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Beyond Occupations: Measuring Tasks and Skills in Modern Labor Markets

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KAICC, RIYADH, KSA

Occupations and Job Tasks Matter for Today's Policy Questions

- How many jobs are technically automatable?
- Which workers can work remotely during lockdowns?
- Which jobs are exposed to AI and generative technologies?
- What are the demands of growing green and care jobs?

How These Questions Are Commonly Answered

- Focus on occupations
- Evidence mainly from high-income countries, especially the US
- Common assumption: same occupation = same job

Occupations differ across development stages



Occupations differ across development stages



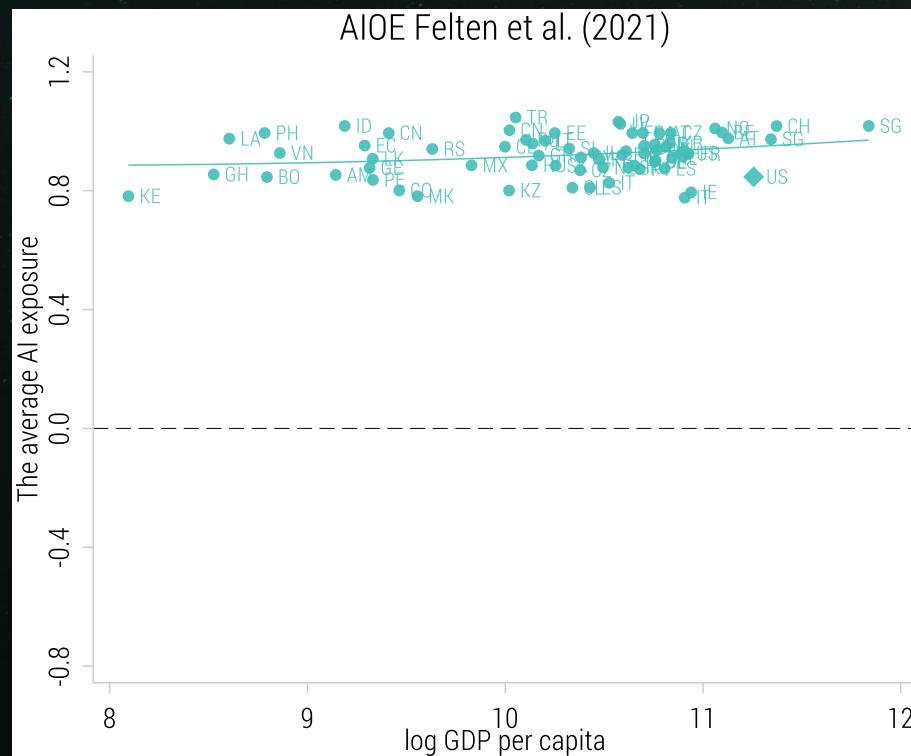
Tasks Are the Right Unit of Analysis

- Technology affects tasks, not occupations
- Skills allow performing tasks; new tasks require new skills
- More complex, less routine-intensive tasks -> higher earnings

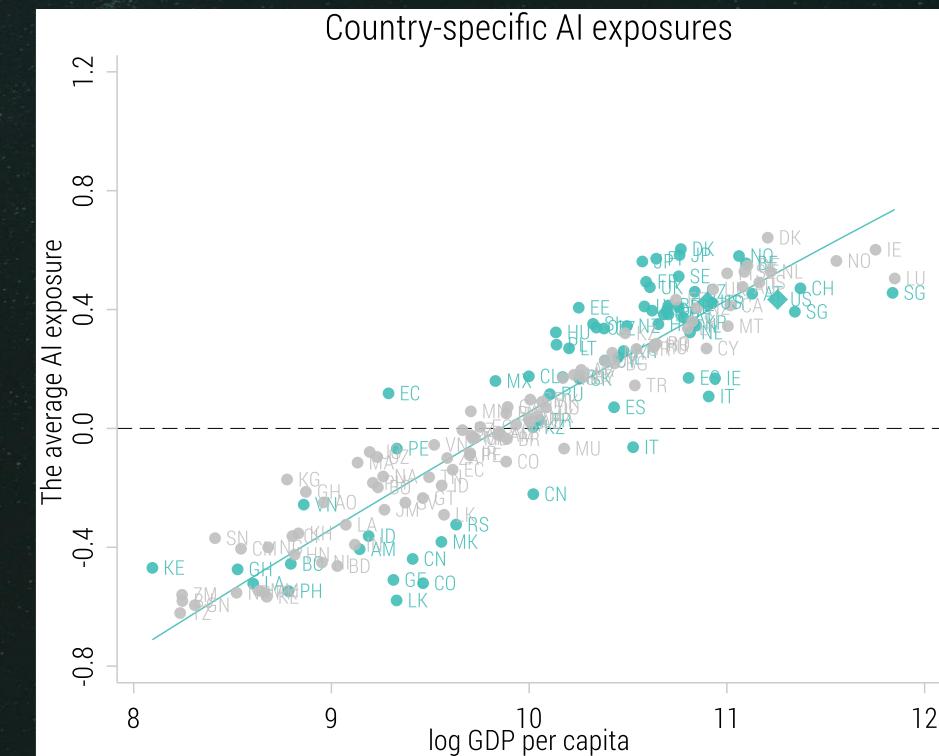
Adjusting for workers' tasks reveals heterogeneity of occupations

