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1 Sources and Coding

1.1 The UPR Process and the Role of Information

The UPR working group meets three times per year in Geneva, reviewing 12-14 randomly-selected states per session. Once complete, an outcome report of the review is compiled, and states have 4.5 years to implement the recommendations it accepted before undergoing another review in the next cycle. Observers of the UPR note that states do, in fact, implement a significant number of the recommendations they support. One study calculated that 48% of supported recommendations were either fully or partially implemented by mid-term (2.5 years after initial review) versus just 19% of the unsupported recommendations.¹

UPR recommendations are informed by three documents: national reports submitted by the state under review; compilations from various UN agencies, special procedures, and treaty bodies; and contributions from stakeholders such as national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, human rights defenders, academic institutions, and regional organizations. However well these sources capture the reality of human rights conditions, they inevitably remain imperfect. Yet this shortcoming does not undercut the validity of our results for two reasons. First, although the information may be unsatisfactory in certain issue areas or with certain states, in the aggregate it is sufficiently connected to the concerns of the human rights regime and is unlikely to distort or corrupt reviewer’s normative positions. Second, while some wealthy countries can supplement the available information, reviewing states generally operate within the same informational parameters. Nonetheless, they make different choices about the issues to prioritize during a given review. Except at the margins, this variation is not determined by unequal resources or access to information.

1.2 Recommendation Coding

Researchers from UPR Info hand coded recommendations by sender, target, issue, action, and response. Interested readers can find detailed descriptions of these elements, as well the full data, on UPR Info’s website (https://www.upr-info.org/en).

The 54 issue categories, which we list and provide examples for below, are broad and exhibit significant within-code variation. For example, Women’s Rights encompass everything from domestic violence and female genital mutilation to workplace discrimination and abortion. Different states stress different aspects of Women’s Rights. It is important to note, however, that issue categories are not mutually exclusive, and recommendations coded as Women’s Rights may also contain labels for Torture or Economic Rights. This allows us to account for systematic variation within issue codes across different state clusters. For example, both Civil Libertarians and Developmentalists stress Women’s Rights, and yet the latter is more likely to associate Women’s Rights with Economic Rights. Because issue categories are multiple and overlapping, the vagueness and generality of any particular category is remedied by the precision afforded by their intersections.

Recommendations are also coded based on the kinds of actions demanded of the state under review. UPR Info researchers coded each recommendation according to a 5-point categorical variable based on the first verb and the overall action contained in the recommendation. Terman and Voeten (2018) recoded this measure as a 3-point ordinal measure that captures the level of severity/leniency in recommendation content. However, we decided against employing this information for both methodological and theoretical reasons. Methodologically, doing so would have added so many features (54 human rights issues x 5 action categories) that the data would have become overly sparse to discern meaningful clusters. Theoretically, incorporating this information is unnecessary for a general mapping of states’ normative positions and related clusters. Regardless of their level of generality, all recommendations reaffirm the human rights norms involved.
We found no cases of recommendations mentioning a particular norm (e.g., sexual rights) that challenge the validity of that norm (e.g., by rejecting sexuality rights altogether.)

Table A1: Issue Codes

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Asylum-seekers - refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>International humanitarian law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>International instruments</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Counter-terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Labor</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>CP rights - general</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Migrants</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Death penalty</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Minorities</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Detention conditions</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>National plan of action</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Disabilities</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Other²</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Elections</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Enforced disappearances</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Public security</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Environment</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Racial discrimination</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>ESC rights - general</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Right to education</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Extrajudicial executions</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Right to food</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Freedom of association and peaceful assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Right to health</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Freedom of movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Right to housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Freedom of opinion and expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Right to land</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Freedom of religion and belief</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Right to water</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Freedom of the press</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>General³</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>HIV - Aids</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Special procedures</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Human rights defenders</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
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<td>45.</td>
<td>Human rights education and training</td>
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<td>46.</td>
<td>Torture and other CID treatment</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td>Human rights violations by state agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
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<td>49.</td>
<td>Impunity</td>
</tr>
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<td>50.</td>
<td>Treaty bodies</td>
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<td>51.</td>
<td>Indigenous peoples</td>
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<td>52.</td>
<td>UPR process</td>
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<td>53.</td>
<td>Internally displaced persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Women's rights</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

² “Other” issues include, but are not limited to, cooperation with the international community/UNHCR, family values, the elderly, hate crimes, right to privacy, self-determination, statelessness, and youth.

³ “General” issues include recommendations that relate to states’ human rights practices and obligations at the most general level, without making references to the other codes. These include, but are not limited to, recommendations pertaining to democracy, human rights goals, (unspecified) international human rights mechanisms, and (unspecified) tolerance / intolerance.
2 Clustering Estimation

The Euclidean distance metric assumes that each dimension—i.e., the 54 human rights issues—is equivalent in kind. In reality, there is observable structure among the issues themselves. For example, Freedom of Opinion and Expression is highly correlated to Freedom of the Press at the recommendation level, and both are subcategories of Civil and Political Rights. To address this issue, we tried reducing the 54-length Reviewer vectors to a lower-dimensional space using principle components and proceeding with the analysis described in the manuscript. We achieved similar results in terms of interstate distance and cluster membership, but the results were more difficult to interpret substantively. For the sake of interpretation, we retain all 54 dimensions in the analysis.

