

Silence or Saliency? Examining the Effects of Transparency on the WTO Secretariat*

Sojun Park[†]

Minju Kim[‡]

June 5, 2024

Abstract

How does transparency affect behavior of international bureaucrats tasked with facilitating negotiations? Existing theories provide competing answers—transparency could induce silence from international bureaucrats or increase their saliency. We test these claims by examining the World Trade Organization (WTO)’s document derestriction reform in 2002. Specifically, we examine how the prompt public disclosure of documents shapes the way the WTO Secretariat writes reports about trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS). Using network statistics to estimate the state preference distributions on key topics, we find that the WTO Secretariat after the reform is more likely to issue reports on salient topics in the negotiations, using accountability-enhancing words. Transparency could empower international bureaucrats to tackle divisive issues in times of member state gridlock.

Word Count: 8,999

*We thank Lauren Konken, Sayumi Miyano, Siyao Li, and participants in the research seminar at the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance, the Junior IO Scholars Workshop, and the 2023 PolMeth annual meeting for their comments. We are also grateful for comments and suggestions from Erik Voeten, Jim Vreeland, Krzysztof Pelc, Marc Busch, Robert Gulotty, and Stephen Chaudoin. To conduct interviews, we acquired an approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of Princeton University (IRB: 15833) and Syracuse University (IRB:23-152). We thank the anonymous WTO staff members for their participation in our interviews, and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University for financially supporting the field research in Geneva, Switzerland.

[†]Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Politics, Princeton University (sojunp@princeton.edu)

[‡]Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Syracuse University (mkim71@syr.edu)

International organizations (IOs) have become more transparent in recent years. IOs can increase transparency in multiple ways,¹ but one common approach is to publicly disclose meeting minutes and internal reports. Public disclosure of documents improves accountability by allowing interested actors to monitor what is discussed and negotiated in IOs. Multiple IOs have loosened the rules to make their documents more accessible to the public. By doing so, IOs have responded to the demands of interested actors (Smythe and Smith 2006; Grigorescu 2007; Dingwerth et al. 2020; Tørstad 2023; Lall 2023a).

How does increased transparency affect behavior of international bureaucrats tasked with facilitating negotiations? IOs are run by international bureaucrats who, as members of the IO Secretariat, carry out the day-to-day work of IOs. For those IOs that provide a regular forum of negotiations, the IO Secretariat participates in negotiations as a mediator and an agenda-setter (Odell 2004; Johns 2007). Given its crucial role in IOs, how does the increased transparency, namely public disclosure of internal documents, affect the way the IO Secretariat performs at IOs?

Existing theories offer competing answers on how transparency affects the behavior of international bureaucrats. On one hand, transparency can generate the silence of international bureaucrats. Fearing that member states could curtail their delegated authority, international bureaucrats refrain from commenting on divisive issues that generate contentious debates in negotiations (Barnett et al. 2004; Urpelainen 2012). On the other hand, as we will argue throughout the paper, transparency can empower international bureaucrats to speak up on divisive issues, which we label as the salience of international bureaucrats. An IO strives to acquire legitimacy from the public (Keohane 2011; Tallberg and Zürn 2019), and transparency enables international bureaucrats to showcase their accountability to the public. The legitimacy-seeking behavior of international bureaucrats is consistent with the

¹For example, transparency in IOs can mean shared knowledge of implementation (Keohane 1982). Alternatively, transparency can mean revelation of sources and methods to detect other state's violations of international rules and laws (Carnegie and Carson 2019), or tight control of international bureaucrats who implement mandates of member states (Honig 2019).

growing research that validates the kinds of strategies an IO adopts to acquire legitimacy in global governance (Gronau and Schmidtke 2016; Dingwerth et al. 2020).

This paper empirically validates the competing claims using the case of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an IO that regulates global trade rules. We examine how the WTO Secretariat writes its reports in intellectual property negotiations, specifically in the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council. Among the numerous issues discussed in the WTO, intellectual property is notable for the polarized demands of its member states. To identify how the WTO Secretariat responds to transparency, we leverage the WTO’s institutional reform that has increased public access to its internal documents. Since May 14, 2002, the WTO has increased its transparency by automatically disclosing internal documents after sixty days of circulation. This contrasts with the previous policy of releasing internal documents after keeping them for at least six to eight months. The contentious nature of intellectual property negotiations, combined with the institutional change in the WTO, makes the WTO TRIPS Council an ideal setting to test how international bureaucrats respond to different levels of transparency.

One challenge in identifying the kinds of interests international bureaucrats represent comes from estimating preferences of member states. Many IOs, including the WTO, change their rules based on the consensus of member states. The consensus-based decision-making makes it impossible to use a spatial model to identify the distribution of member state preferences on an issue area (Poole and Rosenthal 1985; Martin and Quinn 2002; Clinton et al. 2004). Unlike a voting-based IO such as the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, it is difficult to theorize what comprises an ideal point of member state preferences in the setting of the WTO.

We overcome the challenge by adopting a three-step methodological approach based on a network analysis. First, we collect all documents related to TRIPS Council meetings published by WTO members and the Secretariat. Second, for each topic related to trade-related intellectual property, we identify preferences of member states by estimating their

latent membership. We do so by analyzing their document-sponsorship patterns using a measure based on network modularity. The modularity allows us to quantify the degree of polarization among WTO members on each topic. Third, we compare how the Secretariat writes its report for each topic before and after the change in the document de-restriction rule.

Using the network statistic, we find that transparency can induce increased participation of international bureaucrats in negotiations. Specifically, after the rule change and subsequent speedy disclosure of internal documents, the Secretariat is more likely to cover issues that are more polarizing among WTO members in its own reports. We also test whether the Secretariat uses proactive language in the reports to deliver accountability using keyword-assisted topic models (Eshima et al. 2020). We find that the Secretariat’s documents published for communication are more likely to contain words such as “public,” “democratic,” and “respond” than its other summary reports. The findings are robust to an alternative network-based measure of member state preferences and other topic models.

Our findings indicate that transparency can induce the salience of international bureaucrats. Their salience translates into which topic is represented in an IO, and potentially what states can get out of international cooperation. The findings contribute to the debates on the effect of increased transparency on IOs (Keohane 1984; Stasavage 2004; Hafner-Burton et al. 2016; Carnegie and Carson 2019; Pauwelyn and Pelc 2022). Whereas the existing literature predominantly takes a state-centered approach, we bring in international bureaucrats as actors whose behavior is also affected by different levels of transparency. More generally, our study advances the burgeoning literature on performance of bureaucrats and their role in shaping international cooperation (Honig and Weaver 2019; Heinzel 2022; Lall 2023b).

In terms of methods, our paper introduces a new method for estimating the preferences of member states within an international organization. By using network statistics, we can determine how closely aligned or divergent the positions of member states are, despite these positions often being multi-dimensional and challenging to measure due to the unanimity

rule. This method is applicable to various consensus-based IOs, such as the WTO and specialized UN agencies, where member states seek public support from other members before voting. Additionally, this approach can be valuable in studying international bureaucrats by allowing researchers to estimate how these bureaucrats adapt their behavior to the changing preferences of member states.

The paper is organized as follows. We first introduce how existing theories explain the relationship between transparency and international bureaucrats and derive the competing empirical expectations which we label as the silence and salience of international bureaucrats. In the following section, we explain the background of the WTO’s decision to increase its transparency through a rule change in 2002 that led to speedier disclosure of internal documents. We then examine how the WTO Secretariat in intellectual property negotiations responds to the increased transparency before and after the rule change. We conclude the paper by discussing the implications of our findings.

International Bureaucrats under Transparency

Transparency informs multiple stakeholders in the international community about what IOs do. Today, IOs increasingly embrace transparency to make global governance accountable and inclusive. Transparency has become a buzzword solution for an IO suffering from “democracy deficit” (Hale 2008, p.73). Existing studies identify when domestic leaders and IOs adopt transparency. Domestic leaders can manipulate discussions and disguise their underperformance under low transparency (Wallace 2016). Despite the benefits of maintaining opacity, leaders sometimes adopt transparency to further their interests. Hollyer et al. (2019), for instance, finds that leaders in autocracies choose transparency when they seek to use the support of the mass public to deter opposition from rival elites. At the international level, member states of an IO are more likely to increase transparency when the public or non-state actors question the legitimacy of the IO (Grigorescu 2007; Dingwerth et al. 2020;

Lall 2023a).

