Non-State Participation and Policy-Making Performance in International Organizations

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Abstract

What is the effect of non-state actor (NSA) participation on the policy-making performance of international organizations (IOs)? One prominent expectation holds that extensive participation offers opportunities for improved policy-making performance, whereas another suggests that NSA participation may prevent effective policy-making. Yet existing research offers some support for each expectation, and thereby has difficulties adjudicating between them. This paper helps to account for the contradictory findings in existing research by providing a new perspective on the relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making. Theoretically, it develops expectations about three conditions under which the relationship between participation and performance may vary. Empirically, it tests the theoretical expectations by combining a novel dataset on NSA participation patterns with updated and extended data on the policy output of 15 policy-making bodies in eight IOs between 1975 and 2017. I find that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is more conditional than typically expected. Specifically, the relationship is positive when (i) NSAs are offered the opportunity to participate actively in policy-making bodies, and (ii) levels of participation are comparatively modest. By contrast, the relationship is null or even negative when NSAs are offered opportunities to participate passively, and when levels of participation are high. These findings have implications for debates on NSA participation, policy-making performance, and effectiveness in global governance.

1

In recent decades, one of the most prominent trends in global governance has been the expanded involvement of non-state actors (NSAs) in the policy-making bodies of international organizations (IOs). To an increasing extent, IOs have granted NSAs, like citizen organizations, business associations, and trade unions, opportunities to participate in policy-making bodies as providers of policy relevant information, suppliers of knowledge about local conditions, and representatives of important interests. Today, most IOs—irrespective of issue area or world region—offer NSAs opportunities for participation in policy-making (Tallberg et al. 2013).

This development is typically expected to have important implications for the policy-making performance of IOs; that is, the extent to which they are able to produce policy output (Sommerer et al. 2022). One prominent expectation is that extensive NSA participation offers opportunities for improved policy-making performance. When NSAs participate in policy-making, IOs can draw on the resources NSAs provide to learn about potential policy solutions, reduce uncertainty about the consequences of different policies, or identify compromises that may not have been initially apparent (Raustiala 1997; Steffek 2013; Tallberg et al. 2013). But the literature also offers a more cautionary view, which suggests that NSA participation can prevent effective policy-making. This perspective holds that extensive participation can produce decision-making gridlock because it implies more competing viewpoints present in the decision-making situation (Rasmussen and Toshkov 2013),

leads to information overload (Chalmers 2014), and consumes resources that could have been used to increase decision-making speed (Agné 2016). In other words, higher NSA participation can serve to make decision-making more complicated and resource intensive, thereby producing detrimental conditions for IO productivity.

Yet existing research has difficulties adjudicating between the two dominant expectations. On the one hand, an extensive body of research finds support for a positive relationship between NSA involvement and indicators of policy-making performance. This finding extends across issue areas like security policy (Price 1998), gender mainstreaming and human rights (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002; Joachim 2003; Reiners 2022), and most prominently environmental policy (e.g., Raustiala 1997; Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004; Böhmelt and Betzold 2013; Allan and Hadden 2017; Dörfler and Heinzel 2023). On the other hand, an equally substantial body of research finds support for a negative or null relationship between NSA involvement and indicators of policy-making performance. This finding extends to IOs like the WTO (Pianta 2014), the EU (Rasmussen and Toshkov 2013; Chalmers 2014), and across IOs and international negotiations more broadly (Simonelli 2011; Agné 2016; Panke et al. 2022; Sommerer et al. 2022). What can account for these contradictory findings in existing research? What is the effect of NSA participation on IO policy-making performance?

Identifying the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is of vital importance to the research and practice of global gov-

ernance. The expansion of NSA involvement holds a promise of improving IO performance, but could also hamper member states' ability to agree on key policies. While producing policy is not sufficient to ensure IO effectiveness more broadly—for example in terms of inducing compliance or solving problems—it is a necessary precondition for it (Panke et al. 2022, p. 400). IOs that do not produce output die, or live on in name only, without making substantial progress on key goals (Gray 2018, p. 3). By establishing how participation and policy-making performance are linked, it is possible to discern whether NSA participation makes good on its promise, or if its potential merits are limited to other normative goals.

This paper helps to account for the contradictory findings in existing research by providing a new perspective on the relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making. I argue that this relationship is more conditional than typically expected: a positive relationship between participation and policy-making performance holds under a set of favorable circumstances, whereas the relationship is otherwise null or negative. I identify those circumstances through a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis.

Theoretically, I develop expectations about three conditions under which the relationship between participation and policy-making performance may vary. Specifically, I posit that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is either (i) non-linear, (ii) conditional on the type of NSAs participating, or (iii) conditional on the institutional oppor-

tunities for NSA participation in policy-making. This account breaks with the tendency in much existing research to theorize direct effects of NSAs on policy output,[1] and thereby offers an opportunity to reconcile contradictory findings in previous studies.

Empirically, I test the theoretical expectations by combining a novel dataset on NSA participation patterns with updated and extended data on the policy output of 15 policy-making bodies in eight IOs between 1975 and 2017. This empirical strategy breaks with existing research by combining large-N comparison across IOs and policy areas with an ambition to measure participation directly. Existing research tends to either study participation in few cases or single issue areas, or to study institutional *opportunities* for participation—access—in a large-N comparative setting. This paper seeks to integrate the main strength of each of these bodies of literature—a focus on participation and large-N comparison, respectively. In addition, the analyses in this paper draw on data designed to tackle potential issues of endogeneity. Specifically, the data include two policy-making bodies per IO, which allows me to identify the relationship between participation and policy-making performance through comparisons between bodies within the same IO at a particular point in time.

The paper's findings are two-fold. First, there is no general direct relationship between NSA participation and policy-making performance. The

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[1]This tendency is particularly prominent in quantitative research, but see Sommerer et al. (2022) for a large-N exception, albeit focused on institutional *opportunities* for participation.

analyses grant no support to either of the predominant expectations about a positive or a negative linear relationship. Second, instead, the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is more conditional than typically expected. Specifically, the relationship is positive when (i) NSAs are offered the opportunity to participate actively in policy-making bodies, and (ii) levels of participation are comparatively modest. By contrast, the relationship is null or even negative when NSAs are offered opportunities to participate passively, and when levels of participation are high.

These findings have three broader implications for research in global governance. First, it suggests that NSA participation may have a sizeable impact on the functioning of IOs by altering their policy-making performance. While existing literature typically focuses on the patterns, drivers, and strategies of NSA participation (e.g., Hanegraaff et al. 2011; Betzold 2013; Uhre 2014; Hanegraaff et al. 2016; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017; Petersson et al. 2019; Vikberg 2023), it should explore its consequences further. Second, this paper indicates that NSA participation is an important driver of IO policy-making performance. While existing literature often points to explanatory factors like decision-making rules, member state interests, access provisions, and secretariat autonomy (e.g., Schulz and Konig 2000; Ehlermann and Ehring 2005; Elsig 2010; Panke et al. 2022; Sommerer et al. 2022), it should also add NSA participation to its models. Third, this paper's findings speak to debates about the consequences of NSA participation for effectiveness in global governance. On the one hand, this paper's findings hold a promise to

6

the extent that NSA participation typically increases IO policy-making performance. Yet this optimism is conditional on he extent to which adopted policies are fit to solve societal problems, and the extent to which NSAs are given substantial institutional opportunities for participation.

The Effect of Participation on Policy-Making Performance

In this section, I first outline the two dominant expectations about the relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making performance. One holds that NSA participation improves policy-making performance by expanding the information policy makers have at their disposal. The other holds that NSA participation decreases policy-making performance by increasing the number of actors with competing interests in the policymaking situation. I then proceed to outline my main account: that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is more conditional than the dominant expectations allow for.

Positive Effects: Reduced Uncertainty and Policy-Relevant Information

The first prominent expectation in existing literature suggests that expanded NSA participation in IOs will generate higher policy-making performance. This expectation is rooted in a rational functionalist view of IOs (Keohane

1984), which assumes that uncertainty impedes states' ability to strike mutually beneficial agreements, but that NSAs can provide information that reduces this uncertainty. The more NSAs participate in an IO, the more information the IO has at its disposal, providing beneficial conditions for IO productivity.

