



Who Do You Think We Are? Recommendations to Improve our Knowledge of the Composition of Multistakeholder Participation at the IGF



Executive Summary

This Policy Brief draws on the public IGF participation lists from 2006 to 2019 in which we analysed how individual participants chose to identify their stakeholder categories. We subsequently analyse the data to address the following questions:

1. How have stakeholders identified themselves in comparison to their allocation in the internet governance stakeholder framework, and where do the discrepancies lie?
2. Have individuals maintained their roles during different editions of the IGF?
3. Have stakeholders moved between stakeholder groups?

Addressing these questions will give us the means to open up a space for critical reflection on the multistakeholder model at the IGF.

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Introduction

In June 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General presented the “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation”¹. The Roadmap outlines a set of recommended actions for the Internet ecosystem and the wider international community. In the document, the cooperation of multiple and diverse stakeholders is described as being crucial to the future of our society. The Roadmap is the culmination of a reflection exercise inspired by the UN Secretary General-mandated High-level Panel’s report on “The Age of Digital Interdependence”².

This body of current strategic documents maintain a focus on multistakeholderism as bringing together states, the private sector, civil society, and the technical community. In this Policy Brief, we challenge the scope of that definition. We believe that nuances within different stakeholder groups that could or should participate in multistakeholder discussions on Internet governance issues need to be raised. Especially with the UN-supported emphasis on ensuring digital inclusion for all and building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation through a multistakeholder

systems approach in the Digital Roadmap, it is imperative to understand the interest and identity representation of stakeholders, in particular their composition and mobility within policy making forums such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

There have been dedicated efforts by the IGF Secretariat to map stakeholder participation at the IGFs over the past 16 years. This has been done by collecting data regarding attendance. However, the IGF registration form has changed, with limited harmonisation efforts and improvements across the years. This Policy Brief makes concrete recommendations in this regard.

Our Brief also aims to reflect on the IGF’s position in the broader complex surrounding Internet governance, to help the IGF fortify its position as a key space for discussion and dialogue. These discussions are important and timely³ During the IGF 2020 MAG Networking session, Nnenna Nwakanma from the World Wide Web Foundation raised the concern that different working groups throughout the Internet ecosystem are not in dialogue with each other. This is a pressing concern as the UN

¹ UN Secretary-General (2020) Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. Geneva: United Nations. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf

² UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (2019) The Age of Digital Interdependence. Geneva: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf>

³ See Chris Buckridge (2021) “Do We Need The IGF? Now More Than Ever!” RIPE NCC Labs. Available at: <https://labs.ripe.net/author/chrisb/do-we-need-the-igf-now-more-than-ever/> and Jamal Shahin (2018) “We Need to Talk about the State of Internet Governance” Internet Society Blog. Available at: <https://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2018/10/we-need-to-talk-about-the-state-of-internet-governance/>

Secretary General's Digital Roadmap is starting to be rolled out and the Internet governance ecosystem is set for a period of redesign, focusing on representation and participation without fully understanding stakeholder composition and the current working relationships between existing structures.

Background

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)⁴ was held in 2003 in Geneva, and in 2005 in Tunisia. At this meeting, the question of Internet governance was firmly placed on diplomatic agendas. Some states sought to subject the Internet to the conventional intergovernmental model within the UN system (multilateralism). Other actors, including non-state actors, sought to gain a stronger role in global governance (multistakeholderism). Several controversies emerged during these debates, which were addressed in the Tunis Agenda.⁵ On the one hand, some advocated for a restrictive definition of the term Internet Governance, referring only to the technical management of critical Internet resources. Others were in favour of a broader definition,

encompassing policy issues such as e-commerce, spam, and cybercrime. While several countries supported a private-sector led model of Internet governance, others argued that governments should be in charge of Internet governance, in the framework of an intergovernmental body.⁶

These controversies led to the creation of a UN Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), which proposed the following 'standard' definition of Internet governance:

*"The development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet."*⁷

The Tunis Agenda emphasises that there is no single organisation 'in charge of the Internet', but that various stakeholders - governments, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector, the technical community, and civil society - share roles and responsibilities in shaping the evolution and use of the network.

⁴ World Summit on the Information Society. Geneva Internet Platform Digital Watch. Available at: <https://dig.watch/actors/world-summit-information-society>

⁵ Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-E (2005) Available at: <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

⁶ Kurbalija, J. (2016) *An Introduction to Internet Governance*. Geneva: DiploFoundation; Epstein, D. (2013) The Making of Institutions of Information Governance: The Case of the Internet Governance Forum. *Journal of Information Technology* 28(2) 137-49.