Previous research identifies the positive and negative impacts of transparency at various stages of international cooperation, focusing largely on how it affects the behavior of member states. During negotiations, transparency can hinder the conclusion of agreements by reducing the flexibility of officials to compromise (Stasavage 2004; Hafner-Burton et al. 2016). In the implementation phase, transparency can enhance compliance by providing information about the behavior of other member states (Keohane 1982). IOs often encourage member states to report treaty violations by others to ensure compliance. However, excessive transparency might deter such reporting due to fears of revealing sources and intelligence-gathering methods (Carnegie and Carson 2019).

How does transparency affect the behavior of international bureaucrats? When member states use IOs as a forum for international cooperation, international bureaucrats assist member states at every stage. International bureaucrats make daily decisions necessary to run IOs. The IO Secretariat collects and analyzes data, monitors compliance of member states, participates in negotiations, and publishes reports. When writing reports, international bureaucrats summarize meetings, provide background information upon member states' requests, and suggest agendas for future negotiations. An increasing number of studies recognize international bureaucrats as strategic actors (Johns 2007; Johnson 2014; Ege 2020). International bureaucrats adapt their behavior to institutional changes within an IO, and such adaptation can both improve and undermine organizational performance (Honig 2019; Honig et al. 2022; Clark and Dolan 2021).

How transparency affects behavior of international bureaucrats needs to be answered to better understand the consequences of transparency on IOs. To this question, existing theories provide competing answers. On one hand, transparency could lead international bureaucrats to be cautious in their words and actions on divisive issues. On the other hand, transparency could embolden international bureaucrats to speak up on divisive issues. We label these competing claims as the *silence* and *salience* of international bureaucrats,

respectively, and derive the two competing claims based on existing theories in the following section.

The Silence of International Bureaucrats

International bureaucrats exercise authority delegated by member states. As [Barnett et al. \(2004, p.22\)](#) puts, delegated authority is always “authority on loan,” meaning “international bureaucrats must maintain the perception that they are faithful servants to their mandates and masters.” The delegated authority leads international bureaucrats to maintain reputation of neutrality. Otherwise, member states might curtail autonomy of international bureaucrats ([Urpelainen 2012](#)). Anticipating the possible reduction in their autonomy, international bureaucrats tend to exercise their autonomy when member states are indifferent in their preferences ([Barnett et al. 2004](#)) or member states lack knowledge about an issue area ([Fang and Stone 2012](#)). Although less powerful states might accept some degree of the Secretariat’s bias towards powerful states ([Malis et al. 2021](#)), this tolerance risks prompting dissatisfied states to withdraw from the IO ([Johns 2007](#)), posing a threat to the organization’s vitality.

If international bureaucrats seek to maximize delegated authority, transparency would lead to the silence of international bureaucrats. Transparency, especially public disclosure of documents, allows interested actors to access information about IOs with ease. Knowing that the Secretariat reports could be widely read and cited by interested actors, international bureaucrats would refrain from exercising their discretion. The IO Secretariat would avoid bringing up divisive issues that could offend a particular group of member states. International bureaucrats in this situation would prefer issuing reports that are strictly administrative, such as notifying member states when and where negotiations will be held.

The Salience of International Bureaucrats

Alternative expectation is that transparency could induce the salience of international bureaucrats. Besides the delegated authority, an IO exercises its power based on legitimacy which is defined as “the right to rule” (Keohane 2011). Legitimacy shapes an IO’s capacity to develop rules and norms (Tallberg and Zürn 2019), and is central to the effectiveness of international institutions (Chapman 2012, p.29). Like many other organizations, an IO strives to justify its existence. If fails to do so, an IO either officially dissolves or loses its vitality (Gray 2018; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2021). Recent studies increasingly find that an IO adopts strategies to gain legitimacy from the public which includes establishing and reforming accountability measures (Gronau and Schmidtke 2016; Dingwerth et al. 2020). International bureaucrats are at the forefront to promote the IO’s legitimacy. To the legitimacy-seeking international bureaucrats, transparency provides an opportunity to inform their activities to the public.

High transparency allows the Secretariat to reach a larger audience with its efforts. Knowing that their reports could be widely read by the media, non-state actors, and the public, international bureaucrats might be motivated to focus on issues that attract more attention. Existing research shows that IOs can shape public opinion (Chapman 2012; Greenhill 2020). Leveraging this ability, the Secretariat under transparency can bolster the legitimacy of the organization it represents. When the public is aware of the Secretariat’s activities, they are more likely to have a positive view of the international organization. For instance, a survey demonstrates that people are more inclined to support the WTO when they understand its role.² Similarly, by informing the public about contentious debates within an international organization, international bureaucrats can enhance their organization’s legitimacy.

²TradeVista conducted a survey of 1,000 adults in the United States in 2020. For more details, see <https://www.hinrichfoundation.com/research/tradevistas/wto/us-attitude-wto/>.

The Case of the WTO

Between the silence and salience of international bureaucrats, which perspective is more accurate? This paper directly tests the competing claims using the case of the WTO TRIPS. We first discuss the background behind the WTO's decision to increase transparency. We then turn to the WTO TRIPS Council and explain the characteristics that make it the ideal setting to test the effect of transparency on the behavior of international bureaucrats.

Transparency Reform in the WTO

On May 16, 2002, WTO member states officially agreed on new procedures that mandate speedier disclosure of documents drafted by the Secretariat. Before the rule change, the public had an access to a great majority of internal documents after waiting eight to nine months on average. After the rule change, the waiting time got was reduced to six to twelve weeks. Since the rule change, documents drafted by the Secretariat are automatically de-restricted after thirty days of circulation as opposed to eight months (WT/L/452).³

Behind the rule change there were member states that demanded greater transparency from the WTO. In 1998, the US initially proposed the modification of the procedures for the circulation and de-restriction of WTO documents.⁴ Canada and Mexico followed and submitted their proposals.⁵ The conversations continued for four years, and the rule change was adopted during the General Council meeting in 2002. With the rule change, both the time needed to de-restrict documents as well as the number of documents subject to restriction were reduced (para 19, WT/GC/M/74).

A series of protests and criticisms from the public could explain why WTO member states in addition to the US, Canada, and Mexico also supported the rule change. In November

³Member states can request additional restriction periods, but the period cannot exceed thirty days.

⁴See WT/GC/W/88 for the United States' detailed proposal.

⁵See WT/GC/W/106 and WT/GC/W/113 for the Canadian and Mexican detailed proposals.

1999— around the time that the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999 was held—protesters representing non-governmental organizations, labor unions, and other interest groups gathered in Seattle to oppose globalization and economic liberalization. The protesters’ slogan was “transparency and accountability.”⁶ The protesters demanded reforms of the WTO while chanting “This is what democracy looks like.”⁷

The WTO as an organization responded to the public demands for greater transparency. The member states agreed to expedite public disclosure of internal documents. As written in the preamble of the official document (WT/L/452), the rule change was adopted recognizing “(...) the importance of greater transparency in the functioning of the WTO.” The rule change was intended to “make the organization more open and accountable to the citizens our governments [WTO member state governments] represent.”⁸ Compared to the earlier effort (WT/L/160/Rev.1), the decision in May 2002 decision drastically increased the public’s access to WTO internal documents.

We confirmed that the rule change indeed increased the public access to internal documents by examining all 5,500 registered at the WTO TRIPS Council from 1995 to 2019. We calculated the number of days from the date of submission to the date of de-restriction for each document. Figure 1 shows that the average length of time needed for disclosure dropped after the rule change, both for documents written by member state delegates and the WTO Secretariat.

