are projected values derived from the DSL power analysis, assuming additional hand-coded data (from left to right: more hand-coded data).

Across both global challenges, the evidence suggests a consistent pattern of selective scope expansion. Organizations develop expertise and redirect staff tasking toward emerging issues when those issues become priorities for their major principal, and they contract from them when principal priorities shift away. These findings support the argument that scope change occurs not simply because new global challenges emerge, but IOs selectively develop expertise and incorporate new tasks in response to changing principal priorities.

6 Alternative Explanations

Previous analysis shows that IOs systematically adapt to emerging challenges when their major principal changes priorities. A natural alternative explanation is that this is simply driven by issue-

specific earmarked funding. States increasingly steer IO activities through earmarked contributions that restrict resources to specific issues or programs (Reinsberg, Heinzel and Siauwijaya, 2024). If IOs expand simply because states directly finance those activities, earmarked funding increases should precede changes in staff expertise and tasking.

To examine this possibility, I link the job postings data to 342,812 earmarked contribution records from Reinsberg, Heinzel and Siauwijaya (2024). I recode earmarked issue areas to match the 26 topics in the job postings data, resulting in 90 IOs observed in both datasets. Since earmarks are concentrated in development organizations, I focus on expansion into climate and estimate whether increases in climate-related earmarked contributions predict subsequent changes in organizations' climate focus.

Table 2 reports two-way fixed-effects estimates with IO and year fixed effects and standard errors clustered by IO. Across all specifications, climate-related earmarked contributions are not positively associated with subsequent changes in organizations' climate focus. The same pattern holds whether earmarks are measured as disbursements, commitments, or their share of total contributions, and remains unchanged when the outcome is measured two or three years later.⁵³

The results suggest that IO scope expansion is not tightly linked to changes in issue-specific earmarked funding. Rather than expanding into new issue areas after receiving corresponding earmarked resources, IOs frequently reallocate existing staff expertise and tasking. Major principals appear to shape IO scope not just by directly financing issue-specific activities, but also through their broader influence within IOs that shift IO expertise and staff tasking across issue areas.

53. See Table D5.

Table 2: Earmarked Contributions Predicting IO Scope in the Subsequent Year

IO Focus on Climate				
Climate Disbursed	-0.00037 (0.00035)			
Climate Committed		0.00013 (0.00014)		
Prop. Climate Committed			0.00028 (0.0329)	
Prop. Climate Disbursed				-0.0795* (0.0337)
Num.Obs.	903	903	903	903
R^2	0.758	0.758	0.758	0.759
R^2 Adj.	0.702	0.702	0.702	0.704
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
IO FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

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

7 Conclusion

Conventional accounts often portray international organizations as having pre-defined expertise and operating within a stable and narrowly defined scope delegated by states. This paper argues instead that IOs frequently adapt to emerging global challenges by developing new expertise and reallocating staff tasking. Such expansion is selective rather than universal. IOs expand into new issue areas when those issues become priorities for their major principals and contract when those priorities shift away. Therefore, organizational scope is neither fixed nor characterized by unbounded expansion, but evolves selectively through changes in expertise and day-to-day operations.

Empirically, this study introduces job postings as a new measure of organizational operations, capturing how IOs develop expertise and assign staff to new tasks. Analyzing 630,500 job postings from 234 international organizations between 2007 and 2024, I show that organizations substantially reshape their operational profiles over time. Focusing on climate change and artificial intelligence, I demonstrate that IOs expand into these areas when their major principal elevates the issue as a priority. When principal priorities shift away, IOs contract from those issue areas even

though the underlying global challenge persists.

The findings shed new light on how powerful states shape international organizations. Existing accounts often emphasize how state power makes IOs biased against certain states when performing mandate tasks. Building on this insight, this paper shows that major principals even reshape what issues IOs address by influencing how organizations allocate expertise and staff tasking across issue areas. The analysis of earmarked funding further suggests that rather than simply purchasing additional activities through earmarked contributions, major principals can reshape the operational profile of existing organizations by influencing how they deploy their current general resources.

The study also speaks to a core question in international relations: How is the global governance agenda being set? Scope expansion allows existing institutions to respond to emerging challenges without requiring formal mandate reform or the creation of new organizations. However, such flexibility raises questions about accountability, efficiency, and coordination, as IOs may redirect expertise away from traditional functions toward priorities favored by powerful member states.

IOs also derive resources, attention, and legitimacy from client countries, NGOs, private actors, and other constituencies. Bureaucracies therefore may respond to them as well, and the extent of their responsiveness depends on how much their survival and relevance depend on each. More broadly, the logic of relevance-seeking bureaucratic adaptation may extend beyond IOs to domestic agencies and non-governmental organizations, particularly in settings where centralized coordination is weak.

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Appendix:

The Scope Expansion of International Organizations

A Data Collection

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

Table A1: Data Sources⁵⁴

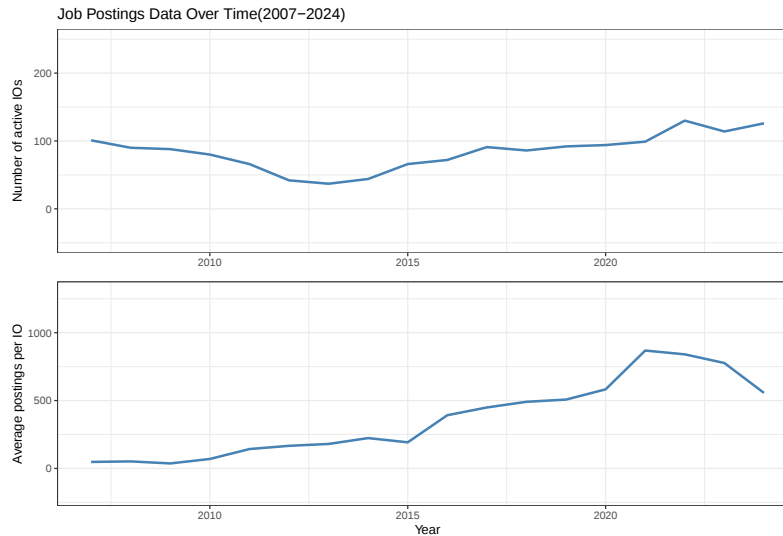


Figure A1: The Number of Job Postings Over Time

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.

54. Data collection follows the same rule as consulting firms like Lightcast, which collect all job postings available from the internet. The data were collected from August 2023 to March 2024. It starts with the MIA-covered IOs and then expands to all IOs covered by these sources. Due to computational constraints, Devex job postings after 2015 cover only large IOs, because Impactpool has good coverage after 2015.

