Multi-Forum Non-State Actors: Navigating the Regime Complexes for Forestry and Genetic Resources*

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Non-state actors (NSAs) comprise a broad range of non-governmental actors, including firms, civil society organizations, experts, indigenous peoples, and others. Notwithstanding their diverging (e.g., for-profit versus not-for-profit) characteristics, NGO and business communities share a broad repertoire of perspectives and levels of influence.[1] NSAs play a crucial role at all stages of international policy-making.[2] They can participate in governmental processes in different roles (e.g., lobbyists) or they may prefer to elaborate their own sets of rules. While this development has led some authors to predict the "privatization" of world politics,[3] other studies underscore the synergies between non-state efforts and governmental regulation.[4] In fact, when evaluated in terms of their transparency, legitimacy, and accountability, NSA initiatives closely resemble those of traditional politics.[5]

Despite a great number of studies of NSAs in global environmental governance,[6] a recent phenomenon significantly alters the context of their actions: the institutional fragmentation of governance architectures, a concept that points to "the overall institutional setting in which distinct institutions exist and interact."[7] Global environmental politics is shaped by an increasing number of institutions, as captured by concepts such as institutional interactions,[8] institutional linkages,[9] or regime complexes,[10] to name but a few.[11]

1. Alcock 2008; Kautto 2009; Boström and Hallström 2010; Tienhaara et al. 2012.
2. Wallace and Josselin 2002.
3. Cutler et al. 1999.
4. E.g., Auld and Gulbrandsen 2010.
5. Bäckstrand 2008.
6. Arts 1998; Newell 2000; Corell and Betsill 2001; Betsill and Corell 2008.
7. Biermann et al. 2009, 17.
8. Oberthür and Gehring 2006.
9. Muzaka 2011.
10. Orsini et al. 2013.
11. Zelli and van Asselt article, this issue.

To explore this new phenomenon, scholars have proposed tools to define and describe institutional interlinkages and complexes.[12] Others have explored the origins of the interactions and fragmentation that led to these complexes.[13] Yet others have investigated the impact of regime complexes on international cooperation and power distribution,[14] or have examined the impact of such complexes on effectiveness.[15] However, to date, there have been no studies on the influence of NSAs on regime complexes negotiated by governments. To fill this gap, this article frames the main debates linking NSAs to institutional fragmentation, focusing on one question in particular: the influence of "multi-forum" NSAs—i.e., NSAs that participate in several elements of a regime complex.

The article first reviews the research on NSAs in a context of institutional complexity. It argues that two analytical problems are important to explore: NSAs' participation in regime complexes; and their influence on these complexes. In response to the general need for stronger theory-driven explanations in the study of institutional fragmentation,[16] the article offers an analytical framework to further investigate this second aspect, presenting assumptions on the influence of multi-forum NSAs, focusing on the material, ideational, and organizational power of these NSAs and their strategies of forum shopping, shifting, or linking. The third part provides an initial empirical assessment, applying this analytical framework to case studies on the governance of forestry and genetic resources. The conclusion summarizes the results, discusses their implications, and proposes areas for further inquiry.

Non-State Actors and Institutional Fragmentation

Multiple parallel negotiations are a key feature of regime complexes, which have been defined as "a network of three or more international regimes that relate to a common subject matter; exhibit overlapping membership; and generate substantive, normative, or operative interactions recognized as potentially problematic whether or not they are managed effectively."[17] For instance, the forest regime complex is "highly fragmented and characterized by a multiplicity of state and non-governmental actors and institutions."[18]

However, so far there have been no studies on the influence of NSAs on regime complexes. In the environmental domain, Green's study of private initiatives in the climate change regime complex examines the contribution of NSAs to institutional fragmentation, but does not assess the extent to which NSAs in-

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12. Rosendal 2001.
13. Muzaka 2011; Morin and Orsini, 2013; Van de Graaf article, this issue; Zelli and van Asselt article, this issue; Zürn and Faude article, this issue.
14. Drezner 2009; Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and McGee article, this issue.
15. Keohane and Victor 2011.
16. Zelli and van Asselt article, this issue.
17. Orsini et al. 2013, 29.
18. Glück et al. 2010, 37.

teract with the governmental elements of the complex.[19] In order to conceptualize the relationship between NSAs and institutional fragmentation, it is necessary to further develop some of the assumptions in the general literature on institutional complexity.