⁷ UN Working Group on Internet Governance (2005) Report of the Working group on Internet Governance. Geneva: United Nations. Par 10.

The IGF emerged as a result of the 2003 and 2005 conferences. Since then, as the Internet's ecosystem has become more dense and intertwined, the stakeholders who are engaged in this complex, transnational policy field have diversified. The output legitimacy of the IGF - what it delivers - has been brought into question. As a space for effective multistakeholder discussion and exchange on Internet governance issues, the IGF's value is being minimised in favour of other fora with concrete outcomes such as standards-making at the IETF and the ITU. This has led to calls for IGF reform from a number of different parties. One of the key elements of the discussion is the 'effectiveness' of the multistakeholder model used by the IGF. These debates revolve around the IGF's engagement with the diffuse and diverse stakeholders that are now active in the field, and its output. Discussion about effective multistakeholderism at the IGF is thus very much part of the ongoing review of the forum, initiated by the UN Secretary General.

The key rationale for this Policy Brief lies in trying to unpack the nature of the IGF's multistakeholder model. Fundamentally, the IGF promotes an open model of engagement in discussions, allowing different categories of stakeholders to participate as speakers and participants in the events. However, **very little systematic analysis of the composition of the stakeholder groups has been done to date**⁸

And yet the MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-strategy) published a public document entitled "Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021"⁹, which included proposals to create a more inclusive IGF. To undertake further discussions on the IGF's inclusivity, it is imperative to understand the current stakeholder composition of the IGF community. Therefore, we analyse how individual participants self-identified when registering to attend the IGF, on the basis of IGF public on-site participation lists from 2006-

⁸ The first leg of our analysis was presented at the 2020 GigaNet symposium and was recently published in the Telecommunications Policy special issue on Norm Entrepreneurship. This paper focuses on civil society representation at the IGF and proposes a purpose-driven perspective to understanding IGF participation. The second leg of our analysis was presented at the 2021 GigaNet symposium and maps all IGF stakeholder categories. This policy brief brings together insights from these two sets of analysis. Furthermore and importantly, Research ICT Africa published their initial findings during the 2021 IGF as well.

Tjahja, N., Meyer, T. & Shahin, J. (2021a) "What is civil society and who represents civil society at the IGF? An analysis of civil society typologies in Internet governance." *Telecommunications Policy* 45(6) 102141. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102141>; Tjahja, N., Meyer, T. and Shahin, J. (2021b) "Who do you think you are? Individual stakeholder identification and mobility at the Internet Governance Forum". Paper presented at: *GigaNet Annual Symposium 2021*, 6 December 2021. Available at: <https://www.giga-net.org/giganet-annual-symposium/>; Van Der Spuy, A. & Agüera Reneses, P. (2021) *Beyond multistakeholder tokenism: A Provisional examination of Participation in the IGF*. Research ICT Africa. Available at: <https://researchictafrica.net/publication/beyond-multistakeholder-tokenism-a-provisional-examination-of-participation-in-the-igf-2006-2020/>

⁹ MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-strategy) (2021) *Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021, Version 3.1, January 22, 2021*. Available at: https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10447/2458

2019.¹⁰ This Policy Brief highlights our most important findings on presence, affiliation and intergroup mobility, focusing on ways forward in understanding stakeholder participation at the IGF. For in-depth analysis and explanation on each of these points (and more!), we refer the reader to our emerging research papers.¹¹

Analysis

At the IGF, participants are requested to identify their affiliation as well as their stakeholder group. The analysis that we present in our papers demonstrates that there is confusion in how individuals see the institutions they work for and/or how they perceive their role within those institutions. **When different stakeholders participate in the IGFs, they do this through means that resort to self-identification and are driven more by a logic of representation rather than participation. In essence, analysis of the IGF's impact is based on *who* a participant is, rather than *for what purpose* a participant is there.** Arguably, however, the IGF intends to create a space for active dialogue and learning between stakeholders (participation), rather than a space to represent one's own interests (presence/representation). In effect,

multistakeholderism at the IGF is currently being 'measured' in a way that tries to capture the (re)presentative nature of the actors, rather than their participative qualities. You might be present, but are you there (and able) to participate? At this stage of our analysis, however, we focus on the first component (presence/representation), as this needs to be understood as well. In the following paragraphs, we highlight the most common gaps and discrepancies in stakeholder self-identification that we encountered thus far.