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 the Number of Job Postings

B Elite Interview Details

ID	International Organization	Interview Date	Interviewee Role
1	World Meteorological Organization	May 2025	Country representative
2	International Labour Organization	May 2025	Officer at Department of Partnerships and Field Support Department
3	International Monetary Fund	August 2025	Senior officer at Strategy, Policy and Review Department; Senior officer at the Managing Director Office
4	(a) World Food Programme; (b) International Monetary Fund	August 2025	Human Resource officer
5	(a) Caribbean Development Bank; (b) Inter-American Development Bank; (c) International Monetary Fund	August 2025	Senior leadership
6	International Monetary Fund	August 2025	Human Resource officer
7	International Labour Organization	August 2025	Senior economist
8	International Finance Corporation	August 2025	Anonymous staff (other information confidential)
9	International Labour Organization	August 2025	Programme manager
10	International Labour Organization	August 2025	Senior leadership
11	(a) Caribbean Development Bank; (b) Inter-American Development Bank; (c) United Nations	August 2025	Specialist staff
12	World Bank	August 2025	Senior economist
13	(a) International Monetary Fund; (b) Bank for International Settlements	August 2025	Senior leadership
14	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	September 2025	Anonymous staff (other information confidential)

Table B1: Elite Interview Information

C Additional Tables and Figures on Data and Measurement

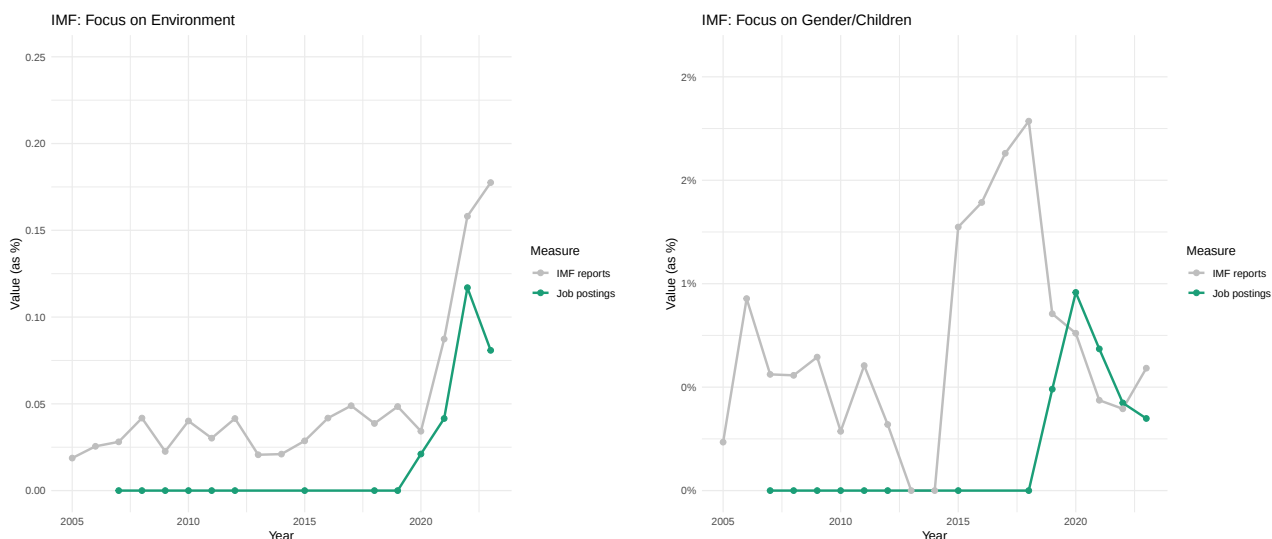
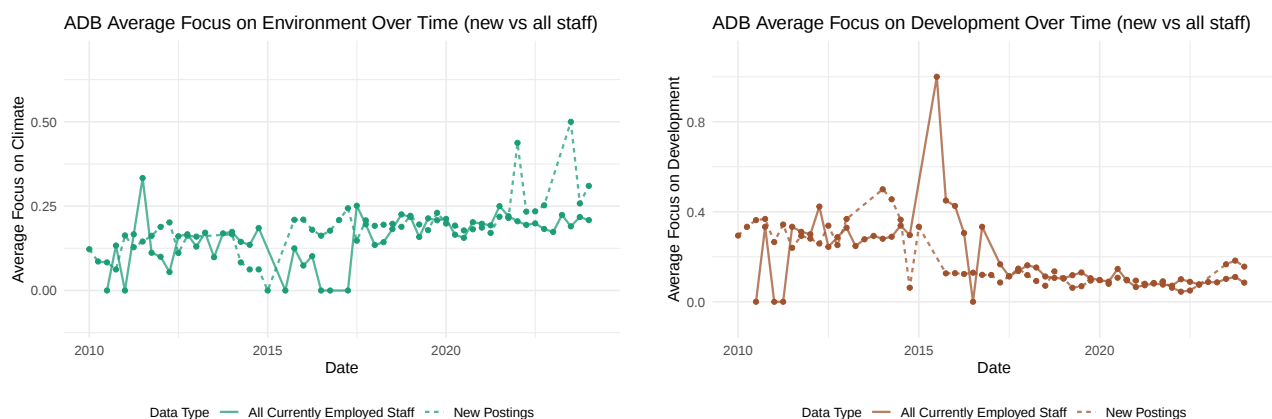


Figure C1: IMF Job Postings and Policy Reports

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) Climate

(b) Development

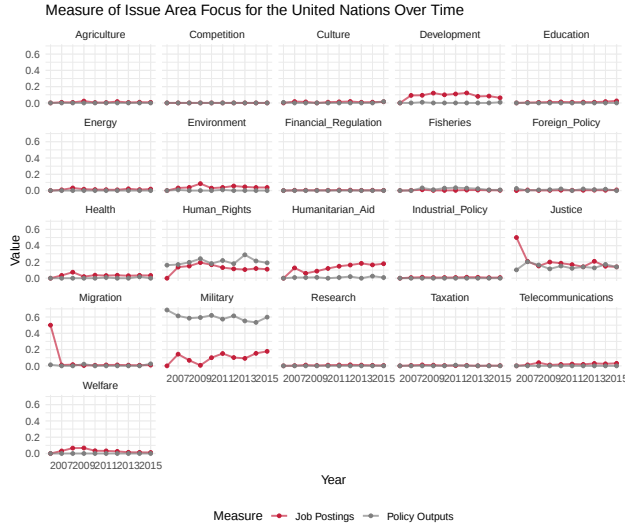
Figure C2: The Focus of the Asian Development Bank on Climate: New vs All employed Staff

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.