Two major analytical problems can be distinguished. The first refers to the *participation* of NSAs in regime complexes. Alter and Meunier signal that institutional fragmentation favors the involvement of NSAs: "complexity contributes to making states and [international organizations] more permeable, creating a heightened role for experts and non-state actors."[20] Yet, other scholars have noted that if the number of opportunities to participate increases with fragmentation, the actual participation of NSAs is likely to depend on the resources at their disposal: "If nothing else, such participation requires a great deal of (expensive) expertise and resources which undoubtedly disadvantage weaker actors."[21]

The second analytical problem concerns the *influence* of NSAs on regime complexes. Just as a regime complex is different from the sum of its parts because overlapping and interacting elemental regimes lead to conflicts and synergies,[22] one can assume that NSAs' influence in a situation of institutional fragmentation is likely to be different from the sum of their influence on individual institutions. Moreover, regime complexes can create new lobbying strategies: "Regime complexity generates opportunities [. . .] for rival actors—whether states, institutions, politicians, or NGOs—to choose among institutions that allow them to get what they want, avoiding the rules they do not like in an effort to gain political advantages or using one part of the system to get advantages in another."[23] However, while some see complexes as opportunities for greater influence, others emphasize the other side of the coin: "For the latter [weaker] actors, more so than for stronger ones, regime complexes are double-edged swords, because the successes they may achieve in one forum [. . .] may be subsequently or simultaneously lost in other fora."[24] As a result, influence in the context of institutional fragmentation is hard to predict: "[s]ometimes complexity empowers powerful state actors, while at other times NGOs and weaker actors gain from the overlap of institutions and rules."[25]

To a great extent, these different studies build on the assumption that the mechanisms through which NSAs exert influence on a regime complex are similar to the ones through which they influence individual institutions. While some NSAs may continue to focus on one particular regime in a complex, others follow more than one negotiation forum, as I will show below. This raises ques-

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19. Green 2008.
20. Alter and Meunier 2009, 17.
21. Muzaka 2011, 772. See also Drezner 2009, 68.
22. Orsini et al. 2013.
23. Hafner-Burton 2009, 36.
24. Muzaka 2011, 772.
25. Alter and Meunier 2009, 14. See also Raustiala and Victor 2004, 280.

tions about the type and level of influence that such multi-forum NSAs have in comparison with NSAs that participate in only one international institution.

In sum, there is a need to clarify the consequences of institutional fragmentation on the *participation* of NSAs in regime complexes as well as the *influence* that NSAs, and in particular multi-forum NSAs, exert on regime complexes. This article focuses on the second aspect, by proposing an analytical framework on the influence of multi-forum NSAs on regime complexes. While this is a unidirectional focus from agents to complexes, it nevertheless yields insights for understanding the broader dynamics of NSAs and regime complexes.

The Influence of Non-State Actors on Regime Complexes: An Analytical Framework

Research on NSA lobbying in a single-regime context, on transnational advocacy networks' influence on environmental negotiations, and on governmental strategies regarding regime complexes, can all assist in conceptualizing and analyzing the influence of multi-forum NSAs. Based on these different strands of research, I deduct a set of assumptions in two steps: the first step derives assumptions on material, ideational, and organizational power resources of multi-forum NSAs from the literature on a single-regime context and on transnational advocacy networks; the second step then establishes assumptions on particular strategies of such NSAs in regime complexes—forum shopping, shifting, or linking—building on the emerging literature on institutional complexity.

The literature on the lobbying activities of individual NSAs in single environmental regimes is well established, with studies covering issues such as climate change,[26] biological diversity,[27] forestry,[28] biosafety,[29] as well as crosscutting analyses covering many other issues.[30] This literature also points out that NSAs often act through collaborative networks, in particular transnational advocacy networks,[31] to lower the costs of participation. Organizations opt for acting collectively since doing so offers a number of potential benefits, such as "increased access, efficiency, visibility, credibility or legitimacy, reduced isolation as well as solidarity and support,"[32] all of which increase the probability of influence. These bodies of literature have generally focused on the resources held by NSAs—in particular their material, ideational, and organizational ones—equipping them with three dimensions of power that they may translate into influence in global governance arenas.

