1 Introduction

International cooperation has undergone a fundamental transformation in recent decades. While international organizations (IOs) were long the exclusive preserve of member governments, the past 20–30 years have witnessed a shift from interstate cooperation to more complex forms of governance, involving participation by transnational actors (TNAs), such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, philanthropic foundations, business associations, and multinational corporations. Increasingly, international organizations are engaging transnational actors as policy experts, service providers, compliance watchdogs, and stakeholder representatives.

This development effectively spans all areas of global governance. International organizations with an historical record of no or limited access, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO), have gradually opened up to TNAs, while international organizations that already had a tradition of interaction, such as the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe, have become even more open. An absolute absence of TNA access to international organizations is today exceedingly rare, which testifies to the breadth of this transnational turn in global governance.

The ambition of this book is to offer a systematic theoretical and empirical account of this development. Guided by the question of *where, how, and why international organizations offer TNAs access to global policy-making?*, it aims to provide the most comprehensive analysis of TNA access to date. Understanding TNA access to IOs is central to the theory and practice of global governance. Once we know where, how, and why IOs open up, we can get traction on some of the critical questions of our day. Who governs in world politics? When do states share authority with private actors? What drives the design of international organizations? How does the transnational turn affect political outcomes? Can civil society involvement help ameliorate democratic deficits in global governance?

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The book's contribution to existing knowledge is threefold. To begin with, it is empirically comprehensive through its broad, comparative scope. While existing contributions mainly consist of single-case studies, this book maps and explains TNA access to the full spectrum of international organizations. In this exercise, it draws on a novel and unique dataset on TNA access to 50 international organizations and almost 300 sub-bodies over the time period 1950–2010. This makes it possible to identify the principal patterns in TNA access across multiple dimensions. In addition, we offer four case studies, drawn from different issue areas and world regions.

Furthermore, the book is theoretically ambitious, developing and testing multiple explanations of TNA access. While existing research is dominated by descriptive accounts of increasing IO openness, this book assesses the individual and combined explanatory power of three theoretical logics. One explanation highlights the benefits to IOs of engaging TNAs for functions they themselves are less well-positioned to conduct. Another explanation suggests that IOs open up to tame popular opposition that endangers their legitimacy and authority. A third explanation posits that growing TNA access reflects the emergence, spread, and consolidation of a norm of participatory democratic governance. In addition, we analyze the constraining effect of sovereignty concerns, organizational costs, availability of TNAs, and political conflict among states on the extension of access.

Finally, this book is methodologically inclusive through its combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. While the use of statistical methods is rare in existing research on TNAs in global governance, it is nonexistent in combination with in-depth case studies, purposefully selected on the basis of patterns in the overall population of IOs. The mixed-method design of the book generates important complementarities, making it possible both to identify macro-dynamics in the wider population of IOs and to focus on micro-dynamics in specific processes of international design; both to assess the combined explanatory power of a large number of factors and to study causal mechanisms in-depth; and to capture formal as well as informal mechanisms of TNA access to international organizations.

Our argument can be summarized in three points. First, we demonstrate that IOs indeed have undergone a far-reaching institutional transformation over the past 60 years. This shift in IO design pervades all issue areas, all policy functions, and all world regions. The period of most dramatic institutional change has been the past two decades, and there is no indication that this transformation is ending. At the same time, central dimensions of variation have proven resilient even as IOs

have become more open. IOs are consistently most open in the area of human rights, in the policy function of monitoring and enforcement, and in the western hemisphere, while least open in security, decision-making, and the southern hemisphere.

Second, we argue that variation in TNA access within and across IOs is mainly explained by a combination of three factors: demand for the resources and services of TNAs, domestic democratic standards in the membership of IOs, and state concerns with national sovereignty. The principal drivers of greater openness in global governance have been functional demands for TNA resources that enable IOs to address governance problems more efficiently and effectively, and domestic democracy among the member states of IOs. Sovereignty costs associated with reductions in state control have been the principal constraint on TNA access, also contributing to distinct patterns of variation across policy functions and issue areas. The central transformative event in the historical development of TNA access was the end of the Cold War, which led to growing functional demands for TNA involvement in international cooperation and strengthened democracy as a principle of governance.