The core assumption in this argument is that IOs engage with NSAs because NSAs can provide valuable resources like policy expertise, local knowledge, and information about state actions. This assumption underlies most functionalist explanations as to why IOs grant NSAs access to the policy process in the first place (Steffek 2013; Tallberg et al. 2013). Inter-state decision-making can be marred by different forms of uncertainty about the likely consequences of alternative policies, or the preferences and actions of other actors (Koremenos et al. 2001), but by engaging with NSAs, states in IOs can gain information that reduces this uncertainty. Many NSAs specialize in producing expert information that help states evaluate the consequences of polices, and in situations of policy-making gridlock, NSAs that are aware of the preferences of different states can help identify compromise solutions that may not have been initially apparent (Raustiala 1997, pp. 726–728, 730). In sum, the resources NSAs provide can help states improve policy-making performance.

When a larger number of NSAs participate in an IO, policy-makers have a wider range of information sources to draw on when producing policy. This has two implications. First, larger numbers of NSA participants increases

the amount of information policy-makers have at their disposal. More information likely increases the probability of identifying policies with beneficial consequences, or of discovering compromises. As Böhmelt and Betzold (2013, p. 132) argue for the case of environmental policy: "The more ENGOs [Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations] have access to a specific negotiation, the more information will be available to official state negotiators", and "[...] more ENGOs should also imply a more diverse range of ideas and inputs during bargaining". Second, larger numbers of NSA participants improves evaluation of the credibility of the information provided. When many NSAs participate, "the plurality of sources provides a check on exaggeration, obfuscation, and poor logic and data" (Raustiala 1997, p. 727). In other words, policy-makers can use their awareness of biases and counter-biases among NSAs to distinguish correct information from incorrect information.

Several works in existing research illustrate likely positive effects of NSA participation on policy-making performance. For example, participation from large numbers of environmental NGOs tends to make states more likely to commit to strong environmental agreements (Böhmelt and Betzold 2013), and institutionalized alliances with external stakeholders tends to improve IO problem-solving performance (Lall 2017). Along similar lines, but at the level of NSAs rather than IOs, Tallberg et al. (2018) find that NSAs that engage in information provision are more likely to be influential in IOs. The expectation that these tendencies hold more generally for the effect of participation on policy-making performance leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: The more NSAs participate in an IO body, the higher the number of policies adopted by the IO body.

Negative Effects: Information Overload and Competing Interests

The second prominent expectation in existing literature suggests that expanded NSA participation may hamper policy-making performance. This expectation comes in different versions, but at its core is an idea about a trade-off between participation and efficiency. The more NSAs participate in an IO, the more information or interests enter into the decision-making process, producing conditions for policy-making gridlock.

One version of this argument does not necessarily contradict the functionalist idea that IOs engage with NSAs to gather information, but it emphasizes that allowing for participation is costly for the IO. At a first stage, NSA participation requires more extensive meeting planning, accreditation procedures, and travel services (Agné 2016, pp. 579–580). At a second stage, the information NSAs provide once in place needs to be processed and evaluated, which demands time and resources (Chalmers 2014). Added together, these costs may serve to slow down decision-making processes, especially when the number of NSA participants is large.

A related version of this expectation diverges more clearly from functionalist ideas in suggesting that IO-NSA relations are best characterized as being based on political pressure and conflicting interests. The assump-

tion that IO–NSA relations can be characterized as political is increasingly common in the study of the EU (De Bruycker 2016), and IOs in general (Rauh and Zürn 2020), and builds on the observation that IOs are politicized entities that seek to ensure that their decisions also enjoy support among NSAs. In line with this perspective, NSAs are not only information providers, but also interest representatives that seek to have their interests reflected in policy. Expanded NSA participation thus suggests that more preferences are voiced in decision-making situations, introducing new issues and paving the way for policy-making gridlock (Rasmussen and Toshkov 2013, p. 372). This expectation is in line with a broad rationalist perspective on international cooperation, where the presence of a larger number of actors with conflicting preferences is expected to inhibit cooperation (cf. Axelrod and Keohane 1985). This tendency is documented in several pieces of existing research, showing that participation by the European Parliament slows decision-making down in the EU (König 2007), as does extensive preference heterogeneity among EU member states (Golub 2007). And beyond the EU, IOs with a larger number of member states with heterogeneous preferences tend to have less flexible policy agendas (Lundgren et al. 2018).

Several works in existing research also support the expectation that high NSA participation may reduce policy-making performance. For example, in the EU, consultation of external actors has been shown to slow down decision-making (Rasmussen and Toshkov 2013), particularly when a large number of actors weigh in on issues (Chalmers 2014). Agné (2016) finds that these

tendencies may hold for a wider range of IOs, in showing that stakeholder participation may reduce IOs' reaction speed when faced with crises. This leads to the second expectation:

H2: The more NSAs participate in an IO body, the lower the number of policies adopted by the IO body.

Conditional Effects: Non-Linearity, NSA Types, and Institutional Provisions

While existing research tends to focus on the direct relationship between participation and policy-making performance, those expectations have difficulties explaining why empirical findings vary across different settings. I develop three expectations that can help reconcile contradictory findings in existing research. Specifically, I posit that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is either (i) non-linear, (ii) conditional on the type of NSAs participating, or (iii) conditional on the institutional opportunities for NSA participation in policy-making.

The first expectation holds that the relationship between participation and performance is non-linear. While the predominant expectation is for the benefits of participation to exceed its costs (positive effect) or for the costs of participation to exceed its benefits (negative effect), it is also possible that there exists an optimal level of participation, above and below

12

which policy-performance is lower. From this perspective, the benefits of increased NSA participation would primarily materialize at moderate levels of participation. For example, Albin (1999) notes the potential for NSAs to improve effectiveness in international negotiations, but highlights that "[...] the criteria [for access to negotiations] should be discriminatory enough to avoid a continuous expansion of standing and the admission of so many actors that they overwhelm the negotiation process" (Albin 1999, p. 384). As an empirical reflection of this concern, IOs are typically selective about the NSAs to which they grant access (Tallberg et al. 2013), and actual levels of NSA participation are often modest (Vikberg 2023). At very high levels of participation, increased NSA participation would instead risk making policy-making unnecessarily complicated without providing additional benefits. Discussing the WTO, where several hundred NSAs attend the recurring Ministerial Conferences, Sjöstedt (2012) notes that, while NSA participation in the organization may have certain long-term positive effects, in the short-term it can often reduce negotiation efficiency through agenda and actor expansion. These observations lead to the following hypothesis:

H3: The relationship between participation and output is inverse U-shaped.

The second expectation holds that participation from different types of NSAs generate different effects on policy-making performance. According

13

to this account, the benefits of participation would primarily emerge when civil society organizations (CSOs) representing broad citizen interests participate. The arguments for a positive effect of CSO participation are similar to arguments for a positive effect of participation in general—CSOs provide policy-relevant information that can help states adopt new policies. This expectation is borne out empirically in studies of environmental NGOs. For example, participation from environmental NGOs makes for more ambitious environmental agreements (Böhmelt and Betzold 2013), and IOs that have a large number of environmental NGOs close to their secretariat are more likely to mainstream environmental policy (Dörfler and Heinzel 2023). By contrast, participation from NSAs representing economic interests, like business associations, may be qualitatively different from that of CSOs. The argument for a negative effect of economic NSA participation is based on the idea that economic actors want to avoid the imposition of policies that prevent their activities. For example, discussing market-regulation in the EU, Dür et al. (2015, p. 957) suggest that business actors "tend to support the status quo with no or only very low regulatory standards at the EU level, which allows them to compete in relatively unfettered markets or to take advantage of regulatory competition between member states". Based on these considerations, I expect a stronger relationship for citizen NSAs than for economic NSAs.[2]

[2]Yet the opposite relationship is also possible. For example, research on NSA participation in global governance (Betzold 2013; Uhre 2014) typically assumes that NSAs representing specific interests are comparatively well-endowed with policy-relevant information, which would suggest that their participation is particularly conducive to policy-making

H4: The (positive) relationship between participation and output is stronger for citizen NSAs than for economic NSAs.