The WTO rule change provides an excellent opportunity to estimate the effect of transparency on the behavior of international bureaucrats. It is an institutional change intended to increase accountability to the public. The rule change also has a clear start date, which

⁶See https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Battle_of_Seattle_The.htm.

⁷The Guardian, December 4, 1999, Real Battle for Seattle, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/dec/05/wto.globalisation>, Last accessed date: September 16, 2023.

⁸WTO Website, accessed on January 29, 2022. See https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/ngo_e/dereestr_explane_e.htm for more details.

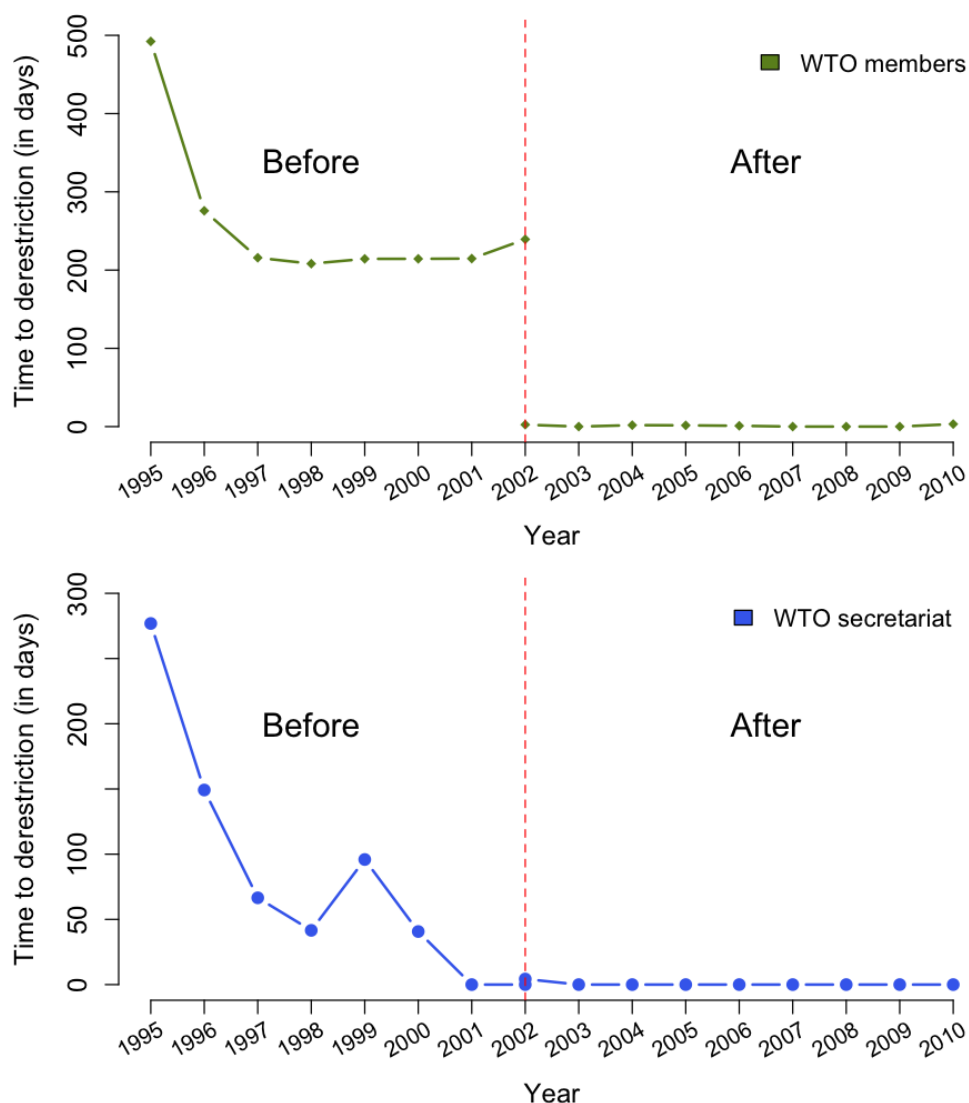


Figure 1: **The Mean Time to Document De-restriction: the Case of TRIPS**

increases the reliability of the estimation. Unlike many other IOs, the WTO had maintained a fully-functioning Secretariat long before its increase in transparency. Because of its broad membership and the distributive consequences of international trade, the WTO is also one of the few IOs that has consistently provided a forum for interstate negotiations.

The WTO TRIPS Council

The Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement is one of the WTO multilateral trade agreements signed in 1995 to protect intellectual property. TRIPS

adopts the minimum standards for intellectual property protection in global markets and contains various trade remedies to mitigate distributional consequences. Yet, implementation of TRIPS remains controversial as the remedies infringe on the property rights of intellectual property owners to meet public policy objectives, such as public access to patented drugs.

The TRIPS Council is one of the legal bodies in the WTO that monitors its member states' domestic laws implementing TRIPS. Additionally, the Secretariat submits annual reports on various issues on TRIPS to the General Council. Staff members at the General Council then administer these issues until the delegates of all WTO member states—who meet at the Ministerial Conference every two years—can resolve them consensually.

A series of communications during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 illustrates how the TRIPS Council is run. After the outbreak of COVID-19, member states submitted a proposal to the TRIPS Council requesting a waiver from the TRIPS Agreement in relation to prevention, containment, and treatment of COVID-19.⁹ The proposal was reflected in the General Council report in the following year.¹⁰ The Director General responded to the General Council report¹¹, and the proposal was put to a vote at the 12th Ministerial Conference in 2022.¹²

The TRIPS Council is an ideal setting to test the intended effect of transparency for the following reasons. First, WTO member states have become significantly polarized during the past two decades over the TRIPS Agreement. Among the debates was compulsory licensing, which allows an individual or a company to use a proprietary technology without the property right holder's consent. After the TRIPS Agreement came into force, the outbreak of

⁹“Waiver from Certain Provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19 - Communication from India and South Africa” (IP/C/W/669)

¹⁰“Annual Review of the Special Compulsory Licensing System - Report to the General Council” (IP/C/90)

¹¹“Communication from the Chairperson” (IP/C/W/688)

¹²“Draft Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement - Revision” (WT/MIN22/W/15/Rev.2)

the HIV/AIDS crisis in the early 2000s caused concerns about a limited access to patented medicines in the Global South (Chorev 2012), where opinions in developed and developing countries were polarized regarding their uses of compulsory licensing since then (Abbott 2005). Similarly, WTO members from the North and the South¹³ were divided into proponents and opponents of waiving TRIPS implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fischer et al. 2023).

Next, the TRIPS Council Secretariat, compared to Secretariats in other WTO divisions, has significant flexibility in assisting with negotiations. Conventionally, disputes raised over WTO trade agreements are resolved by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body. However, existing research has noted that the dispute settlement body plays a limited role in resolving intellectual property-related issues (Pauwelyn 2010). This is most likely because the TRIPS leaves much “room to maneuver” for its interpretation beyond the minimum standards, leading WTO members to actively exploit ambiguous treaty terms and preempt interpretation by the adjudicating body (Park and Konken 2024). We expect that the limited role of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body in trade dispute settlements makes the Secretariat and its participation in the TRIPS Council more obvious to the interested non-state actors, such as patent holders and drug recipients in developed and developing countries.

The Competing Expectations

The features of the WTO and the TRIPS Council together unlock the possibilities of international bureaucrats’ strategic responses to transparency. We expect transparency would affect both the kinds of topics that the Secretariat engages with and words that the Secretariat uses in its reports. Extending the silence and salience of international bureaucrats derived in the previous section, we lay out the competing expectations specific to the context of the WTO TRIPS.

¹³Proponents of the original TRIPS waiver include India and South Africa, while the European Union, the United States, and other industrialized countries proposed a new waiver subsequently.

If transparency triggers the silence of international bureaucrats, the WTO reform should lead the Secretariat to publish more passive documents on divisive issues. In order to not offend a particular group of member states, the Secretariat would refrain from issuing reports on divisive issues. Moreover, the silence of international bureaucrats would induce international bureaucrats to use administrative and technical words instead of words associated with accountability to the public.

