

PURM 2020: The Immunity of International Organizations: Examining the State-IO Bargain

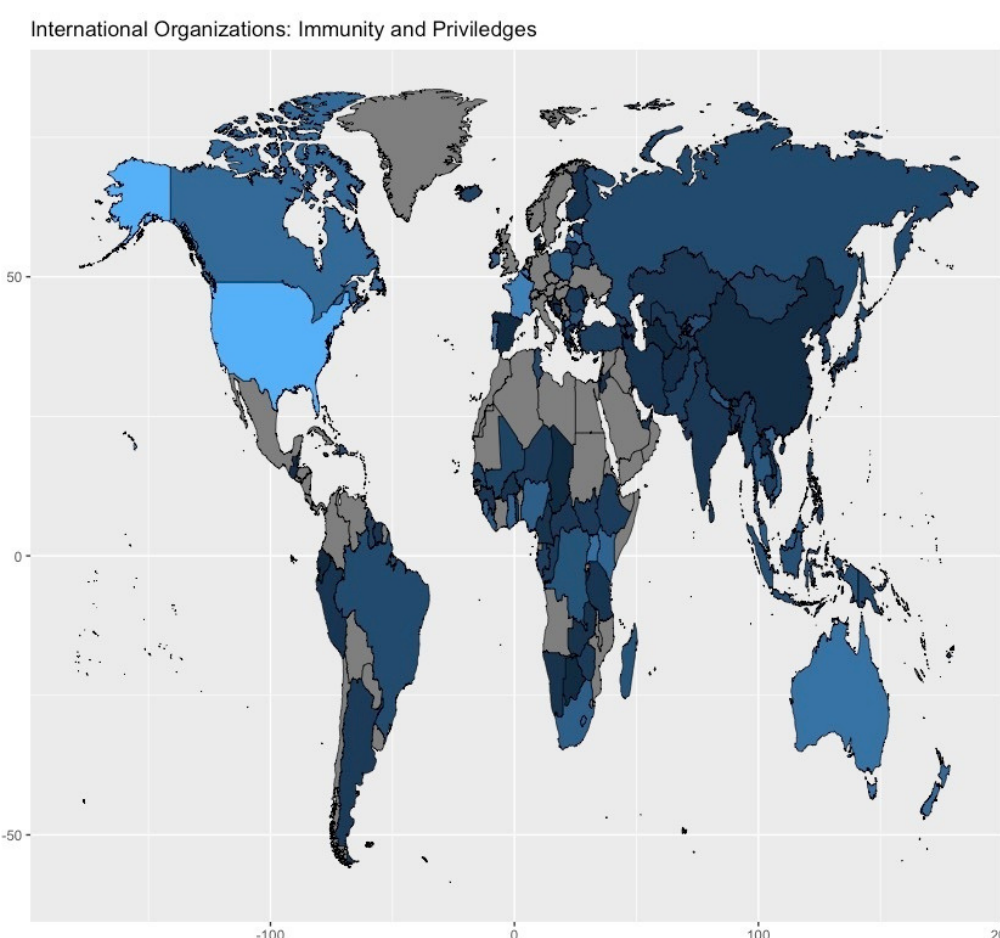
Karin Hananel and Nam Le

Results and Conclusions

- The data showed that the **UN** and its agencies were the most widely covered, close up in terms of numbers were development banks, international courts, and regional IOs.
- With the data we collected, Professor Gray and Ms. Hulvey came to the conclusion that **IO immunities are an overlooked element of the legalization of IOs**, as these immunities are crucial in examining under what **conditions** IOs and staff are brought to member-state courts, the terms of the various bargains between states and IOs on legal insulation, and the functional independence of IOs and staff.
- It was concluded that this data set is **one of the first comprehensive sets of data on IO immunities**, which will have applications for literatures on diffusion and endogenous design of institutions, implications for future literature on IO performance in terms of autonomy and independence, and addresses questions of **IO legitimacy and accountability**.