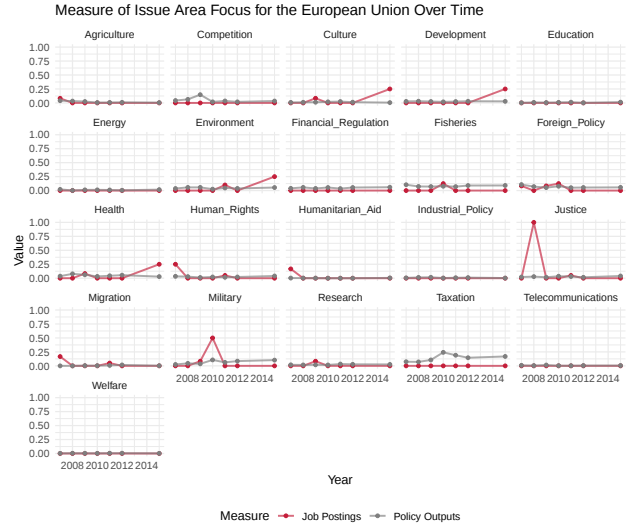
Table C1: Issue Prediction Model (fine-tuned RoBERTa) Performance on the Test Set by Topic

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

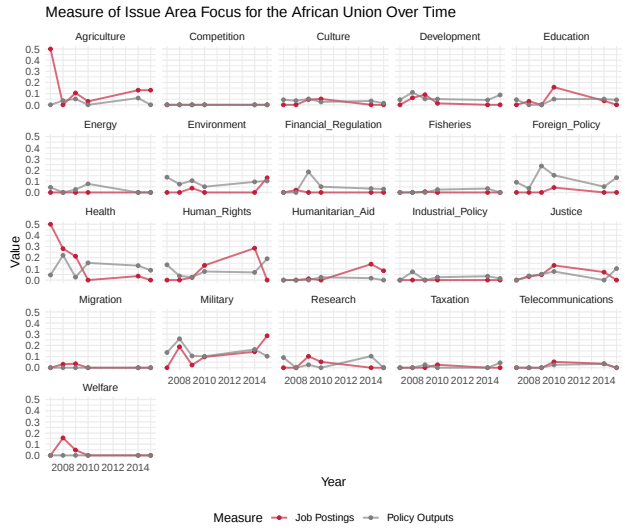
Note: The table reports out-of-sample performance of the fine-tuned RoBERTa model on the test set. Overall performance indicates high classification accuracy across issue areas.



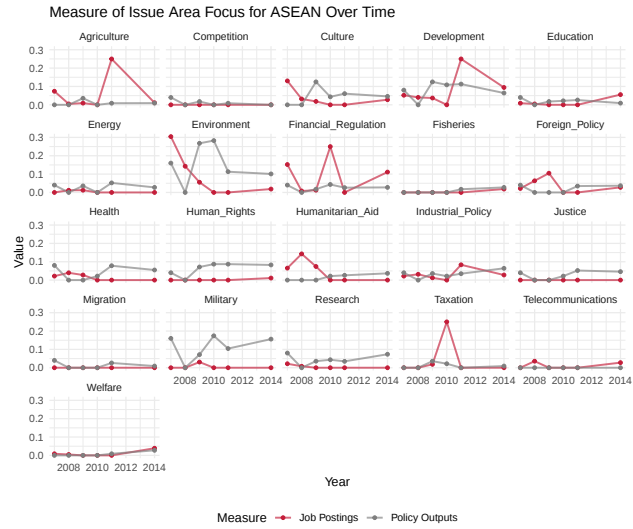
(a) UN



(b) EU



(c) AU



(d) ASEAN

Figure C3: IO Job Postings and Policy Acts

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 acts in an issue area (IPOD data). The red lines are job postings, and the blue lines are policy acts.

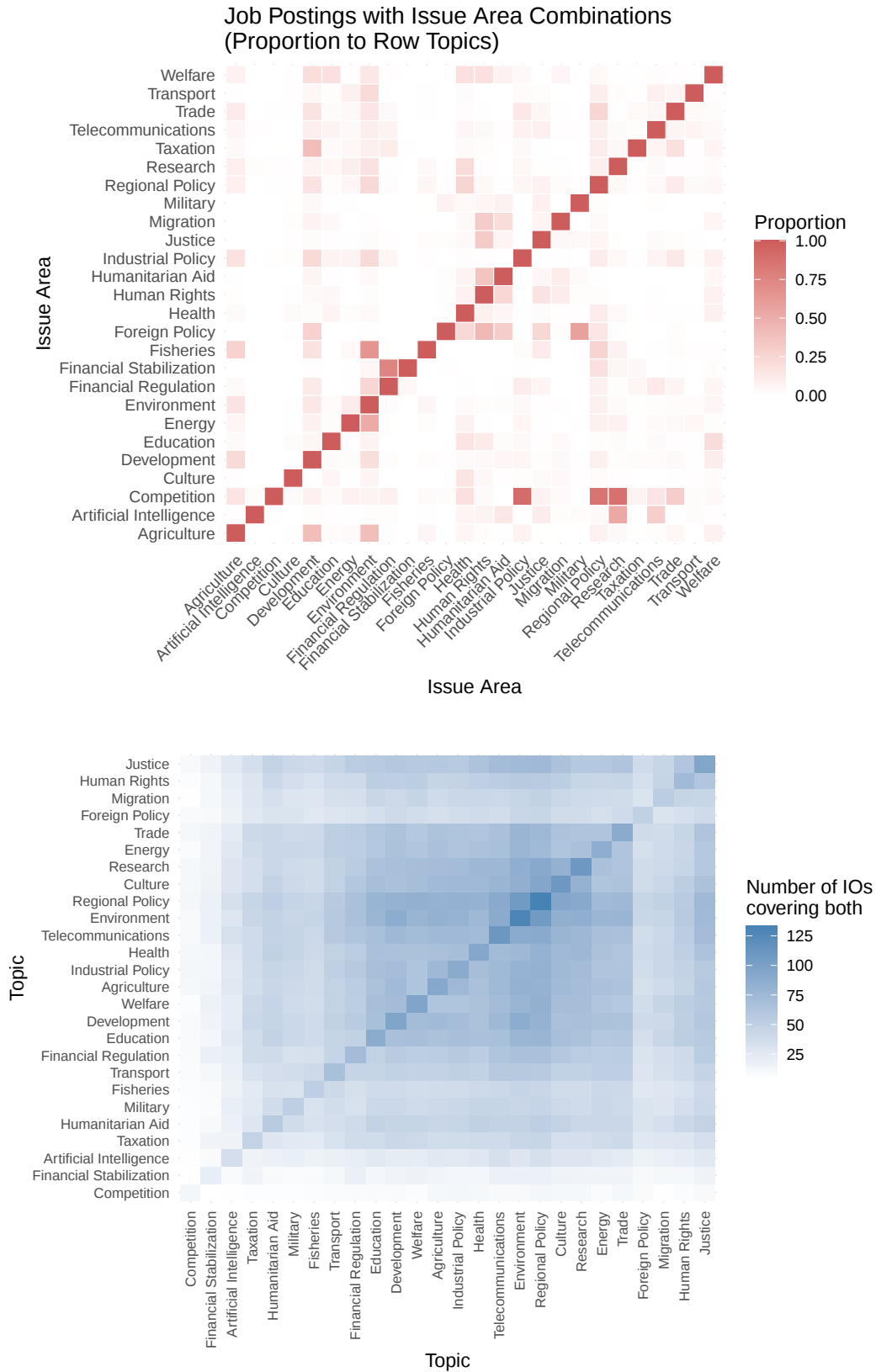
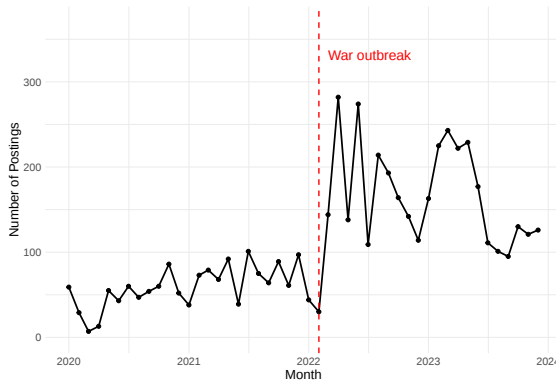
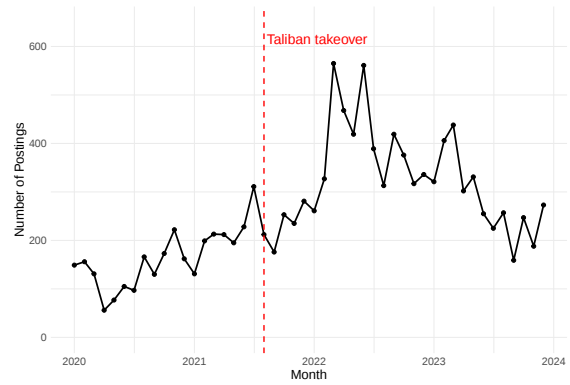


