International Parliamentary Institutions and their effects on citizens' legitimacy perceptions of International Organizations

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Abstract:

International organizations (IOs) are increasingly establishing International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), meaning they involve national parliamentarians in their decision-making process. Recent studies argue that IOs do this to increase their own legitimacy. So far, however, we do not know if the presence of an IPI actually have the potential to increase the perceived legitimacy of an IO and/or its policies among citizens. Our study seeks to fill this gap by testing whether the involvement of domestic MPs through IPIs in IO policymaking improves legitimacy perceptions among the public through better substantive and descriptive representation. We hypothesize that IPIs can help to improve an IO's sociological legitimacy by allowing for the representation of political views that go beyond the one of the government of the day. Further, we investigate whether the descriptive representation of respondents' electoral districts through their directly elected MP can further improve IO legitimacy. We are currently designing a conjoint survey experiment that exposes citizens to hypothetical scenarios of IO decision-making with varying degree of parliamentary involvement. Beyond assessing whether IOs can hope to be successful in increasing their legitimacy by establishing IPIs, our findings will have implications for further research on the parliamentarization and legitimacy of international politics more broadly.

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Introduction

Various theoretical approaches have emerged in international relations (IR) scholarship on how to assess the legitimacy or lack thereof of IOs. Generally, research has moved towards assessing IO legitimacy, in the theoretical but also empirical realm, across dimensions of input, throughput and output (Scharpf, 1999; Schmidt, 2013) or process and performance (Scholte & Tallberg, 2018). One common point of concern, particularly regarding procedural legitimacy, has been the *lack of parliamentary representation and oversight at the international level*. The diagnosis of a "decline of parliament" in international politics lies at the heart of the so-called democratic deficit of intergovernmental organizations (Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Zürn, 2017). Arguably, as a response to increased normative pressures to become more democratic and accountable, IOs began to establish so-called International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) in the 1990s (Grigorescu, 2015; Schimmelfennig et al., 2020).

While conceivably a step towards more legitimate IOs in theory, a nascent strand of research on IPIs has shown that the vast majority of them remain weak with little to no formal legislative, oversight or appointment powers (Adaku, Agomor, Amoatey, & Tandoh-Offin, 2020; Habegger, 2010; Lipps, 2021; Rocabert, Schimmelfennig, Crasnic, & Winzen, 2018; Schimmelfennig et al., 2020). One prevalent explanation for this is that IOs have acted strategically in establishing IPIs: While they aimed to legitimize their organizations through the establishment of such parliamentary assemblies on paper, they sought to do this without actually sharing their authority with parliamentarians in practice (Schimmelfennig et al., 2020).

The legitimacy calculation on the part of IOs has one fundamental assumption, namely that parliamentary participation can, in fact, legitimize international policymaking in the eyes of the stakeholders of IOs. Whereas IPIs increase the normative-theoretical legitimacy of IOs for some political theorists (Held, 1995; Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005), it is not established whether IPIs translate into higher perceptions of legitimacy among the public. This assumption will be tested in this paper. We ask: *Does parliamentary participation in IO policymaking make the organization more legitimate in the eyes of individual citizens?*

To ascertain this question, we will run a pre-registered conjoint survey experiment in Germany, in which we expose respondents to hypothetical but concrete policy decisions by three different IOs. By varying, among other factors, the degree of parliamentary participation and support in these decisions, we hope to be able to shed some light on the underlying causal mechanisms through which legislative involvement might increase the legitimacy of IOs. Do citizens favor parliamentary participation because they value the institution being involved, do

they appreciate more substantive representation for opposition party views, or do they not care at all?

We contribute to the rich literature on public support for international cooperation as well as to the ongoing debate around whether procedural factors are relevant for citizens' legitimacy perceptions of IOs. This paper will proceed as follows. In the next section, we will review the foundations of legitimacy studies in the IO context as well as existing research on IPIs. This will be followed by our hypotheses and their theoretical motivations. In turn, we will present the planned design of the conjoint survey experiment that we will employ to test our hypotheses. Finally, we will give an outlook of the next steps of development of this study.