In contrast, if transparency triggers salience of international bureaucrats, the WTO reform should induce the Secretariat to publish more proactive documents on divisive issues. The salience would be also observable in words the Secretariat used in its reports. If international bureaucrats exert effort to acquire legitimacy from the public, the Secretariat under transparency would be more likely to use words that are associated with accountability to the public. In the following section, we explain how we test the competing expectations.

Testing the Effect of Transparency on Bureaucrats

There are two empirical challenges to overcome to test the effect of transparency on international bureaucrats. First, it is not clear how one can estimate distribution of state preferences on IP-related trade issues in the WTO setting. The existing research on IOs has widely adopted item response theory (IRT) models to estimate ideal points and use them as a proxy for state preferences (Bailey et al. 2017; Bailey and Voeten 2018; Mesquita et al. 2022). However, the IRT models do not apply to an IO like the WTO where its decisions by rule require consensus of member states.

Next, it is important to differentiate between the Secretariat's passive and active use of autonomy. As a member-driven organization, the WTO grants its Secretariat less autonomy compared to other IOs. Nonetheless, within its limited autonomy, the WTO Secretariat can decide on the methods to facilitate negotiations. For example, the Secretariat might adopt a purely administrative role, producing reports that outline the logistics of the negotiations.

Alternatively, it could take a more active role by frequently supplying background information or drafting summaries of prior discussions. To measure how transparency influences behavior of international bureaucrats, it is necessary to establish a metric that assesses their level of proactivity.

In the following sections, we adopt new empirical strategies to address these issues. For estimating state preferences on IP-related topics, we use co-publication of documents among WTO member states in the TRIPS Council. Specifically, for each issue, we quantify the degree of polarization among countries using a network statistic. In this way, we can avoid making strong assumptions about the trade policy preference of an individual member state.¹⁴ The exploratory approach can also be useful when researchers do not have a priori knowledge about the dimension in which most of the variation in state preferences arises.

To identify the Secretariat’s proactive publications on each of the issues, we use the WTO’s document labeling system. Additional details about the document symbols and their hierarchical structure will be discussed in the following sections. Also, we validate the identification strategy using keyword-assisted topic modeling, recently developed by [Eshima et al. \(2020\)](#). By specifying keywords relevant for accountability to the public prior to fitting a model to the text-as-data, we can test the accuracy of using the WTO labeling system.

Our approach can be useful for other consensus-based IOs, such as the UN Development Programme,¹⁵ where member states exchange documents to advocate others’ agenda. Strong states often endorse the unanimity rule as it “generate(s) information on state preferences ... that favor the interests of powerful states” ([Steinberg 2002](#), 342). Therefore, all member states are engaged in a coalition building effort in consensus-based IOs. In many cases, this takes place in the form of publishing (co)sponsorship documents ([Mesquita et al. 2022](#)).

¹⁴[Martin and Quinn \(2002\)](#) offer other approaches, such as Bayesian inference, that can help relax the key assumptions of IRT models.

¹⁵See [the website](#) for more information about the voting system.

Data Collection

We construct an original data set to test our hypotheses. We collect all documents on intellectual property rights published between 1995 and 2019 by WTO member states, the Secretariat, and other IOs attending the TRIPS Council meetings as observers. These documents are classified by specific document symbols¹⁶ that all start with “IP.” The total number of documents is 5,913.

All the documents are labeled in a distinct, hierarchical way. For instance, Article 63 of TRIPS obligates members to notify the WTO of changes to their national intellectual property laws and regulations and the ways they fulfill key principles, such as the Most-Favored Nation (MFN) rule. These documents published in compliance with Article 63 start with “IP/N.” As for issues that WTO members are currently working on, the documents start with the label “IP/C/W.” When final decisions are made, the decisions are announced using labels beginning with “IP/C.” For our empirical analysis, we select documents whose symbols start with “IP/C/W” and “IP/C” for WTO members. The total number of WTO documents whose symbols start with “IP/C” is 1,276 out of 5,913.

To identify whether the WTO Secretariat responds to public needs among WTO members, we subset the documents into different categories based on their topics. In doing so, we use the meta data offering keywords of each document.¹⁷ We subset the documents into different categories based on their common keywords, and use these keywords as a bridge between publications by WTO members and the Secretariat on each keyword. Figure 2 displays the keywords that frequently appear in TRIPS Council meetings, with those on the left representing documents published by the Secretariat and those on the right representing documents published by member states. Both sides commonly address the issue of “patents,” but the Secretariat more frequently addresses global issues such as “technical cooperation”

¹⁶For a more comprehensive overview of the labeling system, see [the WTO guidebook](#).

¹⁷[WTO documents online database](#).

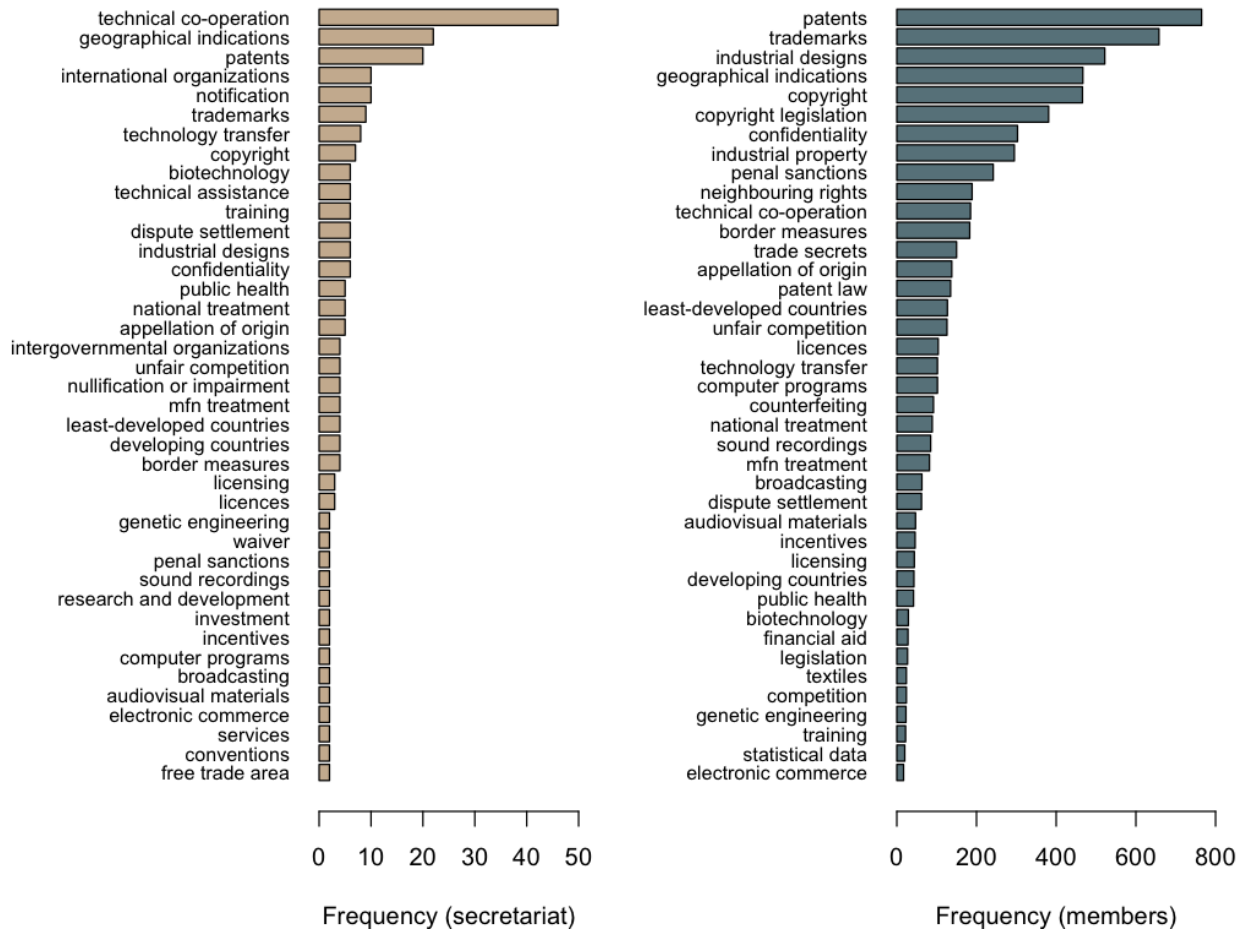


Figure 2: Top topics discussed in the TRIPS Council meetings (1995-2019)

compared to WTO members. There are 138 unique keywords in total from both sides. In the subsequent empirical analysis, we measure the degree of polarization on each topic using a network statistic.