Shifting Baselines: New and Returning Participants At The IGF

IGF terminology on 'attendance' and 'participation'

The IGF Secretariat produces statistical reports which use the terms 'attendance' and 'participation' interchangeably (Table 1).

While 'attendance' indicates an individual's presence at an event, participation means something slightly different: the active involvement of stakeholders¹². However the statistics are a reflection of event registration and also include a number of individuals who are not 'participating' in debates (including staff

¹⁰ By 'participation data', we mean participation or attendance data; see *infra* for our reflections on this issue. The participant lists are available at: <https://www.intgovforum.org/en>. Only individual participants who agreed to be listed are included in these archives.

¹¹ Tjahja, Meyer & Shahin (2021a, b), *supra*, footnote 8.

¹² As we describe below, we do not attempt to measure 'active participation', fully realising that this would require different research methodologies to be applied. We also note that only those individuals who choose to be publicly known are mentioned in our data analysis.

From the organising institutions, translators, media, etc.). Therefore, a distinction should be made between attendance as being present at the IGF, and participation as being an active stakeholder to prevent conflation/confusion.

Our analysis of unique individual participants at the IGF

According to our analysis¹³ every year the IGF welcomes approximately 60% newcomers, while 40% are returning attendees (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows this number in absolute values,¹⁴ while the logarithmic graph (Figure 3) highlights how many and how often participants have returned to the IGF. **In total, 18,968 unique individual participants¹⁵ attended an IGF annual event from its inception to the 2019 event.¹⁶ Of these, 10,000 people have attended the IGF only once.¹⁷**

The IGF can thus be seen as an open space that encourages participation from wider groups of individuals. The fact that the number of

Table 1: Analysis of Data Collection Terminology

2006: participation by stakeholder group
2007: participants by stakeholder group
2008: attendance breakdown
2009: attendance statistics
2010: attendance statistics
2011: none
2012: none
2013: none
2014: none
2015: attendance statistics
2016: attendance and programme statistics
2017: statistics
2018: attendance and programme statistics
2019: participation and programme statistics

¹³ The baseline data for our analysis is from reported participation in annual IGFs, as provided by the IGF website. We developed a database where we removed duplicates and homogenised entries. We also structured the dataset to bring together subdivisions of one organisation as part of the original organisation. Multiple affiliations were also identified (also known as “double hats” regardless of amount of affiliations) and these were separated to acknowledge the different organisations and by extension affiliation represented.

¹⁴ In the figures, blue are newcomers (newbies); red are returning participants staying in the same job upon return; yellow are returning participants who changed roles at least once (we only counted job hoppers once, even if they changed multiple times, so the graph conveys unique job hopping).

¹⁵ Representing 7,326 organisations.

¹⁶ The dataset only includes those who registered and allowed for their names and affiliation to be publicly published.

¹⁷ There are only 3 people who have attended every single IGF until 2019: Giacomo Mazzone, Lynn St. Amour and Marilyn Cade. Giacomo Mazzone represented the European Broadcasting Union and the World Broadcasting Union. Lynn St Amour represented the Internet Society, Internet Matters, the Internet Governance Forum and the Internet Governance Forum MAG. Marilyn Cade represented the International Chamber of Commerce, mCADE llc, and once registered as an end user.

newcomers ('newbies') is consistently more than the number of returning participants is, however, a mixed blessing. On the one hand it means that the IGF is opening its doors to engage with more stakeholders in this increasingly expanding policy space, and on the other it reveals a need to ensure that they can actively participate in the events, whilst finding value in ongoing participation.

Data Discrepancies: Stakeholder Affiliation at the IGF

Within the same organisation

Members of the same organisation did not always self-identify as being in the same stakeholder group (see Figure 4). To illustrate, we highlight how participants from ICANN, the Internet Society (two actors with a large number of attending participants) and GIZ identified themselves upon registration.