Literature Review

Legitimacy Concepts in IR

The question of what makes government, or more generally authority, legitimate is almost as old as political science itself.[2] As the authority of IOs has become increasingly prevalent, IR scholars have begun to take up the question of their legitimacy, or lack thereof. Political theory holds that government of any kind demands justification and, thus, legitimation (Flathman, 1993). This requirement should then also extend to IOs, given that, in a globalized world, they wield authority over citizens, sometimes to a similar degree as nation-states (Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005; Zaum, 2013)? When it comes to the legitimacy of global governance institutions including IOs, legitimacy is defined as:

"[…] the right to rule, understood to mean both that institutional agents are morally justified in making rules and attempting to secure compliance with them and that people subject to those rules have moral, content-independent reasons to follow them and/or not to interfere with others' compliance with them." (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 411).

Within this broader notion of IO legitimacy, one needs to distinguish between normative and sociological legitimacy (Clark, 2003; Keohane, 2006). On a most general level, *normative legitimacy* is an abstract concept that the political objects under scrutiny either have (to a certain degree) or do not have depending on the normative standards one takes as a basis. For example,

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[2] The philosophical foundation of the legitimacy of political power in the Western world dates back to John Locke (Ashcraft, 1991). Later works on the sources of legitimacy by Max Weber (2019) and Seymour Martin Lipset (1981) are the basis of most any modern theory of legitimacy.

an IO with a parliamentary body would generally be viewed as more legitimate than without, by scholars of the cosmopolitan or republican traditions of democracy because the inclusion of the legislature into the IO brings the decision-making process closer to a democratic ideal by strengthening accountability and representation (Archibugi, Koenig-Archibugi, & Marchetti, 2011; Held, 1995; Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005).[3]

In contrast to normative legitimacy, sociological legitimacy is a concrete concept that the subjects of the political process – foremost citizens – either attribute to a political institution or not. For example, NATO could be perceived as less legitimate by citizens than the OSCE, and this perception might be completely independent of institutional features that are highlighted in the normative perspective. Hence, sociological legitimacy understands legitimacy as an empirically measurable concept, namely the *belief* among the subjects of a governance arrangement that it is exercising its authority in an appropriate manner (Suchman, 1995; Weber, 2019). In this sociological conceptualization of legitimacy, it is assumed that individuals do not base their legitimacy assessments on stages of the policy cycle (i.e. input and output). Rather, people evaluate the *process* and *performance* of an IO as far as they can observe it (Bernauer & Gampfer, 2013; Dellmuth, Scholte, & Tallberg, 2019; Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014; Scholte & Tallberg, 2018; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019).

As this study is concerned with citizens' perceptions of IOs, it is exclusively concerned with the sociological conceptualization of legitimacy. Namely, the goal is to ascertain whether legitimacy perceptions of IOs are impacted by parliamentary participation.

Parliaments in IOs: International Parliamentary Institutions

The one avenue through which national parliaments are involved in IOs today are International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs). They are defined as:

"international institution that is of parliamentary nature, whether legislative or consultative and has three or more member states of which parliamentarians are either selected from national legislatures in manner that they determine or popularly elected by electorates of the member states and that is a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis, either attached to an IO or itself constituting one." (Cutler, 2001, p. 209).

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[3] Other schools of thought may well disagree as the lively academic debate on the normative standards of IO legitimacy has shown. For competing views see for example (Moravcsik, 2004; Wendt, 1999).