The third expectation posits that the conditions under which NSAs are allowed to participate has implications for the extent to which they can affect policy-making performance. From this perspective, the benefits of participation would mainly be realized when NSAs are given an active role in policy-making. In some IOs, NSAs are given the opportunity to participate directly in the policy-making processes of IO bodies, for example by making oral statements at meetings. This is the case in IO bodies such as FAO's Conference, where NSAs are allowed to speak before the plenary. While NSAs and policy-makers can also meet more informally in connection with meetings of policy-making bodies (Raustiala 1997, p. 724), such opportunities for active participation during meetings allows NSAs to address all member states simultaneously. In other IOs, NSAs are allowed to be present in the policy-making body's meetings, but cannot actively take part. This is the case in IO bodies such as WTO's Ministerial Conference, where procedural rules limit NSA involvement to observing plenary sessions. Access to policy-making is an important part of the political opportunity structure facing NSAs, and is also consistently identified as a central precondition for NSAs to be able to impact policy (Joachim 2003; Tallberg et al. 2018). I

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performance.

therefore expect participation to have a particularly strong effect on policy-making performance when NSAs are given an active role in IO bodies.

H5: The (positive) relationship between participation and output is stronger when NSAs are allowed to participate actively in policy-making.

Research Design

In the previous section, I formulated expectations about the effects of NSA participation on policy-making performance. In this section, I outline the research design. I first introduce the sample of IO bodies and describe how policy-making performance varies across and within them. I then detail the operationalization of the main independent variable—NSA participation—and describe its variation across the sample. Finally, I introduce control variables and outline the modelling strategy.

A Dataset on Participation and Policy Output

I analyze NSA participation and policy output in a sample of 15 policy-making bodies in eight major global IOs between 1975 and 2017. While the focus on major[3] global IOs in international politics limits the scope of gener-

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[3] I take a major IO to be an IO with all or all but one of the following criteria: "[A] distinct physical location or website, a formal structure (i.e., a legislative body, executive, and bureaucracy), at least thirty permanent staff, a written constitution or convention, and a decision body that meets at least once a year" (Hooghe et al. 2017, p. 16)

alizability, it offers two advantages. First, it increases comparability among the analyzed units. Whereas regional IOs' interactions with NSAs may be shaped by region-specific cultural, economic, or political factors, global IOs exist in a relatively similar organizational environment (Dingwerth et al. 2020, p. 721). Similarly, limiting the sample to major IOs excludes less formalized forms of cooperation, ensuring that IOs in the sample are comparable in terms of institutionalization, as opposed to looser constellations like the G20, and activity, as opposed to dead or dormant organizations (cf. Gray 2018). Second, this focus ensures that the included IOs occupy central positions in the architecture of global governance. In line with previous research, I expect actors at the international level to pay more attention to IOs that have standing (Hooghe et al. 2017, p. 16). Likewise, global IOs make decisions with implications for nearly all global citizens, which should direct attention toward their policy agenda.

To arrive at a final sample of IOs, I use a sampling strategy that seeks to strike a balance between data availability and representativity. Specifically, I started from the population of major global IOs and then applied two criteria: availability of longitudinal data on NSA participation[4] in the meetings of an IO's core policy-making bodies, and representativeness of the selected IOs in terms of issue orientation and status as UN agency. Using a stratified random sampling strategy, I selected eight IOs from three distinct issue ar-

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[4]Since the collection of data on NSA participation is more resource intensive and offers lower data availability than policy output, I use this criterion, rather than longitudinal data availability on policy output.

eas,[5] while simultaneously ensuring that UN agencies and non-agencies were appropriately represented in the sample. The final sample covers a broad range of IOs, from high profile organizations, like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to lesser-known organizations, like the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); and from environmental IOs, like the International Whaling Commission (IWC), to human rights IOs, like the International Labour Organization (ILO).

I operate with IO bodies as the unit of analysis, focusing on the two main policy-making bodies of each IO—typically a plenary body and an executive council. This focus is motivated by two concerns. First, the central inter-state policy-making bodies in IOs can be expected to make the most consequential decisions. Second, there are important research design benefits of focusing on more than one body. A crucial difficulty in estimating the effect of NSA participation on the policy-making performance of an IO is that a range of potential confounding factors are difficult or impossible to measure. For example, a crucial confounding factor—the population of problems that could have been addressed by a policy in a given year—is unobservable. This makes it difficult to determine whether a statistical association between NSA participation and policy-making performance indicates a causal relationship, or whether it is spurious. By studying two bodies within each IO, I reduce the severity of this problem, since I can control for

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[5]I rely on the distinction between economic, social, and political IOs in the Correlates of War Intergovernmental Organizations dataset (Pevehouse et al. 2020).

general forms of confounding factors that affect both bodies within an IO in a given year. Concretely, this strategy exploits the probable assumption that two bodies within the same IO are more similar, in terms of external factors like the problem pressure they face in a particular year, than two bodies in different IOs. In other words, observing that both participation and policy-making performance increase in the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Health Assembly, while participation and policy-making performance remain stable in the WHO's Executive Board, provides stronger evidence of a causal effect than observing that both participation and policy-making performance increase in the WHO's World Health Assembly, while participation and policy-making performance remain stable in the ILO's International Labour Conference.

Dependent Variable: Policy Output

The main dependent variable is the number of policies adopted by an IO body in a given year. To gather these data, I drew on a recent dataset capturing the policy output of 30 IOs from 1980 to 2015 (Sommerer et al. 2022). This dataset includes data on the main decision-making body in six of the eight IOs included in my sample. I extended these data forward to 2017 and backward to 1975, expanded them to also include the executive body in each IO, and added the policy output for the two IOs not included in the existing data.

In complementing the existing data on policy output, I took care to follow

a similar procedure to the one used to collect the original dataset. Consequently, I counted all types of IO policy output adopted by an IO body, whether listed as, for example, resolutions, decisions, or declarations (Sommerer et al. 2022). I also conducted spot-checks by re-counting parts of the existing data to ensure that I arrived at the same number of policies. Most IO bodies publish policies as individual documents or list them in the summary records of meetings, in which case identifying the number of adopted policies was straightforward. For two bodies, the IWC's Scientific Committee and the ILO's Governing Body, I was unable to find lists of policy output, and instead relied on an alternative strategy by counting the number of agenda points in a meeting under which a decision was made. This strategy approximates the fact that IO policies, like agenda points, tend to concern a particular topic. The strategy's primary aim, however, is to ensure comparability within IO bodies over time, rather than between them.

Figure 1 illustrates patterns of policy output across the 15 bodies in the sample. There are two notable features in these patterns. First, there are no clear general trends in the number of adopted policies. Some IO bodies, like the WHO's World Health Assembly and Executive Board, display a downward development in the number of adopted policies, whereas others, like the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) World Meteorological Congress, display an increase over time in the number of adopted policies. Some IO bodies, like the ILO's International Labour Conference, display relatively stable patterns over time, whereas others, like the IWC's Commission,

show extensive variation over time.

Second, the patterns over time are relatively similar between different bodies within the same IO. While the absolute numbers of adopted policies tend to differ across IO bodies within the same IO, the trends are broadly similar. For example, the decline over time in the number of adopted policies is apparent in both bodies of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as both bodies of the WHO. Both bodies of the UNWTO display an initial increase in the number of adopted policies, followed by a relatively stable development. And the bodies of the WMO, as well as the ILO, follow a largely stable pattern over time, except for sudden increases at the end of the observed time period.[6] The exception to this tendency for IO bodies to develop in similar ways is the WTO, where it is difficult to discern a general trend within the Ministerial Conference and the General Council; and the IWC, where the Scientific Committee displays a steady increase in adopted policies, but the Commission displays an initial increase in adopted policies, followed by a later decrease after 1993. The overall similarities between IO bodies within the same IO illustrates that activity levels tend to covary across several bodies within the same IO. This observation supports the decision to operate with two bodies per IO, since it suggests that comparisons between bodies within the same IO can help isolate the effect of NSA participation net of the general problem pressure facing the IO.