- i. Participants who registered as 'ICANN' self-identified as Technical Community, Private Sector and Civil Society. We labelled them as Technical Community.
- ii. Internet Society participants defined themselves as Technical Community, Civil Society, Private Sector. We labelled them as Civil Society + Technical Community.¹⁸

Figure 1. Participant (Re-)Attendance at The IGF (%)

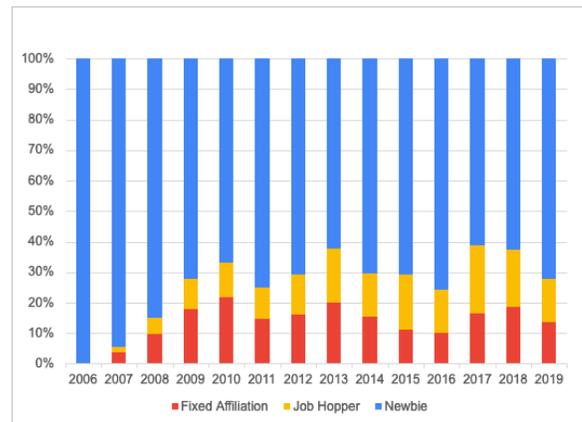


Figure 2. Participant (Re-)Attendance at The IGF

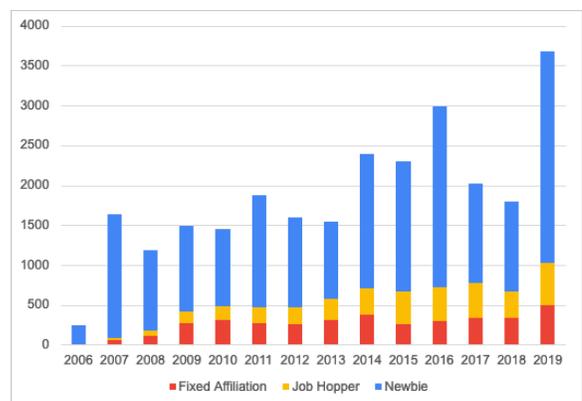
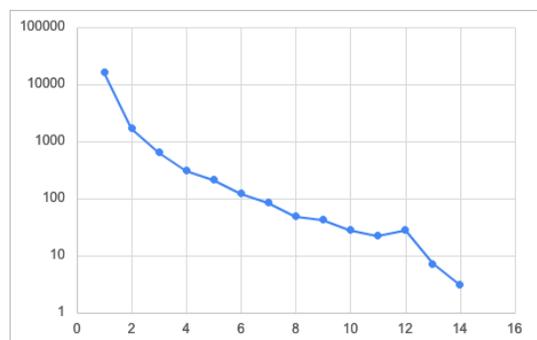


Figure 3. Logarithmic Graph of Number Of Re-Attendance

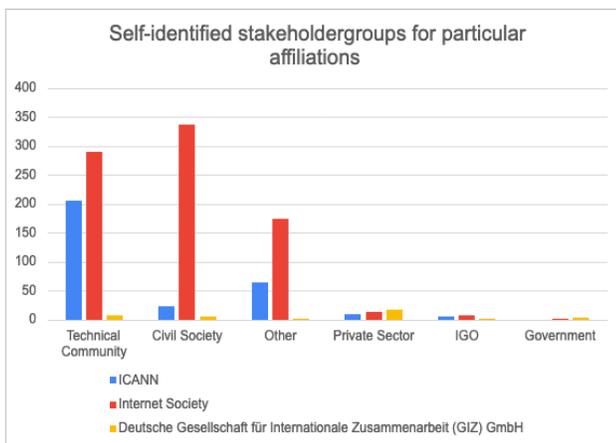


¹⁸ For more details on these 'intersecting groups', see Tjahja, Meyer & Shahin (2021a), *supra*, footnote 8.

- iii. Individuals from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH defined themselves as Private Sector, Technical Community, Civil Society, IGO and Government. We labelled them as Civil Society.

In addition, some individuals would choose to identify with a different stakeholder group across the years, despite staying with the same organisation.

Figure 4. Self-Identified Stakeholder Groups for Particular Affiliations¹⁹



Government

Those who self-identified as ‘Government’ during the registration process were mostly members of different government departments. Yet there were other government actors, such as

councils, national bodies, military, police, cities, legal institutions and political parties who identified themselves as ‘Civil Society’.

End Users

End users were participants i) who self-identified as non-affiliated, ii) whose affiliation was not verifiable, or iii) who clearly were present to learn, not to represent a stakeholder view (e.g. students, see also *infra*, or ISOC ambassadors). This group is an additional classification category we determined upon analysing the data, as the participants did not seem to fit into the other categories provided by the IGF typology. We recognise that all stakeholders are end users in themselves as well.