Over the past decades, IPIs have been increasingly established by IOs. While there were fewer than ten such institutions in the 1990s, there are forty today. In terms of the share of IOs that have an IPI as a quasi-organ, the share grew from just above 5% of all IOs globally in the 1990s to about a third today (Rocabert et al., 2018). IPIs are present in both region-building, general purpose IOs such as the Pan African Parliament within the African Union and in task-specific IOs such as the parliamentary assembly of the OSCE (OSCE PA). The strand of research on these institutions is still nascent and connections to IO legitimacy have been made only conceptually, or in efforts to explain their establishment. Here, IOs are assumed to establish IPIs to bolster their legitimacy (Dingwerth, Schmidtke, & Weise, 2019; Grigorescu, 2015; Rocabert et al., 2018; Schimmelfennig et al., 2020). This driver of IPI establishment, in turn, is implicitly based on the assumption that they *can*, in fact, strengthen the normative as well as sociological legitimacy of IOs.

Normatively speaking, parliaments have indeed recurrently been mentioned as a potential remedy to a lack of IO legitimacy. In fact, the dearth of parliamentary oversight and the reduction of legislative powers in international politics has been the core issue raised by those who diagnosed a democratic deficit of IOs (Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Held, 1995). Especially cosmopolitans envisioned more parliamentary participation in global governance, either through a truly global parliament (in the long run) or through more regional parliaments with higher authority in the short term (Falk & Strauss, 2001; Held, 1995; Held & Koenig-Archibugi, 2005; Höffe, Moellendorf, & Pogge, 2007). But also scholars with a more republican notion of democracy would call for the strengthening of parliaments in global governance in order to democratize it (Dingwerth, 2014; Freyburg, Lavenex, & Schimmelfennig, 2017). For scholars of these traditions, IPIs then signify an increase in IO legitimacy as they bring the decision-making within IOs closer to democratic ideals.

Sociologically speaking, however, there are no empirical studies thus far investigating the question of whether IPIs could, in fact, also affect the sociological legitimacy of IOs. In other words, we do not know whether parliamentary participation in IOs can convince more than just a few political theorists of their legitimacy. This is the gap this study seeks to fill by asking the question: do citizens take MP participation and support into account when evaluating an IO and its policies?

Theory and Hypotheses

There are a number of ways in which IPIs could be expected to influence the sociological legitimacy of IOs. First, the inclusion of parliamentary bodies such as IPIs in IO signifies a change on the representation and, hence participation, dimensions of sociological legitimacy (Scholte & Tallberg, 2018). National legislatures in democracies are tasked with four primary functions: linkage, representation, control/oversight, and policy-making (Bagehot, 1928; Blondel, 1973; Kreppel, 2014; Loewenberg, 2011). For our first hypotheses, we focus on the *representation* function. MPs are channels to articulate and deliberate citizens' preferences, not only to national governments, but also to the international environment, where national governments decide upon international policy. Furthermore, MPs also communicate the outcomes of IO negotiations back to the electorate. Citizens in democracies are used to a central legislative organ participating in the political process and providing opportunities for a wide range of political views to be represented. IPIs, by explicitly including MPs from government and opposition parties elected to the current parliament, could be viewed as providing such a, previously absent, chamber to IOs. In contrast, in an exclusively intergovernmental IO setup, citizens are only represented by their government of the day and its acting ministers. In other words, IPIs fulfil the core principles of representation by making present what is not and by acting on behalf of those who elected the MPs that are part of the IPI (Pitkin, 1967). They are, hence, the institutionalization of representation of the whole electorate, whose presence should have a psychological impact on respondents by eliciting a feeling of better representation and inclusion and, hence, legitimacy among them.

There is some reason to believe that citizens are not content with current modes of representation at the IO level. Existing scholarship has shown that increasing IO contestation based on questionable IO legitimacy often flows from a widespread discontent with existing modes of citizen representation and involvement at the IO level (O'Brien, 2000; Tarrow, 2005). Where previously there was an assumption of a 'permissive consensus' on the part of the citizens – meaning that the overall goals of international cooperation were broadly shared among the public but there was little interest in the mode of it – this has arguably come to an end with these contestations (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). More recently and, perhaps, anecdotally, we have also witnessed increasingly successful nationalist and populist parties in various western democracies. Many of these parties have, at least in part, run their political program on repeatedly attacking the legitimacy of IOs by insinuating a lack of accountability to domestic citizens. All of this seems to suggest that there is at least an implicit demand for better

accountability to and representation of the domestic electorate at the IO level. Thus, we follow others by arguing that a more inclusive IO will elicit higher sociological legitimacy from its decisions (Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014).