Figure A1 contains the dendrogram visualizing the hierarchical clustering solution. States represented on the same branch are closer to each other in their normative positions than states on different branches, and the horizontal axis represents the distance or dissimilarity between two clusters. We applied a cut-point to the dendrogram to demarcate four individual groups from a hierarchically nested structure of states. We chose four groups based on ease of interpretation and popular methods for determining the optimal number of clusters in unsupervised methods. Both the “elbow” and the “gap statistic” methods suggest four clusters as the optimal value of $k$. Flat clustering methods such as k-means return almost identical results when $k = 4$, but obscures intragroup structure, i.e., how larger clusters are constituted by various sub-groups.

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Figure A1: Dendrogram
Determining the number of clusters in an unsupervised machine learning task is similar in some ways to determining the number of classes in a conceptual taxonomy; one ideally balances parsimony with coherence and useful differentiation. On this point, one might ask if Institutionalists and Egalitarians constitute their own groups, or if they would be better described as subgroups of the more fundamental Civil Libertarian or Developmentalist clusters. Due to the nature of automated clustering, there is nothing stopping us from merging these four groups into two or any other number. However, doing so would be suboptimal for several reasons.

First, although we apply reductionist labels to each group, these labels should not obscure the fact that these clusters are constituted by complex configurations of human rights norms that go beyond these simple titles. For instance, Institutionalists prioritize procedural norms related to international institutions, in addition to substantive issues such as enforced disappearances, migrants, and labor. The combination of these priorities renders the Institutionalists distinct from other groups. If we chose a different cut-point, delimiting two groups instead of four, it would not have simply yielded two expanded versions of the Civil Libertarian and Developmentalist factions. Rather, it would have resulted in two large, macro-clusters containing so much internal diversity as to be difficult to interpret and practically unhelpful.

Consider, for example, Canada and Guatemala. Canada does not reference international instruments as much as Guatemala, even though both address civil-political rights. Moreover, while Guatemala addresses socio-economic and civil-political rights in equal measure, Canada deemphasizes socio-economic rights. In other words, there are real differences between these two countries—both substantively and procedurally—that

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tell us something important about the way they view the human rights regime. Combining them in the same macro-cluster obscures these differences.

Moreover, the validity of our four clusters is supported by independent empirical work on the UPR. One review of the UPR’s first two cycles identified four main categories of recommendations that converge with our clustering solution: instruments and mechanisms (similar to our Institutionalist cluster); economic, social, and cultural (our Developmentalist cluster); vulnerable groups (our Egalitarians); and civil and political (our Civil Libertarians).6

Finally, there is little reason to believe the clusters we identify are an artifact of the particular coding scheme used by UPR Info. Rather than imposing mutually exclusive categories, UPR Info coded recommendations using a multi-label, multi-class scheme. For example, a recommendation involving OP-CAT is coded as both International Instruments and Torture, whereas one mentioning OP III of CRC would be coded as International Instruments and Children’s Rights. As a result, clusters may overlap on particular individual human rights norms, but they are distinctive in their configurations of normative positions. Based on their overall recommendation practices, states are assigned to one and only one cluster, even if they might share elements in common with other groups.

3 Low- and Non-Participating States

During its first two cycles, participation in the UPR was identical for states under review (each country was reviewed twice in the data), but uneven for states qua reviewers. In total, 174 different states offered 57,687 recommendations; however, the distribution of recommendations per sender is highly skewed. Some states, like Malta, offered only a single recommendation, whereas France offered more than 1,700. Table A2 lists low- and non-participating reviewing states. Of these, 22 countries did not serve as reviewers at all. Because these states issued no recommendations, we were unable to measure their normative position, and they were immediately dropped from the dataset.

Table A2: Low- and Non-Participating States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Participating (as Reviewers)</th>
<th>Non-Participating (as Reviewers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
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<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Monaco</td>
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<td>Brunei</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
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<td>Cambodia</td>
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<td>Central African Republic</td>
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<td>Comoros</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; Grenadines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>Antigua &amp; Barbuda</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>San Marino</td>
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<td></td>
<td>São Tomé &amp; Príncipe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Suriname</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tonga</td>
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<td>Tuvalu</td>
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The remaining countries issued fewer than 100 recommendations. Low- and non-participating states tend to be small island nations, ridden by conflict, and/or very poor. They likely lack the resources to send delegations to Geneva every session. As a result,
their recommendation practices—if any—are sporadic and skewed by idiosyncratic, exigent circumstances. Together, these states accounted for merely 2.6% of the total recommendations in the first two cycles.

