

Participation and Sustainability in International Institutions: Promises, Pitfalls and Practices

Call for Abstracts

In its most recent report “A Breakthrough for People and Planet” (2023), the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism argues for a better inclusion of civil society, cities, subnational governments and private sector actors in multilateral processes. Greater inclusion and accountability are considered crucial to make international institutions not only more representative but also accountable to future generations, and hence to implement key principles for achieving sustainability across different policy fields.

These recommendations are not new and have long been discussed with a view to their implications for theories of democracy. They point to the fundamental questions of how procedures and practices in international institutions can and should be designed to enable wider participation, but at the same time ensure “good” decisions and effective processes of decision-making. International organizations (IOs) are actively shaping the rules and norms around greater participation and governance for sustainability. Yet, they are also confronted with structural constraints and potential spoilers such as nation states or resourceful private actors.

At the annual meeting of the Thematic Group “International Organization” (TGIO) of the German Political Science Association, we will address this problematique from a theoretical as well as an empirical perspective. Therefore, we ask for paper abstracts along the following thematic range:

- The democracy-sustainability nexus: How can sustainability be achieved while safeguarding democracy? How can concepts like ecological or environmental democracy contribute to sustainability in all its dimensions (social, economic, ecological)? How can this be translated to a global level?
- The specific nexus of participation/inclusiveness and sustainability: How can the repeatedly asserted contradiction between participation and effectiveness be dissolved or at least mitigated? What kind of concepts of “inclusiveness” are discussed? How can (which form of) inclusiveness be assured? What can we learn from diverse policy fields on how to effectively include different stakeholders and groups of affected people?
- Representation in global policy processes: How can institutions, policies and practices be designed to ensure wider representation beyond the national government and safeguard the rights of future generations?
- Decision-making in global policy processes: Who can/should decide? What is/should be the role of experts? What kind of (scientific/indigenous/local) knowledge can/should decisions be based on? How can this type of knowledge be produced and how can it be fed into decision-making processes?

Please send paper abstracts (150-250 words) – either in English or German – with your contact details until **1 March, 2024** to: io@dvpw.de

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