H1 (general representation): Domestic MP participation in IO decision-making through IPIs increases the legitimacy of an IO's policy in the eyes of the public.

There are various kinds of representation, namely formalistic, descriptive, symbolic and substantive (Pitkin, 1967). We understand substantive representation to mean that the MP represents the political views of their electorate. In a purely intergovernmental IO context, only those citizens who are supportive of the parties in government are substantively represented whereas those who favor the opposition parties miss out. As mentioned above, delegations of domestic parliaments to IPIs include members of all parties elected to the current parliament. As citizens who are politically close to the government of the day have their political views substantially represented by government officials already, we expect that particularly those citizens who are close to the opposition parties should be in favor of more IPI participation and support. Thus, we formulate:

H2 (substantive representation): The effect of domestic MP participation through IPIs will be stronger for citizens who identify with current opposition parties.

The second kind of representation that we aim to test if it matters for sociological legitimacy is descriptive representation. A descriptive representative is someone who is on some relevant dimensions typical of the group of people they represent. These relevant dimensions can be more readily observable characteristics such as gender, age, or ethnicity or shared experiences such as having a migrant background, working in the same industry or, as in our case, being from the same constituency (Mansbridge, 1999; Pitkin, 1967). Previous research has shown that descriptive representation matters for citizen favorability of political candidates, decisions and legitimacy of polities (Arnesen & Peters, 2018; Campbell, Cowley, Vivyan, & Wagner, 2019; Mansbridge, 1999). These attributes of representatives are generally thought to be assumed by citizens to signal policy concerns. If one shares attributes with one's representative, this is taken as a cue for shared policy concerns as well (Bianco, 1994; Fenno, 1978; Gay, 2002; Shugart, Valdini, & Suominen, 2005). Hence, the fact that an MP who is from the same geographical area as a respondent is included in an IO decision might be taken as a

cue that the constituency's interests were better represented, and hence the decision is perceived to be more legitimate. In this vein, citizens take better descriptive representation as psychological shortcut for better substantive representation (Popkin, 1991; Tavits, 2010).

Further, it has been argued that citizens may feel closer to the process when decisions are being made by people who are similar on some dimensions to themselves because they feel they can more easily contact the representatives and are more easily understood by them (Arnesen & Peters, 2018; Gay, 2002). In other words, if there is more descriptive representation, the linkage function of legislatures is strengthened. Legislatures link citizens to domestic governments and, through IPIs, to IOs. In this capacity, they bridge the distance between citizens and the decision-making bodies that govern them. The distance between citizens and IOs is particularly large. In parliamentary systems such as Germany, citizens vote for their MPs who, in turn, elect the government. Yet a step further removed, in international multilateral cooperation through IOs, governments of the member states come together to reach a policy decision which is then executed by organizational staff. More formally speaking, there is a longer principal-agent chain of delegation from citizens to IOs than to any other political institution (Jančić, 2017; Vaubel, 2006). This has implications for the support of, or dissatisfaction with IOs. Research on this has shown that, in the domestic context, perceived distance explains the varying aggregated support for local and national representatives and institutions, respectively. In the US, for instance, the level of satisfaction with state and local government is somewhat higher than with the federal level and people express a high satisfaction with their local school despite being highly critical of the school system as a whole (Nye Jr, 1997). While one could argue that the presence of a delegation of national MPs already shortens the distance between citizens and IOs, we assume that it is smallest if the elected constituency MP is included in an IO decision. The district is normally the smallest political unit of representation in national parliaments. If this unit is included into an IO, we should see a decrease in distance between the realm of the voter and the decision in the IO. In turn, this should lead to an increased perceived legitimacy:

H3 (descriptive representation): If citizens know that their district-level MP is included in the decision-making process of an IO, its perceived legitimacy increases.

