

The background of the cover is a composite image. The top half shows a dense, green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. The bottom half shows a large, empty conference hall with rows of desks and chairs, each equipped with a microphone, suggesting a formal diplomatic or academic setting.

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on the move

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**Bridging Divides:
Diplomatic Perspectives on
Migration Governance**

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Abstract

A growing literature examines the politicization of migration cooperation, with particular emphasis on domestic political dynamics and interstate relations. However, we know little about the mid-range diplomats that participate in international migration institutions day-to-day, and how they perceive cooperation in this challenging context. In this working paper we present the findings from a novel survey conducted with diplomats who represent their governments in international cooperation forums in migration governance. We find that there is much overlap in the perspectives of diplomats, and in several instances also across the Global North and South divide. This is surprising given the different positions Global North and South states traditionally hold in the global migration regime. The paper thus lends some support to theoretical perspectives that highlight the potential for international organizations to be venues for socialization that foster common perspectives, even in a highly conflictual field. At the same time, the paper demonstrates how Global North and South states differ on substantive issues of refugee governance.

Keywords

Migration, Diplomacy, International Organizations, Politicization, Refugees

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1 Introduction

In a time when political leaders increasingly turn their back on international institutions in the field of migration and refugee governance, little is known about how the mid-range diplomats who represent their countries in these institutions make sense of this cooperation. Of particular interest is thereby the question of whether these practitioners replicate divides that we usually observe across the Global North and Global South countries when it comes to international migration or whether their views rather converge.

This paper presents the findings from a novel survey conducted with diplomats who, on behalf of their governments, participate in international cooperation forums in migration governance. These forums include classic international organizations (IOs) such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) but also more recent and less formal intergovernmental venues such as the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) and regional consultative processes. Through the survey, we collected information about how these practitioners perceive the existing migration governance structures. We asked about the importance of specific international and regional organizations, the responsiveness of these organizations to different types of crises, the fairness of responsibility-sharing across policies (resettlement, donations), and what the main challenges in migration governance are.

Our leading research question is: how do mid-range diplomats representing their governments in international migration institutions perceive the work of these institutions, and how do the views from Global North and Global South diplomats vary when it comes to global governance of migration?

Analytically, we compare how representatives from states of the so-called “Global North and Global South” view global migration governance. Although the literature highlights central differences between these groups of states in terms of their roles and their interests when it comes to global migration, so far (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019; Chimni 1998), these differences have not been explored at the level of diplomatic stakeholders in a systematic comparative way. Moreover, the international relations literature on international organizations suggests that bureaucratic elites that represent states in international forums adopt similar views as a result of continuous interaction and exchange of information (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Checkel 2007). When it comes to the field of migration in particular, the notion of such elite “socialization”, or at least the impact of it in terms of shifting policy preferences of states, has been called into question. One can therefore argue that, as a hotly politicized issue where domestic politics plays a crucial role, international migration diplomacy is a less likely case for elites’ preferences to converge.

The paper is structured as follow. First, we review existing research from the literature on migration governance and on diplomacy and derive expectations on the attitudes of Global North and Global South diplomats. Thereafter, we introduce the survey material, followed by an analysis of the findings along three main themes: level of governance, responsiveness to crises, and responsibility-sharing between states. Our results show that, overall, there is much overlap in the perceptions between Global South and Global North states’ representatives regarding international institutions and multilateral cooperation. This is especially surprising regarding some of the questions, such as

the perception of the fairness of responsibility-sharing, given that we know that there are vast differences between Global North and South contributions to this issue (Achiume 2022, Linos & Chachko 2022). The questions where Global North and South diplomats differ most are the substantive ones: the institutional qualities expected from international organizations and what constitute the most significant challenges in international migration governance. In sum, the findings suggest that, underneath a shared support for the platforms on which they meet, disagreement lies less in the form than in the content of international migration governance.

2 Diplomats as state representatives or institutional stakeholders: contrasting expectations on international migration cooperation

Diplomats participating on behalf of their government in international institutions have a dual role. On the one hand, they represent state interests and as such their contribution to international governance is tied to the official position of their national government. On the other hand, these diplomats are themselves stakeholders of the international institutions in which they interact, and thus subject to institutional dynamics that can – especially over a longer period of time – also imply the diffusion of ideas and values that move diplomats closer to the position of their peers and, at least partially, transgress statist divisions. The literature on international migration relations and international organizations substantiates these contrasting views, posing an intriguing puzzle for examining diplomats' attitudes towards the international institutions they participate in.

2.1 Migration diplomacy as a conflictual field

International migration is not a stronghold of international cooperation (Betts 2011; Lahav and Lavenex 2012), and International Relations and International Law scholarship have consistently emphasized the deep antagonisms opposing states identifying with varying roles (and thus interests) in the migration system. States even leverage these positions and coercively engineer migration to inflict costs on other states (Greenhill 2010). These differences are usually summarized along the Global North/Global South divide. Migration-sending and transit states are commonly positioned in the Global South, and most Global North states are commonly positioned as migration-receiving states (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019; Chimni 1998; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020; Natter 2023). This is not to say that Global South states cannot be migration-receiving states; in fact, the bulk of international migration takes place between countries of the Global South (IOM 2024, 23).

The literature highlights two main dimensions that separate Global North and South states. The first one relates to structural inequality in global governance more generally as well as in the specific case of migration. Adler-Nissen (2021) refers to multilateral organizations set up by Western states after the Second World War, including several of the main migration governance organizations (e.g., IOM), as a “Western states club” that undermines and alienates other states. Indeed, Western states have to a large degree shaped the structures and defined the norms of global cooperation on migration, not least via their power over the funding of these organizations (Chimni 1998; Lavenex and Vaagland 2025; Chetail 2019). Meanwhile, the category “Global South” encompasses the largest refugee-hosting states. These states, although fundamental to the global regimes, have traditionally had less influence over global migration governance structures (Chimni 1998; Davies 2007).

The second dimension separating Global North and South states are their positions in the global migration system itself. The migration diplomacy literature argues that “the interests and power of state actors are affected by their position in migration systems according to whether they are migration-sending, migration-receiving, or transit states” (Adamson and Tsourapas 2016:115). Most migration takes place within regions (South-South and North-North). However, and despite efforts to highlight that all states are countries of origin, transit, and destination (Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration 2018, para. 10), the Global North states are generally framed in a position of migrant receivers *vis-à-vis* their Global South counterparts. Although relying strongly on immigration for their labour markets, Global North states, including the United States of America and European Union (EU) member states, have increasingly invested in restrictive policies and practices, geared at controlling and limiting migration flows, especially from the Global South. The “global mobility divide” (Mau et al. 2015) expresses the fact that, while citizens of Northern countries have benefitted from far-reaching visa liberalization, citizens from Global South countries have faced increasing visa restrictions (Czaika et al. 2018). Global North countries have also moved to “controlling migration through international cooperation” (Pijnenburg et al. 2018), not only among themselves, but also via the mobilization of transit and sending countries in the containment and return of migration flows (Fitzgerald 2019; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Hathaway 2015).

Conversely, existing studies highlight how countries of origin of migrants have sought to influence international migration governance. Global South countries have played a key role in the codification of migrants’ rights in the United Nations (UN) Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, while no Global North country has hitherto acceded to this key human rights treaty (Pécoud 2017). An increasing number of Global South countries have developed dedicated policies promoting emigration opportunities for their citizens, also in a move to reap remittances (Lee 2017; Desmond 2025). More recently, and partly as a result of Global North outreach, scholars have highlighted how states from Global South such as Morocco, Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan have engaged in “reversed conditionality” (Cassarino 2025; Chetail 2026) and leveraged their position as refugee hosts and migrant transit states, *vis-à-vis* Global North states, to receive monetary transfers and political gains (Tsouarpas 2019; Vaagland 2023).

Given the differences between Global North and Global South states when it comes to structural inequality in global governance, we expect them to differ when it comes to the definition of the underlying problem and substantive responses, that is, the institutional qualities of IOs (analysis part I), and *responsiveness to crises* (analysis part II), including: if there is there a ‘sense of crises’ in migration governance today; and what they consider the most significant challenges in global migration governance. Given their different positions in the global migration systems, we expect them to also differ when it comes to preferences for various *responsibility-sharing* efforts (analysis part III), such as funding projects, offering asylum, offering resettlement, or fighting root causes of migration.

2.2 International institutions as socializing venues

While migration governance and politics literature highlight the differences between Global North and South states, research on cooperation in international institutions invokes the possibility of convergence between actors. Early functionalist approaches to international organizations suggested that the experience of working for such organizations could produce a “transfer away from identification with national units and toward the adoption of an internationalist outlook” (Wolf, 1973: 354). Research on the socializing effects of international institutions has been taken up under the constructivist paradigm in International Relations from the mid-1990s onward. Socialization is thereby defined as a process “inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community” (Checkel 2007:5). Accordingly, state representatives sharing institutional roles, such as the diplomats included in our survey, and who engage in continuous interaction in international institutions, may develop common understandings and hence adopt similar perspectives (e.g., Wendt 1994; Checkel 2007; Bearce and Bondanella 2007).