Civil Society

We realised very quickly upon analysing the data that ‘civil society’ is more of a ‘catch all’ category that reflects far more than just one homogenous group (see Tjahja, Meyer & Shahin 2021a²⁰ for a complete breakdown of this typology). In essence, breaking down civil society into discrete groups allows us to understand what these different sub-groups can actually contribute to the discussions at the IGF. Such a nuanced approach based on a purpose-driven framework to understanding civil society would allow us to focus on their goals rather

¹⁹ This table focuses solely on those who self-identified as the main organisation, and does not include data from those who self-identified as ICANN Supporting Organisations or Advisory Committees; nor Internet Society Chapters.

²⁰ See *supra*, footnote 8.

than forcing civil society to continuously learn how to adapt to the spaces defined in a top-down manner. **In reality, the manner in which we look at Civil Society changes the manner in which stakeholders are invited to the table, and what our expectations of the resulting dialogue should be.**

Academia and technical community groups

Currently in the IGF data, there is no differentiation between academics, staff, and students within the academia stakeholder group. Academic faculty such as research or teaching staff of a university, college, high school, etc. may take an active role in discussions at the IGF. However, academic staff such as human resources or management may not necessarily attend to contribute, but to learn about best practices and policies. Students (unless part of an association) are not stakeholders that represent a community or entity in terms of the debates taking place at the IGF. Their purpose is in learning about the issues at stake, rather than contributing to the debates. For example, at the 2019 IGF, we identified 473 participants (12.85%) who belong in academia, of which 231 (6.3%) were academics, 234 (6.4%) were end users and eight were staff (0.2%). Furthermore, researchers with technical backgrounds may also be participating at the IGF as part of the Technical

Community. Members of the Technical Community stakeholder group may work for the private sector, government or academia (Civil Society) and are thus dispersed across a number of different groups. The upshot of these discussions around academia and the technical community reveal a large 'grey area' of self-identification and blurred boundaries, where individuals may legitimately wish to add themselves to more than one category, but are limited in doing so.

IGF staff as participants

IGF host staff, including local service providers and staff working as translators, consultants, captioners, etc, are all mentioned in IGF participant lists. However, these individuals are there to support and facilitate the Internet Governance Forum activities rather than attend as a stakeholder. Although crucial to the event's functioning, they are not stakeholders and therefore should not be included in the participation statistics. This again raises questions of the distinction between participation and attendance.

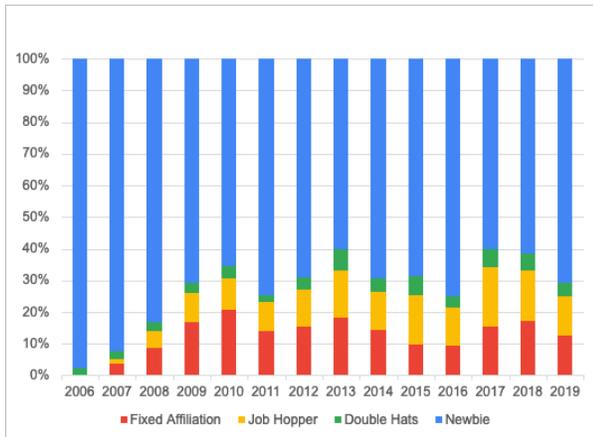
Multiple affiliations at the IGF

Over the years, 1,095 people have indicated multiple affiliations when registering at the IGF, despite the registration form officially only allowing indication of one stakeholder group per registration.²¹ The registration form thus

²¹ In Figure 5, green are double hats, people who registered with multiple affiliations at the IGF. They participate on behalf of multiple organisations or sit on a variety of boards or volunteer on working groups.

results in gaps in stakeholder group representation.