Third, we conclude that the conventional understanding of TNA access is overly colored by an unfortunate focus in existing research on a select set of international organizations. It is a frequent and influential argument in the literature that IOs primarily have opened up in order to tame opposition from NGOs and social movements. Invariably, this claim is rooted in the experiences of the large economic organizations from the mid 1990s onwards, when popular opposition against the WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the European Union (EU) pushed these IOs toward greater openness. In a comparative perspective, however, neither the protests against these organizations, nor their effects on institutional design, have been typical for IOs at large. The most significant shift toward greater access in global governance had already happened before popular opposition peaked around the year 2000; and outside of the economic realm, protests and legitimization-driven reforms remain the exception.

Beyond its conclusions on TNA access to IOs, the book carries implications for three ongoing debates in international relations (IR) theory. First, it speaks to research on institutional design in international cooperation, challenging common assumptions of stability and inertia in international organizations, and highlighting the complementarities of explanations drawn from alternative theories of institutional design. Second, the book's results carry implications for the literature on transnational activism and influence in global governance, delineating how

the institutional preconditions for TNAs to have an impact in world politics have become considerably more favorable over time. Third, and finally, the book engages the normative debate on democracy in global governance, highlighting limits in the empirical viability of models based on closer civil society involvement.

The puzzle: TNA access to international organizations

The past quarter of a century has witnessed a gradual transformation in the dominant mode of political organization at the global level, from interstate cooperation, negotiated and managed by national governments, to more complex forms of governance, involving transnational, supranational, and subnational actors as well. The state-dominated international organizations of the postwar period have developed into more multifaceted arrangements, and new forms of governance have emerged that involve both public and private actors. The general thrust of these developments has been conceptualized and documented in a string of studies in recent years (e.g., Rosenau and Czempiel 1992; Risse-Kappen 1995; Held and McGrew 2002; Kahler and Lake 2003; Avant et al. 2010).

One area where particularly dramatic developments appear to have taken place is the openness of international organizations vis-à-vis transnational actors. While IOs that historically have been quite closed now seem to have embarked on a process toward greater openness, IOs that already had a tradition of some interaction with civil society and business actors simultaneously appear to have expanded this cooperation.

The UN was among the earliest postwar organizations to offer NGOs access to select bodies, notably the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC). Over the years, the number of NGOs with consultative status has increased dramatically, from 41 in 1948 to about 3,500 today (UN 2012a). In addition, the initial openness of ECOSOC toward NGOs has subsequently spread to other parts of the UN system, generating a pattern where few or no UN bodies, conferences, processes, and funds remain entirely closed. Even the UN Security Council these days interacts with NGOs through the so-called Arria Formula (UN 2012b). Environmental treaties and negotiations constitute another area where TNA involvement has been extensive historically and appears to have accelerated in recent years. The Stockholm conference in 1972 is often heralded as having ushered in a new era of civil society involvement in global environmental governance. Data on international environmental treaties over the past century substantiate this picture, indicating that

delegation of policy functions to private actors has grown dramatically over the past 25 years (Green 2010).

Cases illustrating how once closed IOs gradually have come to open up include the multilateral economic organizations. The World Bank has undergone significant change in this respect under the credo of participatory development. Whereas only 21 percent of all World Bank funded projects involved civil society participation in 1990, this figure had risen to 72 percent in 2006 (World Bank 2009). The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO, traditionally hesitant to engage directly with transnational actors, nowadays invites NGOs as observers at ministerial meetings and grants private actors the right to submit legal briefs on trade disputes. Its ministerial conference in 2005 was attended by more than 700 TNAs, among them faith-based organizations; business, labor, and farmer associations; and human rights, environmental, and development groups (WTO 2009). Even the IMF, by far the most closed of the three economic institutions, appears to have opened up on the margins, consulting with civil society in association with IMF summits.