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[6]Both of these sudden changes are potentially the product of changes in reporting practice in the organizations, and I therefore exclude these years from the main analyses. I include them in the robustness checks.
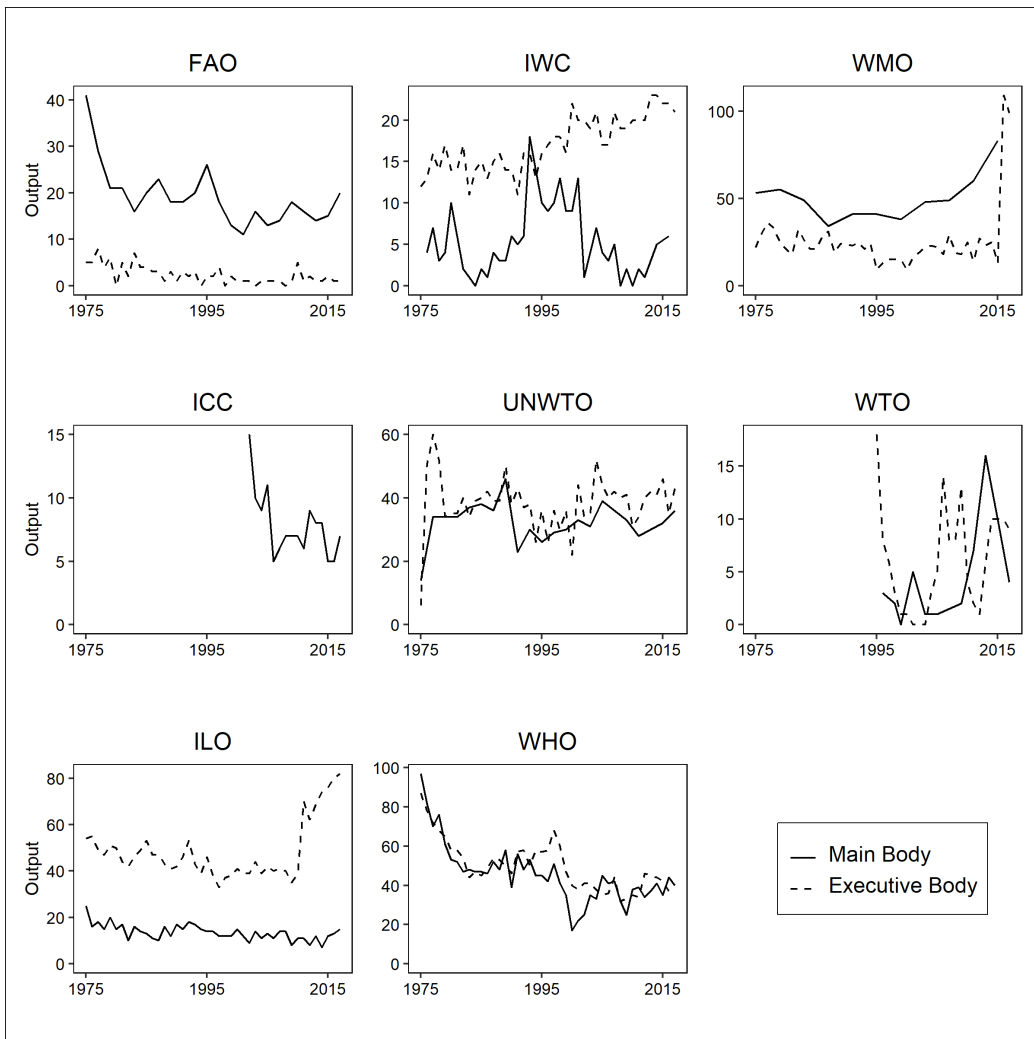
Figure 1: Policy output over time

Independent Variable: Participation Patterns

The main independent variable is the number of unique NSA participants in an IO body in a given year. To assemble these data, I collected meeting documents from the digital archives of the selected IOs and identified as participating NSAs all organizations that took part in a meeting in their own right (i.e., not as part of a member state delegation) and that did not constitute intergovernmental organizations. Concretely, this typically meant all non-IO organizations listed as "Observers" in a meeting record. I count the number of organizations, not the number of representatives, and treat national branches or particular offices of NSAs as part of their main organization. In a few instances, IO bodies hosted special guests, and invited speakers or experts. Since the role of these guests, speakers, and experts is likely to be qualitatively different from that of other NSA participants, I do not include them in the data. For IO bodies that hold several meetings per year, I code up to three meetings, and only count each NSA once for a given year. If a body holds more than three meetings per year, I purposefully select one meeting per third of the year to ensure that the selected meetings are comparable over time. While IO bodies sometimes hold extra-ordinary meetings to address specific issues, I only code regular meetings.

Figure 2 plots the number of NSA participants in the policy-making bodies of IOs. Two patterns stand out as particularly important. First, there is no clear trend toward either more or less NSA participation over time. Some IOs, like the UNWTO's Executive Council, display increasing levels

of participation, whereas others, like the FAO's Conference, have witnessed decreasing levels of participation. In some IO bodies, like the IWC Commission, participation patterns are characterized by significant variation during the observed time period, with an initial increase followed by decreasing participation in the 2000s. Other IO bodies, like the WHO's Executive Board, display relatively stable participation patterns.

Second, while there are similarities in the overtime developments in bodies that are part of the same IO, there is also important variation between them that can be exploited to identify the effect of participation on policy-making performance. For example, participation increased substantially in the UNWTO's General Assembly in the mid-1990s, whereas no corresponding increase took place in the UNWTO's Executive Council. Conversely, participation decreased in the IWC's Scientific Committee in the mid-1980s, whereas no corresponding decrease took place in the IWC's main decision-making body, the Commission. And in the WTO, the Ministerial Conference displays large variation in participation over time, whereas participation in the General Council remains at zero.

In the main analyses, I modify the participation variable to test different hypotheses. When testing the direct relationship between participation and policy-making performance (H1 and H2), I rely on a simple count of NSAs as the main independent variable. To test the conditional relationships, I draw on three distinct strategies. First, I test the curvilinear relationship (H3) by including a quadratic term in addition to the basic count of NSAs. Second,
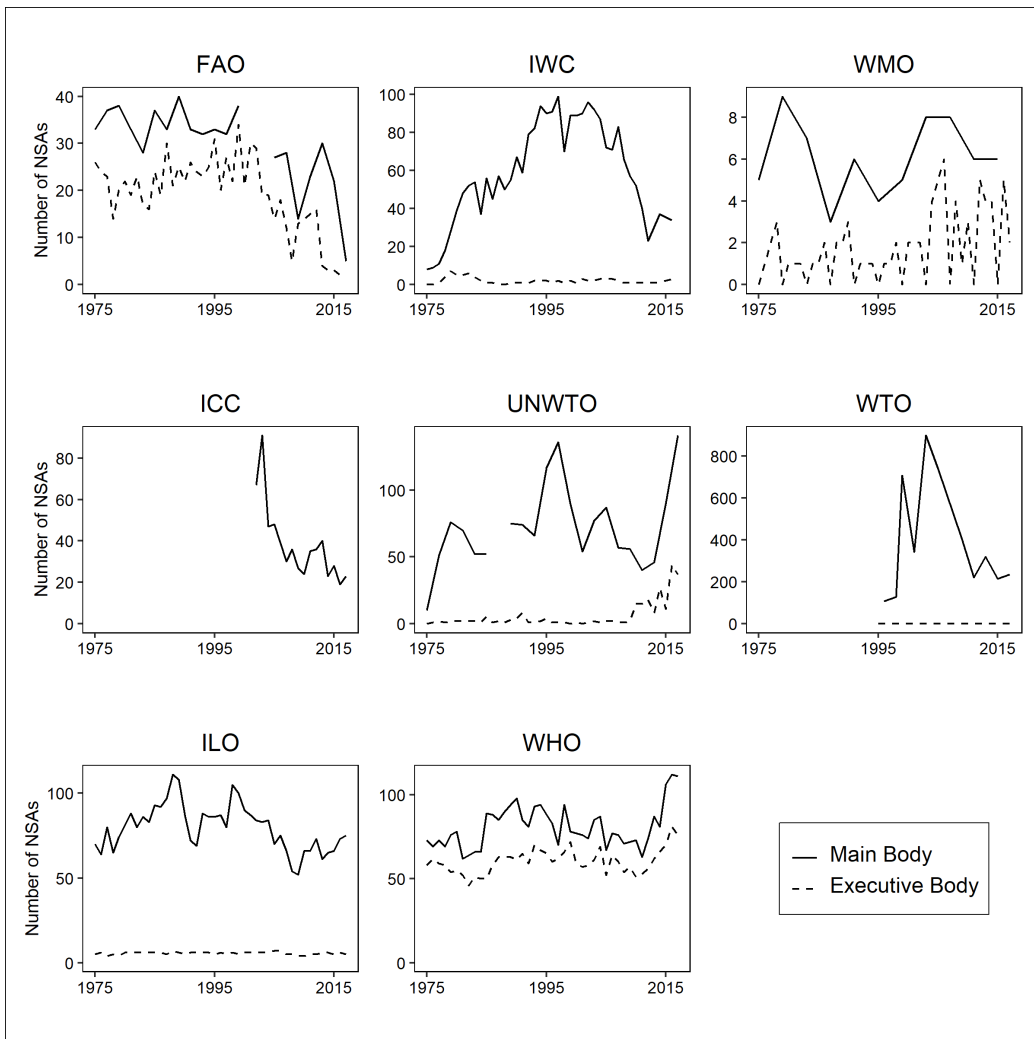
Figure 2: NSA participation over time