The process of socialization implies that actors shift from a “logic of consequences” to a “logic of appropriateness”. A logic of consequences explains how Global North and South states have different views on global migration governance, given their different points of departure. A logic of appropriateness, however, explains how Global North and South states, through continued interactions within institutional venues, may adopt similar stances on several issues, as they adopt new norms and are provided with information about causal relationships and about other decision-makers’ preferences. Empirical studies of socialization within international institutions have tended to focus on the staff employed by international organizations, such as NATO (Gheciu 2005) or the EU, a strongly integrated supranational organization (Beyers 2005; Hooghe 2005; Lewis 2005; Murdoch et al. 2019). A slightly different perspective is taken by Chelotti et al. (2022) in an analysis of states’ positions and preferences expressed in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). As in our case, their analysis focuses on state representatives in an international organization (the UNGA), and not on the staff of an international organization. They measure socialization as the convergence between the positions of the members of an international organization – in this case, again, the EU – in a multilateral organization – the UNGA. Their analysis of UNGA debates shows that indeed EU member state representatives who cooperate with a high degree of institutionalization in the EU adopt similar positions and preferences when their actions in the UNGA are examined.

From this perspective, we could expect that diplomats that represent their governments in global migration policy forums adopt rather similar views, bridging the Global North/South divide. Alternatively, we could also imagine that diplomats from a certain region or community that cooperates more often, such as through regional organizations or consultations, would adopt a similar problem-understanding, distinct from that of other regions.

In line with this constructivist literature, we expect that, despite the inequalities in the current migration governance system and the subsequent differing state interests, representatives from the Global North and South will reflect their shared experiences as diplomats engaged in global migration governance. We believe this socialization is more likely to foster common perspectives on the role of different international organizations and the importance of different levels and forms of governance, including national, regional, and international levels, as well as formal versus informal venues. These matters reflect experiences that emerge from collectively working on

migration governance in multilateral contexts, while *substantive questions* and *solidarity-sharing*, arguably to a larger degree have to balance migration governance needs with nation state interests.

3 Empirical part

3.1 Background

This paper presents the results of a survey we conducted with diplomats, asking about their experience and preferences in migration governance when it comes to *governance structures*, *responsiveness to crises*, and *responsibility sharing efforts*. The survey consisted of 21 questions in total, combining sliding scale questions (from “do not agree” to “totally agree”) and free text fields where respondents could write their own answers. The survey targeted migration experts, meaning the person sent by the state to cover migration-related questions in the UN and other international forums in Geneva. These experts are typically based at the states’ permanent mission to the UN in Geneva, or at the state’s embassy to Switzerland in Bern. From 3 October 2024 to 25 March 2025, the survey was emailed out to representatives of 186 states, with 304 email addresses for state missions to the UN in Geneva and state embassies in Bern¹. After 3 rounds of email reminders and one round of telephone reminders, respondents representing 34 countries completed the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of 18 percent of all countries. The countries cover all five UN-defined regions of the world: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and others (UN 2025). For anonymity purposes, we only reveal the region involved, and not the specific countries included in the survey. The survey was available in both French and English, and the respondents could decide which version to answer.

The 34 respondents represent twenty-four ‘Global South’ and ten ‘Global North’ states: eleven African, four Asia-Pacific, two Eastern European, eight Latin American and Caribbean, and nine Western European states. Our classification as “Global North” or “Global South” state thereby follows the two most widely used international classifications by the World Bank and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)². Accordingly, only states that are classified “High Income” by the World Bank and “Developed state” by the UNCTAD are counted as Global North. Other countries are counted as Global South.

The respondents are people who, on behalf of their government, represent the country before international organizations dealing with migration in Geneva. Some of the respondents have held their current position for more than three years (27 percent), some for 1-3 years (41 percent), and some for less than one year (32 percent). The vast majority of respondents have worked in government in previous positions (91 percent). With few exceptions, they all reported that they attended meetings and events in relevant global and UN forums for migration governance (for example, 88 percent attended meetings in the IOM), suggesting that we have reached the relevant individuals working at the global level of migration governance. Had the survey targeted diplomats in cities that house the most important regional organizations, such as Brussels with the EU, it is possible that the respondents’ reflections would be different, especially regarding the questions on

¹ The technical platform for the survey and the dissemination of the survey to permanent missions was conducted by the survey company DemoSCOPE.

² See, respectively: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/378834-how-does-the-world-bank-classify-countries> for the World Bank; <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications.html> for UNCTAD.

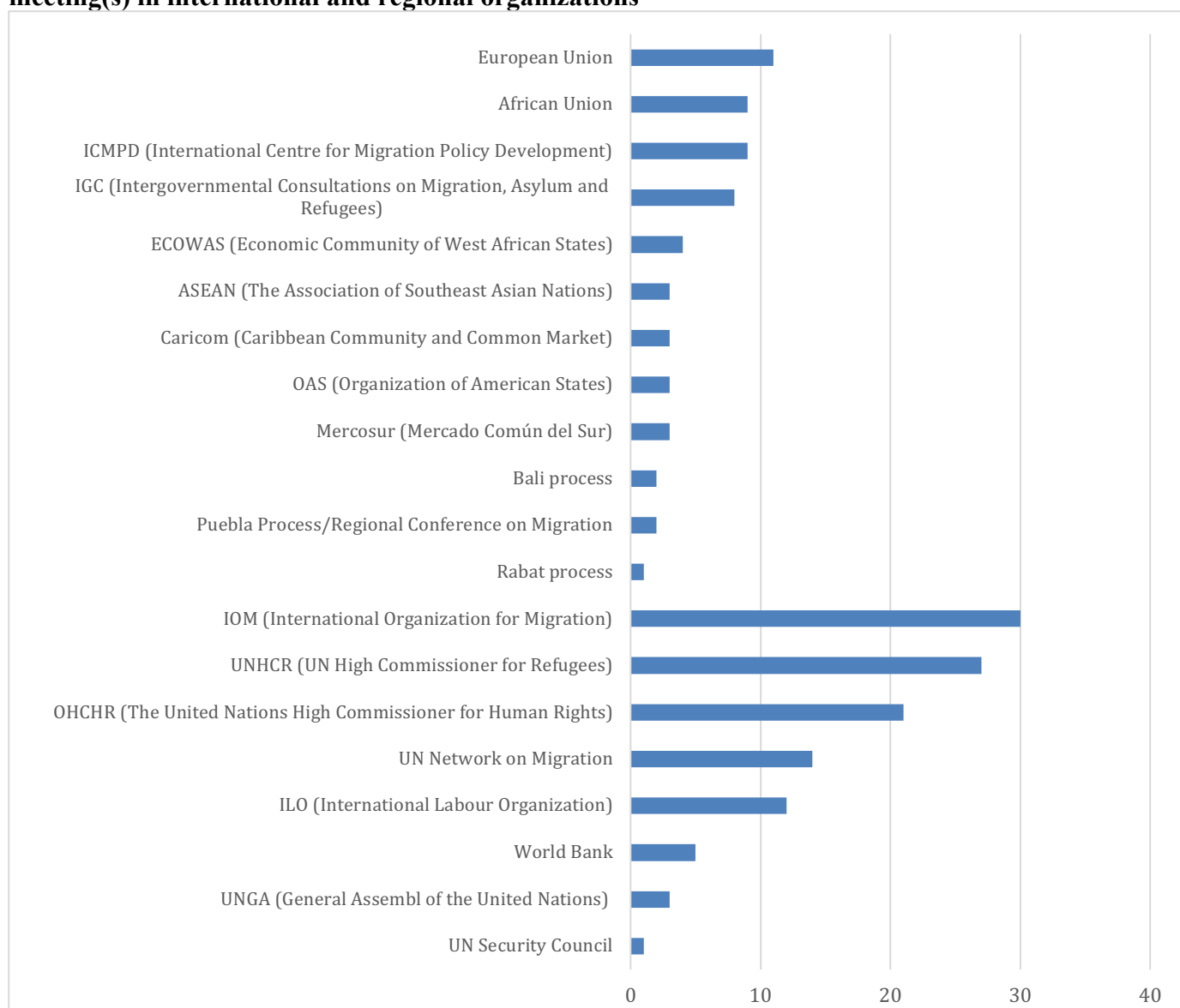
governance structures. Diplomats working with the multilateral institutions in Geneva have different experiences which may influence their positions on multilateral solutions and institutions. The questionnaire itself was drafted in a collaborative effort by the authors, drawing inspiration from the elite survey constructed by Scholte et al. (2021).

3.2 Analysis part I – Governance structures

3.2.1 Relevant institutions

Most of our respondents participate in global migration forums for meetings and events, including IOM, UNHCR, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (see Figure 1). Less than half of respondents reported that they had attended meetings in the UN Network on Migration, the International Labour Organization (ILO), or the World Bank (only five respondents). Regarding the regional organizations, we see that many representatives have attended meetings in the EU (eleven), African Union (9), International Centre on Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (9), and Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Migration and Refugees (IGC) (8).

Figure 1. Attendance in organizations (N=34), how many respondents have reported attending meeting(s) in international and regional organizations



Several respondents added in free text fields that they also attended other relevant forums (see table 1). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was mentioned by three respondents, as was Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), which was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NCR) in 1998 and offers data and analysis on internal displacement (IDMC 2026). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was mentioned by two respondents, as was Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). As for regional forums, two respondents reported attending meetings in embassies. The Budapest Process, which is a regional dialogue focused on the eastern neighbourhood of the EU, and the Cartagena Process, which is a Latin American and Caribbean initiative, were both mentioned.