Figure 1.1 captures this transnational turn in global governance, portraying the enormous growth of international NGOs in the post-World War era, and the equally dramatic expansion of TNA access to IOs during the same period. Not only have international NGOs become more numerous, and come to populate all areas of world politics (Boli and Thomas 1999; Risse 2012); they have also increasingly gained access to IOs.

Yet fundamental differences in TNA access still appear to remain – across as well as within international organizations. To start with, overviews of TNA access in multiple policy domains point to a variegated pattern (Steffek et al. 2008; Jönsson and Tallberg 2010). Civil society and business actors seem to be closely involved in environmental governance, human rights, and development IOs. By contrast, TNAs appear to enjoy much less access to IOs in the fields of security, finance, and migration. Furthermore, earlier studies suggest that TNA access in global governance varies across the different phases of the policy cycle, even within one and the same IO (Steffek 2008; Green 2010). Involvement at the stages of policy formulation and implementation appears to be particularly common, while decision-making often is presented as insulated from private actor participation. Finally, it does not take more than a cursory look at arrangements for TNA involvement in global governance to realize that access, where and when it is offered, varies both in terms of what it entails and to whom it is granted. While some IOs, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and
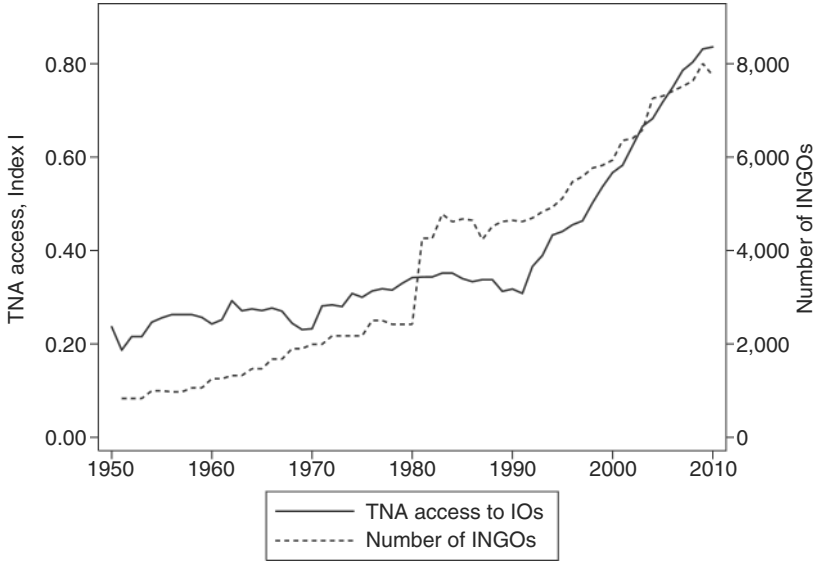
Figure 1.1 Number of INGOs and level of TNA access to IOs, 1950–2010

Source: For TNA access, own data (for details, see Chapter 3). For INGOs, data from the *Yearbook of International Organizations* (Union of International Associations 2010). The data include information for INGOs of types A–D. Between the 18th edition (1978) and the 19th edition (1981) of the *Yearbook*, the coding of INGOs changed. Data on NGOs accredited to ECOSOC suggest a more linear development of the NGO population during these years.

the EU, go as far as offering formal representation to TNAs, other IOs merely provide for consultation or information-sharing arrangements. And while some arrangements are quite exclusive, with invitation lists restricted to experts only, other arrangements are highly inclusive, featuring no or very lax accreditation rules.

These developments and preliminary impressions present us with a set of puzzles. First, why would states, given concerns with national sovereignty and political influence, risk compromising their traditional monopoly of power in international organizations? As evidenced by the earlier examples, TNA access extends beyond the insignificant, to involve inclusion of civil society and business actors in the setting of the policy agenda, the implementation of policy in the field, the monitoring of state commitments, and even authoritative decision-making. Moreover, TNA access nowadays extends beyond low politics to areas

at the heart of national sovereignty, such as international security. Why states that normally are jealous guardians of political autonomy and institutional prerogatives would accept or even promote such a development is as close as we can come to a political science mystery.