I test for differences between different types of NSAs (H4) by disaggregating the participation variable into counts of *economic NSAs*, e.g., business associations and professional organizations; *CSOs*, e.g., environmental organizations and other organizations that represent citizen interests; and *other NSAs*, e.g., research institutes and other NSAs that do not clearly represent interests. Third, I test the conditional relationship between participation and depth of access by including an interaction term multiplying participation by access *depth*. The depth indicator is sourced from the *Transaccess* dataset (Sommerer and Tallberg 2017), and captures the extent to which an IO body gives NSAs deep—for example by allowing NSAs to present statements at meetings—or shallow—for example by allowing NSAs to observe meetings—opportunities for involvement in policy-making. The original variable takes on five different values ranging from no access rights to access rights comparable to those of member states, e.g., in the shape of voting rights. I divide the variable into three qualitatively distinct categories representing no access; passive access, e.g., being allowed to observe meetings; and active access, e.g., being allowed to present statements at meetings.

Control Variables

I control for a set of potential confounding factors that may affect both the number of NSAs participating in an IO body, and the number of policies adopted by an IO body. First, I control for the number of *member states* in the IO body. This is a potential confounding factor because a high number of

26

member states may increase the number of NSAs interested in participating in the IO body, while simultaneously making it more difficult to reach an agreement on policies. For IO bodies where all member states are allowed to participate, I rely on member state figures from the Correlates of War Intergovernmental Organizations dataset (Pevehouse et al. 2020) and update the data by adding the years 2015 to 2017. For most of the executive councils, where only a subset of member states take part, I collect member state data from IO documents, focusing on the first meeting held in each year. Since the number of member states is unlikely to have a linear effect on policy-making performance, I logarithmize the variable.

Second, I control for the extent to which an IO has a *democratic membership*. Democracies are often seen as particularly likely to produce large NSA populations (Dellmuth and Bloodgood 2019, pp. 260–261), and are often assumed to be particularly cooperative in international relations (see e.g., Sommerer et al. 2022). The indicator captures an IO body's average member state score on the Polity V index (Marshall and Gurr 2020) in a given year.

Third, I control for the amount of *media attention* devoted to an IO in a given year. Media attention is likely to increase NSA activities toward IOs (Rauh and Zürn 2020), and may also affect the number of policies adopted by an IO. For example, media attention can act as a proxy for the problem pressure facing an IO in a given year. The indicator is sourced from Nexis Uni and captures the number of mentions of the full name of each IO in The Associated Press, a newswire selected based on its global coverage as well as

the longitudinal availability of articles in Nexis.[7] I logarithmize the variable to account for non-constant marginal effects.[8]

Fourth, I control for the *policy scope* of an IO. An IO that expands into new policy areas may attract attention from more NSAs, but its broader mandate may also increase the adoption of policies. The indicator captures the yearly sum of policy areas in which an IO works (Hooghe et al. 2019).

Fifth and finally, I also include *depth* of access as a control variable. The depth of access is a potential confounding factor both because deep access arrangements may incentivize participation from NSAs, and because deep NSA involvement may generate higher policy-making performance. Conversely, shallow access may create frustration among NSAs, who then choose not to participate (Anderl et al. 2021), while at the same time not offering NSAs meaningful opportunities to provide policy-relevant information that could form the basis of new policy.[9]

Model Specification

To isolate the relationship between NSA participation and policy-making performance, I estimate two sets of models. The first set of models estimates the effect of NSA participation through a comparison between IO bodies in the same year. Specifically, these models include fixed effects for IO bodies

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[7]Articles are available back to and including 1977. I impute years 1975-1976 with the average value for 1977-1978.

[8]$Ln(x + 1)$

[9]Another relevant control variable would be voting rules within IO bodies, but considering that the voting rules for policy initiation and decision making have not changed in the relevant bodies during the observation period, I do not include it as a control.

and years, as well as control variables for time-varying IO and body specific confounders. The second set of models adopt a stricter design, and estimate the effect of NSA participation through a comparison between IO bodies within the same IO in the same year. These models include fixed effects for IO bodies and IO-years, as well as control variables for the time-varying IO body specific confounders. None of the IO level control variables are included in these models, since they are perfectly collinear with the IO-year fixed effects. Since the dependent variable is a count, I estimate both types of models as Poisson regressions assuming a log-linear relationship between the outcome and the independent variables. Concretely, the two models take the following forms:

$$E(Y_{ijt} \mid P_{ijt-1}, \mathbf{X}_{ijt-1}, \mathbf{Z}_{jt-1}, \gamma_i, \lambda_t) = \exp(\beta_1 P_{ijt-1} + \beta_k \mathbf{X}_{ijt-1} + \beta_l \mathbf{Z}_{jt-1} + \gamma_i + \lambda_t)$$

$$E(Y_{ijt} \mid P_{ijt-1}, \mathbf{X}_{ijt-1}, \gamma_i, \alpha_{jt}) = \exp(\beta_1 P_{ijt-1} + \beta_k \mathbf{X}_{ijt-1} + \gamma_i + \alpha_{jt})$$

Where Y_{ijt} is the number of policies adopted by body i in IO j at time t, P_{ijt-1} is the number of NSA participants in the IO body, $\mathbf{X}_{ijt-1}$ is a vector of time-varying IO body level control variables, and $\mathbf{Z}_{jt-1}$ is a vector of time-varying IO level control variables. The main independent variable and all control variables are lagged by one meeting-year.[10] Finally, γ_i and λ_t are IO

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[10]This means that independent variable values in IOs that meet less frequently than

body and year fixed effects, while α_{jt} are IO-year fixed effects.

I estimate all models with cluster robust standard errors, given the risk of autocorrelation in panel data. There are relevant arguments for clustering at the IO body, as well as the IO level (Cameron and Miller 2015), but I report standard errors clustered at the IO level, considering that this typically results in the most conservative standard errors in my models.

Results

What is the relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making performance? Table 1 displays the results of regression models estimating this relationship. Models 1, 3, 5, and 7 include IO body and year fixed effects, as well as a set of IO and IO body level control variables. Models 2, 4, 6, and 8 include IO body and IO-year fixed effects, and a set of IO body level control variables. All variables measuring the number of NSAs are divided by ten to improve presentation. The analyses generate several important results.

