

Treading Between the Lines

A Quantitative Text Analysis of ASEAN Neoregionalism

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ASEAN Regionalism

Time and again, the ASEAN Way and its regional centralization has proven challenging for policy changes to stick.

It has, for so long, taken EU as a model for Regional Organization, but has often taken the passive stance in regional foreign policy.

It's passiveness roots from its colonial history, exaggerated by the normalized hedging among member states.

Research Questions:

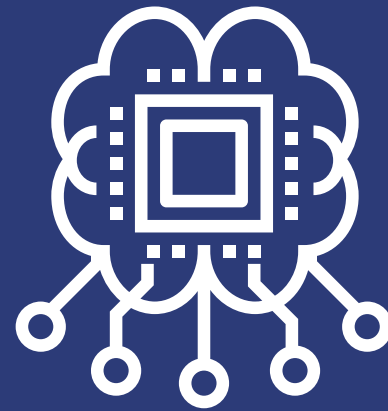
- What policy shifts will render South Korea's efforts and interests more valuable for ASEAN nations?
- Where do individual ASEAN member countries' positions lie mapped against the NSP main objectives and initiatives?



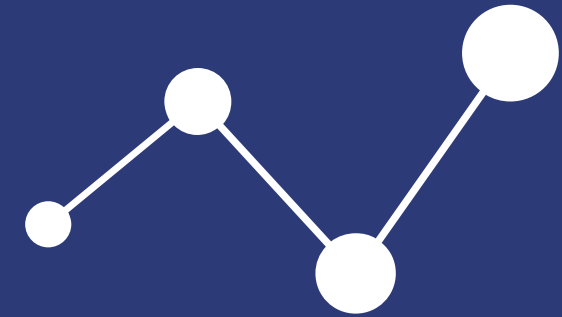
Innovation & Contribution



ASEAN Corpus



Machine Learning



Rhetorical Signals



Data & Methodology

**ASEAN
Speech
Archive**

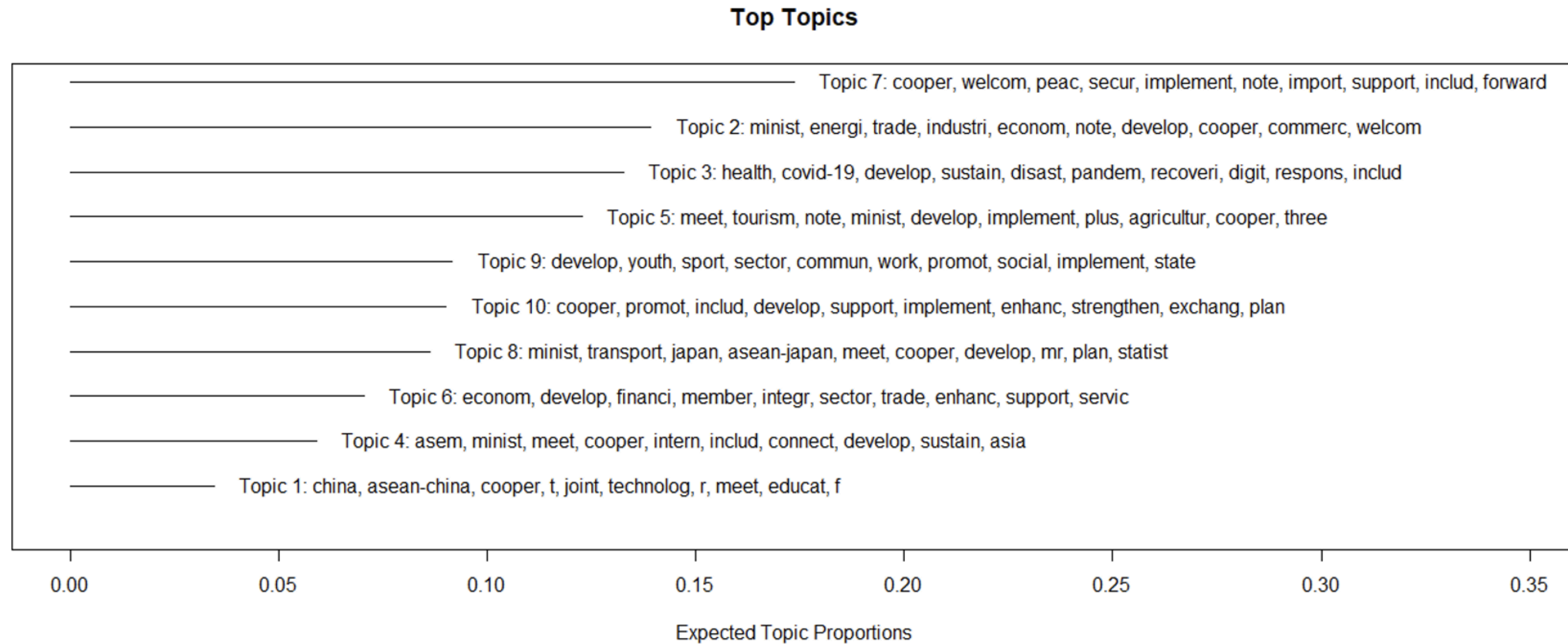
**Exploratory
Analysis**

**UN General
Debate
Corpus**

Results

Topic Modeling

Figure 1. Top Topics from Exploratory Method (Topic Modeling) on ASEAN Communication