Table 1: free text field of international and regional organizations where they have attended meetings

International	Regional
Special Adviser on internally displaced people (IDPs) and Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).	Budapest Process
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Cartagena Process
Human Rights Council (HRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Embassy in Brazil
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Embassy
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)	I don't cover those but my colleagues in capital and in Washington DC and cities where those mechanisms are.
Special Adviser on IDPs and Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).	Southern African Development Community (SADC)
International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summit, Global Diaspora Summit (GDM), International Organization for Migration (IOM) statutory meetings	Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

We asked respondents to report how much confidence they had in the different international and regional organizations' ability to foster cooperation between states on migration-related issues (see Figure 2). Their answers are presented below as the mean value on the scale 1= No confidence, and 4= a great deal of confidence. We see that, on average, Global North states' representatives rank the listed international organizations higher than Global South states' representatives do. However, upon further inspection, we see more variation between Global South states' representatives (standard deviation varies between 0,5 and 1,1) than between representatives from states in the Global North (between 0,4 and 0,8).

When respondents were asked to estimate the influence of international organizations in migration governance issues and to rank the top three most influential ones in order, we see that the IOM stands out, with overall 88 percent of respondents ranking it among the top three, and that there is little difference between the Global North and Global South states' representatives.

Regarding the regional organizations, again we see that Global North states' representatives have expressed more confidence in them than Global South states' representatives (see Figure 2). Interestingly, we see that, for the most part, regional organizations typically associated with Global North and with large Global North membership are ranked higher by Global North states' representatives: EU, ICMPD, IGC. Similarly, the African Union, with exclusively Global South membership, is ranked higher by Global South states' representatives than by Global North states'

representatives. There are, however, exceptions, like the Bali Process, the Puebla Process and the Rabat Process, which were all ranked higher by Global North states' representatives. These three all have northern hegemons in the lead: Australia for the Bali Process, the United States for the Puebla Process, and the EU for the Rabat Process.

When respondents were asked to estimate the influence of regional organizations and to rank the top three most influential in order, we see in Figure 4 that state representatives from both groups rank EU highest (see figures 3 and 4). Moreover, see in Appendix (tables 5 and 6) that the EU is ranked as most influential, first place, by 80 percent of Global North state's representatives, and by 42 percent of Global South states' representatives. Overall, and in line with our expectations, we see that there are some differences between the groups, and that these generally reflect structural inequalities in global governance.

Figure 2. Average confidence in organizations between 1 (=not confident at all) to 4 (=a great deal of confidence), Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=24)

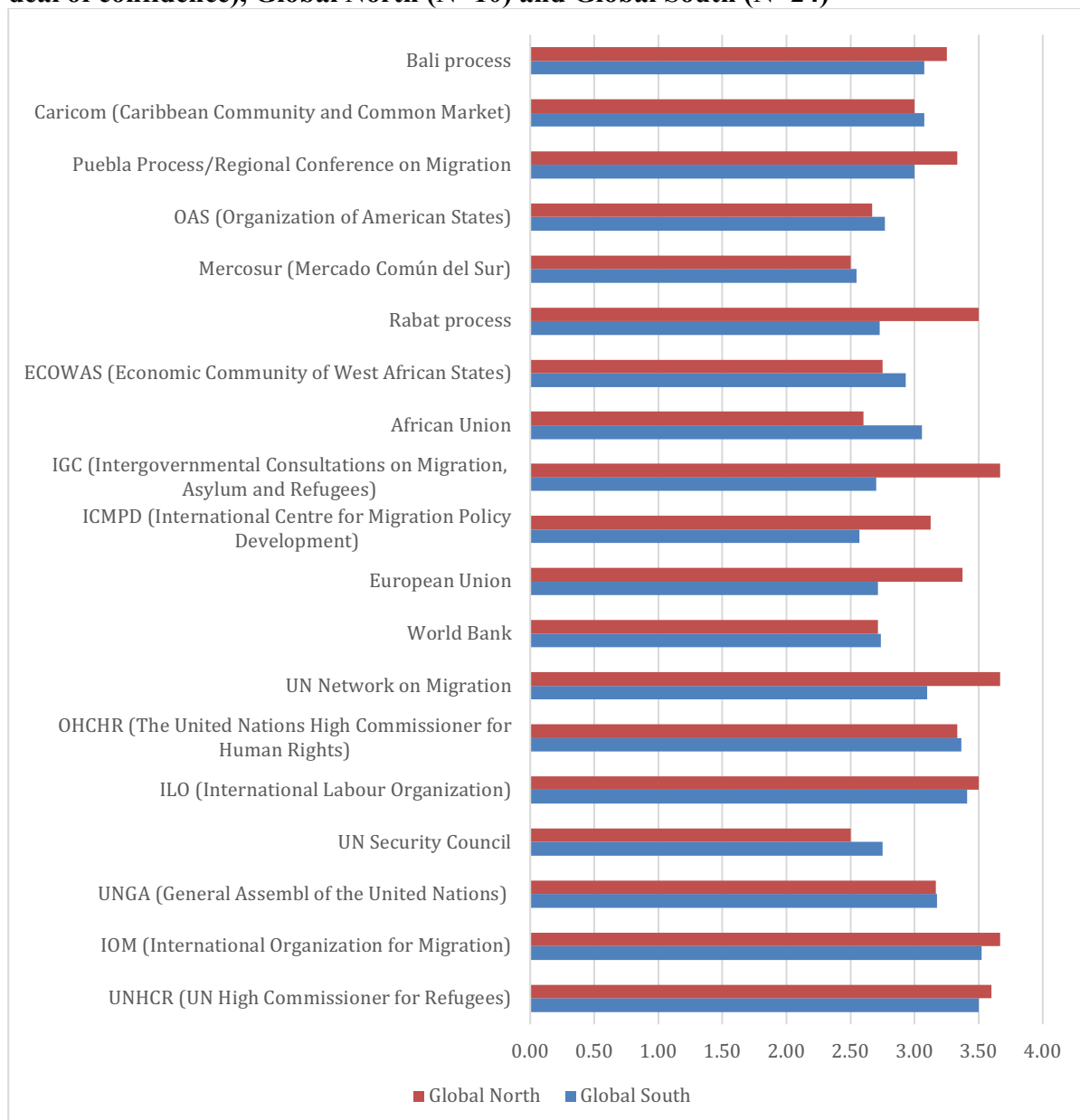


Figure 3. How often (in percentage) international organizations are ranked among the most influential, Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=24)