Material power refers to the material assets that NSAs can use for their

26. Newell 2000.
27. Arts 1998.
28. Humphreys 2004.
29. Arts and Mack 2003.
30. Betsill and Corell 2008; Falkner 2008; Tienhaara et al. 2012.
31. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Shawki 2011.
32. Botetziagas et al. 2010, 115.

lobbying strategies, particularly financial capacity and human resources. For instance, the number of staff dedicated to join or follow international negotiations is a crucial parameter. But material power is also sometimes referred to as "economic power,"[33] since NSAs from stronger national economies may in general find better conditions to accumulate financial resources and provide employment. While economic power is often associated with business actors,[34] several transnational NGOs also possess great material power. For instance, according to its 2011 annual report, Greenpeace received more than US$237 million in donations in 2011.[35]

Ideational power refers to the ability to master information and expertise (i.e., grounded information based on experience), and to adapt this information to discussions in a specific issue area.[36] This ability is considered to be the prime "weapon" of advisory NGOs.[37] Typical examples of strong NGO ideational power include initiatives such as the Earth Negotiations Bulletin of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, or the ECO newsletter produced by the Climate Action Network. Actors from the business sector also may exert considerable ideational power.[38] The ability to master complex technical information on a certain environmental issue may give some firms considerable leverage. This is because ideational power is not just based on information in general, but particularly on "unique" information or "alternative" information[39]—and businesses may strategically benefit from information asymmetry on a great number of issues due to their monopoly of access.

Still, information as such—or the monopoly of access to it—is not sufficient for exerting ideational power. In addition, NSAs have to adapt the information to the ongoing debates, constantly providing advice and identifying new policy options. This requires linking information to timely global and transnational concerns.[40] It also means turning information into predictions when advising policy-makers, e.g., with regard to the prospects and potential impacts of implementing international treaties. In their framing of debates NSAs can, to a certain extent, exaggerate information.[41] For instance, NGOs may seek to dramatize the situation they are fighting against. When proposing new ideas, NSAs have to be careful not to lose truthfulness and credibility.

Organizational power is often measured in terms of internal functioning and external networking capacity. Internally, such power depends, among other things, on the efficiency of an organization's decision-making processes and on

33. Boström and Hallström 2010, 43.
34. Betsill and Corell 2008, 22.
35. Greenpeace 2011, 37.
36. Boström and Hallström 2010, 45–46.
37. Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004, 58. See also Correll and Betsill 2001; Humphreys 2004; Shawki 2011.
38. Bernhagen 2008, 85.
39. Boström and Hallström 2010, 46.
40. Boström and Hallström 2010.
41. Bernhagen 2008, 86.

its capacity to respond to new challenges. Externally, organizational power is sometimes called "social power" or "social capital," and refers to "the ability of actors to establish or link to formal or informal cooperation and alliances."[42] Acting through coalitions or advocacy networks may help pool and enhance material and ideational resources. However, this may also have some draw-backs. For instance, some NSAs are more efficient when acting individually.[43] In addition, power relationships within organizations and coalitions are common and can pose problems for equal participation.[44]

The next question is how these different dimensions of power or resources add up and are translated into actual influence. In this regard, it is useful to fo-cus on the shaping of knowledge (as processed information) as an indicator of influence, meaning that influence is constructed through cognitive interactions between NSAs and their addressees.[45] This is especially relevant, since "interna-tional environmental politics is an area in which knowledge is particularly un-certain, issues are complex, and material interests are ambiguously affected."[46] The transmission of information depends on the quality of the relationships that NSAs develop with other players. As a result, power—defined in terms of material, ideational and organizational resources—does not necessarily lead to effective influence, as this also depends on an NSA's *access* and *centrality*.[47]

NSAs can have informal (i.e., lobbying) or formal (i.e., consultative) access to other actors in international environmental institutions. First of all, contacts—particularly formal ones—with governmental actors in general, and decision-makers in particular, are key conditions, albeit not sufficient ones, for exerting influence. Contacts with other players are also important as a channel for indirect influence and often make it crucial to build bridges within and across categories of players (business with NGOs, NGOs with governments, etc.[48]). Centrality depends on the ability of a player to identify the key targets and the key setting for influence—whom to talk to and where and when to do so. Figure 1 presents the resulting dynamic, linking the three types of NSA power to influence in practice in the case of negotiations within a single forum.