First, models 1 and 2 do not support the existence of a direct positive (*H1*) or negative (*H2*) relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making performance. The coefficient of *number* is small in substantive terms, not statistically significant, and its sign is not consistent across the models. This result suggests that NSA participation is unlikely to have a direct linear

annually are lagged to the previous year in which a meeting was held.

Table 1: Poisson regression estimating the effect of NSA participation on policy output

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Number	0.005	-0.001	0.059***	0.050**			-0.008***	-0.020***
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.021)			(0.002)	(0.000)
Number^2			-0.001***	-0.001***				
			(0.000)	(0.000)				
Number $\times$ Depth (active)							0.055***	0.055***
							(0.018)	(0.018)
Economic					0.032	-0.004		
					(0.025)	(0.035)		
CSO					-0.045	0.003		
					(0.032)	(0.070)		
Other NSAs					0.023	-0.013		
					(0.034)	(0.027)		
Depth (active)							0.189	0.795***
							(0.176)	(0.003)
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	462	360	462	360	462	360	457	356

*p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.*

effect on policy-making performance. Similarly, models 5 and 6 grant little support to the conditional hypothesis (*H4*) that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance would be stronger for CSOs than for economic NSAs. The coefficients of both *Economic* and *CSO* are small in substantive terms, not statistically significant, and their signs are not consistent across the models. This indicates that participation from different types of NSAs is unlikely to drive variation in the strength of the relationship between participation and performance.

Instead, the results grant support to non-linearity and depth of access as key conditioning factors. To begin with, models 3 and 4 grant support to the hypothesis (*H3*) that the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is non-linear. Across both models, *number* and $number^2$ have the expected sign and are significant at conventional levels. This result suggests that the marginal effect of an increase in participation is higher when starting from low levels of participation than when starting from high levels of participation. And at very high levels of participation, the marginal effect may even be negative. Furthermore, models 7 and 8^{11} support the hypothesis (*H5*) that the depth of NSA access conditions the relationship between participation and policy-making performance. The coefficient for *Number × Depth (active)* is positive and statistically significant at the 99 percent level across both models. This result suggests that the relationship

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[11] All models that include this interaction term exclude observations where depth is zero, since some depth of access is a necessary precondition for participation.

between participation and performance is stronger in IO bodies that give NSAs an active role in policy-making than in IO bodies that only give them a passive role.

To illustrate the direct and conditional relationships between participation and performance, Figure 3 vizualises the marginal effects of models 2, 4, 6, and 8. Across all panels, the figure captures marginal effects of a 10 NSA increase with 95 percent confidence intervals, and the y-axes represent semi-elasticities, which can be interpreted as percentage increases in policy-making performance.[12] To begin with, Panel B illustrates the decreasing and eventually negative marginal effect of NSA participation. Initially, the marginal effect is positive. For example, expanding NSA participation from 10 to 20 participants is associated with a 5 percent increase in policy output, while an expansion from 90 to 100 NSA participants is associated with a 4 percent increase in policy output. Eventually, at around 365 participants, the marginal effect reaches a turning point, after which the addition of more NSA participants starts to have a negative effect. Yet as illustrated by the rug at the bottom of the panel, the large majority of IO bodies face considerably lower levels of participation—typically around 20 to 40 participants, and rarely above 100. The WTO's Ministerial Conference is the only IO body that reaches above 360–370 participants, and it only does so in four years during the observed time period. Yet case study evidence from one of those four years, the 2003 Ministerial Conference in Cancun, illustrates

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[12]E.g., 0.05 represents a 5 percent increase.
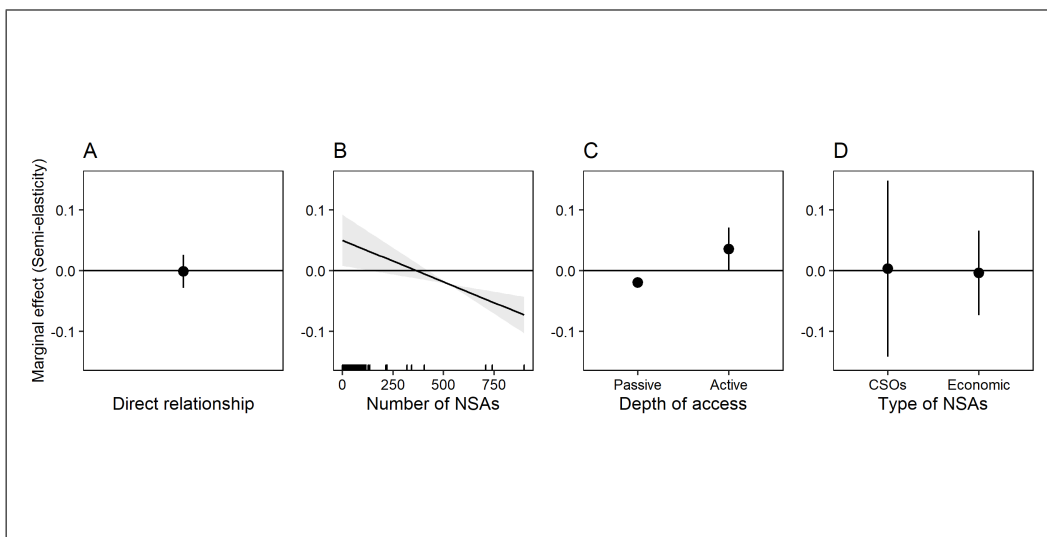
Figure 3: Marginal effects in direct and conditional relationships. 95 percent confidence intervals.

the plausibility of the underlying theoretical mechanism. During that Conference, NSAs could build upon conflicts over trade liberalization between Northern and Southern countries and strengthen the negotiating positions of countries from the South. In the words of Pianta (2014, p. 218): "In a WTO context marked by powerful interests of the North and a large but fragile front of developing countries, civil society activism could 'tip' the outcome towards failure of the negotiations."

Panel C illustrates the relationship between participation and policy-making performance conditional on the depth of access granted to NSAs. In IO bodies where NSAs are given an active role in meetings, a 10 NSA increase is associated with a 4 percent increase in performance. While the wide confidence intervals indicate that the effect is comparatively uncertain, the

coefficient is statistically significant at the 95 percent level. In bodies where NSAs are given a more passive role in meetings, by contrast, the relationship is negative and statistically significant. Concretely, a 10 NSA increase is associated with a 2 percent decrease in output. The varying relationship between participation and performance is illustrated by IOs like the IWC, where the main body, the Commission, has allowed NSAs to make statements during meetings for most of the observation period, whereas access to the second most prominent body, the Scientific Committee, has been limited to an observational role for most NSAs for most of the observation period (Tallberg et al. 2013, pp. 211–213). In the Commission, a substantial increase in participation during the late 1980s and early 1990s was matched by a correspondingly large increase in policy output. By contrast, there is no similar relationship between participation and output in the Scientific Committee, where an overall decrease in participation is coupled with an overtime increase in policy output.

Finally, the marginal effects are small and the confidence intervals wide in panels A and D. This pattern indicates the lack of support for a direct linear relationship between participation and performance, or a relationship conditional on the type of NSA participating.

Taken together, the analyses can be summarized in terms of two principal findings. First, there is no general direct relationship between NSA participation and policy-making performance. Second, the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is more conditional than

typically expected. Specifically, the relationship is positive when (i) NSAs are offered the opportunity to participate actively in policy-making bodies, and (ii) levels of participation are comparatively modest. By contrast, the relationship is null or even negative when NSAs are offered opportunities to participate passively, and when levels of participation are high.

Robustness Checks

I estimate a set of alternative models to assess the robustness of the findings. First, I run the models with a different lag structure (Table A1). Since the meetings of some IO bodies take place less frequently than annually, the one-year lag used in the main models are effectively longer in some bodies than in others. I modify the lag structure by keeping the one-year lag for bodies meeting annually, while values for bodies meeting less frequently are not lagged. The results remain robust to this change, with the exception that *Number* is no longer statistically significant in one of the models including a quadratic term. However, a Wald-test indicates that the polynomial $Number + Number^2$ is nevertheless jointly significant, which supports the presence of an inversed U-shaped relationship.