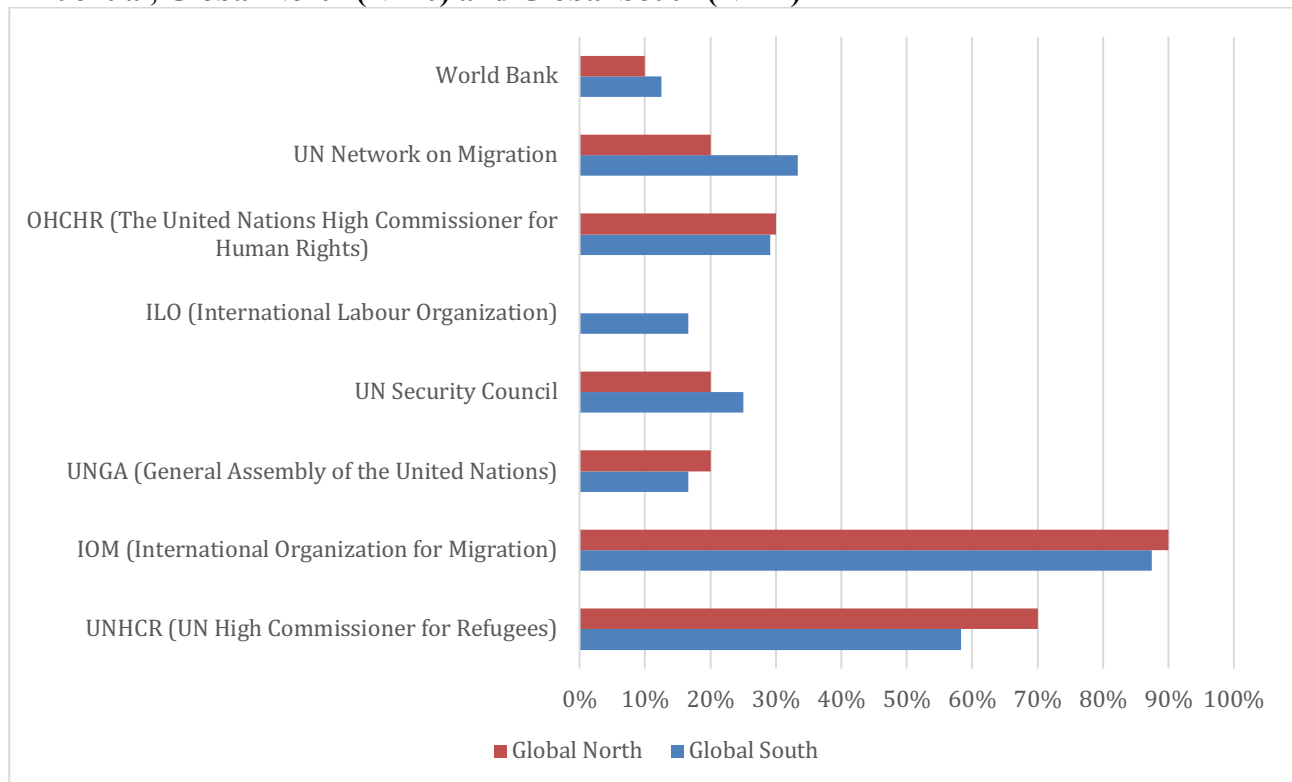
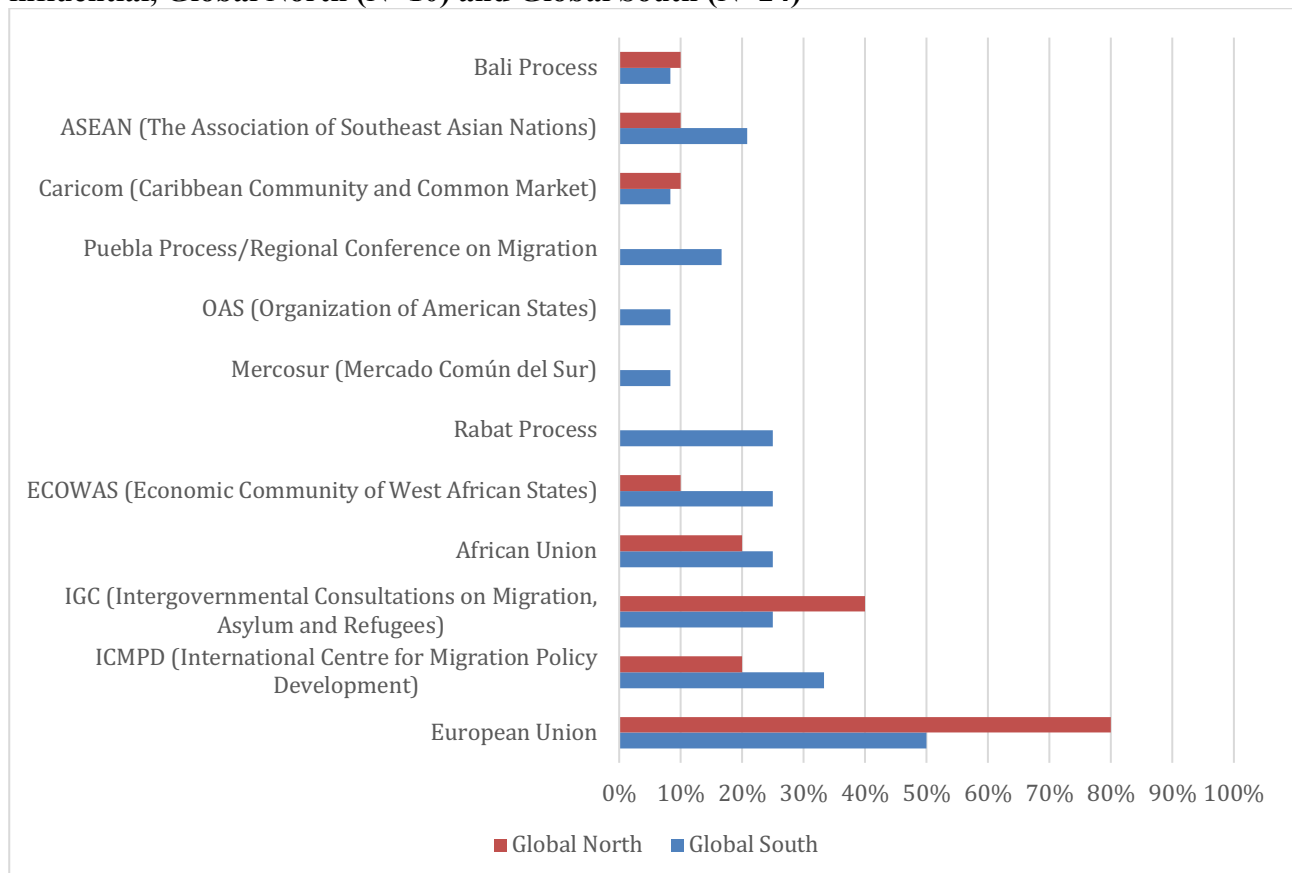


Figure 4. How often (in percentage) regional organizations are ranked among the most influential, Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=24)



3.2.2 Institutional qualities

We asked which of four institutional qualities respondents would expect from international organizations in the field of migration in order to have confidence in them and asked them to rank the most and second most important institutional quality (see Figure 5). We found that Global South states' representatives view a "collaborative approach with room for exchange, dialogue and cooperation" as an important institutional quality in international forums. Moreover, that they, more so than their Global North partners, view "equal access and say for all its members" as a central institutional quality. Global North states' representatives are more concerned with decisions being taken "based on expertise".

Figure 5. How often (in percentage) institutional qualities were ranked as most important or second most important, Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=23)

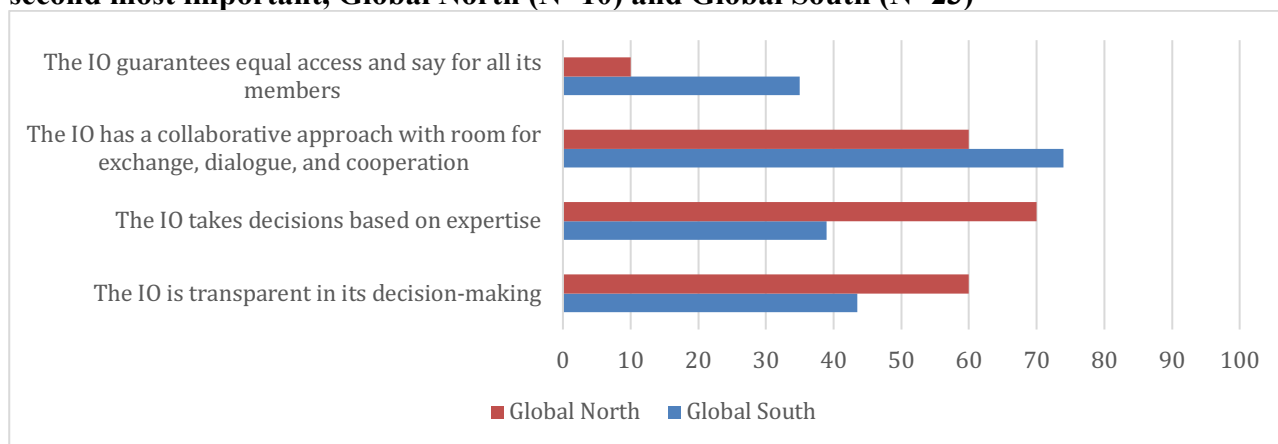


Table 2 further demonstrates the order of the ranking of different institutional qualities and reveals that the quality most often ranked first among Global South was "collaborative approach", and the one most often ranked first among Global North states' representatives was "decisions taken based on expertise", with 40 percent (against 17 percent of the Global South). When it comes to what institutional qualities respondents find most important, we see that, in line with our expectations, Global North and Global South have different preferences that correspond to structural inequalities in the migration governance regime. Among Global North states' representatives, from states with more monetary power and normative influence, none ranked "equal access and say for all its members" first, while twenty percent of representatives of states from the Global South did (Table 2).

Table 2. Ranking order of institutional qualities, Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=23)

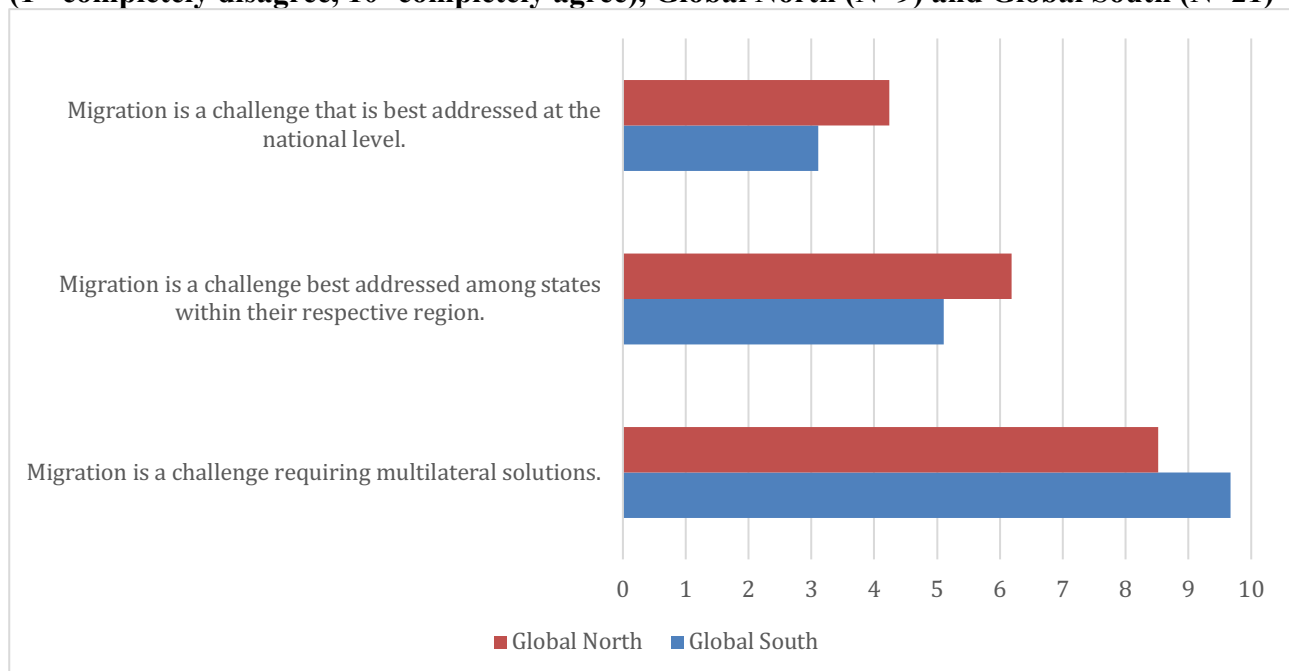
The international organization...	Global South		Global North	
	Ranked first	Ranked second	Ranked first	Ranked second
is transparent in its decision-making	3%	41%	50%	10%
takes decisions based on expertise	17%	23%	40%	30%
has a collaborative approach with room for exchange, dialogue, and cooperation	35%	23%	10%	50%
guarantees equal access and say for all its members	20%	14%	0%	10%

3.2.3 Levels of governance

Migration governance, traditionally viewed as a core aspect of state sovereignty, can be addressed at different international levels. States cooperate in multilateral settings, such as in the Geneva-based IOs where the respondents of the survey often appear, and in various regional organizations³. The respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree) how much they agreed with the following statements: *Migration is a challenge requiring multilateral solution*; *Migration is a challenge best addressed among nation-states within their respective region*; and *Migration is a challenge that is best addressed at the national level* (see Figure 6).

