

International Cooperation in Times of Global Crisis

This project focused on the ways that international organizations function and studied the ways that they operate in different countries around the world. In particular, I researched three separate projects: the legal immunity of international organizations, the role of international election monitors in elections in developing democracies, and the United States Senate debate on the League of Nations.

Author

Jasper L. Taylor, COL 2025

Affiliations

Research conducted under supervision of Professor Julia Gray, Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Science
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Introduction

Legal immunity of international organizations - many international organizations claim legal immunity is necessary for them to function. However, some international organizations are more likely to be granted immunities by their host countries than others. This project studied why certain organizations enjoy legal immunity while others do not.

Election monitoring in developing democracies - when elections occur in either unstable democracies or new democracies, international election monitors arrive to evaluate the election. Countries invite certain election monitors whose evaluations are often biased. This project tracked which election monitors attended what elections and how they evaluated the elections. It also tracked the differences in news reports about elections from Russian news sources and Chinese news sources.

United States Senate debate on the League of Nations - the League of Nations was a proposed international organization that was aimed at addressing and mending some of the effects of World War I. It famously failed to pass in the United States Senate, despite support from President Woodrow Wilson and early support from the general public. This project studied what shapes preferences on international cooperation and sought to understand how uncertainties about the consequences of international cooperation frame domestic debate.

Methodology

Legal immunity of international organizations - this project involved accessing online legal databases for the countries being studied. For each country, there are different websites available that offer a list of laws passed in the country. I then searched for laws regarding immunities. However, there was often a language barrier when accessing websites, so finding laws regarding immunities could be challenging. After finding the immunity laws, they would then be entered into a spreadsheet with specifics regarding the laws.

Election monitoring in developing democracies - this project involved using online research database Nexis Lexis to access news reports in the periods surrounding the election. The results were gathered by using keywords for each country and filtering the date and the source of the news report. After the news reports were obtained, they were downloaded into PDF format and coded into an online survey that noted all the observers listed for each election and their evaluation of the election.

United States Senate debate on the League of Nations - for this project, United States Senate records would be obtained from the Library of Congress. After this, the Senate debate on the League of Nations would be read through and analyzed. After this, the debate was coded into an online survey that explained the contents of the day's debate and noted things like reasons for opposing the League or reasons in favor of it.

Results and Analysis

Legal immunity of international organizations - for this project, finding a definitive list of every immunity for a certain country was often not possible. However, for the immunity laws that were found, the laws often included things allowing the international organization to possess juridical personality and stated that the organization was immune from legal process. The immunity laws or contracts also often specified that the international organization did not have pay customs duties and taxes. They also often stated that the organization headquarters are inviolable and can not be searched by authorities. The staff and executives of the international organizations were also often granted the legal status of a diplomat in the host country. An analysis of these results leads to the understanding that many countries do not keep concise records online of their laws.

Election monitoring in developing democracies - for this project, some searches did not yield any articles for certain countries. However, most countries had plenty of articles. The articles listed the information about the election and stated the evaluations of observers attending the elections. Unsurprisingly, the evaluations of observers were often biased based on the member states of the international observer organization. For example, observers like the Commonwealth of Independent States, an international organization made up of former member states of the Soviet Union, were often much less harsh on their evaluations of their own member states. In a country like Belarus, the CIS often stated that Belarus held fair elections with other observers, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, stated that the elections were undemocratic. So, the evaluation of the election observers largely depended on the international organization they represent. There were also more articles for most European countries from Russian news sources rather than Chinese ones.

United States Senate debate on the League of Nations - after reading through many Senator speeches on the League of Nations, many of them feared that United States entry into the League would embroil the United States in European affairs. Many also worried that it would go against the Monroe Doctrine. Many Senators proposed certain amendments or reservations to the League that they believed would improve its condition. Interestingly, most Senators fell into one of four groupings about opinion on the League of Nations. These groups are the irreconcilables, the mild reservationists, the moderate reservationists, and the internationalists. Coding the speeches into the online surveys helped to understand the preferences of individual senators based on their speeches, thus allowing for a better understanding of the preferences on the League of Nations.

Conclusion

Note that these projects are ongoing and the research conducted is being used in unpublished research papers.

Legal immunity of international organizations - overall, countries grant international organizations immunity in different ways which allow the organization to carry out its day to day functions. However, it is challenging to find a concrete source listing every law regarding immunities.

Election monitoring in developing democracies - the evaluation of the validity of elections often depends on the international observer group giving the evaluation and international observers are often biased when giving evaluations.

United States Senate debate on the League of Nations - for this project, reading the Senate speeches on the League of Nations revealed that many of the Senator's the League primarily because it would implicate the United States in European affairs. However, there is still much more work to be done for this project.