Second, I estimate models that measure participation as the number of issues participating NSAs represent, rather than the number of participating NSAs (Table A2). This change presents a test of the theoretical mechanism, which emphasizes how an increase in the number of issues and ideas may either improve or decrease policy-making performance. I construct this

alternative indicator by counting the number of unique industries or social issues participating NSAs represent in each IO body-year. The results remain robust to this change in specification. In addition, the coefficient for *number of issues* is now statistically significant in the model excluding the quadratic term, but only when using the least conservative estimation strategy.

Third, I reintroduce the observations from ILO's Governing Board and WMO's Executive Council that were removed due to suspicions that they were the product of reporting changes (Table A3). The results in the less conservative models—those including IO body as well as year fixed effects, but not IO-year fixed effects—undergo three changes: *Number* is only significant at the 90 percent level in the model with a quadratic term, *Number × Depth (active)* is no longer significant, and *Economic* and *CSO* are now significant. However, there are good reasons to remain confident in the original results given that the outliers are most likely the product of new reporting practices in the IO bodies, and given that the results in the most conservative models—those including IO body as well as IO-year fixed effects—remain robust to this change.

Fourth, I estimate models excluding the WTO's Ministerial Conference (Table A4). While the Ministerial Conference is an important IO body, there may be concerns over its comparability to other IO bodies—for example in terms of the sheer amount of NSAs that attend its meetings.[13] The results

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[13] Although its uniqueness should not be exaggerated. For example, the WHO's World Health Assembly, the UNWTO's General Assembly, the IWC's Commission, and the ILO's International Labour Conference have all had levels of NSA participation similar to or

remain robust to this change, with three exceptions. To begin with, the (linear) relationship between participation and output is now significant. This is partly expected, given that very high values of *Number* have been truncated following the removal of the Ministerial Conference. In other words, what remains is the lower range of *Number*, where its relationship with policy output remains predominantly positive. Furthermore, the coefficients for *Economic* and *Other NSA* are now statistically significant. Finally, the coefficient for *Number × Depth (active)* is now negative, rather than positive, in the most conservative specification. In this particular robustness check, however, the less conservative model is likely more reliable than the conservative one. When using IO-year fixed effects, removing the Ministerial Conference effectively also implies removing WTO's General Council, since no IO-years in WTO have more than one observation when the Ministerial Conference is excluded, and IO-years with only one observation do not contribute to the estimation of the key coefficients. Removing both the Ministerial Conference and the General Council leads to a large reduction in IO bodies that give NSAs opportunities for passive involvement in policy-making, which means that the interaction effect is unreliably estimated.

Fifth, I estimate the models on data including international bodies with similar levels of participation as the WTO's Ministerial Conference (Table A5). Since the Ministerial Conference is the only body in the sample with participation levels above the turning point of the quadratic relationship,

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higher than the lower end of the Ministerial Conferences' participation levels.

there may be concerns about how well this relationship extends beyond the analyzed data. I therefore estimate models including the Conferences of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which both have participation at a magnitude similar to that of the Ministerial Conference.[14] While these bodies are typically not considered IOs, they are a second-best to adding additional IOs, given the empirical rarity of IO bodies with participation levels similar to that of the WTO and the centrality of the CBD and the UNFCCC in existing research on NSA participation in international politics (e.g., Uhre 2014; Hanegraaff et al. 2016). The results remain robust to this change when including the CBD, but not when including UNFCCC. This suggests that the results from the main analyses do extend beyond the original data, but not to all international negotiations.

Sixth, I run the models using OLS instead of Poisson regression (Table A6). While it is standard practice to use Poisson models for count data, it is possible that the log-linear relationship assumed by the model does not accurately capture the relationship between dependent and explanatory variables. The key results are robust to this change in specification.

Taken together, the robustness checks reinforce conviction in the main findings. They highlight that there is little evidence of a direct linear relationship between participation and output, and also grant further empirical

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[14]The author is grateful to Andreas Nordang Uhre for sharing data on participation in these bodies.

support to the presence of a more conditional relationship.

Conclusion

NSA participation in the policy-making bodies of IOs is typically expected to have important implications for policy-making performance. One prominent expectation holds that extensive participation offers opportunities for improved policy-making performance, whereas another suggests that NSA participation may prevent effective policy-making. Yet existing research offers some support for each expectation, and thereby has difficulties adjudicating between them. This paper helps to account for the contradictory findings in existing research by providing a new perspective on the relationship between NSA participation and IO policy-making. The paper's findings are two-fold.

First, there is no direct relationship between NSA participation and policy-making performance. The analyses grant no support to either of the predominant expectations about a positive or a negative linear relationship. Second, instead, the relationship between participation and policy-making performance is more conditional than typically expected. Specifically, the relationship is positive when (i) NSAs are offered the opportunity to participate actively in policy-making bodies, and (ii) levels of participation are comparatively modest. By contrast, the relationship is null or even negative when NSAs are offered opportunities to participate passively, and when levels of participation are high.

These findings have three broader implications. First, a burgeoning body of literature studies NSA participation in IOs (e.g., Hanegraaff et al. 2011; Betzold 2013; Uhre 2014; Hanegraaff et al. 2016; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017; Petersson et al. 2019; Vikberg 2023). While this literature typically focuses on the patterns, drivers, and strategies of NSA participation, it only rarely studies its consequences. This paper suggests that NSA participation may have a sizeable impact on the functioning of IOs by altering their policy-making performance. Future research should explore this relationship further, but also continue to assess the consequences of participation on other dimensions—such as distribution, IO democracy, and IO legitimacy (cf. Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015).

Second, another strand of literature studies the patterns and drivers of IO policy-making performance (e.g., Schulz and Konig 2000; Ehlermann and Ehring 2005; Elsig 2010; Panke et al. 2022; Sommerer et al. 2022). While this literature often points to explanatory factors like decision-making rules, member state interests, access provisions, and secretariat autonomy, this paper indicates that NSA participation should also be added to that list. If future research neglects to incorporate NSAs into its explanatory models, it will risk missing out on a key group of actors with important consequences for IO policy-making.

Third, this paper's findings have implications for debates about the consequences of NSA participation for effectiveness in global governance. On the one hand, this paper's findings hold a promise to the extent that NSA partic-

ipation typically increases IO policy-making performance. While very high levels of participation may reduce policy-making performance, the typical IO body remains well below these levels of participation. Yet there are two important qualifications to this optimism. First, policy-making performance does not necessarily improve IOs' ability to solve societal problems. If the adopted policies are watered down, not fit for purpose, or not complied with, they are unlikely to have a significant impact on societal outcomes. Second, NSAs are unlikely to increase policy-making performance unless they are given substantial institutional opportunities for participation. If NSAs are reduced to passive observers of policy-making, their impact will likely be marginal.

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Appendix

Table A1: Poisson regression with alternative lag.

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Number	0.005	0.009	0.064***	0.039			-0.011***	-0.019***
	(0.011)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.026)			(0.002)	(0.001)
Number^2			-0.001***	-0.001**				
			(0.000)	(0.000)				
Number × Depth (active)							0.057***	0.049**
							(0.019)	(0.023)
Economic					0.032	0.009		
					(0.029)	(0.027)		
CSO					-0.049	0.022		
					(0.033)	(0.062)		
Other NSAs					0.020	-0.039		
					(0.048)	(0.030)		
Depth (passive)	0.279	0.199	0.319	0.304	0.309	0.209		
	(0.200)	(0.656)	(0.203)	(0.655)	(0.188)	(0.754)		
Depth (active)	0.457	0.746	0.537	0.847	0.520	0.756	0.194	0.567**
	(0.394)	(0.860)	(0.366)	(0.869)	(0.362)	(0.979)	(0.207)	(0.249)
Media attention (ln)	-0.041		-0.045		-0.023		-0.046	
	(0.034)		(0.040)		(0.031)		(0.041)	
Member States (ln)	0.142	-0.340	0.080	-0.345	0.062	-0.302	0.072	-0.331
	(0.207)	(0.344)	(0.187)	(0.324)	(0.151)	(0.346)	(0.200)	(0.327)
Democratic membership	0.009	0.024	0.010	0.024	0.008	0.023	0.009	0.023
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.027)
Policy Scope	0.030		0.047		-0.000		0.041	
	(0.156)		(0.132)		(0.139)		(0.137)	
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	466	364	466	364	466	364	461	360

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.