Figure C4: Top: Heatmap on the prevalence of topic coexistence in job postings. Bottom: Heatmap on the number of IOs focusing on topic combinations.



(a) Ukraine Crisis



(b) Taliban Takeover

Figure C5: IO Shift in Focus on Specific Events 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).

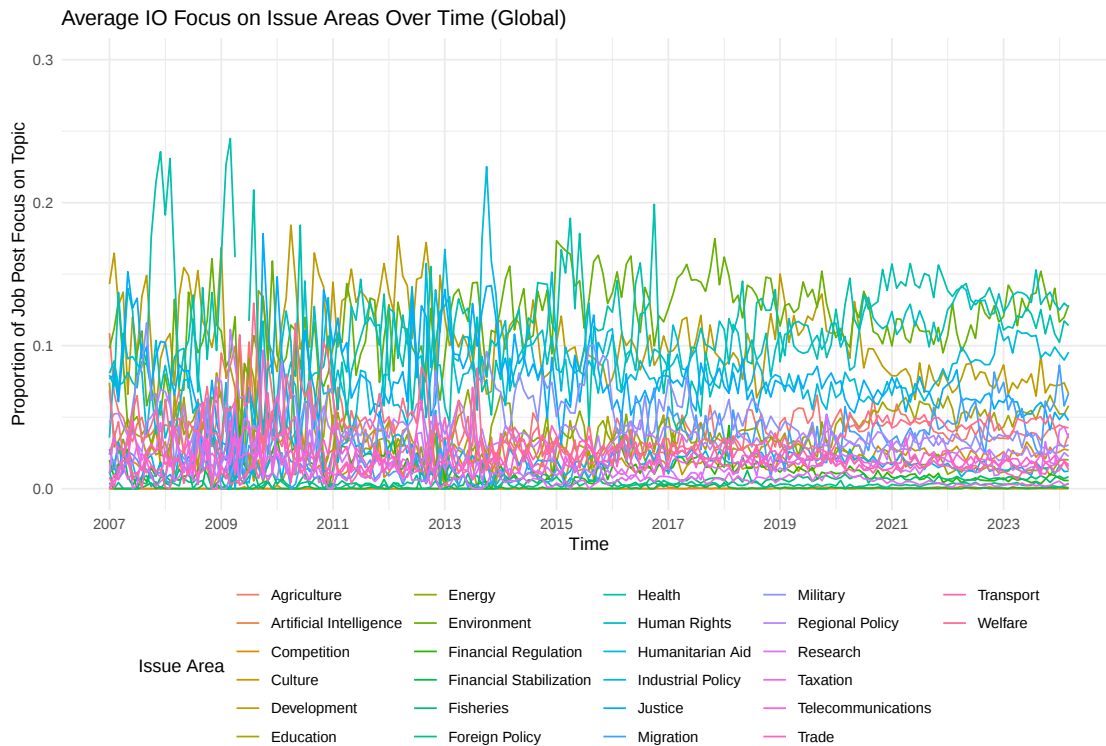


Figure C6: Aggregated Focus of IOs on All Issues Over Time

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

D Additional Analysis on Hypothesis Testing

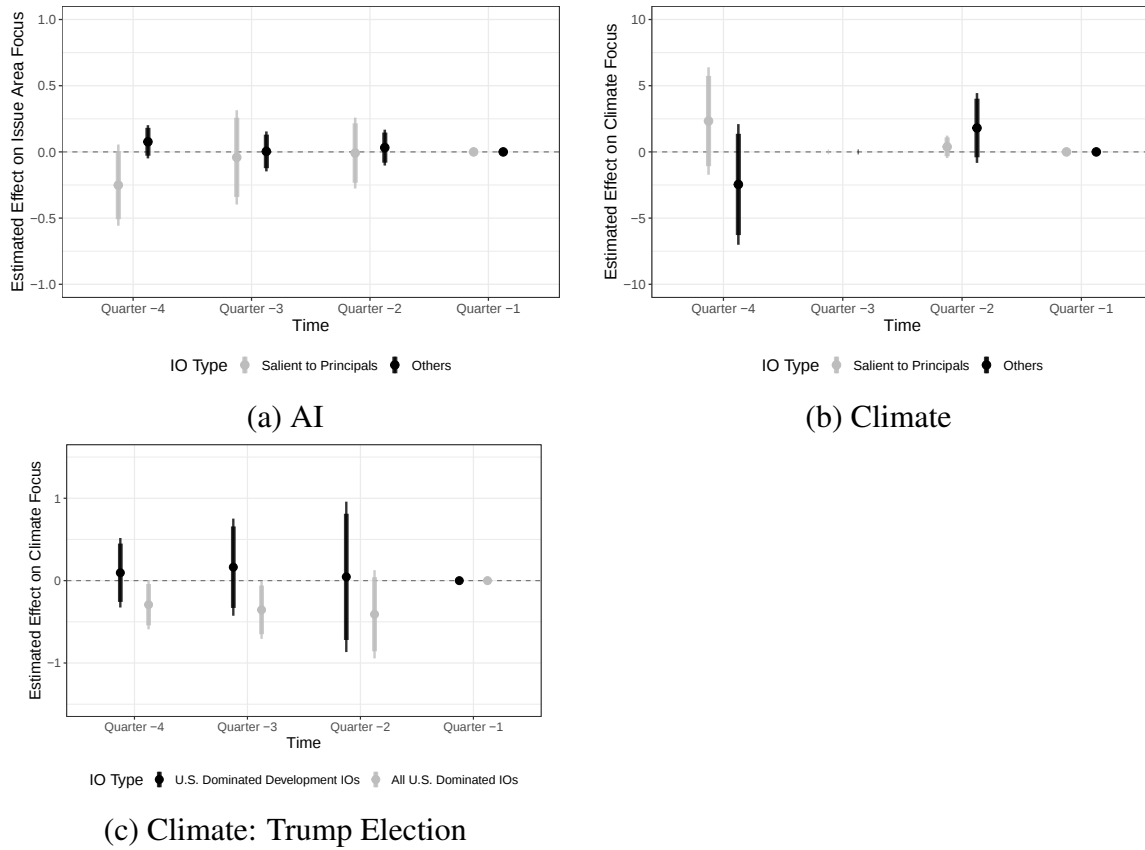


Figure D1: Parallel Trends Test

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. (b) only includes three periods because IOs in this analysis did not post jobs in quarter -3. (c) shows a minor deviation from zero for U.S.-led IOs at time $t = -3$, but this deviation disappears in subsequent periods and runs counter to the estimated treatment effects. No pre-trend deviation is observed for the development IO group.

Treated (With increased major principal priority)	Council of Europe; EUROCONTROL; Eurojust; 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; International Criminal Court; Council of Europe Development Bank; European Central Bank; European Commission; European Union Intellectual Property Office; 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; 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; Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail; European Union Satellite Centre; 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; Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs; European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts; Court of Justice of the European Union; European Defence Agency; European Investment Fund; European Forest Institute
Treated (Without increased major principal priority)	African Development Bank; African Union; Asian Development Bank; Association of South East Asian Nations; Bank for International Settlements; CABI; CGIAR System Organization; Caribbean Community; Caribbean Development Bank; Counter-Terrorism Committee; Economic Community of West African States; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Inter-American Development Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Civil Aviation Organization; 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; UN Women; UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth; United Nations; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; 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; European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research; European Public Law Organization; International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; International Development Law Organization; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century; Common Fund for Commodities; International Telecommunication Union; Union for the Mediterranean; African Development Bank Group; International Trade Centre; OPEC Fund for International Development; Central European Free Trade Agreement; International Criminal Police Organization - INTERPOL; International Development Research Centre; Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance; Latin American Integration Association; International Court of Justice; European Partnership of Supervisory Organisations in Health Services and Social Care; 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 D1: AI Regime Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status

Note: The table report only IOs contributing observations to the relevant analysis window. IOs without job postings during the corresponding estimation window are omitted.

Treated (With increased major principal priority)	Asian Development Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Finance Corporation; 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; Commonwealth Secretariat; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Inter-American Development Bank; International Development Law Organization; OSCE - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Pacific Islands Forum; UN Women; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; United Nations Population Fund; World Trade Organization; International Fund for Agricultural Development; Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law; International Telecommunication Union; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; International Monetary Fund; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; International Labour Organization; World Meteorological Organization; International Tropical Timber Organization; Southern African Development Community