We found that most respondents expressed the strongest support for multilateral cooperation on migration, with the Global South states' representatives supporting multilateralism most (with an average rating of almost 10 of 10). On a scale from 1-10, representatives on average gave regional solutions between five and six, and national solutions received an even lower score of between three and four. Representatives across states from the Global North and Global South have similar preferences when it comes to governance levels, with strong support for multilateral solutions. This is perhaps not so surprising, given that our respondents are based in Geneva and often appear in these multilateral contexts. It is possible that representatives that participate more so in regional or bilateral negotiations would have other preferences.

Figure 6. Which level should migration be governed, average level of agreement with statements (1= completely disagree, 10=completely agree), Global North (N=9) and Global South (N=21)



3.2.4 Role of regional consultative processes

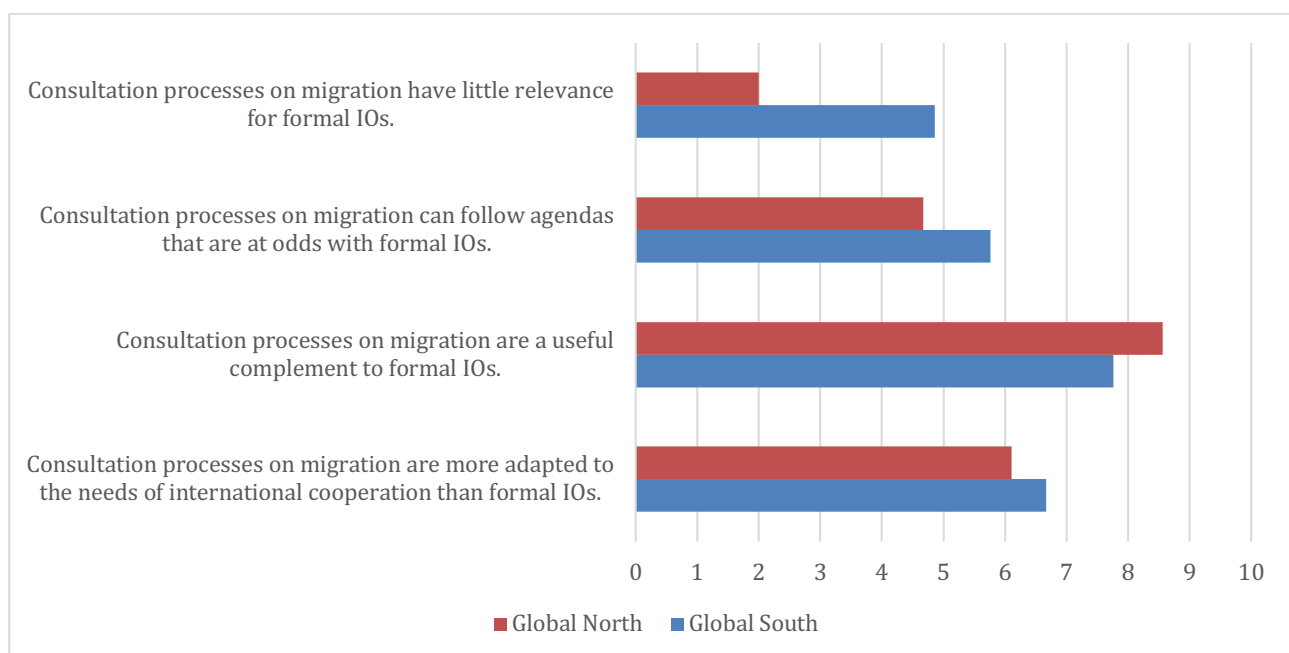
Over the last decades, several intergovernmental processes have come to supplement international organizations in migration governance. Some processes are regional (like the IGC, ICMPD, the Puebla Process, the Bali Process, and the Rabat Process), and some are global (like the GFMD and the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees). We asked respondents on a scale from 1

³ States also cooperate on migration bilaterally through direct negotiations and Memorandums of Understanding. However, this was not a focus of this survey, which targeted diplomats based in Geneva who participate in multilateral forums.

(completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree) to indicate how much they agreed with the following statements about consultative processes: they are *more adapted to the needs of international cooperation than formal IOs*; they are *a useful complement to formal IOs*; they can *follow agendas that are at odds with formal IOs*; and they have *little relevance for formal IOs*.

The results in Figure 7 show that respondents view consultative processes mostly positively. They are seen mostly as “complementary” to formal international organizations, and less so viewed as “following agendas at odds” with formal organizations. Global South and Global North states’ representatives have relatively similar views on the role of consultative processes. The groups deviate somewhat, though, as Global North states’ representatives agree to a very little degree with the statement “Consultation processes have little relevance for formal International Organizations”, whereas representatives of Global South states agree somewhat more with this statement. This data suggests that Global North states’ representatives view consultative processes somewhat more positively than Global South states, which reflects also the leading role played by Global North states in these processes (Lavenex 2019; Chetail 2019, 304). However, apart from this difference in the most negative assessment option, respondents have, contrary to our expectation, quite similar views on consultative processes.

Figure 7. Role of consultative processes, average level of agreement with statements (1= completely disagree, 10=completely agree), Global North (N=9) and Global South (N=21)



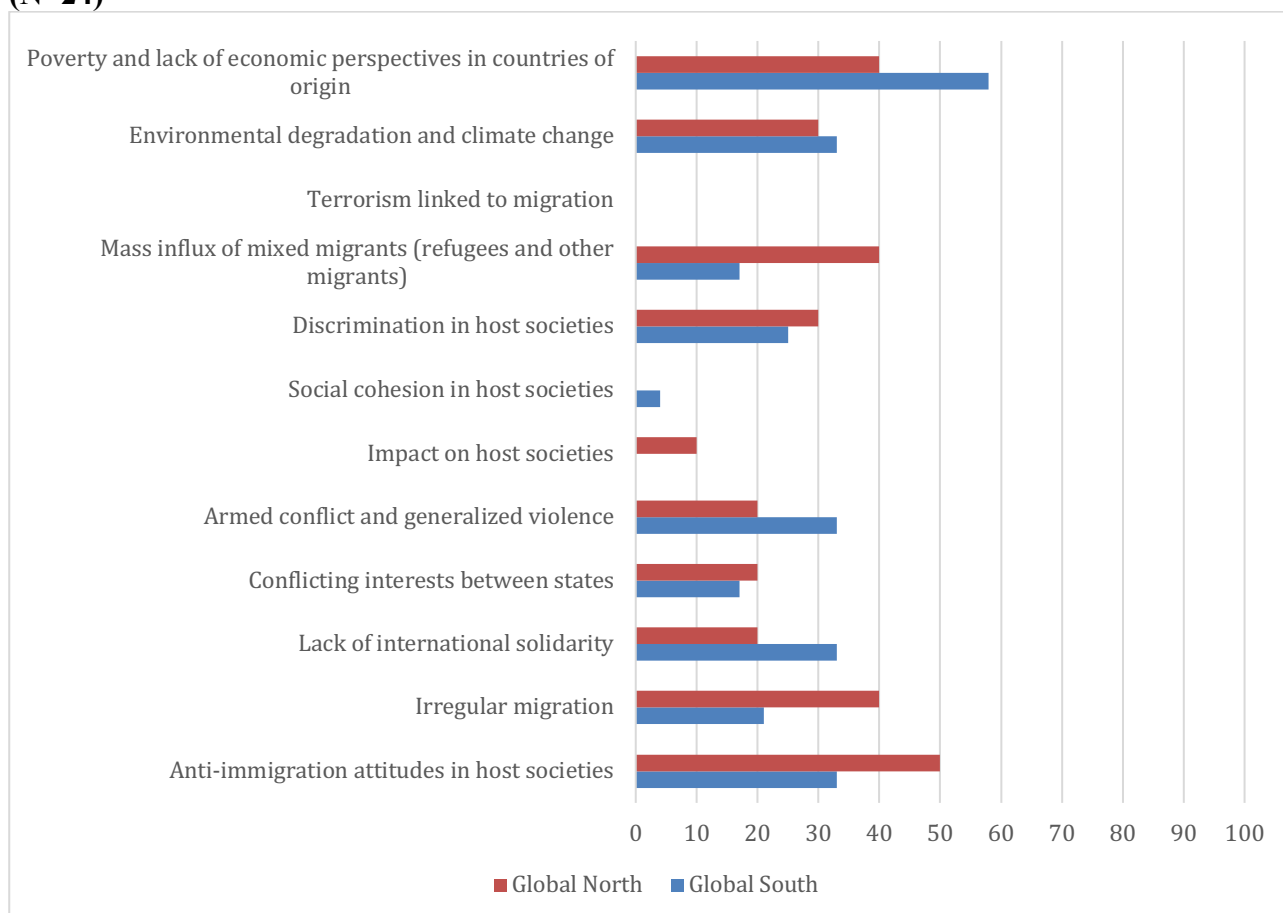
3.3 Analysis part II – Responsiveness to crises

3.3.1 Most significant challenges in international migration governance

We asked our respondents to consider a list of challenges and to rank the *most significant challenges today and in the future of international cooperation on migration*. Figure 8 shows the percentage of respondents that ranked each challenge as the first, second, or third most important challenge, and Table 3 shows the ranking in more detail. The two challenges most often ranked among the top three were: *Poverty and lack of economic perspectives* and *Anti-immigration attitudes in host communities*.