Results

Topic Clusters

Figure 2. Weighted Words Statistics for Chosen Topic Clusters in the ASEAN Corpus

Topic 7 Top words:

Highest Prob: cooper, welcom, peac, secur, implement, note, import

FREX: arf, south, peac, sea, stabil, admm, defenc

Lift: erod, denuclearis, ewgs, miscalcul, cessat, claimant, fellowship

Score: arf, unsc, peac, eas, stabil, admm, peninsula

Topic 2 Top words:

Highest Prob: minist, energi, trade, industri, econom, note, develop

FREX: commerc, energi, coal, power, cent, trade, page

Lift: anggraini, cusi, domingo, fatal, gao, gregori, hng

Score: energi, mustapa, fatal, mrs, re, khemmani, pholsena

Topic 10 Top words:

Highest Prob: cooper, promot, includ, develop, support, implement, enhanc

FREX: best, mental, explore, practic, experi, eu, exchang

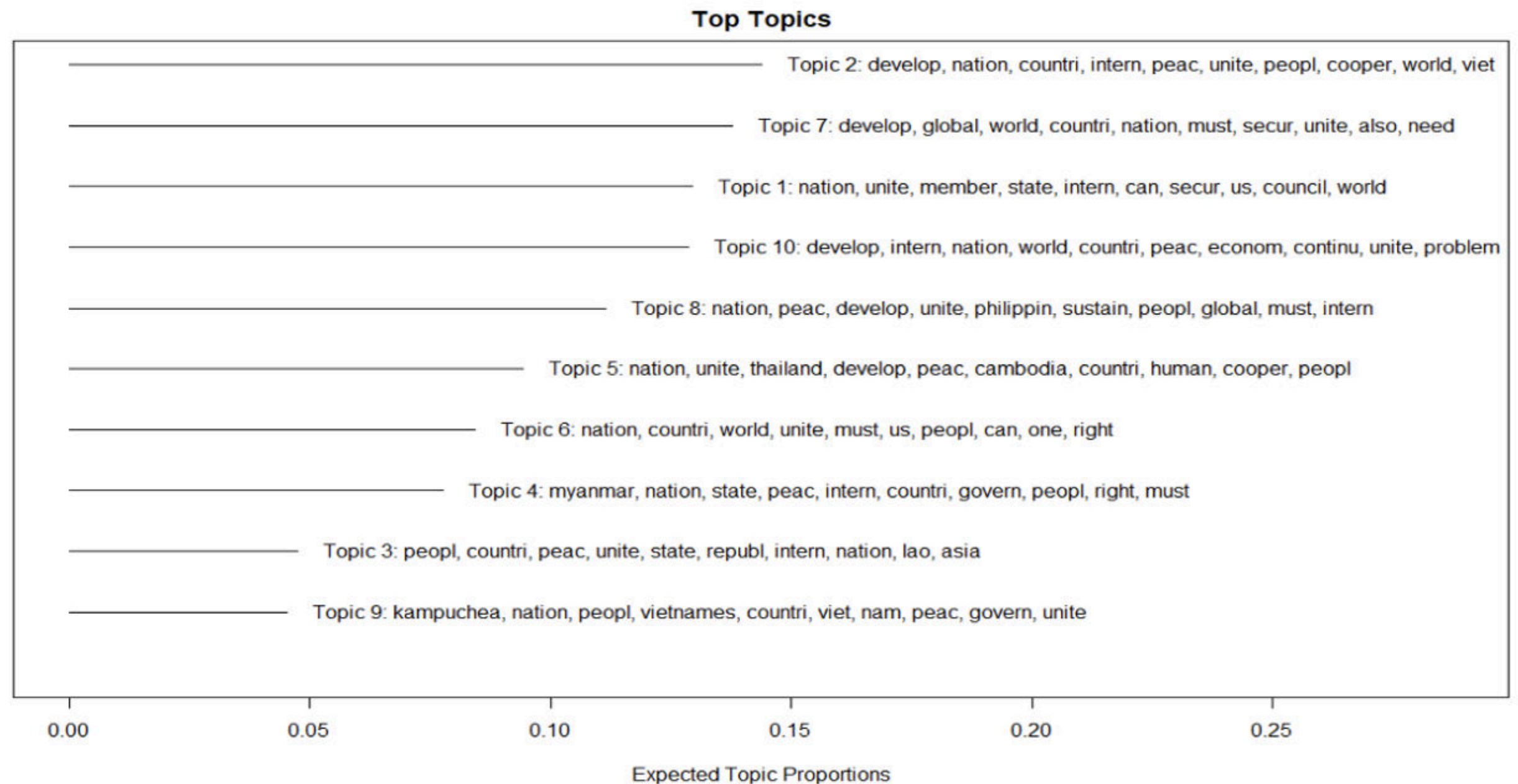
Lift: mental, jcc, explore, cooperation, uk, 5g, update

Score: mental, explore, uk, eu, digit, marin, cooperation

Results

Topic Modeling

Figure 3. Top Topics from Exploratory Method (Topic Modelling) of ASEAN Member Countries' Statements and Speeches in the UNGDC