However, we suspect there to be a moderator in this relationship between the various kinds of representation, which are factors of procedural legitimacy, and overall legitimacy assessments made by citizens: performance legitimacy. There are a number of studies that have

tested the various dimensions of sociological legitimacy of IOs and national governments across a wide range of contexts. The inclusion of parliamentarians in IOs alters their decision making and, hence, signifies a change on the procedural side of legitimacy as opposed to the performance side. Whether citizens take such procedural elements into consideration when thinking about a governance structure's legitimacy in general has been shown to depend on the context. Research on the importance of procedural and outcome quality for legitimacy assessments originally emerged at the domestic level. Here, two main, yet contradicting, theoretical expectations have emerged. On the one hand, proponents of the "stealth democracy" approach hold that citizens usually do not care about processes and only include outcome quality considerations in their legitimacy assessments (Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014; Esaiasson, Persson, Gilljam, & Lindholm, 2016; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Diametrically opposed, other studies have found that citizens do care about process and that they have strong preferences for meaningful participation in collective decision-making (e.g. Bernauer, Mohrenberg, & Koubi, 2019; Doherty & Wolak, 2012; Strebel, Kübler, & Marcinkowski, 2018). Further, the importance one places on the quality of one factor might also depend on the quality of the other. For example, a standard stealth democracy argument is that citizens only begin to care about the process once the performance is bad and the institution does not deliver as promised (Strebel et al., 2018).

Procedural assessments are typically made based on how a particular decision came about. Here people's concerns lie with the fairness of the process, its accountability or who participated in it (Scholte & Tallberg, 2018).Thus far, there is only limited evidence regarding procedural legitimacy considerations of citizens at the international level (Bernauer et al., 2019).[4] Bernauer and Gampfer (2013) show that individuals favor civil society involvement when it comes to global environmental governance. They also present evidence that this effect is sensitive to changes in the status quo, meaning that a move to exclude civil society decreases legitimacy while their inclusion increases it. Turning their attention to an IO (UN) as opposed to a particular agreement, Dellmuth and Tallberg (2014) find that institutional performance, real or anticipated, explains sociological legitimacy. Unlike the previous authors, they do not consider one dimension in isolation, but also look for evidence on procedural drivers (i.e. interest representation) which they, however, do not find.

The only study so far that explicitly evaluates procedure and performance against one another is by Bernauer et al. (2019). In their series of conjoint survey experiments in Germany

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[4] An exception is the well-developed body of legitimacy research on the European Union. See for example (Hobolt, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2005)

and the United Kingdom, they describe a hypothetical scenario of international regulation of transboundary pollution. Varying processual indicators of the regulation in the treatment, they find that institutionalized access to information on decisions, the involvement of civil society and the need for approval by domestic parliaments matter just as much for the evaluation of a specific act of international cooperation as do performance indicators such as costs or relative benefits. They further show that there is a relationship between those factors as citizens are less accepting of high- or low-quality outcomes when their informational treatment indicates that the procedural quality was poor.

Given this state of previous research, there is reason to believe that citizens will factor in performance factors into their evaluations as well. While this could affect the level of support of any given decision, it could also alter the importance respondents place on procedural matters. Hence, we expect that when the outcome quality is poor, either due to extraordinarily high economic costs or great inefficiencies in terms of time elapsed until a decision is reached, the effect of IPI participation on IO legitimacy will be smaller or diminish entirely.

H4 (performance legitimacy): The positive effect of substantive and descriptive representation on IO legitimacy will be weaker/diminish for decisions that score poorly on performance measures.