Several positive feedback loops exist within this dynamic. First, material power is important for investing in ideational power. Research capacity can be enhanced by material assets; for instance, NGOs such as Greenpeace or WWF are able to recruit scientists and analysts to produce reports.[49] But material power also facilitates organizational power, as NSAs require resources to deal with their internal management and to collaborate with others. Second, organi-zational power is linked to ideational and material power. Organizational

42. Boström and Hallström 2010, 47.
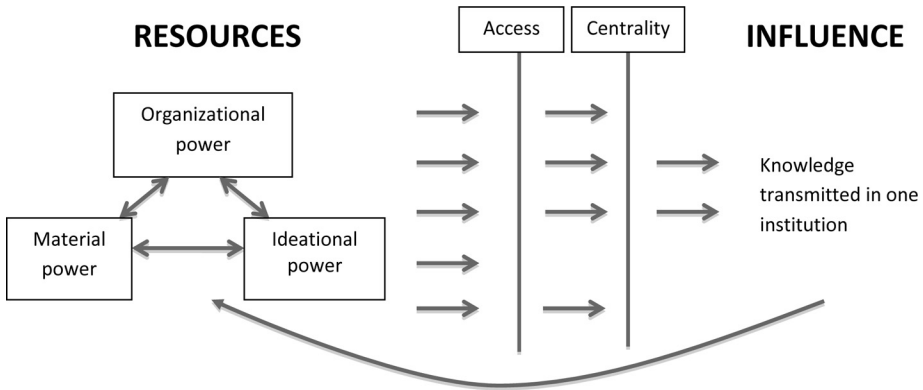43. Kautto 2009; Orsini 2011.
44. Doherty 2006; Dombrowski 2010.
45. E.g.,Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004; Betsill and Corell 2008.
46. Bernhagen 2008, 86.
47. Betsill and Corell 2008, 18.
48. Boström and Hallström 2010, 47.
49. Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004, 57.

Figure 1
Analytical Framework: The Influence of Non-State Actors on Individual Institutions

power helps organizations efficiently manage their funding and facilitates the production of relevant information. Third, when ideational power increases, NSAs can become known for their expertise and receive more funding to, among others, improve their internal organization and external collaboration. While the different types of power may thus reinforce each other, the resulting influence can also create feedback loops: the more influence an NSA has, the more its resources will be enhanced.

Which assumptions can we derive from the literature on stakeholder engagement in a single forum for multi-forum NSAs? In general, in comparison to other NSAs, multi-forum NSAs may be expected to score relatively high on all three dimensions of power. In the first place, their very ability to participate in different international forums depends on both financial and human resources. It also requires good internal management for effective participation, as well as obtaining sufficient information on what is being negotiated where.

Moreover, once participating in different forums over time, NSAs are likely to further develop some of their resources. Some forms of power are easier to acquire and accumulate in the long run than others, in particular ideational and organizational power. With regard to ideational power, participating in multiple international forums dealing with the same topic may enhance the capacity of multi-forum NSAs, as they tend to gather a larger set of (innovative) information which they can process into reports and papers. Multi-forum participation is also likely to increase the organizational power of NSAs, as they will interact with more negotiators and observers who specialize in the field, thus establishing contacts beyond their coalitions, in particular with political targets.

Because they are engaged in several forums simultaneously, multi-forum NSAs may also be granted greater access and occupy a more central position in negotiations. They have a chance to improve their access since, as studies have

shown, repeated involvement in policy issues may enhance actors' credibility[50] and their long-term legitimacy.[51] Moreover, multi-forum NSAs that are involved in different governance arenas over a longer period of time are likelier to know better where and to whom to spread their message in a fragmented institutional environment.

To summarize this first set of assumptions, one may expect a virtuous cycle, in which influential actors—already equipped with considerable levels of material, ideational, and organizational power—gain easier access to policy processes, and subsequently further increase their role in the negotiations.[52] As a result of these processes—the effects of the three types of resources combined with positive feedback loops—the influence of multi-forum NSAs, when compared to single-forum ones, may be expected to be relatively high and to further grow over time.