Results

Topic Clusters

Figure 4. Weighted Words Statistics for Chosen Topic Clusters in the ASEAN Member Countries' Speeches in the UNGDC

Topic 6 Top words:

Highest Prob: develop, global, world, countri, nation, must, secur

FREX: terror, partnership, food, energi, climat, mdgs, terrorist

Lift: aceh, biofuel, gase, soft, interfaith, g-8, timor-lest

Score: soft, mdgs, g-20, hiv, partnership, doha, interfaith

Topic 2 Top words:

Highest Prob: develop, nation, countri, intern, peac, unite, peopl

FREX: lao, nam, viet, republ, cooper, asean, democrat

Lift: almati, lldcs, ordnanc, unexplod, landlock, cluster, munit

Score: lldcs, viet, nam, lao, landlock, unexplod, munit

Topic 10 Top words:

Highest Prob: develop, nation, countri, intern, econom, peac, world

FREX: indonesia, treati, disarm, non-align, nuclear, bosnia, herzegovina

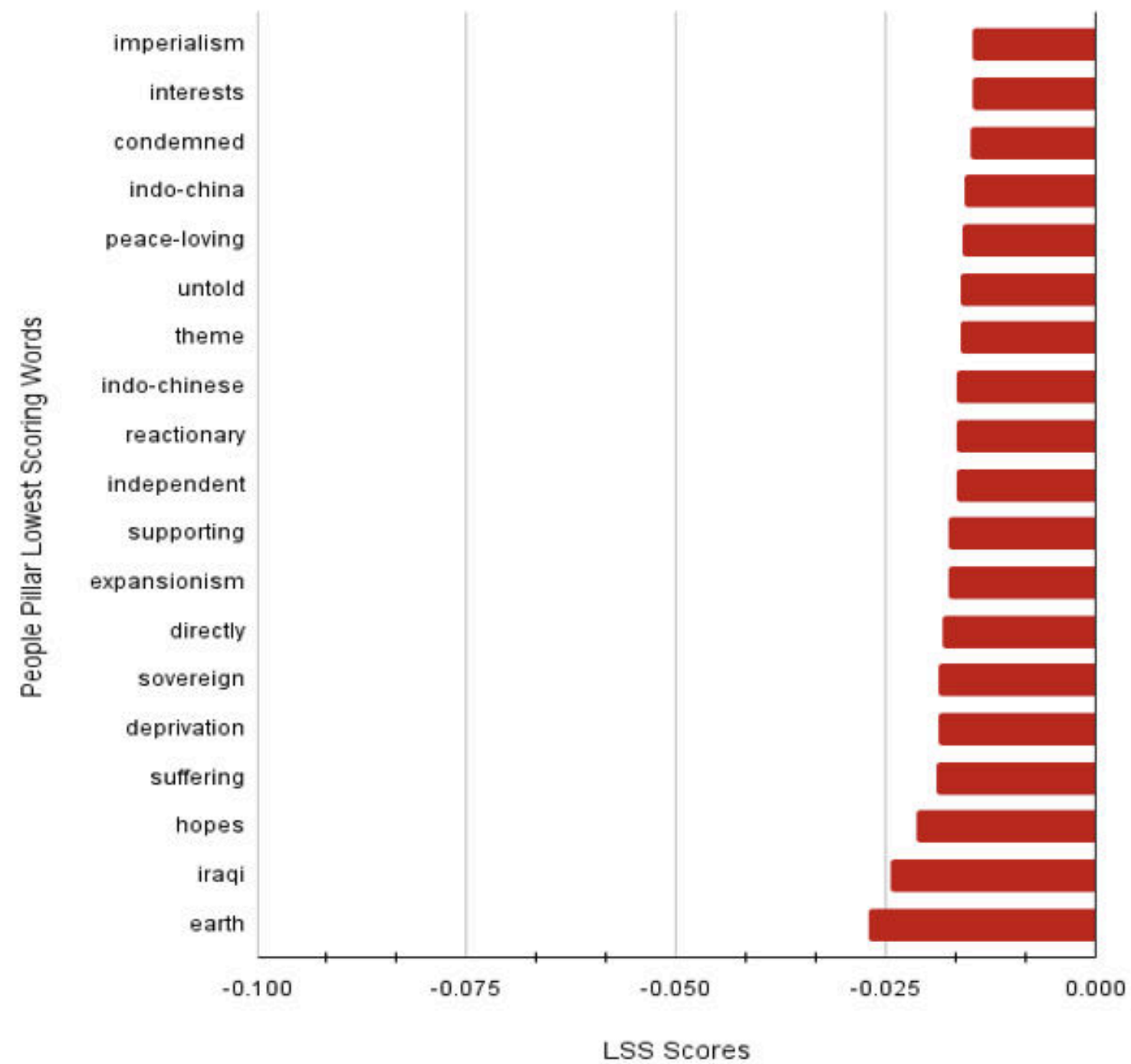
Lift: ambigu, test-ban, reactiv, efficaci, indivis, survey, amelior