Estimation of Member State Preferences

For each keyword observable in our data, we estimate the distribution of state preferences on each issue instead of estimating individual preferences on the issue. We do so by first identifying which group of WTO members publishes a document together or sponsors others' documents. Unlike a document published by a single member state (Figure 3), multiple member states can co-sponsor a proposal and publish a document with their names listed

below the document title (Figure 4).

We assume that the co-publication indicates alignment of state preferences on each issue. This allows us to construct an adjacency matrix A for each keyword, where $a_{ij} = 1$ if states i and j publish the same document or sponsor each other's publication and $a_{ij} = 0$ otherwise. We repeat this process across different keywords to uncover how state preferences are spread across various topics.

For the alignment of state preferences identified in A , we calculate a network statistic summarizing the degrees of polarization among nodes and edges, called *modularity*. To do so, we first analyze the structure of latent communities to which each country belongs using community detection.¹⁸ This allows us to partition WTO members into several groups of countries that co-publish documents frequently.

Next, we estimate how fragmented the communities are using the modularity Q . This can be done by calculating the proportion of the edges that fall within the given groups minus the expected ratio if the nodes were connected at random. Formally, Q can be written as follows, where for each node i and j in the matrix A , k_i denotes node degrees from a randomly generated network. m is the total number of edges generated from the network, and s_i indicates a community membership of country i . The modularity ranges between 0 and 1, where the higher the modularity, the more consolidated countries are within each group but fragmented across different groups.

$$Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{i,j} \left(a_{ij} - \frac{k_i k_j}{2m} \right) \left(\frac{s_i s_j + 1}{2} \right)$$

We calculate the modularity for each keyword in our data to quantify the degree of polarization among WTO members, with higher modularity scores indicating greater polarization. Table 1 summarizes how this statistic varies across different keywords. Notably, issues that

¹⁸For a broad literature that uses community detection, see Lupu and Traag (2013), Renshon (2016) for international conflict, and Lupu and Voeten (2012) for the study of IO.

generate conflicts between the Global North and South, such as “patents,” “electronic commerce,” and “public health,” rank at the top. These topics are known for their exclusivity of economic benefits and causing international disputes. In contrast, keywords that appear in the middle and bottom of the table, such as “developing countries,” “least-developed countries,” and “economic development,” are strongly linked to international cooperation.



EXAMPLES OF IP ISSUES AND BARRIERS IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COMMUNICATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Figure 3: An example of a solo-publication by WTO members



WAIVER FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE TRIPS AGREEMENT FOR THE PREVENTION, CONTAINMENT AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19 – RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA, ESWATINI, INDIA, KENYA, MOZAMBIQUE, MONGOLIA, PAKISTAN, SOUTH AFRICA, THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA AND ZIMBABWE

Figure 4: An example of a co-publication by WTO members

Figure 5 illustrates the configuration of WTO member state preferences on each issue. Each gray line represents cases in which WTO member states co-published documents or sponsored each other’s publication on the issue. Boundaries with different colors describe latent groups, identified using community detection. Note that the ways state preferences are

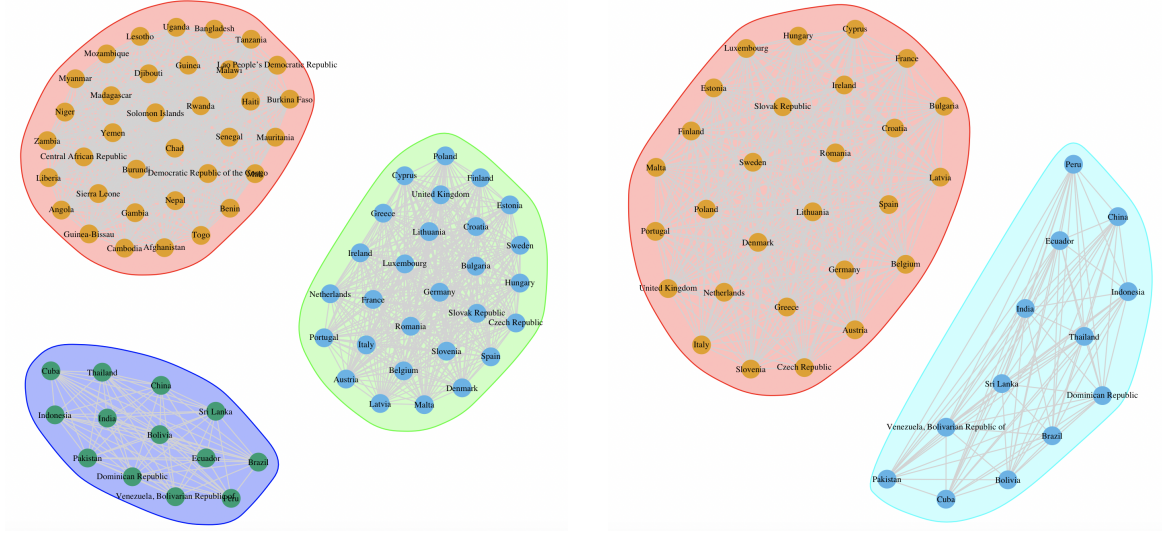
Keyword	M
patents	0.615
licences	0.545
electronic commerce	0.476
public health	0.443
...	...
epidemics	0.306
disease control	0.284
biotechnology & genetic engineering	0.253
developing countries	0.240
...	...
least-developed countries	0.122
environment	0.084
technical assistance	0.073
AIDS	0.027
economic development	0.020
...	...

Table 1: **Examples of the modularity: high vs. intermediate vs. low**

distributed vary across issue areas, and the networks with higher modularity exhibit more dense inner-group and more sparse outer-group connections. For those issues polarizing WTO members, the gray lines become shorter within each group and longer across different groups of countries. In Section 2 of the Appendix, we as robustness checks compute the modularity in various ways using different hyper-parameters.

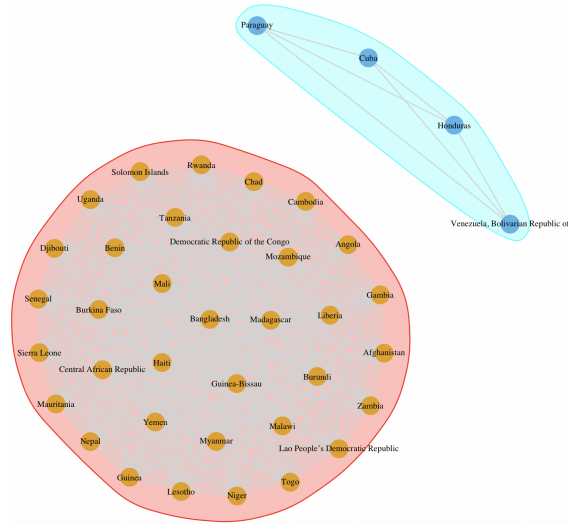
Identification of Passive and Proactive Publications

After measuring the degree of polarization for each keyword, we identify the passive and proactive publications by the Secretariat. The passive publications are largely administrative. In the TRIPS Council meetings, these often include sharing contact points of member states or updating of the status of the member states' acceptance of the protocol (Figure 6). On the other hand, proactive publications reflect more substantial contributions from the Secretariat. In the context of the TRIPS Council meetings, international bureaucrats



(a) highest (“licences”)

(b) intermediate (“infectious diseases”)



(c) lowest (“economic development”)

Figure 5: **The degrees of polarization: high vs. intermediate vs. low**

use proactive publications to gather background information, summarize issues, and compile various proposals submitted by member states (Figure 7).