AI Exposure of Managers Around the World

Assuming occupations are identical
as in the US

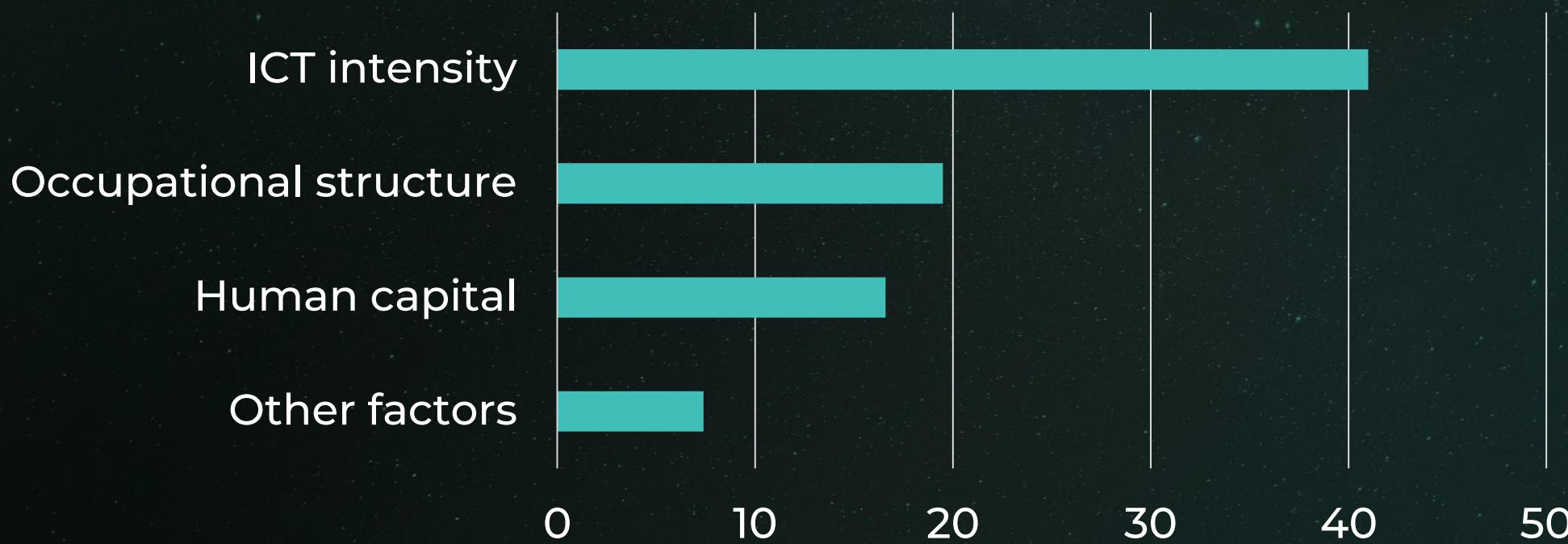


Accounting for tasks



Technology use and supply of skills explain most of task-driven differences in workers' exposure to AI

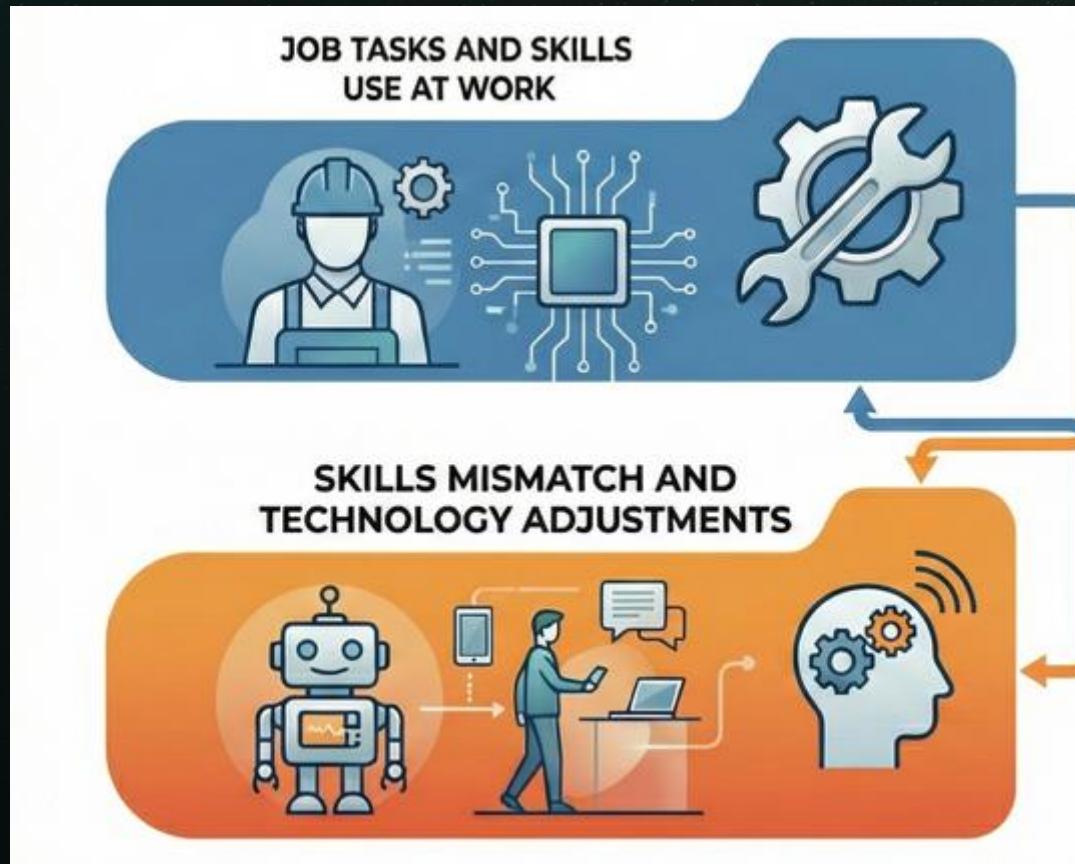
Sources of cross-country differences in workers' AI exposure (%)