Yet, differences emerge between North and South. *Poverty* was considered more important by Global South states' representatives (ranked by 64 percent) than by Global North ones (ranked by 36 percent), while *Anti-immigration attitudes* was ranked among the top three challenges by half of the Global North states' representatives. 30 percent of them even ranked it as the top challenge (see table 3). By contrast, only 36 percent of Global South states' representatives ranked this challenge among the top three. *Environmental degradation and climate change*, a slow-onset challenge to migration governance, also received relatively high scores (see Figure 8), with a third of the respondents, across representatives from states in the Global North and Global South, rating it among the top three.

Figure 8. The percentage of respondents that ranked each challenge as the first, second or third most important challenge to migration governance, Global North (N=10) and Global South (N=24)



We see from Figure 8 and Table 3 that there are different perceptions among representatives from states in the Global South and Global North when it comes to identifying the most important challenges to international cooperation on migration, and, moreover, that the differences broadly speaking reflect the contexts and migration challenges of their respective regions. Global South states' representatives highlighted the challenge *Armed conflict and generalized violence* (ranked as first by 23 percent). Meanwhile, *Mass influx of mixed migrants* was ranked as the most important challenge by 40 percent of Global North states' representatives, against only 4,5 percent among Global South states' representatives.

Table 3. Challenges ranked first, second or third, Global South (left) and Global North (right)

	Global South						Global North					
	Ranked first		Ranked second		Ranked third		Ranked first		Ranked second		Ranked third	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Anti-immigration attitudes in host societies	3	13,6%	1	4,5%	4	18,2%	3	30,0%	0	0,0%	2	20,0%
Irregular migration	2	9,1%	2	9,1%	1	4,5%	1	10,0%	2	20,0%	1	10,0%
Lack of international solidarity	2	9,1%	2	9,1%	4	18,2%	0	0,0%	1	10,0%	1	10,0%
Conflicting interests between states	3	13,6%	1	4,5%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	10,0%	1	10,0%
Armed conflict and generalized violence	5	22,7%	3	13,6%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	10,0%	1	10,0%
Impact on host societies	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	10,0%	0	0,0%
Social cohesion in host societies	0	0,0%	1	4,5%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Discrimination in host societies	2	9,1%	2	9,1%	2	9,1%	0	0,0%	1	10,0%	2	20,0%
Mass influx of mixed migrants (refugees and other migrants)	1	4,5%	0	0,0%	3	13,6%	4	40,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Terrorism linked to migration	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Environmental degradation and climate change	2	9,1%	3	13,6%	3	13,6%	1	10,0%	0	0,0%	2	20,0%
Poverty and lack of economic perspectives in countries of origin	2	9,1%	7	31,8%	5	22,7%	1	10,0%	3	30,0%	0	0,0%

We asked respondents to provide one or two examples of situations they would consider a migration crisis. Table 4 shows their free-text answers which we have organized by if they are focused primarily on the country-of-origin, or the country of destination. An interesting pattern in their reporting is that respondents from both groups (Global North and South) point out issues relating to the countries of origin, transit, and destination. Both report on drivers of migration (within the country/region of origin) such as climate change, lacking economic/educational opportunities, wars, and conflict. Both groups report on issues relating to destination countries, including lack of legal pathways for migration, xenophobia, aging populations, and unwillingness to provide services to migrants. Moreover, both groups have respondents that point out dangerous migration routes as an example of a migration crisis. Several specific examples of what respondents understand as migration crises are

mentioned, including: Palestinian displacement, migration flows towards the EU in 2015, the displacement of Venezuelans, the Polish/Belarus border contention, displacement from Ukraine, migration flows at the United States border, and migration flows at the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Overall, this open-ended question reveals that there are many different interpretations of what constitutes a migration crisis, and that there are many similarities in the views of Global North states' and Global South states' representatives. At the same time, we do see that Global North states' representatives tend to focus their answers on contexts in the Global North (Europe and US), while the Global South states' representatives have a broader perspective and mention issues in their home region as well as in the Global North.

Table 4. Free text: provide one or two examples of migration crises (*translated into English)

Country of origin focused	
Global South	Global North
conflict in the Sahel with the loss of jobs in the primary sector and insecurity*	Environmental degradation and impact of climate events driving migrants to leave their place of origin
Migration crisis in Libya*	Failure of own domestic system leading to migration
Handling large-scale migration flow of the population due to humanitarian crisis- refugees from DRC Congo and Sudan crossing to Kenya through various border points to access the refugee camps.	War in Ukraine
Political and economic instability*	Lack of educational or livelihood opportunities in place of origin driving migrants to leave
armed conflicts*	Abuse of children and women*
Migration movements in the Darian Gap including all the risks that migrants face in the root.	Mass displacement after a climate change event
Nigeria (the issue of boko haram)	
Palestine	
Dominican Republic - Haiti	
Sudan situation with the influx of mixed movement due to conflict and climate disasters, in the context of the lack of regular pathways for migration.	
Sudanese refugee crisis	
Venezuela	
Wars and armed conflict	
Migration crisis in the Maghreb*	
Haiti political and humanitarian situation	
illegal migration and trafficking /smuggling of human beings- the dangerous and difficult routes undertaken by the illegal migrants to reach Europe especially through Northern Africa. This is caused by poverty and lack of economic perspective in their countries of origin.	
Climate-related migration*	
the scarcity of fishery resources due to the overexploitation of resources by industrial fishing in West Africa*	
Unemployment in the country of origin*	
the current hotbeds of tension in Africa*	
religious, ethnic and racial persecution*	
Middle East (Israel-Palestine conflict)*	
South Sudan	
The Sahel (the issue of climate change)	

Venezuelan migration	
Destination country focused	
Global South	Global North
Massive influx of migrants into Western Europe since 2015*	Integrations problems/difficulties in host countries that create tensions and breeding ground for both organized crime and xenophobia.
Central American migrants to the US	Les personnes qui meurent en mer lorsqu'elles essaient de traverser le détroit de Gibraltar.
Migration causes terrorism*	Migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Africa to the EU
migrants who want to settle in England*	situation at the Belorussian-Polish border
ageing populations in the global north	There are not enough legal pathways and people (as they do today) go on dangerous routes to access safety or better life conditions.
Border USA - México	Less and less respect for the right to asylum
Migration crisis in Europe*	Migrants crossing into the US
German migrants	migration crisis in Europe back in 2015
North African migrants to EU territory	The transit and destination countries are not able/willing to provide enough dignified accommodation/services and fair and fast treatment of cases (e.g. asylum system).