Score: ambigu, indonesia, bosnia, herzegovina, test-ban, informal, npt

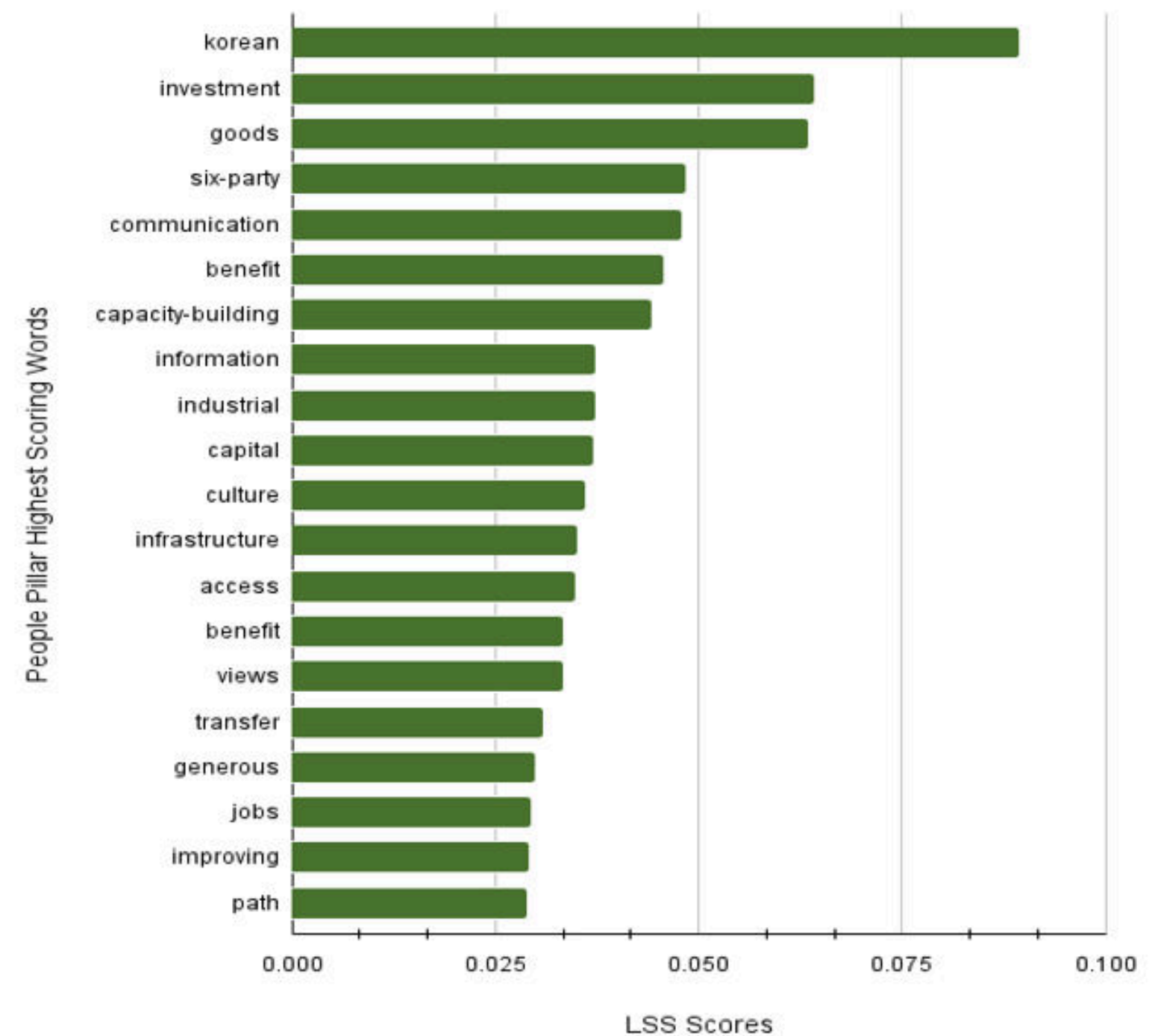
People

Latent Semantic Scaling

Bottom 30 LSS Scores for People Pillar



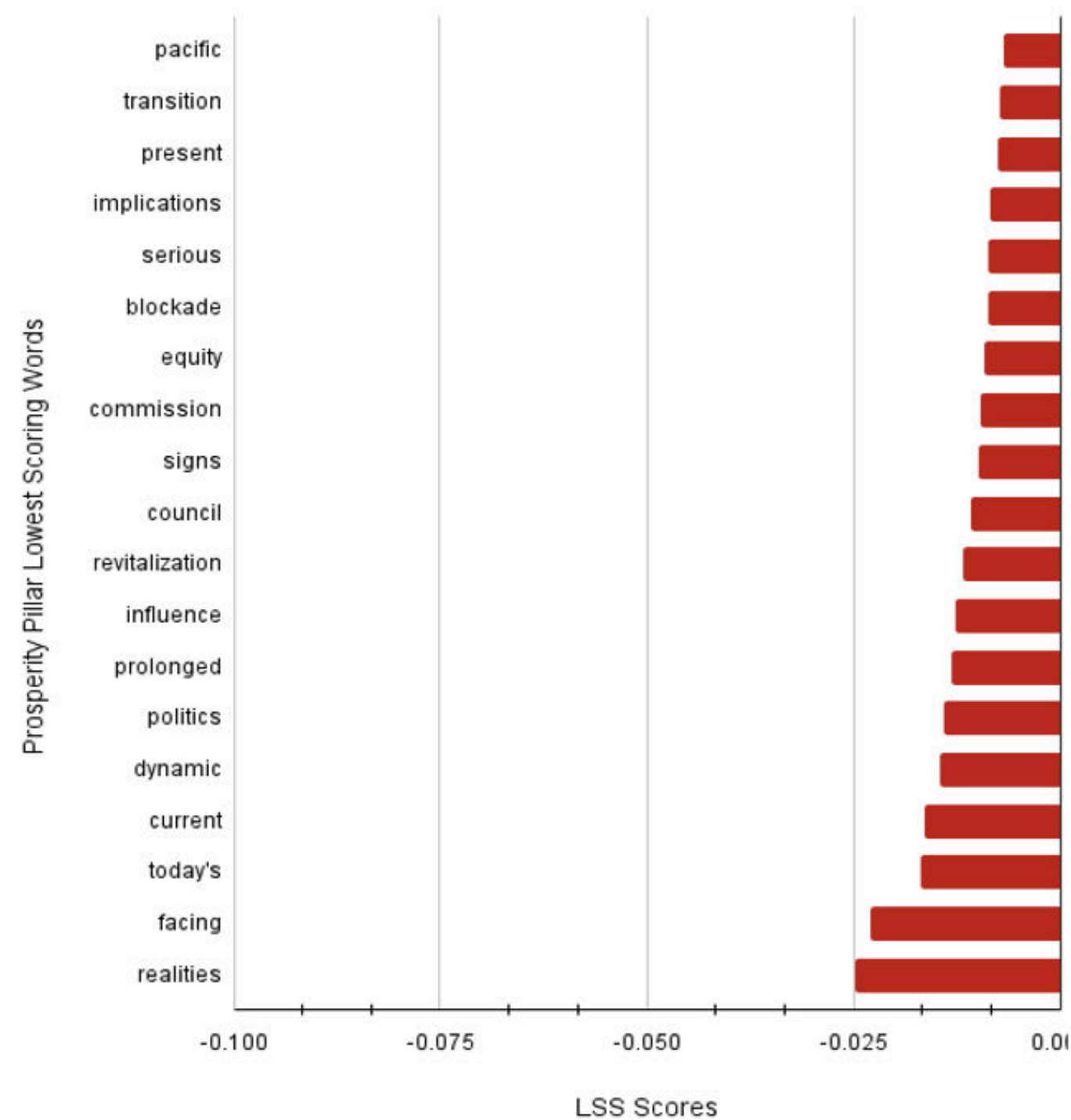
Top 30 LSS Scores for People Pillar



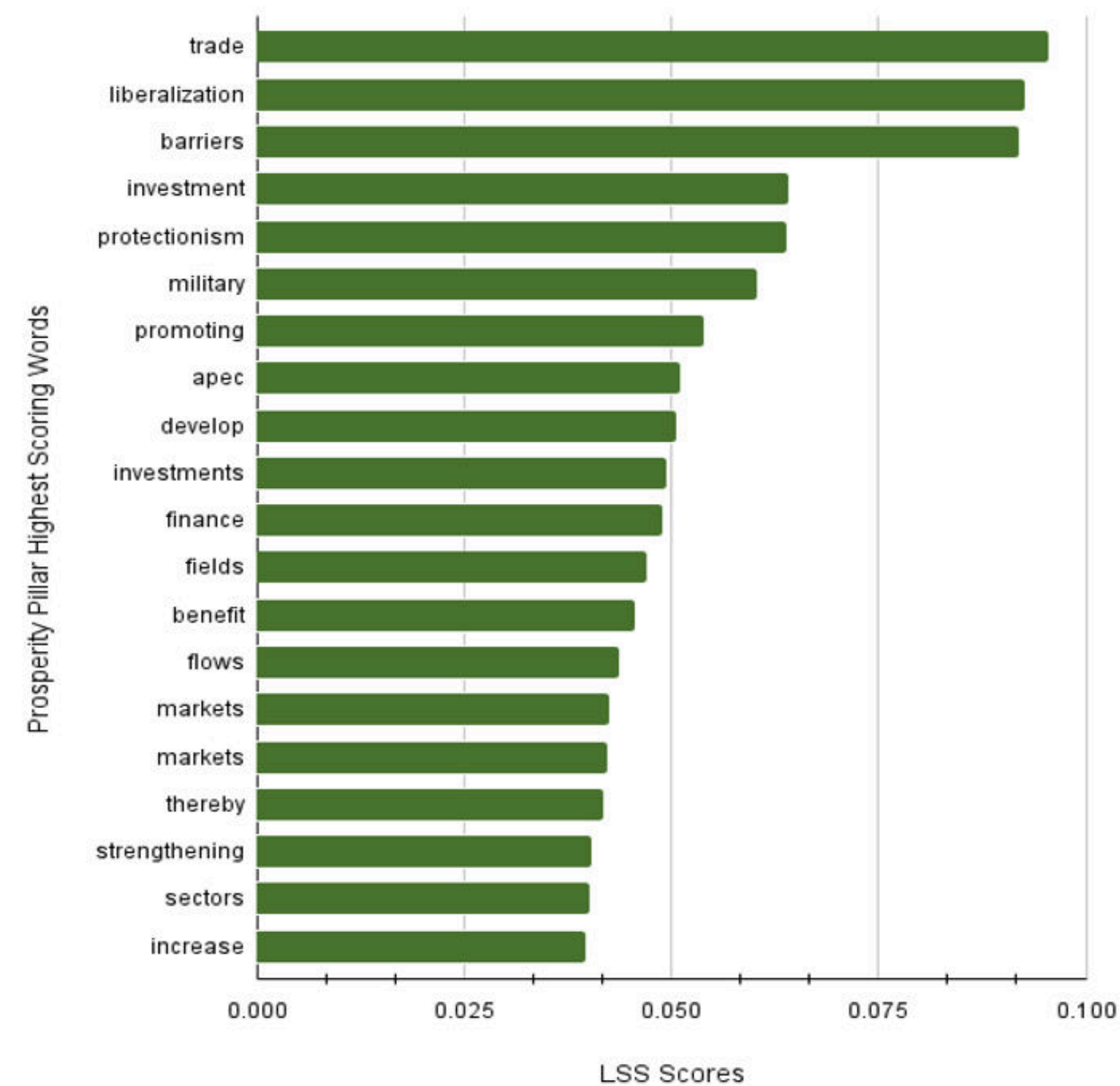
Prosperity

Latent Semantic Scaling

Bottom 30 LSS Scores for Prosperity Pillar



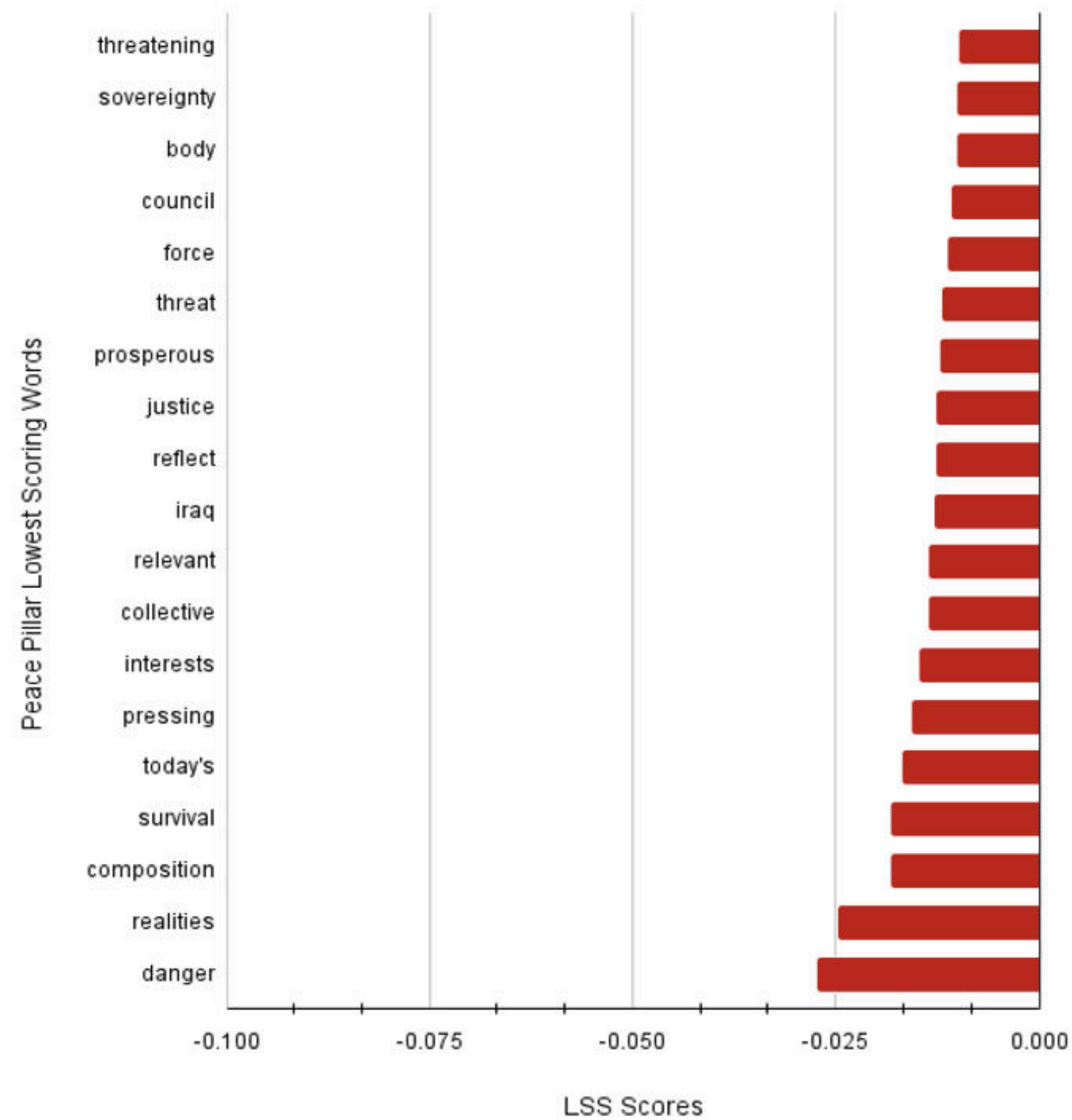