Subset Analyses and Potential Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

There are reasons to believe that the sizes of the effects formulated in our hypotheses may vary across certain subgroups of respondents and across levels of other attributes. Previous research has shown that legitimacy assessments of institutions do not only depend on factors pertaining to the institutions themselves. Rather, they are also a function of individual predispositions. Furthermore, individual and institutional factors also interact, meaning that whether someone prefers procedural over performance elements can depend on their individual characteristics. Variables that have been shown to be of relevance here include socioeconomic status, political values, domestic institutional trust (Dellmuth, Scholte, Tallberg, & Verhaegen, 2021, 2022; Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014; Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi, & Cabrera, 2022; Lee & Lim, 2022), skill levels, issue grouping logics (Bearce & Jolliff Scott, 2019), gender (Edwards, 2009) and religion (Tsai, 2017). Hence, this study will control for these individual variables by asking respondents a battery of preliminary questions along the frequently used GAL-TAN dimensions. Furthermore, we know from representation theory, that descriptive representation

is of particular importance to minority groups of those that have been discriminated against. Experimental power and number of respondents allowing, we hence might look for a greater positive effect of descriptive representation for those subgroups in our experiment.

Another potentially interesting subgroup to look at are respondents who identify with opposition parties and whose district level MP is of that same opposition party. In theory, one could expect that this combination of substantive and descriptive representation has the strongest effect on legitimacy perceptions. Again, this will depend on the number of such respondents in our sample and power considerations of the study.

Finally, forthcoming research appears to present evidence that citizens' legitimacy evaluations of IOs depend on the political values that citizens ascribe to the IO in question and, in turn, whether those values map onto ones own. For instance, respondents who identify as left-wing and perceive the UN as having a left-wing profile and the WTO as having a right-wing profile are more likely to perceive the UN as more legitimate than the WTO (Ecker-Ehrhardt, Dellmuth & Tallberg, fortcoming). By asking respondents about their perceptions of IOs in that regard in our own study, we aim to reproduce this finding and see if, in our context, it also matters for legitimacy perceptions and the factors affecting them.

Data and Methods

Experimental design

We plan to test these hypotheses with a population-based pre-registered conjoint survey experiment conducted with approximately 2,000 German respondents. The main goal is to experimentally vary the type/level of parliamentary participation to identify the effect of these institutional features on citizen evaluations of the legitimacy and outcome of IO decision making. Using a conjoint design (e.g., Hainmueller et al. 2014) allows us to additionally vary other attributes of IO decision making that may influence attitudes - e.g., financial cost implications, level of dissent among country representatives, and duration of the decision-making process. Unlike when using simple vignette experiments, we can hence make causal inferences about multiple potentially relevant attributes and compare their relevance. Conjoint experiments have several additional desirable characteristics, such as low social desirability bias (Horiuchi et al. 2022) and that cognitive burdens to not seem to increase with the number of attributes and trials (Bansak et al 2018).

The specific design is as follows. Initially, respondents will read a brief introductory text on international cooperation and how Germany and other states conduct a large part of this

cooperation within IOs. This will be followed by a table in which the details of two hypothetical decisions of an IO are juxtaposed (see Table 1). We plan to vary six attributes of IO decision making, namely *organization* within which the decision was taken; the *content* of the decision, the (economic) *costs* that this decision would have for Germany; which actors were allowed to *participate*, which of these actors *supported* the decision; and finally, the *duration* until a decision was reached within the IO (see Table1).

The participation attributes capture our key independent variable. The levels of this attributes are 1) government, 2) government and a parliamentary delegation of the German Bundestag, and 3) government and a parliamentary delegation including the local MP. With the involvement of the parliamentary delegation, we aim to test H1 and H2. (Not) mentioning the respondents' directly elected district-level MPs, is our operationalization of descriptive representation and social distance between citizens and IOs as per H3.

The next attribute is these actors' support, or lack thereof, for the decision. The government will always be in favor, as it would otherwise not have agreed to the intergovernmental decision that was made in the hypothetical scenario. The support of the other actors will be randomized (if others are mentioned). This attribute can tease out whether legitimacy depends on the government acting in agreement with parliament and/or the other actors.