We identify the Secretariat’s passive and proactive publications using the WTO document labeling system. Specifically, when WTO member states and the Secretariat follow up on documents published earlier, their resulting documents are labeled separately using

suffixes.¹⁹ These include “/Add.” for addendum, “/Corr.” for corrigendum, “/Rev.” for revision, and “/Suppl.” for supplement; all are followed by numbers indicating their sequential order. Therefore, to distinguish the initiatives set forth by the WTO Secretariat from their administrative activities, we create an indicator that equals 1 if her documents do not contain the suffixes and 0 otherwise. The total number of documents published by the Secretariat between 1995 and 2019 is 182 out of 5,913, which is the size of our final data set. Among them, sixty-nine documents (38%) do not contain suffixes and are classified as proactive activities of the Secretariat.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

IP/N/7/Rev.3/Add.2
26 January 2011

(11-0433)

**Council for Trade-Related Aspects
of Intellectual Property Rights**

NOTIFICATION OF CONTACT POINTS FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON TRIPS

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Figure 6: **An example of a passive publication by the WTO Secretariat**

By analyzing the labels attached to WTO documents, we differentiate between situations where the Secretariat chooses not to exercise its autonomy and where it lacks the autonomy to act. As a member-driven organization, the WTO limits the Secretariat’s ability to publish proactive documents on a number of issues, regardless of the Secretariat’s intentions. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to measure the Secretariat’s proactivity across all issues indiscriminately. To address this, we compare various versions of documents published by the WTO Secretariat on topics where it is permitted to contribute. We specifically exclude

¹⁹For more information about the hierarchy of WTO documents labeling system, see [the WTO official guidance](#).



WTO SECRETARIAT TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE TRIPS AREA

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

Figure 7: An example of a proactive publication by the WTO Secretariat

cases where the Secretariat's inaction is due to a lack of autonomy to accurately identify its exercise of power within the boundaries of its given authority.

Model Specification

We identify the effect of the document de-restriction policy on behaviors of the WTO Secretariat in two ways. In the first model, we partition 182 documents published by the WTO Secretariat into two sub-samples, one published before and the other published after the policy change, and compare their results. In our data set, the WTO Secretariat published eighty-five documents before the reform, and ninety-seven documents after the reform.

Next, to check whether the results remain consistent, we pool the sub-samples and use a dummy variable I_t that equals 1 before the policy change and 0 otherwise. In this model, we add year-fixed effects μ_t to control for the effects of unobservable, year-specific events and account for topics discussed intensively at a specific point in time t . We also add a battery of other observable, document-level covariates Z_{it} as control variables, where i denotes each document published by the Secretariat. These include the number of keywords each document contains and the number of TRIPS articles it refers to among others. We

add these covariates as they capture the WTO Secretariat’s writing style, which differs at the document level, such as tone and preferred references to existing rulings.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 I_t + \beta_2 X_{it} + \beta_3 Z_{it} + \beta_4 I_t X_{it} + \beta_5 I_t Z_{it} + \mu_t + \epsilon_{it}$$

The model for pooled analysis can be specified formally as above, where Y_{it} is an indicator of proactive publication by the WTO Secretariat. X_{it} measures the average degree of polarization among topics the WTO Secretariat speaks to in each document, and the parameter of our interest is β_4 . In this way, we examine how the change in the document de-restriction policy in the WTO affects the extent to which the Secretariat acts proactively on polarizing issues.

Results

International Bureaucrats’ Responses to Transparency

We find the evidence in support of the salience of international bureaucrats in Table 2. The coefficient of *polarization* is positive and statistically significant in columns 4-6, but not in columns 1-3. This indicates that the WTO Secretariat is more likely to publish a proactive report on a polarizing topic when the public can monitor the international organization under high transparency. The effect remains statistically significant after adding covariates in the regression, such as the number of issues addressed by the Secretariat at the same time. The results are also robust to year-fixed effects.

The covariate *delays in publication* suggests that proactive publication by the Secretariat bears the scrutiny of member states under transparency. When comparing the models with year-fixed effects (columns 3 and 6), delays in publication are positively associated with proactive publication by the Secretariat after the 2002 reform, and not before. Member states have exclusive rights to request an additional thirty days of delays in publication from the Secretariat reports (WT/L/452), and the *delays in publication* coefficient in column 6

	Proactive publication by the Secretariat (1=Yes)					
	Before the 2002 reform			After the 2002 reform		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
polarization	2.242	1.282	0.562	5.367***	5.329***	5.882***
	(1.485)	(1.594)	(1.564)	(1.317)	(1.409)	(1.564)
delays in publication (days)	0.008***	0.006***	0.006	0.297	0.309	0.282***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.008)	(24.257)	(24.257)	(0.046)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Observations	85	85	85	97	97	97
Log Likelihood	-44.877	-41.538	-31.128	-48.348	-46.848	-36.101

Standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2: **Sub-sample Analysis: Before vs. After the 2002 Reform**

indicates that member states under transparency are careful in approving publication of proactive reports by the Secretariat.

The findings under pooled analysis are summarized in Table 3, reaffirming the previous results using the sub-samples. It should be noted that the pooled analysis enables direct comparison between our samples before and after the reform, adding to the power of our statistical test. This is also one of the reasons why the coefficients and p-values change in our pooled analysis. Yet, the results remain statistically significant at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$ when we add year-fixed effects. The consistent estimates of other control variables, such as *delays in publication*, also support our expectation about the impact of transparency.

Content Analysis of the Bureaucrats' Responses

In the previous analysis, we classify WTO documents based on their symbols. However, identifying the WTO Secretariat's proactiveness using the document classification system alone has limitations. For instance, documents published by the Secretariat with no suffix attached to their symbols often cite previous documents published by WTO members and

Proactive publication by the Secretariat (1=Yes)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
after the reform \times polarization	2.805** (1.357)	3.458*** (1.342)	3.610** (1.670)
after the reform \times delays in publication (days)		0.567** (0.262)	0.322* (0.194)
after the reform \times number of keywords		0.122 (0.099)	0.129 (0.176)
after the reform \times number of TRIPS articles		-0.124 (0.241)	-0.214 (0.245)
after the reform \times number of products		-0.129 (0.404)	-0.528 (0.386)
after the reform	16.265*** (1.104)	-1.150** (0.528)	16.141*** (1.259)
polarization	0.719 (0.953)	1.068 (0.839)	0.459 (0.922)
delays in publication (days)	0.234*** (0.067)	0.254*** (0.058)	0.182*** (0.066)
number of keywords		0.048 (0.034)	0.082** (0.035)
number of articles		-0.013 (0.024)	-0.005 (0.033)
number of products		0.018 (0.212)	0.442* (0.226)
Year FE	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	182	182	182
Log Likelihood	-121.438	-314.496	-115.419

Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3: **Pooled Analysis: Before vs. After the 2002 Reform**

summarize their debates.²⁰ Even if there are no such in-text citations, terminology used to legitimize the WTO's presence can be driven by other structural forces, such as hierarchy among IOs, rather than transparency and accountability to the public (Dingwerth et al. 2020).