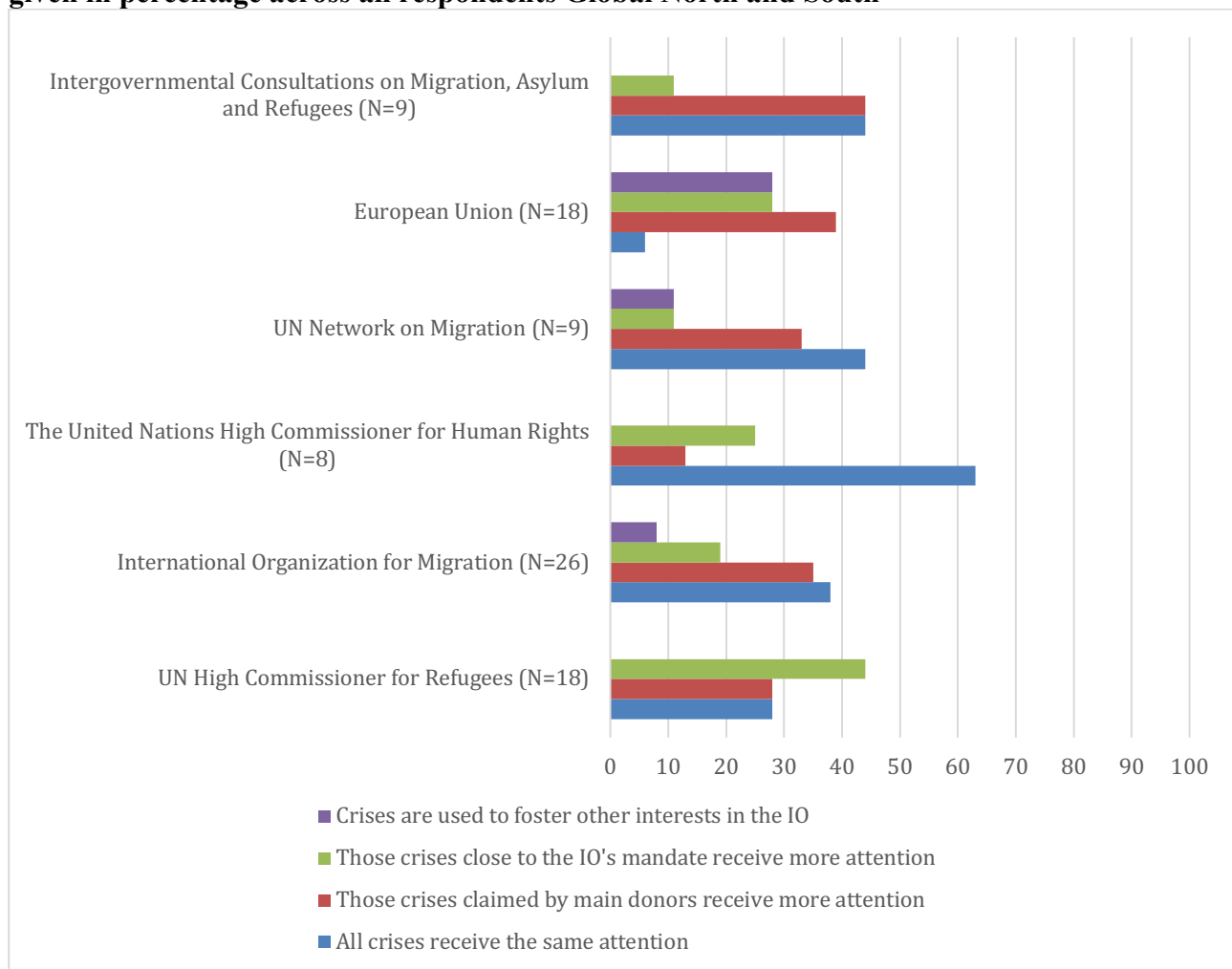
3.3.2 Crisis governance by organizations

Some crises are met with more attention and responses than others. Considering the international and regional organizations respondents indicated in a previous question as being of influence, we asked them to rank how responsive they perceive these organizations to be to crises related to migration. For each of these organizations, respondents were asked to select one of the following options: *All crises receive the same attention*; *The organization favours those claimed by main donors*; *the organization favours those close to their mandate*; or *The organization uses crisis to foster other interests*.

Because respondents were asked only to answer for the organizations they had already indicated as relevant, the total number of respondents per organization varies, and for several organizations there is only 1 respondent. Therefore, we cannot compare respondents from states in the Global North and Global South. Figure 9 shows the results for the organizations that had at least 8 respondents.

The OHCHR stands out as an organization that is seen as treating crises equally. When comparing the IOM and the UNHCR, we see that the latter is seen as operating more closely to its mandate, while the IOM is more often reported as treating all crises equally. The organizations that are perceived to have the least equal treatment of crises are the EU and the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC). 39 percent of respondents reported that, in the EU, crises claimed by the main donors receive most attention. For the IGC, 44 percent answered in this vein. This is not fully surprising, however, as these organizations have a regional focus.

Figure 9. How responsive are international and regional organizations to crises? Answers given in percentage across all respondents Global North and South

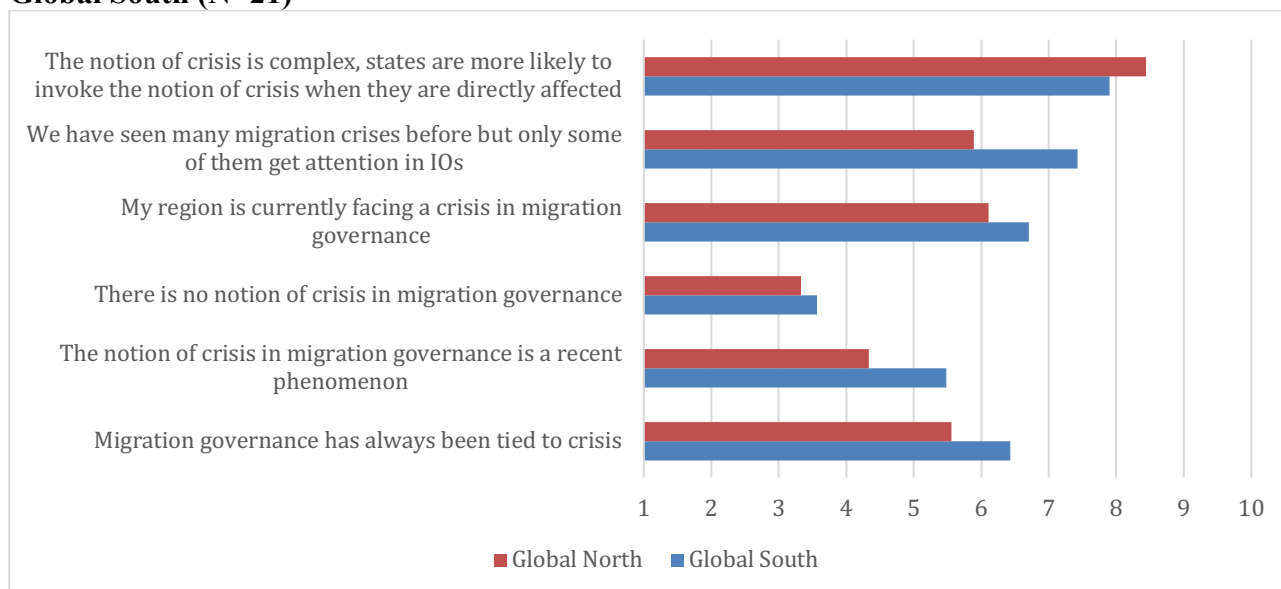


3.3.3 Sense of crisis

We asked respondents how much they agreed with six statements regarding crises in migration governance on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree): *Migration governance has always been tied to crisis*; *The notion of crisis in migration governance is a recent phenomenon*; *There is no notion of crisis in migration governance*; *My region is currently facing a crisis in migration governance*; *We have seen many migration crises before but only some of them get attention in IOs*; and *The notion of crisis is complex, nation-states are more likely to invoke the notion of crisis when they are directly affected*.

In Figure 10, we see the average value (from 1-10) on how much respondents from Global North and South agree with each statement. Respondents across groups answered very similarly that they agree that the notion of crisis is complex and that it is used by states when they are affected. Respondents to a lesser degree reported that there is “no notion of crisis” in migration governance. Global South states’ representatives, more so than Global North ones, agreed that we have seen many migration crises before, but only some of them receive the attention from international organizations. This finding is in line with our expectations, as it reflects the structural inequality in global migration governance. Overall, however, there is much convergence between the groups on the perceived notions of crisis.

Figure 10. Level of support for different notions of “crisis” in migration governance (average value on a scale from 1=completely disagree, to 10=completely agree), Global North (N=9) and Global South (N=21)

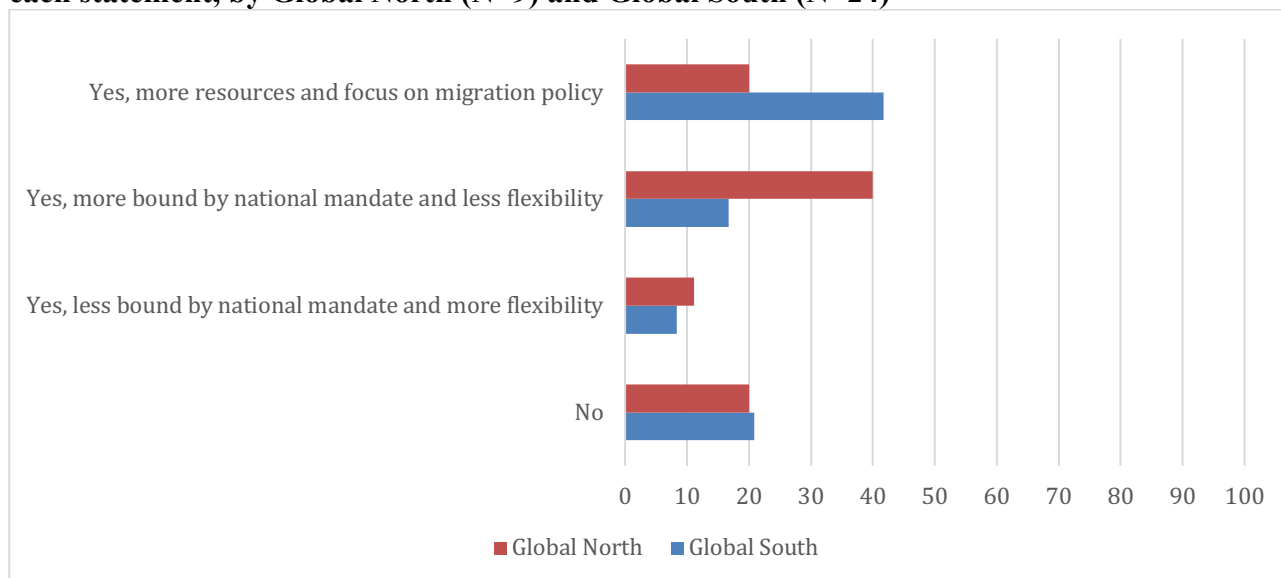


3.3.4 Perceived change in professional conditions working on migration

We asked respondents if the professional position they currently hold in migration governance has changed over the past decade, and if so, how. In Figure 11, we see that over forty percent of Global South respondents reported that they have witnessed a shift the past decade *towards more resources and focus on migration policy* (against twenty percent of respondents from the Global North states' representatives). This suggests that migration has become more of a priority for representatives of states from the Global South in the past decade. Meanwhile, forty percent of Global North states' respondents reported that there has been a change towards less flexibility and more nationally-bound mandates (against less than twenty percent of representatives of states from the Global South). This similarly could suggest greater prioritization of migration across regions. Perhaps even more so, it complements the vast existing research connecting migration policymaking in the Global North with increased politicization (e.g. Maricut-Akbik 2019).