Top 30 LSS Scores for Prosperity Pillar



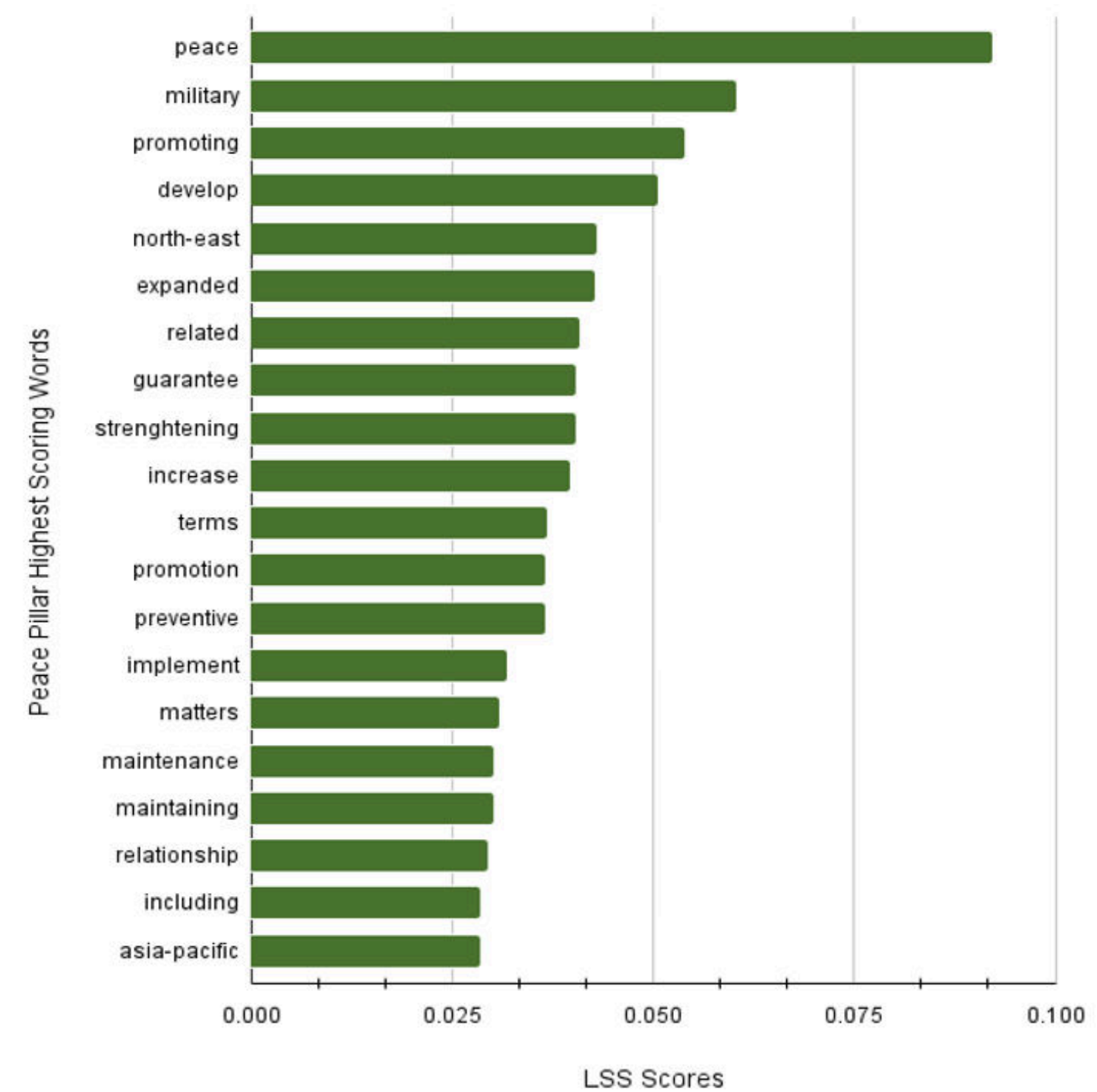
Peace

Latent Semantic Scaling

Bottom 30 LSS Scores for Peace Pillar



Top 30 LSS Scores for Peace Pillar



Results

So which country is interested in which Policy Cluster?

Table 1. Structural Topic Model (STM) coefficients aggregated by country differentiated across chosen topic clusters representing South Korea's NSP Pillars.
ASEAN member states' speeches in the UN General Debate Corpus

	(1) Topic 6: Peace	(2) Topic 2: Prosperity	(3) Topic 10: People
Intercept	0.08530* (0.04026)	0.061966 (0.034166)	0.024663 (0.030580)
Indonesia	0.10597 (0.05421)	-0.029814 (0.044261)	0.3202250*** (0.055930)
Cambodia	0.16707** (0.05905)	0.008262 (0.046046)	0.005851 (0.043353)
Laos	-0.03206 (0.05351)	0.458056*** (0.055492)	0.019713 (0.043629)
Myanmar	0.02901 (0.05930)	-0.034184 (0.045146)	0.060756 (0.046670)
Malaysia	0.01707 (0.05519)	-0.045578 (0.045648)	0.090740* (0.044698)
Philippines	0.02616 (0.05378)	-0.038266 (0.044654)	0.086994 (0.047929)
Singapore	0.08595 (0.05929)	-0.044302 (0.046061)	0.018588 (0.042904)
Thailand	0.13108* (0.05815)	-0.028444 (0.044740)	0.024010 (0.041435)
Vietnam	-0.03272 (0.05265)	0.419474*** (0.052241)	0.022093 (0.042119)
Observations	396	396	396