We complement the previous empirical strategy by analyzing the contents of the reports published by the Secretariat. Specifically, we test how much the documents that are clas-

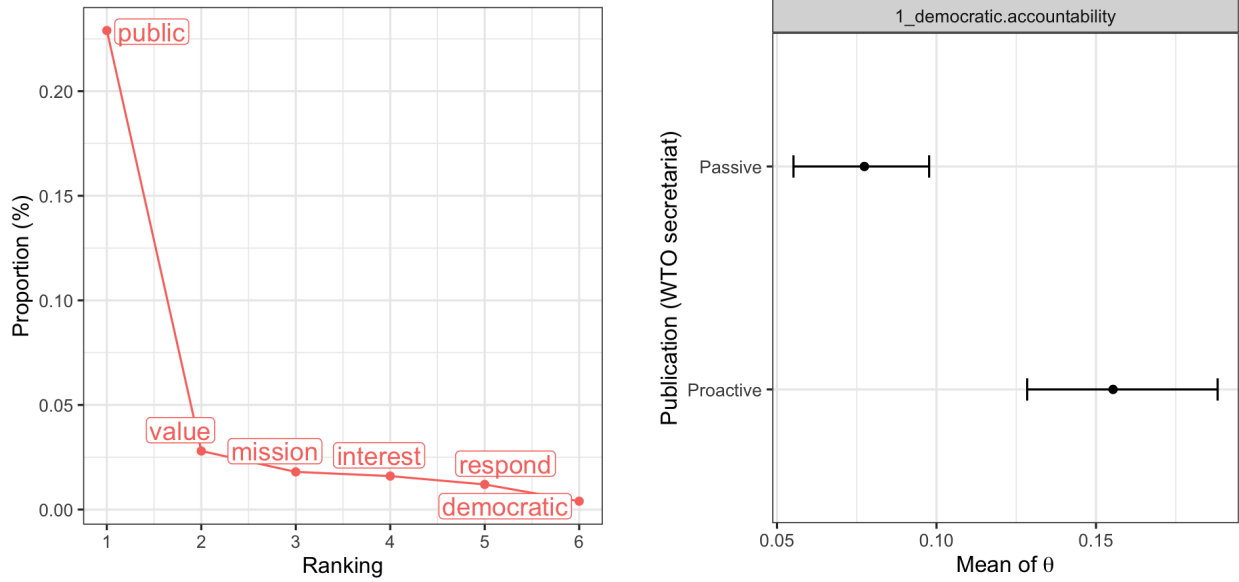
²⁰In these circumstances, the WTO Secretariat cites other documents published by WTO member states to enter prolonged discussions among the member states, rather than to avoid or summarize their debates.

sified as “proactive” by using their labels actually contain proactive words used to improve accountability to the public. We do so by applying a semi-supervised topic model, called keyword-assisted topic models (**keyATM**) (Eshima et al. 2020), to the raw text-as-data.

Unlike other topic models, **keyATM** requires researchers to specify keywords relevant to their substantive interests *before* model fitting. In this way, **keyATM** prevents a post hoc interpretation of the results. Additionally, when scholars do not have a priori expectations about other topics, **keyATM** allows its users to have topics with no keywords. By doing so, the model also leaves room for unsupervised learning and lets the data speak for itself for the remaining parts that researchers do not theorize.

We selected the keywords representing accountability to the public, such as “public” and “respond,” based on the existing IO literature (Dingwerth et al. 2020; Tørstad 2023; Schmidtke et al. 2023). Next, we calculated the marginal posterior mean of document-topic distribution, conditional on the document-level covariate we used in the main analysis. Recall that the dependent variable was 1 (“proactive”) if each publication by the WTO Secretariat did not contain any suffix in its document symbol, and 0 (“passive”) otherwise. Last, in case the Secretariat addresses other topics we are unaware of under the selected 182 documents, we add six topics with no keywords.

Figure 8 provides an additional evidence in support of the salience of international bureaucrats. The figure presents the kinds of keywords used in the Secretariat reports. The left-hand plot visualizes the frequency of each of the keywords in the corpus. The result suggests that more than 20% of documents published by the WTO Secretariat for the first time contain mission-driven language targeted at the public. The right-hand figure plots the mean of document-topic distribution conditioned on the proactive publication indicator. The plot indicates that the documents categorized as “proactive” publications using the document labeling system are more likely to contain proactive language than those classified as “passive.” The findings provide suggestive, if not compelling, evidence that the Secretariat publishes the documents in the TRIPS Council to improve accountability to the public.



(a) Keywords Prevalence: Accountability to the public

(b) The Means of Document-topic Distributions: Passive vs. Proactive

Figure 8: **Content Analysis: Keyword-assisted Topic Models** (Eshima et al. 2020)

We additionally conduct three robustness checks to validate our findings. We first evaluate the topic model fitting and check its time-trend (Appendix Section 1). We find that the topic proportion of accountability to the public increases but only after the document de-restriction rule was implemented in 2002. We also change the number of topics with no keywords and show that the results remain statistically significant. In Appendix Section 2, we use different community detection techniques in calculating the modularity. From this exercise, we confirm that calculation of modularity is robust to different types of community detection techniques. We also examine whether co-publication network is a good indicator of alignment of state preferences by excluding powerful countries from the network. We find that the results remain consistent. In Appendix Section 3, we conduct additional text-as-data analyses using structural topic models (Roberts et al. 2014). We consistently show that the Secretariat’s use of proactive words increased after the 2002 reform.

Conclusion

In this paper, we examine how transparency shapes the behavior of international bureaucrats using the WTO’s document de-restriction rule change in 2002. After the reform, the WTO was forced to disclose its internal documents within sixty days. Our analyses indicate that the WTO Secretariat, after the prompt disclosure of internal documents, issues more reports on divisive topics that generated contentious debates among member states. We also conduct a text analysis and find that, after the rule change, the Secretariat uses more words associated with accountability to the public in its reports. Together, these analyses indicate that transparency can increase the salience of international bureaucrats.

Our results speak to the adage “sunshine is the best disinfectant,” a statement that policymakers often use to advocate for transparency.²¹ We demonstrate that international bureaucrats do not necessarily stay silent under transparency. Instead of staying silent, international bureaucrats flag contentious issues that the public cares about in their reports. The analyses suggest that transparency could empower international bureaucrats to tackle divisive issues during times of member state gridlock. One caveat, however, is that the Secretariat’s representation of divisive issues could undermine other values that member states care about, such as the swift conclusion of a negotiation or in-depth agreement on the divisive issues. Future research could further delve into the potential trade-offs that the behavior of the Secretariat under transparency might bring about.

Future studies could also examine how transparency affects behavior of international bureaucrats in different IOs. The WTO provides a regular negotiation forum, but this is not the case with other IOs. Depending on the issue area, IOs collect and distribute data, monitor compliance of member states, and mediate conflicts. Depending on their missions, the role of international bureaucrats varies. It is thus important to conduct analyses on other

²¹Louis Brandeis, a former Supreme Court Justice, famously stated, “Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants” in his Harper’s Weekly article “What Publicity Can Do.” (Brandecis 1913). This statement is later used by policymakers to endorse transparency. For example, see US Senator Ben Cardin’s letter to his constituency, <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/letters/sunlight-is-the-best-disinfectant/>.

IOs to demarcate the extent to which international bureaucrats respond to transparency and its consequences on international cooperation.

Methodologically, our paper introduces a novel approach to measure the extent of polarization in an IO's agenda among member states. Typically, the IRT model is used to quantify polarization when member states express their preferences through voting. However, many IOs, such as the WTO, rely on consensus for rule-making, making it difficult to discern state preferences through voting. This consensus-based decision-making poses a challenge for researchers trying to identify member states' preferences. To address this, we utilize keywords in IO documents and assess the extent to which member states co-publish these documents. We then determine the degree of polarization for each keyword by analyzing the fragmentation of co-publication patterns. We propose that this method could be beneficial for other IOs that use consensus in decision-making, particularly when the focus is on the distribution of state preferences rather than individual preferences. Researchers can apply this approach to investigate other consensus-based IOs where member states form coalitions to set agendas.

More generally, our findings have implications for transparency in IO and its impact on accountability to the public. Accountability consists of two key elements, the ability to know what an actor is doing and the ability to make that actor do something else ([Hale 2008](#), p.74). While transparency in IOs addresses the first element, it is uncertain whether it also addresses the second. Our study offers preliminary evidence that transparency encourages IOs to give more attention to topics that might otherwise be neglected, by influencing the behavior of international bureaucrats.