Second, what explains the remarkable speed with which this development has taken place? The institutional designs of IOs are notoriously resistant to reform. Changing the constitutional rules of IOs invariably involves substantive institutional hurdles, in the shape of unanimous agreement among the contracting parties, sometimes in combination with some form of domestic ratification. The distributional implications of institutional rules typically generate conflicting state preferences on reform, making agreement difficult to achieve. The capacity of IO bodies to implement institutional changes on their own is normally circumscribed by states' interest in matching delegation with control. The organizational cultures of IOs oftentimes have a stabilizing effect by defining durable institutional norms. And once in place, institutional rules tend to become self-reinforcing, by structuring expectations, presenting adaptation costs, and generating positive feedback effects that serve to lock in the status quo. Yet, these expectations notwithstanding, we have witnessed a dramatic transformation of international organizations over the past few decades.

And finally, why does the openness of international organizations still vary extensively across multiple dimensions? Why would IOs invite transnational actors in some issue areas and for some policy functions, but not others? How can we explain that access, where and when it is offered, sometimes is very far-reaching in terms of what it entails and who gets to be included, but at other times is restrictive in the same regards?

Common for all of these puzzles is the question of what the fundamental forces are that drive and constrain TNA access, thus producing the patterns we observe. Are these developments propelled by changing conceptions of legitimate global governance, by a shift toward governance problems for which TNA involvement is particularly useful, by attempts to stem popular opposition to IOs and their policies, or by some other factor? What is the role of sovereignty concerns, costs of participatory arrangements, the availability of interested TNAs, and the level of political conflict among states in shaping patterns of IO openness?

This book is a response to these puzzles and questions. Focusing explicitly on TNA access to IOs, we seek to explain where, how, and why civil society and business actors are invited to participate in global policy-making. We conceive of TNA access as one of several central

dimensions of the institutional design of IOs, where other dimensions consist of, for instance, policy remit, geographical scope, and the autonomy of IO bodies (cf. Koremenos et al. 2001; Koremenos 2012). TNA access is distinct from TNA participation, even if the two often go together. While access consists of the institutional mechanisms whereby TNAs may take part in the policy process of an IO, participation denotes the presence and activities of TNAs making use of these institutional venues. In this book, we will focus exclusively on institutional access, leaving aside questions of actual participation. Access is an important object of study in itself, as a dimension of institutional design, and as a precondition for TNA participation and influence in global governance.

This emphasis on institutional access should not be misunderstood as an exclusive focus on formal features. Rather, we conceive of access in both formal and informal terms, and see as one of the advantages of the project's research design the possibility of capturing both formal and informal access. While formal access is anchored in treaties, rules of procedure, secondary legislation, and bureaucratic decisions, informal access is developed through customs and practices.

We focus on access for transnational actors, defined as private actors operating in relation to international organizations, rather than alternative but related actor categories, such as NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs). The opening up of international organizations is not restricted exclusively to the nonprofit sector of NGOs and CSOs, but extends to for-profit actors as well, such as corporations and banks. Similarly, IOs do not only grant access to organizational entities, but also to individuals, as in the case of private access to international courts. Restricting the study to NGOs and CSOs would thereby leave out important parts of the phenomenon we wish to map and explain.

We conceptualize TNA access in terms of two primary dimensions: the depth of access and the range of TNAs with access. The depth of access captures the level of involvement offered to transnational actors through rules and practices. Do TNAs enjoy a deep level of active and direct involvement, perhaps even mirroring that of member states, or is their participation limited to more shallow forms of passive and indirect involvement, such as observing negotiations? The range of access captures the breadth of TNAs entitled to participate. Do all civil society and business actors that are interested in participating in an IO have access to it, or do institutional procedures and practices limit involvement to a subset of TNAs?