Figure 5. Double hats

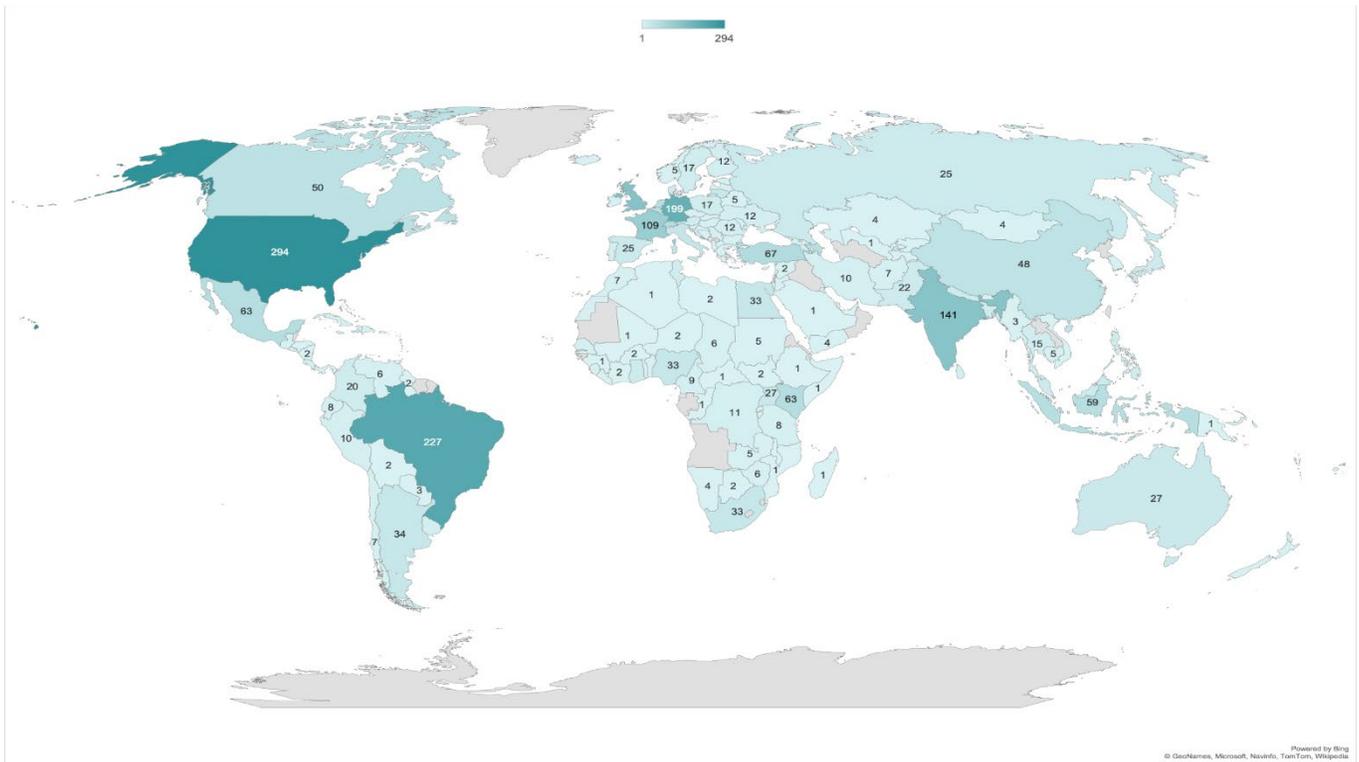


Geography

Finally, the IGF is a global forum, designed to engage with all corners of the world. However, each IGF is organised by a host country. The past four IGF events have taken place in Europe. This leads to concerns about the level of global engagement in the event. At this stage, our research did not include location data of individual participants as it is not part of the public data set. However, we tried to derive the data concerning geographic coverage in our earlier published research (restricted to civil society) on the basis of the headquarters of each organisation (Figure 6). We want to take this opportunity through this Policy Brief to raise several questions regarding the use of geographical data to understand representation: should we identify the physical

location of organisations or rather the headquarters? Should we focus on participants' country of origin or country of residence? In our earlier published research, we also found that organisations can be based in one country but are operational in a different country. Therefore, clarity between place of residence of an individual and location of the headquarters of an organisation should be established.

Figure 6. Civil Society Representation per Country (2009-2016) at IGF (Map)



Concrete Recommendations For The IGF Secretariat

Consistency in terminology on 'attendance' vs 'participation' in IGF statistics

We completed our research based on the available data, but it is currently unclear whether the annual stakeholder reports are fully comparable. Consistency in terminology would help clarify the gathering of statistical data.

Redesign the IGF Registration form

To achieve greater inclusiveness, there first needs to be acknowledgement of the existing stakeholders. To ensure a more accurate overview of the representation of participating

stakeholders, the IGF registration form needs to become more precise:

1. *Build an organisation database with automatic stakeholder affiliation assignment*

The current dataset includes participants who across the years have used different spellings, order, abbreviations, and stakeholder groups to identify themselves. By systematising the process through a database, the data becomes more manageable to analyse, as affiliation titles are homogenised, and stakeholder groups automatically assigned to the affiliation, rather than to the individual. Indeed, pre-filling the registration form based on past entries (or as we suggest a purpose-focused framework) allows

for more accurate and better understanding of stakeholder (group) participation.²²

2. Acknowledge end user group as a category

The Civil Society stakeholder group includes any individual and student who is attending the IGF, which skews the data as it may seem that more civil society stakeholders are attending. This gives the wrong view of actual participation and could lead to misinforming decision makers about civil society activity and end user presence.