References

- Abbott, Frederick M (2005). The WTO medicines decision: World pharmaceutical trade and the protection of public health. *American Journal of International Law* 99(2), 317–358.
- Bailey, Michael A, Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten (2017). Estimating dynamic state preferences from United Nations voting data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(2), 430–456.
- Bailey, Michael A and Erik Voeten (2018). A two-dimensional analysis of seventy years of United Nations voting. *Public Choice* 176, 33–55.
- Barnett, Michael, Martha Finnemore, et al. (2004). *Rules for the world: International organizations in global politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Brandecis, Louis D (December 20, 1913). What publicity can do. *Harper's Weekly*.
- Carnegie, Allison and Austin Carson (2019). The disclosure dilemma: Nuclear intelligence and international organizations. *American Journal of Political Science* 63(2), 269–285.
- Chapman, Terrence L (2012). *Securing approval: Domestic politics and multilateral authorization for war*. University of Chicago Press.
- Chorev, Nitsan (2012). Changing global norms through reactive diffusion: The case of intellectual property protection of AIDS drugs. *American Sociological Review* 77(5), 831–853.
- Clark, Richard and Lindsay R Dolan (2021). Pleasing the principal: US influence in World Bank policymaking. *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1), 36–51.
- Clinton, Joshua, Simon Jackman, and Douglas Rivers (2004). The statistical analysis of roll call data. *American Political Science Review* 98(2), 355–370.
- Dingwerth, Klaus, Henning Schmidtke, and Tobias Weise (2020). The rise of democratic legitimization: why international organizations speak the language of democracy. *European Journal of International Relations* 26(3), 714–741.
- Ege, Jörn (2020). What international bureaucrats (really) want: Administrative preferences in international organization research. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 26(4), 577–600.
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette (2021). What kills international organisations? when and why international organisations terminate. *European Journal of International Relations* 27(1), 281–310.
- Eshima, Shusei, Kosuke Imai, and Tomoya Sasaki (2020). Keyword-assisted topic models. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Fang, Songying and Randall W Stone (2012). International organizations as policy advisors. *International organization* 66(4), 537–569.

- Fischer, Sara E, Lucia Vitale, Akinyi Lisa Agutu, and Matthew M Kavanagh (2023). Intellectual property and the politics of public good in COVID-19: Framing law, institutions, and ideas during TRIPS waiver negotiations at the WTO. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 10910269.
- Gray, Julia (2018). Life, death, or zombie? The vitality of international organizations. *International Studies Quarterly* 62(1), 1–13.
- Greenhill, Brian (2020). How can international organizations shape public opinion? Analysis of a pair of survey-based experiments. *The Review of International Organizations* 15(1), 165–188.
- Grigorescu, Alexandru (2007). Transparency of intergovernmental organizations: The roles of member states, international bureaucracies and nongovernmental organizations. *International Studies Quarterly* 51(3), 625–648.
- Gronau, Jennifer and Henning Schmidtke (2016). The quest for legitimacy in world politics—international institutions’ legitimation strategies. *Review of International Studies* 42(3), 535–557.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M, Zachary C Steinert-Threlkeld, and David G Victor (2016). Predictability versus flexibility: Secrecy in international investment arbitration. *World Politics* 68(3), 413–453.
- Hale, Thomas N (2008). Transparency, accountability, and global governance. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 14(1), 73–94.
- Heinzel, Mirko (2022). International bureaucrats and organizational performance. Country-specific knowledge and sectoral knowledge in World Bank projects. *International Studies Quarterly* 66(2), sqac013.
- Hollyer, James R, B Peter Rosendorff, and James Raymond Vreeland (2019). Why do autocrats disclose? Economic transparency and inter-elite politics in the shadow of mass unrest. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(6), 1488–1516.
- Honig, Dan (2019). When reporting undermines performance: The costs of politically constrained organizational autonomy in foreign aid implementation. *International Organization* 73(1), 171–201.
- Honig, Dan, Ranjit Lall, and Bradley C Parks (2022). When does transparency improve institutional performance? Evidence from 20,000 projects in 183 countries. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Honig, Dan and Catherine Weaver (2019). A race to the top? The aid transparency index and the social power of global performance indicators. *International Organization* 73(3), 579–610.
- Johns, Leslie (2007). A servant of two masters: Communication and the selection of international bureaucrats. *International Organization* 61(2), 245–275.

- Johnson, Tana (2014). *Organizational progeny: Why governments are losing control over the proliferating structures of global governance*. Oxford, UK: Transformations In Governance.
- Keohane, Robert O (1982). The demand for international regimes. *International Organization* 36(2), 325–355.
- Keohane, Robert O (1984). *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, Robert O (2011). Global governance and legitimacy. *Review of International Political Economy* 18(1), 99–109.
- Lall, Ranjit (2023a). Making global governance accountable: civil society, states, and the politics of reform. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Lall, Ranjit (2023b). *Making international institutions work: The politics of performance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lupu, Yonatan and Vincent A Traag (2013). Trading communities, the networked structure of international relations, and the Kantian peace. *Journal of conflict resolution* 57(6), 1011–1042.
- Lupu, Yonatan and Erik Voeten (2012). Precedent in international courts: A network analysis of case citations by the European court of human rights. *British Journal of Political Science* 42(2), 413–439.
- Malis, Matt, B Peter Rosendorff, and Alastair Smith (2021). A political economy of international organizations. In *2021 International Political Economy Society Conference*. https://mattmalis.github.io/files/pdf/MSR_IDesign_7nov2022.pdf.
- Martin, Andrew D and Kevin M Quinn (2002). Dynamic ideal point estimation via Markov chain Monte Carlo for the US supreme court, 1953–1999. *Political analysis* 10(2), 134–153.
- Mesquita, Rafael, Rodrigo Martins, and Pedro Seabra (2022). Estimating ideal points from UN General Assembly sponsorship data. *International Interactions*, 1–20.
- Odell, John S (March 17-20, 2004). Mediating multilateral trade negotiations. In *Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association*, Montreal, Canada. International Studies Association.
- Park, Sojun and Lauren C Konken (2024). Exploiting treaty ambiguity: Public health exceptions in the WTO TRIPS agreement. *The Review of International Organizations*, 1–28.
- Pauwelyn, Joost (2010). The dog that barked but didn’t bite: 15 years of intellectual property disputes at the WTO. *Journal of International Dispute Settlement* 1(2), 389–429.
- Pauwelyn, Joost and Krzysztof Pelc (2022). WTO rulings and the veil of anonymity. *European Journal of International Law* 33(2), 527–564.

- Poole, Keith T and Howard Rosenthal (1985). A spatial model for legislative roll call analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 357–384.
- Renshon, Jonathan (2016). Status deficits and war. *International Organization* 70(3), 513–550.
- Roberts, Margaret E, Brandon M Stewart, Dustin Tingley, Christopher Lucas, Jetson Leder-Luis, Shana Kushner Gadarian, Bethany Albertson, and David G Rand (2014). Structural topic models for open-ended survey responses. *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4), 1064–1082.
- Schmidtke, Henning, Swantje Schirmer, Niklas Krösche, and Tobias Lenz (2023). The legitimization of international organizations: Introducing a new dataset. *International Studies Perspectives*, 1–25.
- Smythe, Elizabeth and Peter J Smith (2006). Legitimacy, transparency, and information technology: The World Trade Organization in an era of contentious trade politics. *Global Governance* 12, 31.
- Stasavage, David (2004). Open-door or closed-door? Transparency in domestic and international bargaining. *International organization* 58(4), 667–703.
- Steinberg, Richard H (2002). In the shadow of law or power? Consensus-based bargaining and outcomes in the GATT/WTO. *International Organization* 56(2), 339–374.
- Tallberg, Jonas and Michael Zürn (2019). The legitimacy and legitimation of international organizations: Introduction and framework.
- Tørstad, Vegard (2023). Can transparency strengthen the legitimacy of international institutions? Evidence from the UN Security Council. *Journal of Peace Research*, 00223433221123996.
- Urpelainen, Johannes (2012). Unilateral influence on international bureaucrats: an international delegation problem. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(4), 704–735.
- Wallace, Jeremy L (2016). Juking the stats? Authoritarian information problems in China. *British Journal of Political Science* 46(1), 11–29.