To explore the relevance of additional attributes, we plan to ask about different IOs from different policy areas dealing with issues of varying salience to the German public. To create variation in IO and policy area, we include for security policy the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for economic policy the World Trade Organization (WTO), and for human rights the United Nations (UN). Respondents will only be asked to make a within-IO comparison, so any pair of scenarios will present them with two NATO, WTO or UN decisions (and not decisions from two different IOs).

To generate variation in the nature of the decisions and the economic and temporal costs within the IO, different kinds of decisions are presented. For NATO, for example, the two options are the delivery of fighter jets to Ukraine or the permanent deployment of troops to the Russian border. Of course, the decision levels will not be randomized independently of the organization. After all, a deployment of troops is unlikely to be decided upon by the WTO. These decisions, then, will incur different monetary costs for Germany (and other states) and take different time periods to reach. Financial and temporal effectiveness are the operationalization of performance measures as per H4. Economic costs have been shown to be

one of the key output-related determinants for support of IO decisions in the literature and randomly takes on a low, medium and high level in our experiment.

Table 1: Attributes of Conjoint Experiment

	Option A	Option B
A: What was decided?		
B: In which IO was the decision taken?		
C: What are the economic costs of the decision for Germany?		
D: Who represents Germany?		
E: Which German actors support the decision?		
F: How long did it take to reach the decision?		

Finally, as a measure of temporal effectiveness, the duration until the decision was reached is also varied across different, to be specified, numbers of months. It would be possible here to check whether citizens only prefer more participation (if they do at all) if it does not come at the expense of slowing down the process which could be a likely scenario. In other words, in H4 we are testing whether there is a tradeoff between participation and outcome quality as measured in economic and temporal costs. (see Table 2 for all levels of all attributes).

An additional row is added to the choice sets saying for each option that the government is leadings the negotiations, as is common in international cooperation. We include it in the form of another (quasi) attribute to make it clear to respondents that national governments are by far the most important actors in the decision-making processes of these IOs.

Table 2: Levels of Attributes

	Attribute	Realization	Variation
A	Decision	1. [NATO] Delivery of fighter jets to Ukraine 2. [NATO] Permanent deployment of NATO troops tot he Russian border 3. [WTO] New sanction mechanisms to enforce environmental standards in supply chains 4. [WTO] More advantageous tariffs for global south countries 5. [UN] Aid program for host countries to integrate refugees 6. [UN] Humanitarian aid for conflicts	Completely randomized
B	IO	1. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 2. World Trade Organisation (WTO) 3. United Nations (UN)	If A=1 or 2, B=1 If A=3 or 4, B=2 If A=5 or 6, B=3
C	German Contribution	1. 0 Euro 2. 10 Mio. Euro 3. 10 Bn. Euro	Completely randomized
D	German Representation	1. Government 2. Government + Bundestag Delegation 3. Government + BT Delegation including your local district MP	Completely randomized
E	German Support	1. Government 2. Government + BT Delegation 3. Government + BT Delegation including your local district MP	If D=1, E=1 (no randomization); If D=2, randomize E=1 or 2; If D=3, randomize E=1 or 3;
F	Duration	1. 3 Weeks 2. 3 Months 3. 3 Years	Completely random variation

Case Selection

As has been laid out above, we selected three IOs which enact two (hypothetical) policies each. The chosen IOs vary along a few dimensions of interest and allow us to ascertain the external validity of any possible effects, we might find. In other words, this helps us to analyze whether parliamentary participation and support is relevant for the sociological legitimacy of IOs across different contexts. Firstly, the IOs operate in different policy areas: the WTO in the economic, the NATO in the security and the UN in the human rights realm, respectively. Secondly, the IOs have different types, as well. NATO and WTO are task-specific IOs, whereas the UN is a general-purpose IO whose policy activity extends well beyond the refugee policies in our example. Thirdly, the IOs vary with regard to their authority. As of 2019, The WTO is among the 10 organizations with the highest delegation (9th) and pooling (7th) scores,

respectively. Conversely, NATO has one of the lowest pooling scores (rank 71 from 74 organizations in the data) and is in the bottom half in terms of delegation (55th). Finally, the UN has a relatively high pooling score (18th) and is close to the mean with regards to delegation (42nd) (Hooghe et al., 2017).