In addition to assumptions building on traditional channels of influence in one forum, the literature on the behavior of states in regime complexes suggests that, compared to single-forum NSAs, multi-forum NSAs may use other channels of influence.[53] In particular, existing research has identified *forum shopping* and *forum shifting* as two important strategies used by governments in a context of institutional fragmentation, which could potentially be replicated by NSAs.[54] Forum shopping is the strategic use of different institutional settings to make progress on a given agenda.[55] Through forum shopping, actors "seek out the forum most favorable to their interests."[56] Forum shifting is the changing of discussion forum, i.e., moving the debate on a particular issue to an arena that better reflects an actor's interest. It entails favoring one venue over the other.[57] In addition to these two strategies, I establish a third one that is located at the other end of the spectrum: *forum linking.* Some NSAs may work hard to link and integrate different forums, by proposing a common normative frame applicable to all forums and by suggesting a division of labor, for example regarding specific topics, governance functions, or geographical areas and jurisdictions.

One indicator of these strategies is attendance. While states, as decision-makers, often participate in major negotiations by default, the participation of an NSA in a particular forum and the strategy it develops are likely to be the result of deliberate choices. When NSAs regularly attend all forums, this can be seen as an indicator for forum linking. When they regularly attend one or two forums but occasionally participate in an additional forum, this may hint at a strategy of forum shopping. When they change their negotiation forum of

50. Gullberg 2008, 162.
51. Cashore 2002, 512.
52. Schroeder 2010.
53. Other strategies common to all NSAs are lobbying, advocating, and exercising public pressure. See Arts and Mack 2003.
54. Kautto 2009, 106. See also Haufler 2009, 128.
55. Raustiala and Victor 2004, 299; Busch 2007.
56. Raustiala and Victor 2004, 280.
57. Helfer 2004.

choice or abandon a forum, this can be viewed as a sign of forum shifting. To be sure, attendance is only a first indicator, and is often coupled with more substantial strategies such as allocating different lobbying efforts to different forums, networking with other NSAs in certain settings, or investing more time and resources for preparing particular negotiations.

Unlike forum linking, forum shopping and shifting aim at destabilizing regime complexes, albeit in different ways. Forum shifting is a highly disintegrative strategy because it aims to disconnect negotiation forums and limit negotiations to one venue. By contrast, while forum shopping may create conflicts and competition between different institutions (because these institutions are alternatively considered as adequate venues), it presupposes a certain level of overlap or interaction between them—and, as such, a certain level of integration of a regime complex.

NSAs are likely to choose among these three strategies according to their interests. When an issue has been institutionally framed in line with their preferences, they are likely to favor the status quo or an even higher level of integration of a given regime complex. This would ensure regulatory stability, since the transaction costs for changing or influencing a set of institutions (or a whole regime complex) are higher than for a single institution. Conversely, when a complex is not likely to serve their interests, they may tend to reframe the debates and seek to alter the complex to the extent that their capacities allow for it. An NSA's choice of strategy may depend on the availability of the three types of resources mentioned above. One can assume that multi-forum NSAs are likely to invest their efforts in one particular strategy to avoid too many costs and will not easily change this strategy across a given regime complex.

The Cases of Forestry and Genetic Resources

The analytical framework proposed here includes a series of assumptions and propositions that need to be tested, modified, and further developed through empirical analyses. With research on multi-forum NSAs still at an early stage, a comprehensive test would require a large-n and multivariate analysis which is beyond the scope of this study. The analysis and evidence presented in this section can therefore only provide a modest first step toward testing the plausibility of the proposed framework.

The analysis draws on two case studies, covering the period from 2001 to 2011. The first case study focuses on natural genetic resources (GRs). Genetic resources are extracts of plants, animals, or microorganisms that can be used, among others, for commercial applications (for instance, pharmaceuticals) and are traded worldwide. Since 2001, the GR regime complex has been primarily negotiated in the following forums: the Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABSWG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), whose mandate is to define the conditions of access to GRs and benefit sharing; the Intergovernmental Committee (IC) on Intellectual Property and Genetic

Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), whose mandate is to protect the traditional knowledge associated with GRs; meetings of the governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), an agreement that creates a particular multilateral system dealing with plant genetic resources; and the Council on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the WTO, which discusses patenting for inventions based on plants, animals, or biological processes.[58] However, since NSAs are not allowed as observers at the TRIPS Council meetings, this forum has been excluded from this study, which covers all meetings from the first WIPO IC meeting in April 2001 to the first CBD intergovernmental meeting on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) in June 2011.

