

International Organizations from the Ground Up: Understanding Global Cooperation Through Data

Introduction

As the world order becomes increasingly interdependent and connected, countries are constantly working to cooperate over international problems. In this, **international organizations (IOs)** facilitate collaboration and help countries better achieve their goals. This project seeks to evaluate the **development** and **efficiency** of IOs over time, and look at their **life cycles and activity** by analyzing their annual meetings, budgets, new agreements, and more. As such, this project seeks to gain a better understanding of **international cooperation** in the current day and age.

Overall Research Questions

- How do international organizations (IOs) help countries implement decisions to collaborate across borders?
- What is the role of the institutional structure and the incentives of the staff within IOs?
- How do these IOs change over time and adapt to changing conditions in the world?
- What have been the trends in IO activity over the last decades?

Methodology

Wartime Cooperation during WW2: League of Nations

- Data, including wages, roles, divisions, and personal information, was collected on workers of the League of Nations during the 1930s period from archival scripts in English and French.
- Data was organized in spreadsheets. Using R and STATA programming languages, data cleansing and analysis was performed to obtain contingency tables and reveal trends about the nature of work at such a prominent international organization.

Vitality of IOs: Organisation of American States (OAS) and African Union (AU)

- For each IO, data was collected about their meetings and activities every year using archival articles from Nexis Uni, including information about new grants, agreements, or setbacks to their mission.
- This data was then compiled to find a baseline level of activity for each IO over time, and then information from all IOs was combined to view trends of international cooperation over time.

Results & Conclusions

The research highlights a significant increase in **international organizations (IOs)** over time, reflecting a growing reliance on global cooperation. The data shows that IOs often follow **distinct** life cycles, with their success largely influenced by their internal structures and staff incentives. A comparison of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the African Union (AU) reveals that regional differences impact the effectiveness of these organizations, with the OAS showing more consistent activity. These findings underscore the need for IOs to adapt to changing global conditions to remain effective in fostering international collaboration.

Graph: Variation in IO vitality over time