In our clustering estimation, it was important to normalize Reviewer data in order to capture substantive differences in normative content, not merely quantitative differences in participation rates. If they were included, low-participating reviewers would be considered in equal weight as high-participators such as France. We are confident that UPR recommendations reflect a useful signal of states’ normative positions, but only if we have enough observations to take a reliable measurement. When such observations are infrequent, the signal is too noisy and imprecise, and could distort the results. Nevertheless, the general picture remains largely unchanged once we include low-participating states. Figure A2 replicates the Principal Component Analysis reported in the manuscript while including low-participating states, showing comparable dimensions of fragmentation. Table A3 reports group assignments of low-participating states fitted to the main clustering solution.

Figure A2: Principal Component Analysis with Low-Participating States
Table A3: Cluster Assignments for Low-Participating States

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<td>Afghanistan</td>
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## 4 Regional Classifications

### Table A4: Regional Classifications

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<tr>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Asia</th>
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<th>Latin America</th>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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|                |                 | Serbia                           |              | United Kingdom |              |
|                |                 |                                 |              | United States  |              |
## 5 Issue Rates Across Groups

Table A5: Recommendation Rates Per Issue for Four Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seekers and Refugees</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
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<td>Civil Political Rights</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
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<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Corruption</td>
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<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.29</td>
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<td>Counter-terrorism</td>
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<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
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<td>Detention</td>
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<td>5.83</td>
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<td>Development</td>
<td>0.17</td>
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</tr>
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Quantities represent proportion of a group’s total recommendations devoted to a particular category, in percentage points. Note that columns will not sum to 100 because issues are not mutually exclusive.

Table A6: Distribution of Recommendations Across Groups for Each Issue
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>International Instruments</th>
<th>Justice</th>
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<td>International Instruments</td>
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<td>Justice</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Labor</td>
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<td>21.91</td>
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<td>12.79</td>
<td>34.55</td>
<td>23.09</td>
</tr>
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<td>National Plan of Action</td>
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<td>47.06</td>
<td>16.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>20.66</td>
<td>29.62</td>
<td>21.95</td>
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<td>Right to Education</td>
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<td>27.89</td>
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<td>13.39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td>
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<td>26.7</td>
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<td>Special Procedures</td>
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<td>40.85</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Treaty Bodies</td>
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<td>Women's Rights</td>
<td>40.48</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>32.86</td>
<td>16.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantities represent proportion of total recommendations in a given category issued by each of the four groups, in percentage points. Rows sum to 100.
6  Change and Stability over Time

6.1  Changes in Issue Prevalence

The total number of UPR recommendations per session has increased rapidly over time, possibly because more states are participating as reviewers. One may also wonder whether the issues being discussed also change, perhaps due to contemporary challenges faced by the international community or specific regions. For example, conflicts in the Middle East catalyzed a refugee crisis in Europe that peaked in 2015, when 1.3 million migrants from Syria and elsewhere requested asylum in Europe. Given the facts on the ground, how did issues such as Migrants change in prevalence in the UPR, and how do such shifts affect our analysis of normative fragmentation?

Figure A3: Recommendations about Migrants over Time

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7 Gujadhur and Limon.
9 We thank an anonymous reader for raising this point.
In order to examine temporal trends—whether a given issue has grown more or less popular over time—we must normalize for the total quantity of recommendations per session. Figure A3 reports the percentage of recommendations dedicated to Migrants over time. Recall that the UPR Working Group reviews 12-14 states per session, and the order of reviews is determined by lot. As a result, the prevalence of any given topic can change drastically from session to session, depending on which states are up for review. Looking to the general trend, however, we see at best a marginal increase in the focus on migration across the first two cycles of the UPR. We conducted a similar procedure for each of the 54 thematic issues, calculating the change in recommendation share across the two cycles; none had shifted more than two percentage points. In sum, while the quantity of recommendations has grown markedly, the overall thematic landscape did not transform drastically during the UPR’s first nine years.
6.2 Group Characteristics by Cycle

Tables A7 and A8 replicate Table 5 of the main manuscript, identifying the distinctive issues for each group per cycle.

Table A7: Distinctive Issues for Cycle 1

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Enforced Disappearances</td>
<td>Right to Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrajudicial Executions</td>
<td>Right to Health</td>
<td>Migrants</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom of Opinion and Expression</td>
<td>Rights to Education</td>
<td>International Instruments</td>
<td>HIV / AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of the Press</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
<td>Right to Health</td>
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<td>Human Rights Violations by State Agents</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Civil Political Rights</td>
<td>Environment</td>
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<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Right to Housing</td>
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Table A8: Distinctive Issues for Cycle 2

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<td>Treaty bodies</td>
<td>Environment</td>
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<td>Right to Housing</td>
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<td>Rights to Education</td>
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<td>Extrajudicial Executions</td>
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<td>Human Rights Violations by State Agents</td>
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