Treated (Without increased major principal priority)	African Union; Association of South East Asian Nations; CGIAR System Organization; European Investment Bank; International Development Research Centre; International Livestock Research Institute; Caribbean Development Bank; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics; European Commission; European External Action Service; European Forest Institute; European Union; Asian Productivity Organization; CABI; International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; 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; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; Islamic Development Bank; OPEC Fund for International Development; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; New Development Bank; European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts; SAARC Development Fund; UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
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 D2: Paris Agreement Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status

Note: The table report only IOs contributing observations to the relevant analysis window. IOs without job postings during the corresponding estimation window are omitted.

Treated (Decreased major principal priority, all IOs)	African Development Bank; Asian Development Bank; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Inter-American Development Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Monetary Fund; International Organization for Migration; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; The World Bank Group; UN Women; United Nations; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; United Nations Office for Project Services; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; United Nations University; World Food Programme; World Health Organization; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; International Development Law Organization; International Finance Corporation; International Labour Organization; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; World Meteorological Organization; International Tropical Timber Organization; Pan American Health Organization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation; International Fund for Agricultural Development; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; International Renewable Energy Agency
Treated (Decreased major principal priority, development IOs)	African Development Bank; Asian Development Bank; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Inter-American Development Bank; International Monetary Fund; The World Bank Group; United Nations Development Programme; International Development Law Organization; International Finance Corporation; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; International Fund for Agricultural Development
Control (IOs without principal priority change)	African Union; CGIAR System Organization; Caribbean Development Bank; Council of the European Union; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; European Council; European Institute of Innovation and Technology; European Stability Mechanism; European Union; Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Association of South East Asian Nations; European Commission; European Forest Institute; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; Islamic Development Bank; OPEC Fund for International Development; Pacific Islands Forum; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; European External Action Service; International Livestock Research Institute; New Development Bank; Southern African Development Community; European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts; SAARC Development Fund; UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning; East African Community; European Central Bank; European Free Trade Association; European Investment Bank; European Investment Fund; European Patent Office; Nordic Development Fund; CABI; European Police Office; Council of Europe Development Bank; European Institute for Gender Equality; Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency; International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; Asian Productivity Organization; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; European Organization for Nuclear Research; European Union Intellectual Property Office; African Ministers' Council on Water; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Union for the Mediterranean

Table D3: Trump Entering Office Analysis: International Organizations by Treatment Status

Table D4: Interrupted Time Series Estimates

Effect	$0 \leq t \leq 2$	$t \geq 0$	$t > 0$
Panel A: AI increased salience to major principal			
Immediate level change	0.278* (0.176)	0.214** (0.119)	0.107 (0.089)
Time trend	0.018 (0.070)	0.002 (0.044)	0.048 (0.051)
Post-intervention trend change	-0.056 (0.161)	-0.022 (0.059)	-0.072 (0.064)
Panel B: AI without increased salience to major principal			
Immediate level change	0.115 (0.101)	0.032 (0.056)	-0.105** (0.057)
Time trend	0.006 (0.011)	0.003 (0.011)	0.025* (0.019)
Post-intervention trend change	-0.106** (0.057)	-0.012 (0.013)	-0.020 (0.019)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