In the event that we find different effect sizes between these organizations, we acknowledge, of course, that it will be difficult to attribute these differences to one of those particular differences between the organizations. However, this is explicitly not our focus. We are merely trying to get an idea of how well any effects might travel across (as different as possible) contexts. In a similar vein, we are also aware that we cannot experimentally vary the geopolitical times we are currently living in. Due to the Russian war against Ukraine and now, even more recently, the renewed military escalation between Hamas and Israel, defense and security issues as well as NATO in particular are currently highly salient topics in the German political debate. This circumstance will make it nearly impossible to evaluate whether any possible difference in effect sizes between NATO and the other organizations is due to the aforementioned differences between NATO and the other organizations, or just an artefact of the high saliency of NATO and security issues at this particular point in time.

Our hypothesis 3 is dependent on the presence of a directly elected district-level MP. We are, thus, limited in terms of countries from which to sample our respondents. In Germany, with its mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system, voters have two votes in every general election. With their first vote, they select their preferred candidate to represent their district in the German Bundestag, whereas with the second, they indicate their preferred party. In every term, half of the seats in the Bundestag are given to the winners of the respective district votes, whereas the other half is determined proportionally by the party vote share in the second vote. Hence, every district is represented at the Bundestag with one MP which makes Germany a good site for our experiment.

Dependent variable: preference and legitimacy

The measurement of citizen preferences will be done in a two-step process. First, in the choice task, respondents will be asked (1) which decision they prefer and (2) which decision they deem to be more legitimate. This will be followed by a question on (1) how strong their support or disapproval for each option is and (2) how they rate the legitimacy of each option. This will be done on a scale from one to seven, with one indicating strong disapproval/very illegitimate and seven indicating strong support/very legitimate. With this strategy, we hope to

be able to tease out nuances in citizens' legitimacy assessments across the theoretical dimensions of performance and procedure.

Conclusion

In the following, we will briefly sketch how to interpret our findings once the study has been conducted and the effect directions and sizes are clear. In a scenario where we find the effects of our treatments to be exactly as hypothesized, a few readings of this are thinkable. For one, the respondents would then appear to share the legitimacy beliefs of the elites of IOs, namely that IPIs or parliamentary participation do in fact enhance the decision-making process of IOs. Further, such a finding would add to previous studies that have found that citizens do, in fact, value the quality of process in decision making and not only base their judgements on the outcomes (i.e. the policy content) (Bernauer et al., 2019; Doherty & Wolak, 2012; Strebel et al., 2018).

On the other hand, if there are no effects as postulated in our hypotheses whatsoever, this could be a first indicator that IOs will not be successful in enhancing their legitimacy through involving domestic parliamentarians. At least, citizens would not appear to immediately recognize the added (democratic) value of parliamentary participation. This is, however, not to say decisively that there is no potential whatsoever to convince citizens of the merit of IPIs. We know from previous research that elite cues do influence citizens' perceptions in other contexts of support and legitimacy. Perhaps future research would then need to establish if these potentials exists and if/how elites could realize them through an information campaign or the like. Another reading of this would be to interpret such results as evidence for the stealth democracy hypothesis. Boiled down: when it comes to IOs, citizens predominantly evaluate its legitimacy based on whether they support the outcome of a decision or not (Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002).

Finally, we could be presented with positive effects that are completely independent of the way in which parliamentarians are involved. All hypothesized effects would be significant and positive, but would not be distinguishable from one another. If that were the case, this could speak to a "democratic intuition" that respondents might have. They intuitively support IPI participation, independently of how exactly the IPI is constructed or who is participating. This could, in turn, have implications for the institutional design of IPIs, namely that it does not appear to be of importance to citizens and, as such, other considerations (e.g. policy expertise of MPs) could be more important when designing IPIs and their memberships.

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