When access is offered, this may be granted either by the member states of an IO or by the international bureaucracy servicing the

IO. Where member states grant TNAs access to IOs, this typically takes place through intergovernmental negotiation of formal rules or through state development of informal practices. Where IO bureaucracies offer TNAs access, this normally takes place through decisions or actions by a secretariat, court, or other form of supranational body, expanding interaction with transnational actors. By contrast, our focus on institutional access precludes actors on the outside of an IO defining the terms of engagement. Access, after all, is provided by someone. While civil society and business actors may exert pressure on IOs to open up, the eventual decision of whether or not to offer access always rests with member states and international bureaucracies.

The research design: a mixed-method approach

This book adopts a comparative, mixed-method approach. The combination of a large-N analysis of TNA access in an extensive number of IOs and in-depth case studies of TNA access in specific IOs generates important complementarities (on the merits of mixed-method designs generally, see King et al. 1994; Brady and Collier 2004; Lieberman 2005). While the quantitative analysis maps long-term dynamics in a wider population of international organizations, and makes it possible to assess the combined explanatory power of a large number of factors, the case studies focus on micro-dynamics in specific processes of institutional design, and are particularly well-suited for studying causal mechanisms. Moreover, whereas the quantitative analysis is limited to formal institutional design, the case studies capture informal mechanisms of access as well.

The quantitative component of the research design builds on a novel and unique dataset compiled for this project, presented in depth in Chapter 3. The dataset contains information on formal TNA access to 298 organizational bodies of 50 IOs over the time period 1950–2010. The IOs have been selected on the basis of a stratified random sample from a list of 182 international organizations, based on a revised and updated version of the Correlates of War Intergovernmental Organizations Dataset (COW-IGO) (Pevehouse et al. 2004). Stratification allowed us to ensure the representation of international organizations from a large variety of policy areas and world regions. As a result, our sample includes a balanced selection of major and well-known IOs, like the UN and the WTO, and less known regional and specialized organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the International Coffee Organization (ICO).

We operate with TNA access to IO bodies, such as ministerial coun-
cils, committees, and secretariats, as the unit of analysis. This choice
permits a multi-dimensional analysis of TNA access that enables an
exploration into the variation of TNA access across as well as *within* IOs.
The dataset exclusively captures formal access, as laid down in treaty
provisions, rules of procedure, ministerial decisions, policy guidelines,
or equivalent. The data have been collected on the basis of documents
from archives, databases, and direct data requests to the relevant IOs.

The dataset allows us to identify the most profound patterns in TNA
access – across time, issue areas, policy functions, types of IO bodies,
and world regions. We also map the extent to which access is deep or
shallow, confined to a select group of TNAs or extended to broad sets of
actors, permanent or easy to revoke, highly codified or more informal,
and granted mainly by states or IO bureaucracies. These descriptive data
are in themselves of great importance for our understanding of TNA
involvement in global governance. But, in addition, we confront them
with expectations of the patterns we would find if certain causal factors
were at play, and thus use them for explanatory purposes as well.

As a second step, we engage in time-series cross-sectional multivari-
ate statistical analysis. We consider it likely at the outset that the vari-
ation we can observe in TNA access may be the product of multiple
explanatory factors. Theoretically, we order the most prominent poten-
tial explanations in terms of three sets of driving factors, as well as
a cross-cutting set of conditioning factors. The explanatory statistical
analysis permits us to assess the causal effects and interactions of these
factors on the relative openness of IO bodies in world politics.

The qualitative component of the research design consists of four
carefully selected case studies. The general purpose of the case stud-
ies is to parse out and illustrate causal mechanisms at work in produc-
ing varying levels of openness toward TNAs within and across IOs.
Process tracing is a central component of this strategy, in light of its
comparative advantages in identifying complex sequences of causality
over time in historical cases (George and Bennett 2005; Gerring 2007).
In contrast to the quantitative analysis, the case studies allow us to
capture informal access, in the shape of noncodified customs and prac-
tices. The case studies draw on a rich variety of primary and secondary
sources, including official documents, interviews, participatory obser-
vation, and existing empirical research.

Inspired by nested analysis in mixed-method research, the four
IOs for intensive study have been drawn from the broader sample
of 50 international organizations. The specific selection of cases has
been informed by the overall patterns of TNA access identified in