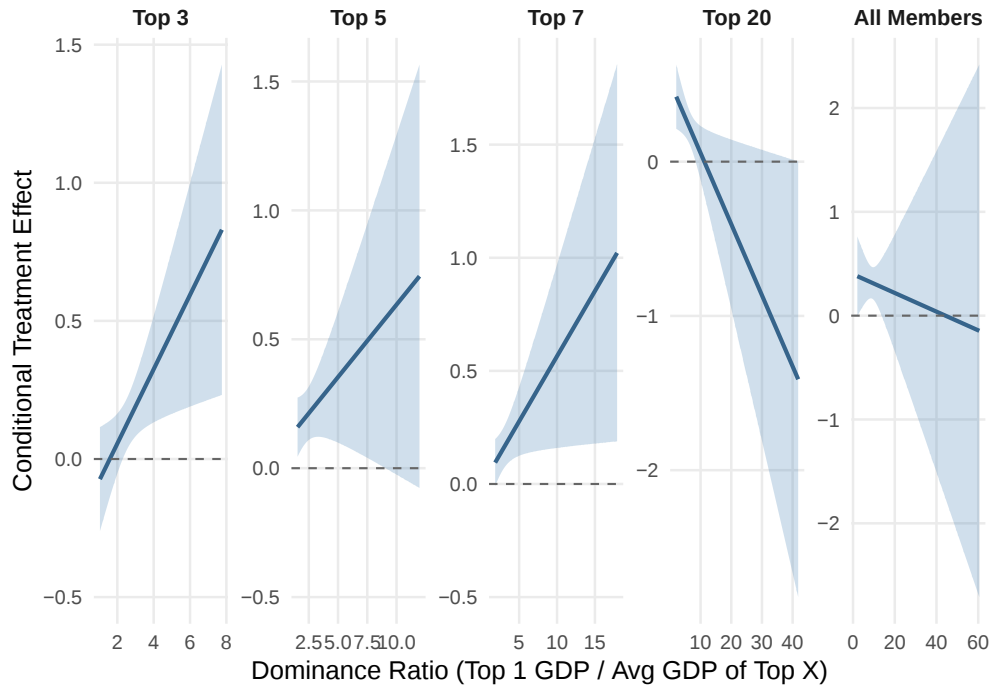
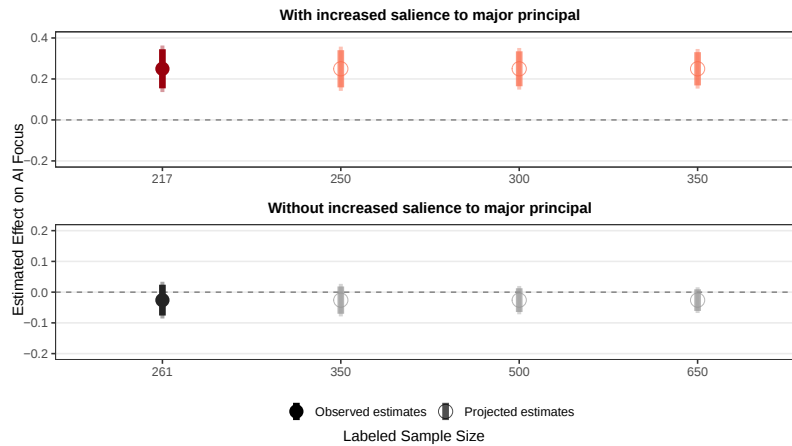


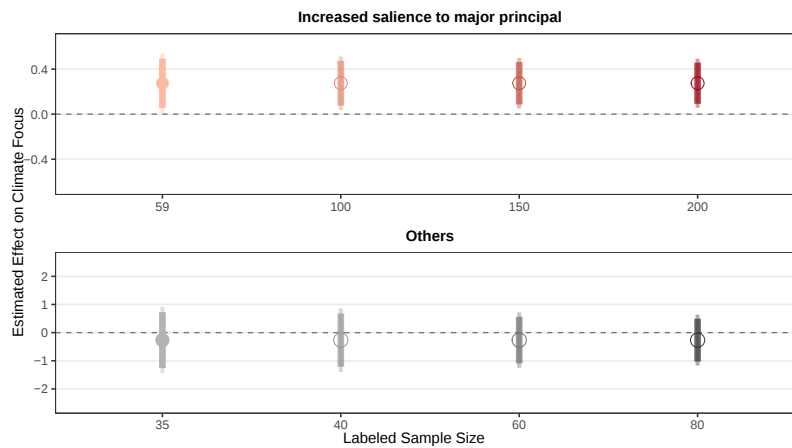
Figure D2: Power Concentration and the Conditional Effect of Global Challenge on the AI Focus of IOs with Increased Principal Priority

Note: The figure plots the conditional effect of the global AI challenge on IOs' AI and telecommunications focus when the level of power concentration varies, among IOs whose major principal increase attention to AI. Each panel uses a different definition of the top member group for calculating the dominance ratio (Dominant state GDP / Average GDP of Top X). The model also controls for the average state priority in the corresponding group. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. The concentration of power only within the most powerful member states amplifies the expansion of IOs into AI.

Panel A: AI expansion in non-AI IOs (ChatGPT release)



Panel B: Climate expansion in non-climate IOs (Paris Agreement & UNGA 2015)



Panel C: Climate expansion in U.S.-led IOs (Trump election 2016)

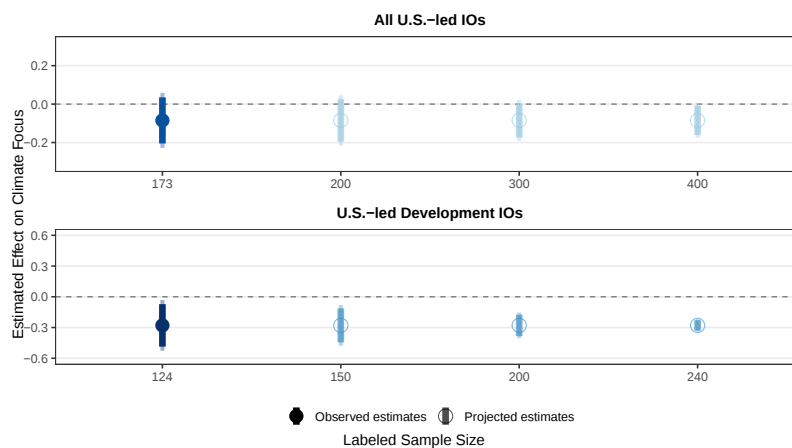


Figure D3: Bureaucratic Expansion: Robustness to Missing Data

Note: This figure replicates the baseline analyses after randomly removing 5% of European IO postings. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. Estimates on the left (solid dots, darker color) use the observed hand-coded data; remaining estimates are projected values from a DSL power analysis assuming additional hand-coded data.