3. Differentiate between staff and stakeholders

In the IGF data set, there are participants who are solely responsible for specific tasks at the IGF rather than being an active contributor/participant to the discussions. Examples include translators, security staff, venue staff, captioners, etc.

4. Allow to add multiple affiliations

It is common practice for stakeholders to be affiliated with multiple organisations. This should be reflected in the registration form to accommodate how the ecosystem works in practice.

5. Include geography

The registration form should include specific questions about the country of residence of the participant, and/or the location of the affiliated organisation(s). If global participation is an important measure of the success of the IGF, then we need to understand participation based on geography/region (and under representation), which requires that the registration form include specific questions about the country of residence of the participant, and/or the location of affiliated organisation(s).

Considering representation vs participation at the IGF

Is a hybrid form of engagement emerging at the IGF? This blend of representative and participatory models of engagement leads to some blurring around whether individuals take part in the IGF to represent an organisational position, or to participate as informed individuals. Whilst we understand that this is not an easy issue to address, we think that a reflection on this can be useful to determine the expectations for the IGF going forward.

²² Pre-assigning the stakeholder group is preferable for the purpose of understanding representation. At the same time, it is a pragmatic and practical solution. We recognize that in pre-assigning, some of the richness of stakeholders' current self-identification would be lost.

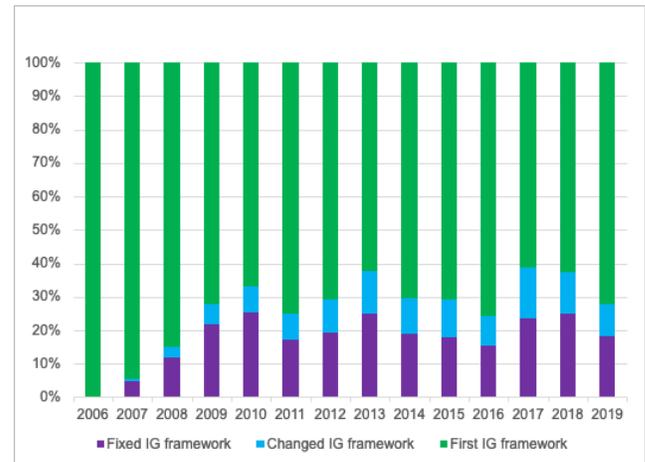
Food for thought: re-attendance and mobility

We have seen in Figures 1 through 3 that there are a large number of ‘newbies’ participating in more recent IGFs. Surprisingly, the re-attendance figures are not increasing at the same rate. One assumption we initially had was that new participants would not participate again if the IGF was held on a different continent, simply due to geography and resource challenges. Our findings, however, hint that this might not be as geographically-bound as previously assumed. Thus, re-attendance is an issue that needs to be examined.

We saw in Figure 5 that a substantial percentage of participants have changed their affiliations over the course of their participation in different IGFs. These were identified as ‘job hoppers’. We decided to look in more depth whether individuals would in this process also change stakeholder groups according to our typology. Figure 7 conveys in green the newcomers, purple indicates the participants who returned but stayed within the same stakeholder group, and light blue highlights the participants who changed stakeholder groups.

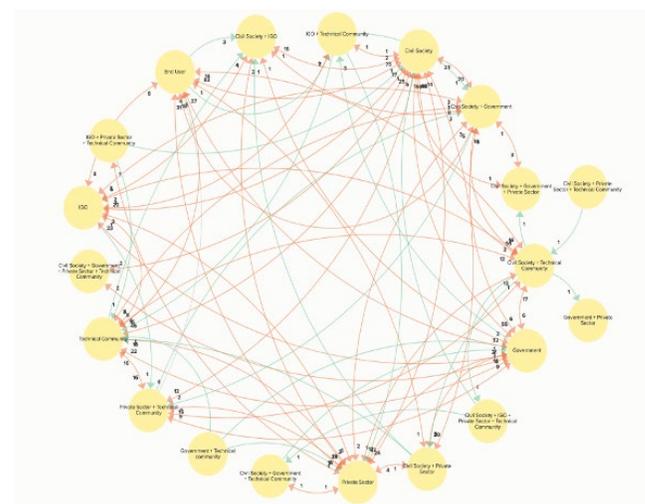
Figure 8 visualises the movement between stakeholder groups, and indicates in orange movement to and from a stakeholder group, and in green one way movement. The data shows that Civil Society moved mostly to the