Introduction

- The concept of **immunity** for **intergovernmental organizations** (IOs) first materialized with the formation of the UN. As part of its establishment, it was given legal autonomy and immunity in every country that held membership.
- There is **incredible variation** in state policy on IO immunities, as they can be granted, amended, or revoked at any time, with multiple iterations of immunities for the same IO being very common. These immunities directly influence where an organization chooses to invest in property and staff.
- However, even with the normalization of IO immunity, there **lacked a comprehensive data set of these immunity agreements**, which was the first step in answering the broader research questions.

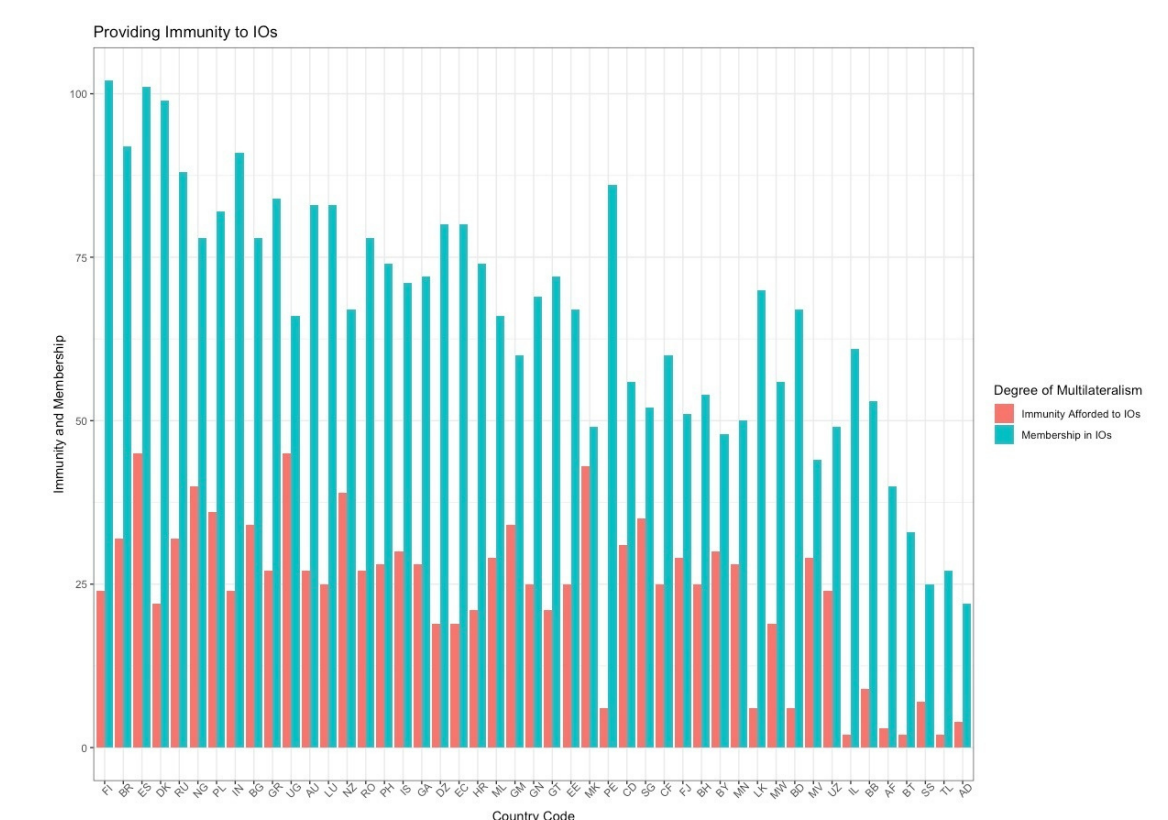


Methods and Materials

- Data was collected on country-level practices for granting immunities through searching country-level legal codes.
- In some cases, full translations were conducted of government materials in foreign languages.
- The data organized methodically based on the types of immunities included in each law, such as immunities for specific staff or staff in general, monetary, financial, imports, communications, security, and more.

Overall Research Questions

- What are the implications of **insulating** IOs and their staff from **legal recourse**?
- Do IOs ‘work’ better when they are **protected by law**?
- What can **endogenous design features** tell us about the contracts among states and IOs?



Special thanks to Professor Gray and Rachel Hulvey for their ongoing mentorship, support, and for sharing their results with us as they continue their research.