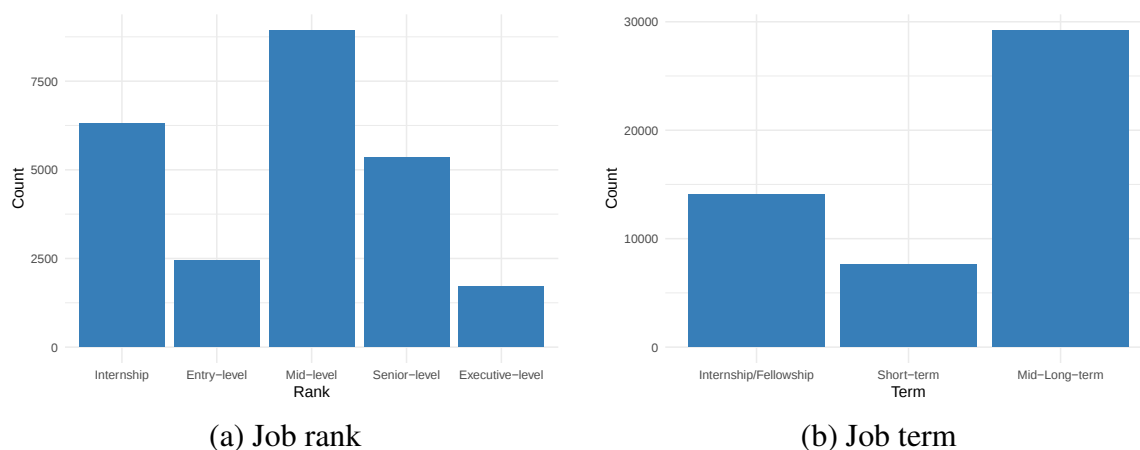
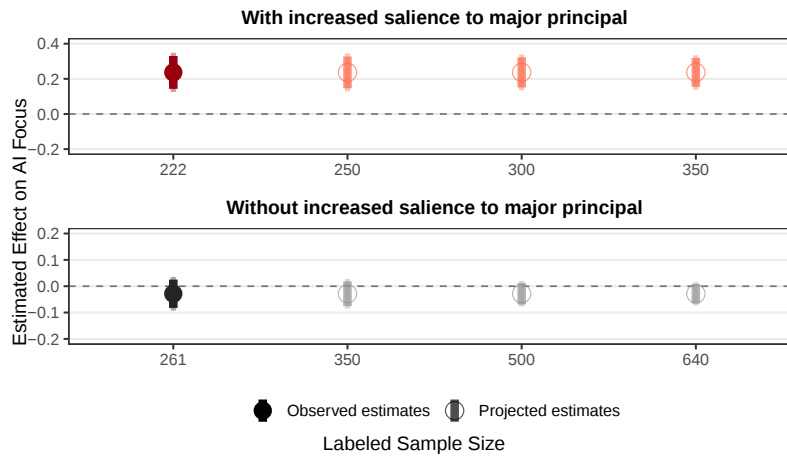


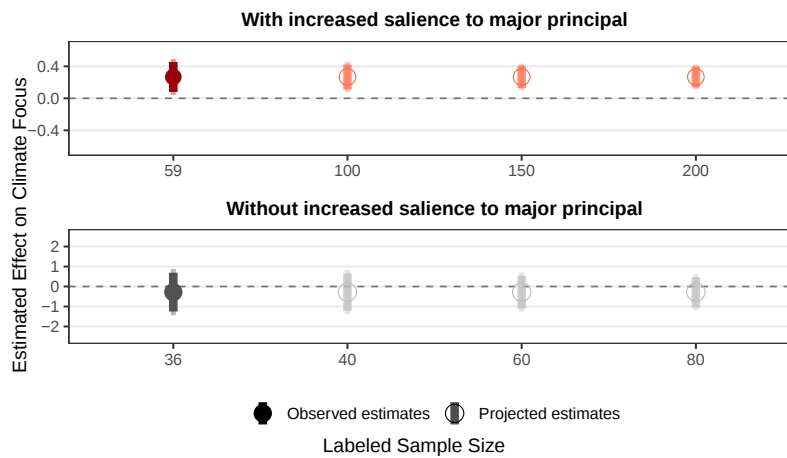
Figure D4: Rank and Terms of Climate-related Jobs in IOs with Increased Principal Priorities

Note: The x-axis is job rank and term categories, and the y-axis is the number of climate-related jobs in IOs whose principal priorities on climate increase. The job rank plot excludes jobs without a clear rank description.

Panel A: AI expansion in non-AI IOs (ChatGPT release)



Panel B: Climate expansion in non-climate IOs (Paris Agreement & UNGA 2015)



Panel C: Climate expansion in U.S.-led IOs (Trump election 2016)

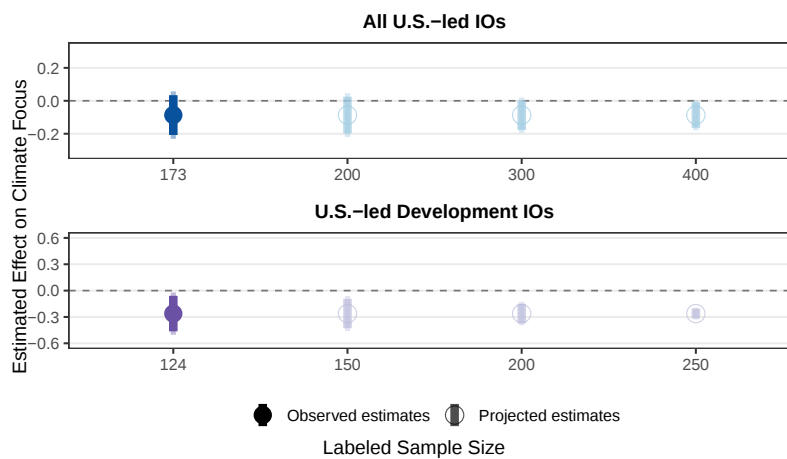


Figure D5: Bureaucratic Expansion: Robustness to Removing UN

Note: This figure replicates the baseline analyses after removing United Nations. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. Estimates on the left (solid dots, darker color) use the observed hand-coded data; remaining estimates are projected values from a DSL power analysis assuming additional hand-coded data.

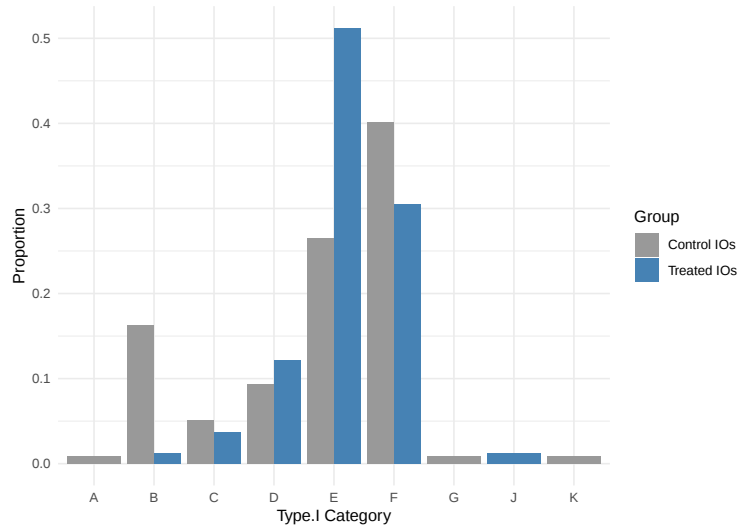


Figure D6: Comparison of IO Type: IOs With and Without Major Principal Prioritizing AI

Note: IO types are coded using the Yearbook of International Organizations. IO Type.I are defined as follows: A Federations of international organizations; B Universal membership organizations; C Intercontinental membership organizations; D Regionally defined membership organizations; E Organizations emanating from places, persons, or other bodies; F Organizations having a special form; G Internationally oriented national organizations; J Recently reported or proposed international organizations; K Subsidiary and internal bodies.