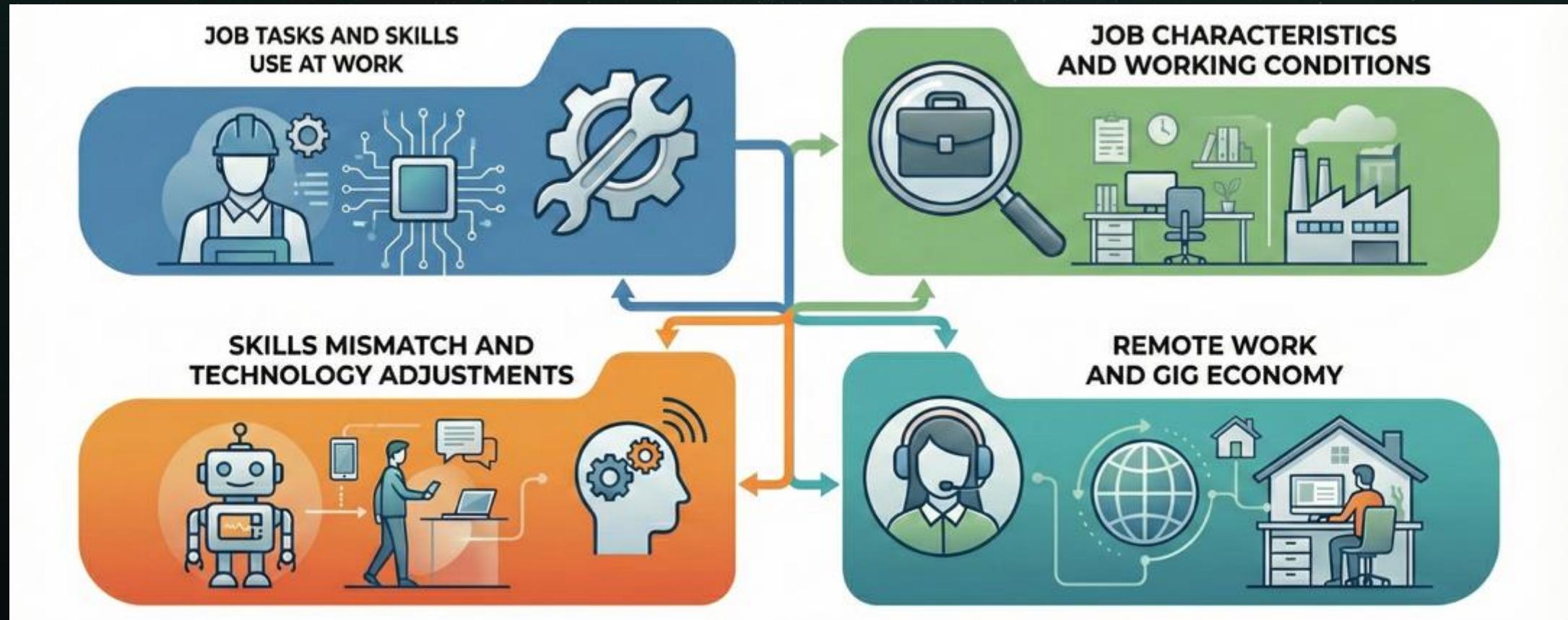
Updating Labour Statistics Is Feasible – the Jobs and Skills Survey approach of Asian Development Bank



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The Jobs and Skills Survey in Bhutan, Georgia, and Philippines

- Cooperation with countries' statistical offices
- JSS module integrated in Labour Force Surveys
- Cost efficient upgrade of existing data collection

Labour statistics must move beyond “who people are” and focus on „what people do”



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