The clear differences between the groups potentially reflect very different experiences of respondents from Global North and South states the past decade, but it may indicate the increased prioritization of migration policy for both groups.

Figure 11. How has the professional position changed the past decade? Percentage support for each statement, by Global North (N=9) and Global South (N=24)



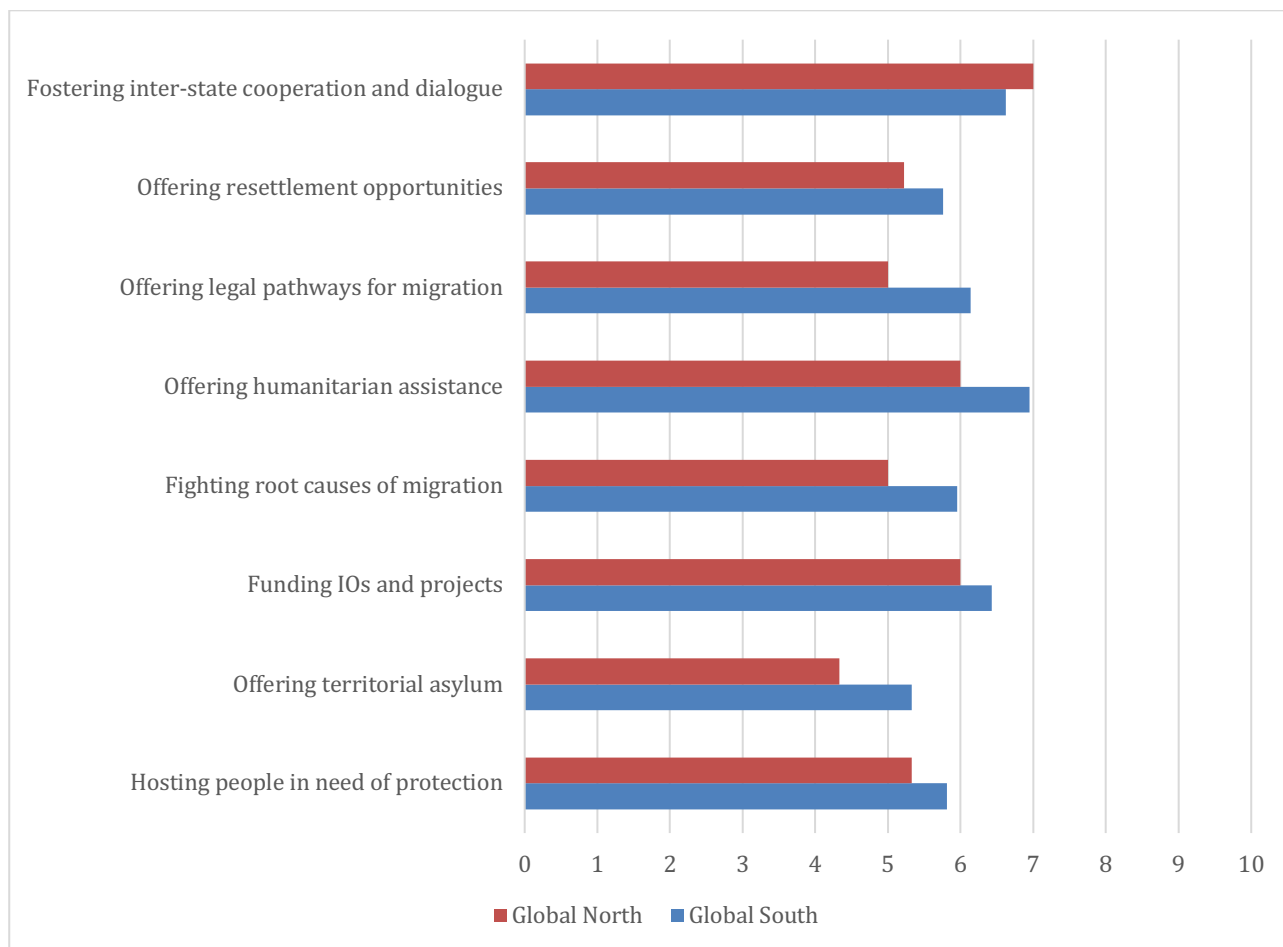
3.4 Analysis part III – Responsibility sharing between states

3.4.1 Fairness in responsibility sharing

There are several ways states can contribute to international cooperation on migration. We asked respondents to which degree they thought there is fair responsibility-sharing among states today in the following eight areas: *Hosting people in need of protection*; *Offering territorial asylum*; *Funding IOs and projects*; *Fighting root causes of migration*; *Offering humanitarian assistance*; *Offering legal pathways for migration*; *Offering resettlement opportunities*; *Fostering inter-state cooperation and dialogue*. The respondents' answers ranged on a scale from 0 (completely unfair) to 10 (completely fair) for each of the areas, as shown in Figure 12.

No issue area was seen as completely fair (average value of 10). The highest score reported related to *Fostering inter-state cooperation and dialogue*, with an average of 5,67 across all representatives, and was the highest among Global North states (7,0). Among Global South states, *Offering humanitarian assistance* (6,95) was reported as the fairest. Interestingly, respondents from Global South and Global North states reported relatively similar perspectives on fairness, even on issues such as: *Hosting people in need of protection*, where, in general, Global South states do much more compared to Global North states; and on *Funding*, where a relatively small number of states in the Global North do the majority of funding. Contrary to our expectation, the groups have relatively similar perceptions of fair responsibility-sharing, even though efforts vary tremendously.

Figure 12. Fairness in responsibility-sharing, average value on scale (0=completely unfair, to 10=completely fair), by Global North (N=9) and Global South (N=21)



4 Conclusion

The survey has revealed that, overall, the diplomats report attending meetings in similar international migration forums, and they have relatively high confidence in several organizations engaged in global migration governance, including UNHCR, IOM, ILO and OHCHR. One takeaway is that the survey provides much-needed optimism in the study of international politics of migration.

Re-visiting our research question (how do the views of diplomats from Global North and Global South vary when it comes to global governance of migration), we find that, overall, there is much overlap in the priorities and perceptions between Global South and Global North states' representatives.

We expected that Global North and South states would differ most when it came to substantive question regarding the institutional properties of international organizations and the factors defining a migration crisis, as well as distributional questions of perceived *fairness in responsibility sharing*. We also expected to see most convergence in perceptions when it comes to *governance structures*.

In line with our expectations, the groups differ regarding which challenges they see as most pressing for global migration governance, reflecting the different contexts of their respective regions (Figure 8), and they report different priorities for the institutional qualities of international organizations (Figure 5). However, their free-text reporting reveals similar understandings of what a migration crisis is (Table 4), and there is convergence in how they reflect on “the current notion of crises in migration governance” (Figure 10). In line with our expectations, we find strong convergence regarding *governance structures*, which are the platforms in which they are socialized as diplomats. Our perhaps most surprising result is the relatively consensual perception of fair *responsibility-sharing* between states, with both groups reporting rather low perceived fairness across categories such as offering territorial asylum, funding, fighting root causes, hosting, etc. (Figure 12).

Overall, our findings suggest that, in contrast to the strong divide proposed in the literature on migration governance, there is quite some convergence in the perceptions and support of state representatives interacting in multilateral migration settings. The survey thus provides novel insights and backing for the notion that diplomats share similar understandings of certain issues and politics, despite sometimes contradictory interests of home countries, giving support to dynamics of socialization in international institutions. At the same time, however, our findings show that the differences between Global North and Global South diplomats concern less the form than the substance of international cooperation. While Global North representatives value expertise and transparency, Global South diplomats emphasize equity and room for dialogue. When it comes to migration challenges, Global North diplomats underline mixed flows, irregular migration, and anti-immigrant sentiments, while Global South diplomats put much more emphasis on the drivers of (forced) migration.

Our results reflect the experiences of individuals that represent states in migration governance which are crucial sources of information. Our findings merit further large N elite studies that explore whether there truly is such a large discrepancy in states’ interests in migration governance among diplomats, as much of the migration governance literature suggests, as well as qualitative in-depth studies of how the diplomats’ perceptions are formed. With a larger sample, it would be possible to include more fine-grained regional categories for comparison, going beyond the categories of Global North/South, and also to target respondents outside Geneva, to include diplomats that represent their governments in the various regional organizations.

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