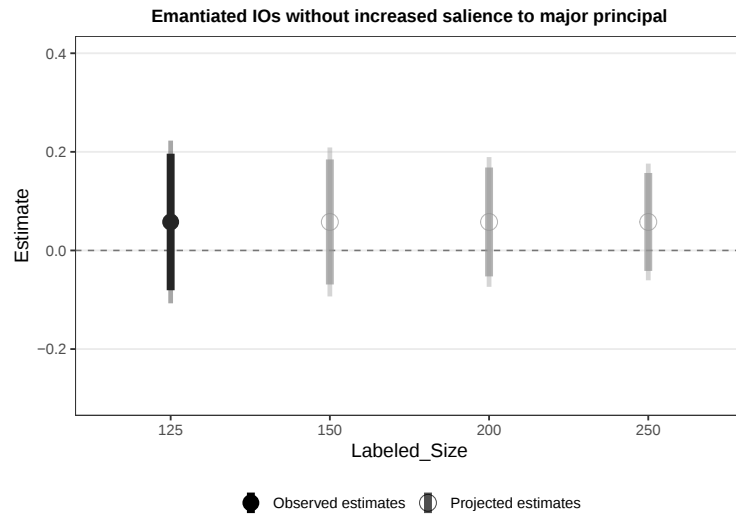
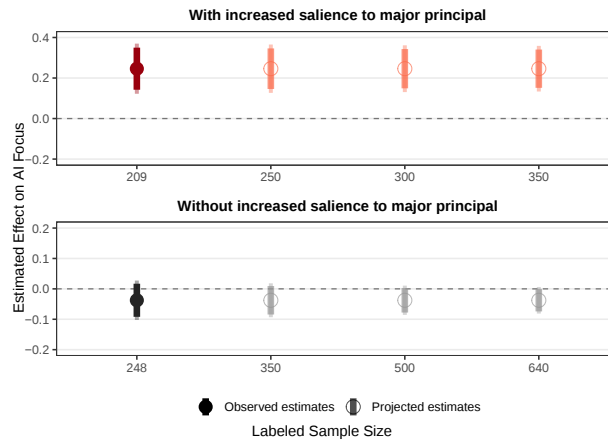


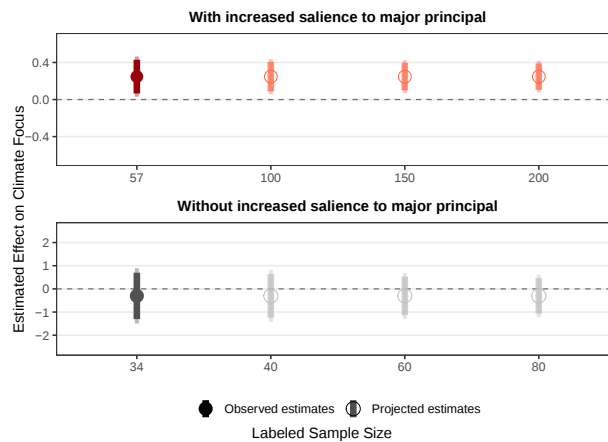
Figure D7: Emanated IOs Without Increased AI Salience to Major Principal

Note: Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. Estimates on the left (solid dots, darker color) use the observed hand-coded data; remaining estimates are projected values from a DSL power analysis assuming additional hand-coded data.

Panel A: AI expansion in non-AI IOs (ChatGPT release)



Panel B: Climate expansion in non-climate IOs (Paris Agreement & UNGA 2015)



Panel C: Climate expansion in U.S.-led IOs (Trump election 2016)

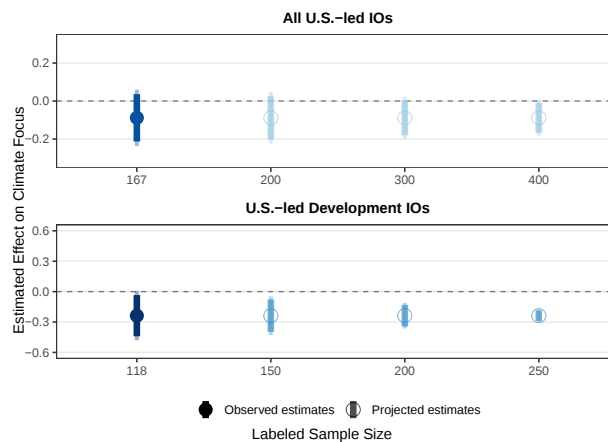


Figure D8: Bureaucratic Expansion: Robustness to Alternative Control Groups

Note: This figure replicates the baseline analyses after randomly removing three control group IOs. The climate-Paris analysis uses the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance as the control to ensure the control group exists in all periods. Points represent average treatment effects with 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) confidence intervals. Estimates on the left (solid dots, darker color) use the observed hand-coded data; remaining estimates are projected values from a DSL power analysis assuming additional hand-coded data.

Table D5: Lagged Earmarked Climate Funding Predicting IO Focus in the Subsequent Year

Panel A: Lagged Effects (t-2)				
	IO Focus on Climate			
Climate Disbursed	-0.00005			
	(0.00048)			
Climate Committed		0.00023		
		(0.00017)		
Prop. Climate Disbursed			0.0169	
			(0.0258)	
Prop. Climate Committed				-0.0355
				(0.0580)
Num.Obs.	854	854	854	854
R2	0.772	0.773	0.772	0.773
R2 Adj.	0.726	0.726	0.726	0.726
RMSE	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
IO FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Panel B: Lagged Effects (t-3)				
Climate Disbursed	0.00030			
	(0.00044)			
Climate Committed		0.0000		
		(0.00020)		
Prop. Climate Disbursed			0.0020	
			(0.0197)	
Prop. Climate Committed				-0.0276
				(0.0335)
Num.Obs.	812	812	812	812
R2	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.760
R2 Adj.	0.714	0.713	0.713	0.714
RMSE	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
IO FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001				

Note: Panel A presents the effect of climate earmarked funding on IO's focus on climate two years later. Panel B presents the same result for three years later.