Since the 1990s, forest-related issues have been negotiated in more than eight international forums.[59] This paper concentrates on those institutions with a predominant focus on forestry: the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), which is historically one of the main negotiating arenas on forests,[60] with a high-level commitment to the monitoring, reporting, and assessment of world forests; the UN Forum on Forests, which was established in 2001 to coordinate national and international policy efforts on this issue; and the International Tropical Timber Committee (ITTC) of the corresponding organization, which regulates the exploitation of tropical forests. The study covers all meetings from the 15th COFO meeting held in March 2001 to the 47th ITTC meeting held in November 2011.

These case studies cover issues where NSAs have an important stake, sometimes colliding with the preference of other NSAs. Thus, while patents on products derived from GRs are sought after by pharmaceutical, seed, and biotechnology companies, many environmental NGOs are militating against the granting of such patents and the exploitation of indigenous knowledge. In forest politics, timber traders have high stakes in maintaining the wood commodity market, while NGOs and indigenous people associations fight for stronger restrictions of this market as well as better social safeguards and against illegal logging and deforestation.[61] Moreover, both domains represent instances of advanced institutional fragmentation and local-cumulative environmental problems that are strongly linked to certain locations, particularly in the Global South. Finally, similar norms, such as national sovereignty, indigenous peoples' rights, and benefit sharing, are discussed within both complexes.[62]

Both complexes can be argued to exhibit cases of "conflictive" fragmentation.[63] With respect to the regime complex on forests, the high degree of institu-

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58. For an overview and history of the complex, see Morin and Orsini, 2013.
59. Glück et al. 2010.
60. Cadman 2010, 9.
61. For earlier studies of NSAs in the forests negotiations, see Humphreys 2004.
62. Raustiala and Victor 2004, 289; Cadman 2010, 13.
63. See the classification in Biermann et al. 2009, 19.

tional fragmentation, lack of a strong overarching regime, and strong conflicts of interests among major actors have led some observers to call it a "non-regime."[64] Apart from the Non-Legally Binding Agreement on All Types of Forests, adopted in 2007, there has been no international agreement on the issue since 2001. Likewise, for GRs, some elements are highly conflictive, in particular "the overlap between the CBD and TRIPS [which] concerns both diverging norms and diverging regulations."[65] However, if one isolates the TRIPS forum, as is the case in this study, the remaining sample resembles more a cooperative sub-complex within the broader and rather conflictive institutional complex on GRs. In particular, the CBD, FAO, and WIPO Patent Law and Patent Cooperation treaties coexist rather peacefully and share the common understanding that GRs are used commercially. The dynamics of this complex have been recently highlighted by the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization by the CBD parties in 2010.[66] A second difference is the absence of transnational institutional arrangements or initiatives in the GR complex, apart from voluntary guidelines. By contrast, in international forest governance, the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forests Certification have emerged as key certification organizations involving both private and public actors. The establishment and persistence of these organizations may be seen as a response to the existing governance gap—and also to the difficulties that forestry NSAs had been experiencing when trying to influence governmental forest negotiations.[67]

Table 1 presents general statistics about the involvement of NSAs in the regime complexes for GRs and forests. It shows that in both cases the share of multi-forum NSAs is at least 32 percent. An analysis of the time period covered by each multi-forum NSA, provided in Figures 2 and 3, confirms that they have been involved for longer periods of time. The number of multi-forum NSAs increases over time in both case studies, due to the progressive entry of newcomers, but also owing to the continued involvement of existing multi-forum NSAs.

To explore the assumptions on positive feedback loops that multi-forum participation can generate, seven multi-forum NSAs (three from the forestry regime complex and four from the GR regime complex) were asked about their organizational and ideational resources, as well as about the resources of others.[68] The inclination of actors to underestimate their own resources and to overestimate the resources available to others was taken into account.[69] The in-

64. Dimitrov et al. 2007.
65. Rosendal, 2001, 95.
66. Oberthür and Pożarowska article, this issue.
67. Dimitrov 2005, 16.
68. The small number of interviews is partly compensated by the quality of the interviewees in terms of their participation in several negotiation meetings. A full list of interviewees is included at the end of the article. The different short quotes used for illustration come from different interviewees, but are not directly linked to them for reasons of confidentiality.
69. Arts 1998; Newell 2000; Gullberg 2008.