Table A2: Poisson regression estimating the effect of the number of represented issues on policy output

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number of issues	0.140**	0.071	0.292***	0.250**	-0.095***	-0.207***
	(0.063)	(0.084)	(0.091)	(0.098)	(0.036)	(0.009)
Number of issues^2			-0.040***	-0.044***		
			(0.009)	(0.010)		
Number of issues $\times$ Depth (active)					0.289***	0.334***
					(0.071)	(0.091)
Depth (passive)	0.286*	0.567**	0.279*	0.561*		
	(0.172)	(0.249)	(0.161)	(0.297)		
Depth (active)	0.469	1.336***	0.463	1.305***	0.139	0.717***
	(0.311)	(0.259)	(0.294)	(0.319)	(0.170)	(0.038)
Media attention (ln)	-0.049		-0.047		-0.049	
	(0.030)		(0.030)		(0.031)	
Member States (ln)	0.133	-0.097	0.125	-0.110	0.104	-0.038
	(0.147)	(0.373)	(0.138)	(0.338)	(0.149)	(0.377)
Democratic membership	0.016	0.021	0.015	0.024	0.015	0.023
	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.024)
Policy Scope	0.048		0.040		0.040	
	(0.122)		(0.111)		(0.116)	
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes
Observations	462	360	462	360	457	356

*$p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.

Table A3: Poisson regression including outliers

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Number	0.003	0.002	0.040*	0.062**			-0.006***	-0.020***
	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.025)	(0.025)			(0.002)	(0.000)
Number^2			-0.001**	-0.001***				
			(0.000)	(0.000)				
Number × Depth (active)							0.036	0.066***
							(0.024)	(0.021)
Economic					0.066**	0.013		
					(0.032)	(0.038)		
CSO					-0.111**	-0.009		
					(0.057)	(0.071)		
Other NSAs					-0.041	-0.031		
					(0.050)	(0.046)		
Depth (passive)	0.377*	0.536	0.410*	0.807**	0.402**	0.508		
	(0.216)	(0.351)	(0.217)	(0.316)	(0.200)	(0.477)		
Depth (active)	0.593*	1.322***	0.643*	1.592***	0.644**	1.292**	0.220	0.793***
	(0.350)	(0.388)	(0.345)	(0.349)	(0.324)	(0.535)	(0.185)	(0.003)
Media attention (ln)	-0.032		-0.035		0.008		-0.036	
	(0.069)		(0.072)		(0.052)		(0.072)	
Member States (ln)	-0.183	-0.607	-0.220	-0.612*	-0.251*	-0.577*	-0.233	-0.603*
	(0.239)	(0.371)	(0.239)	(0.314)	(0.151)	(0.351)	(0.244)	(0.319)
Democratic membership	-0.036	-0.005	-0.036	0.005	-0.030	-0.004	-0.036	0.003
	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.023)
Policy Scope	0.218		0.223		0.140		0.218	
	(0.212)		(0.203)		(0.169)		(0.205)	
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	471	367	471	367	471	367	466	363

*$p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.

Table A4: Poisson regression excluding WTO Ministerial Conference

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Number	0.045**	0.036*	0.082***	0.077***			-0.144	0.292***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.009)			(0.087)	(0.055)
Number^2			-0.003**	-0.003***				
			(0.001)	(0.001)				
Number × Depth (active)							0.188**	-0.256***
							(0.091)	(0.049)
Economic					0.107***	0.064***		
					(0.033)	(0.020)		
CSO					-0.006	0.050		
					(0.031)	(0.057)		
Other NSAs					-0.025*	-0.048**		
					(0.013)	(0.023)		
Depth (passive)	0.321*	0.881***	0.330*	0.962***	0.337*	0.924***		
	(0.185)	(0.103)	(0.180)	(0.082)	(0.187)	(0.223)		
Depth (active)	0.528	1.690***	0.544*	1.770***	0.548*	1.756***	0.160	0.877***
	(0.325)	(0.104)	(0.317)	(0.084)	(0.319)	(0.250)	(0.198)	(0.013)
Media attention (ln)	-0.044		-0.043		-0.028		-0.045	
	(0.032)		(0.031)		(0.022)		(0.032)	
Member States (ln)	0.119	-0.174	0.104	-0.177	0.069	-0.109	0.094	-0.193
	(0.153)	(0.323)	(0.143)	(0.321)	(0.127)	(0.333)	(0.160)	(0.320)
Democratic membership	0.017	0.024	0.017	0.027	0.019	0.020	0.016	0.024
	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.026)
Policy Scope	0.072		0.077		0.023		0.071	
	(0.125)		(0.122)		(0.104)		(0.126)	
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	452	348	452	348	452	348	447	344

* $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.

Table A5: Poisson regression expanding data to international conventions

Model:	Including UNFCCC (1)	Including UNFCCC (2)	Including CBD (3)	Including CBD (4)
Number	0.002	0.016	0.006	0.056***
	(0.002)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.015)
Number^2		0.000		-0.001***
		(0.000)		(0.000)
Depth (passive)	0.274	0.288	0.260	0.324*
	(0.172)	(0.175)	(0.182)	(0.182)
Depth (active)	0.446	0.467	0.422	0.531*
	(0.317)	(0.318)	(0.332)	(0.316)
Media attention (ln)	-0.050*	-0.054*	-0.045	-0.046
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.033)
Member States (ln)	0.161	0.148	0.191	0.110
	(0.156)	(0.155)	(0.169)	(0.148)
Democratic membership	0.014	0.015	0.013	0.016
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Policy Scope	0.066	0.069	0.068	0.071
	(0.142)	(0.138)	(0.137)	(0.123)
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	484	484	473	473

Actual Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.

Table A6: OLS regression estimating the effect of NSA participation on policy output

Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Number	0.076	-0.002	0.857**	0.642***			-0.002	-0.078***
	(0.099)	(0.068)	(0.289)	(0.157)			(0.051)	(0.004)
Number^2			-0.009**	-0.007***				
			(0.003)	(0.001)				
Number × Depth (active)							1.053***	0.749***
							(0.250)	(0.121)
Economic					0.437	0.180		
					(0.642)	(0.351)		
CSO					-0.753	-0.272		
					(1.106)	(0.618)		
Other NSAs					1.638	-0.595		
					(0.929)	(0.825)		
Depth (passive)	5.245	4.107	5.743	7.766**	5.276	3.429		
	(4.612)	(3.571)	(4.963)	(2.874)	(4.534)	(4.122)		
Depth (active)	9.728	10.798**	10.320	14.680***	10.158	10.007*	4.264	6.983***
	(7.302)	(3.971)	(7.369)	(3.175)	(7.109)	(4.654)	(2.632)	(0.009)
Media attention (ln)	-1.194		-1.175		-1.015		-1.302	
	(0.982)		(1.065)		(0.784)		(1.091)	
Member States (ln)	7.208	3.838	6.629	3.489	6.510	4.216	5.437	3.325
	(4.678)	(11.943)	(4.538)	(11.506)	(3.756)	(11.783)	(4.621)	(11.419)
Democratic membership	0.129	0.664	0.220	0.789	0.021	0.667	0.206	0.813
	(0.731)	(0.812)	(0.703)	(0.755)	(0.708)	(0.809)	(0.710)	(0.750)
Policy Scope	5.443		5.751		5.177		5.573	
	(3.556)		(3.524)		(2.948)		(3.505)	
IO Body Fixed-Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed-Effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
IO-Year Fixed-Effects		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	462	361	462	361	462	361	457	357

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01. Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered on IOs.