Figure 7. Stakeholder Mobility Between First and Any Follow Up Attendance



Private Sector (67 people). Government actors are more inclined to move to Civil Society (56), but also moved to IGOs (23) showing a mutual mobility direction, as IGO actors also moved to Government (23). IGOs also moved to Civil Society (20) and received Civil Society actors in return (17). The Technical Community moved mostly to Civil Society (45) followed by Private Sector (28).

Figure 8. Social Network Analysis of Stakeholder Group Mobility



To sum up, the dataset reveals a substantial amount of mobility across the field, and our initial findings provide a rationale and the scope to do more research on revolving doors/stakeholder mobility in Internet governance. By its nature, this research would be far more in depth and qualitative in nature. For example, any research programme would need to conduct interviews with these 'mobile individuals' in order to understand their choice of affiliation, their movement between stakeholder groups, and how this affects their capacities to represent their current affiliations. This mobility is particularly important at the IGF, where personal connections help influence outcomes and results that emerge from the discussions held in this space.

Research recommendations

1. Further research could study job hoppers and how often people returned in different roles. This would likely entail a qualitative, in-depth research programme looking at the influence of 'revolving doors' on an individual's capacity to act as a representative of a given stakeholder group.
2. Further research could also examine reasons for unique and re-attendance, which

would dig deeper into the consequences of high 'newbie' counts at recent IGFs, and the lack of a commensurate rise in re-attendance.

3. In depth research on the way people contribute to conversations and outputs at the IGF needs to be carried out in a systematic manner. This should increase our understanding of the qualitative value of participation²³, in order to understand the impact of the IGF on creating shared understanding amongst all stakeholders engaged in governing this complex regime.

Conclusion

This Policy Brief sought to show that the IGF has developed a specific model of multistakeholderism that reflects the open nature of the Internet. The IGF does not fit into any predefined categories of 'governance' *per se* and is thus rather unique in the way it brings stakeholders together. This model is currently under review, with discussions about an IGF+ model having been ongoing for quite some time, including in the MAG's Working Group on Strengthening and Strategy. We aim to contribute to this debate and have started to map and analyse the wealth of data on stakeholder presence and affiliation. However

²³ See Arnstein, Sherry R. 1969. 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', Reprint, *Journal of the American Planning Association* *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85:1, 24-34 (2019), . <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2018.1559388>, and Drieghe, Lotte, Jan Orbie, Diana Potjomkina, and Jamal Shahin. 2021. 'Participation of Civil Society in EU Trade Policy Making: How Inclusive Is Inclusion?' *New Political Economy* 0 (0): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2021.1879763>, which deal with this in different contexts.

due to the discrepancies highlighted above, it is very challenging to currently draw any deep conclusions on the effectiveness of the multistakeholder model as such.

The IGF does not aim and is not designed to be a place for making global rules on how to govern all the diverse aspects of the Internet. It is best thought of as a learning exercise - a space where different actors can develop common understandings of how to deal with Internet governance. This is done in a space that is deliberately designed to avoid the trappings of the multilateral state system, where issues may be hijacked by certain states in order to achieve broader political goals.

Building upon our research programme that critically examines the nature of multistakeholderism in the field of Internet governance, we have put forward a number of recommendations relating to practical policy actions. We also propose additional research questions that emerge from our initial analysis of the onsite participation list from the 2006-2019 IGFs. These recommendations do not at all consider the actual execution of processes within the IGF meetings themselves: we have not looked at what people do once they are in the rooms at the IGF, but do recognise that this is another dimension that needs to be analysed more deeply. We hope that these recommendations and questions can be taken into account in future debates on IGF reform.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Johan Baijot (VUB) for his support and assistance with formula development to manage and verify the data and help design the graphs. Dr Mark Raymond (University of Oklahoma) for his insightful comments on our work, and Chris Buckridge (RIPE NCC) and Orsolya Gulyas (VUB) for proofreading.



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