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

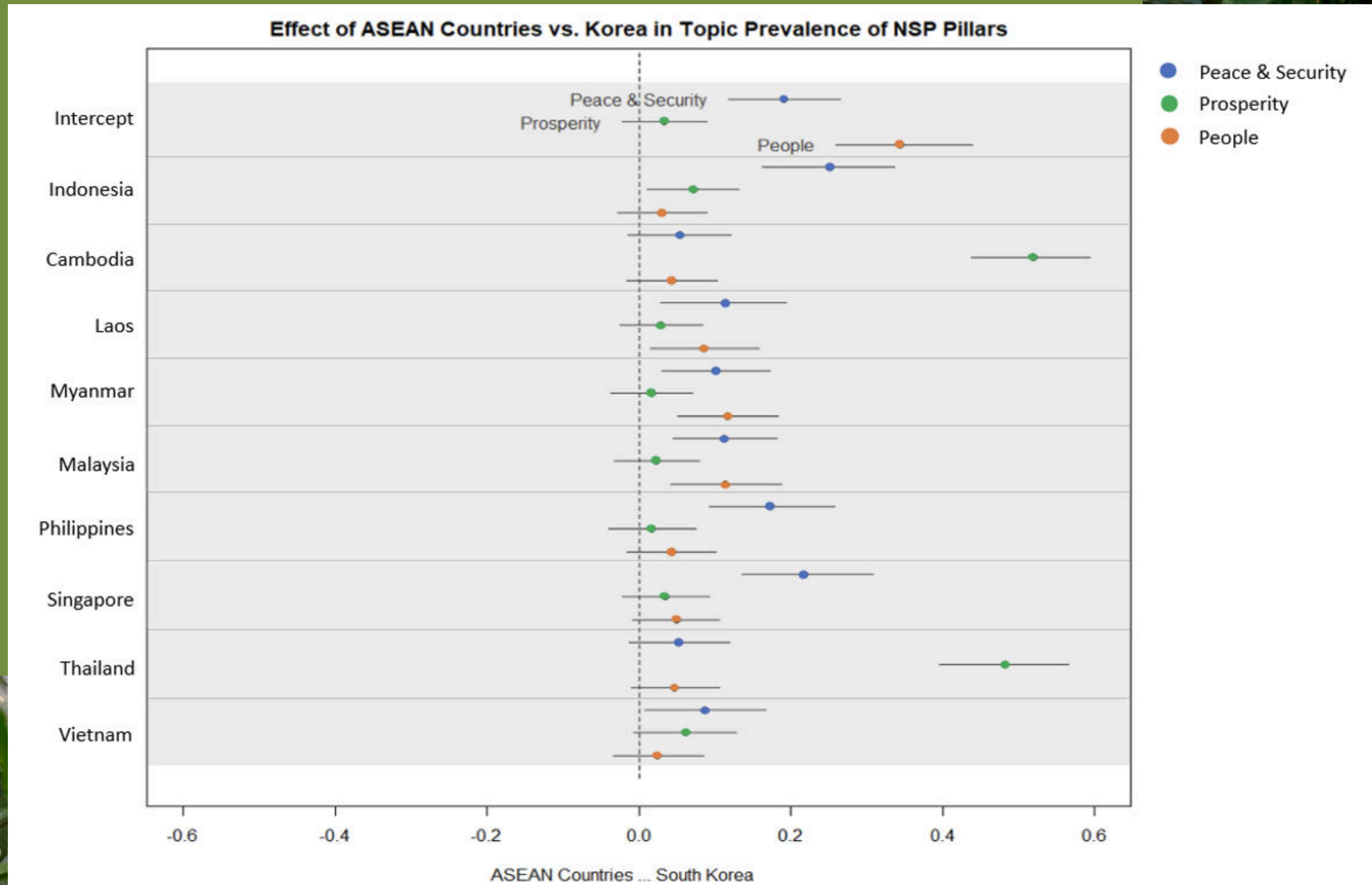
*** p<0.01.

** p<0.05.

* p<0.1.

Results

So which country is interested in what Policy Cluster?



Conclusion

- The ASEAN Speech Archive needs to add granularity to its documentation and be better maintained to encourage more scholarly work on the region's policies.
- With hedging being prominent as an international policy strategy in the ASEAN Way, accurately identifying member countries with aligned policy interests to incentivize and engage with, will offer higher chances of swinging other ASEAN member states.



Conclusion

Quantitative Text Analysis is a relatively new and innovative research methodology that allows use of text, newspaper articles, online articles, transcripts, subtitles, tweets and social media posts as data.

It should be further applied and taught to promote mixed-methods of analysis among learners and peers.



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