Table 1

NSA Participation in the Forestry and GR Regime Complexes

	Forestry Complex	*GR Complex*
Number of meetings	33	37
Meetings per forum	18 (ITTC); 6 (COFO); 9 (UN)	19 (IC); 11 (ABSWG); 7 (FAO)
Total attendance by NSAs (total)	661	2,008
Number of different NSAs that attended these meetings	274	730
Number of different NSAs that attended only one meeting (share of total)	166 (25.1%)	284 (14.1%)
NSAs that attended more than one meeting and only one forum (share of total)	74 (38.7%)	509 (67.3%)
NSAs that attended two forums (share of total)	26 (19.1%)	60 (27.8%)
NSAs that attended three forums (share of total)	12 (17.5%)	5 (4.9%)
Total multi-forum NSAs (share of total)	38 (36.6%)	65 (32.6%)

terviewees recognized the importance of networks, in particular informal networks: "what you see is just the tip of the iceberg." Likewise, they tended to assess the importance of their competitors by looking at the way they are connected to others. The interviewees confirmed that networking is particularly difficult in a context of institutional fragmentation. To address the considerable number of different stakeholders in such a fragmented institutional setting, participation in multiple forums, was considered instrumental.

Interviewees also stressed the advantage of multi-forum NSAs in terms of ideational power. First, attending several negotiating forums was considered a key asset for information-gathering across areas: "to learn what is happening and where." Second, participating in multiple forums enables NSAs to provide information that is better tailored to the addressees in the various negotiation processes. This is either because it helps to avoid inconsistencies with what already exists elsewhere but is not always known by negotiators—"otherwise they would reinvent things"—or because it helps to propose innovative experiences and thinking. Better information provision, in turn, tends to strengthen the reputation of multi-forum NSAs: "We regularly receive feedback such as 'thanks for tackling issues no one else is tackling.'" Interviewees confirmed that organizational aspects are key facilitators for ideational influence. First, better
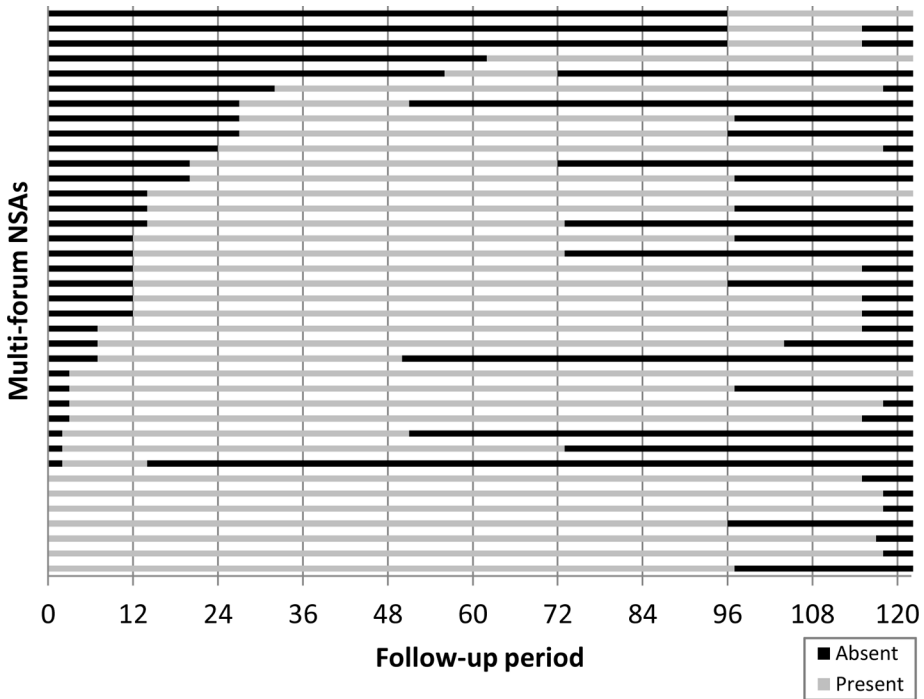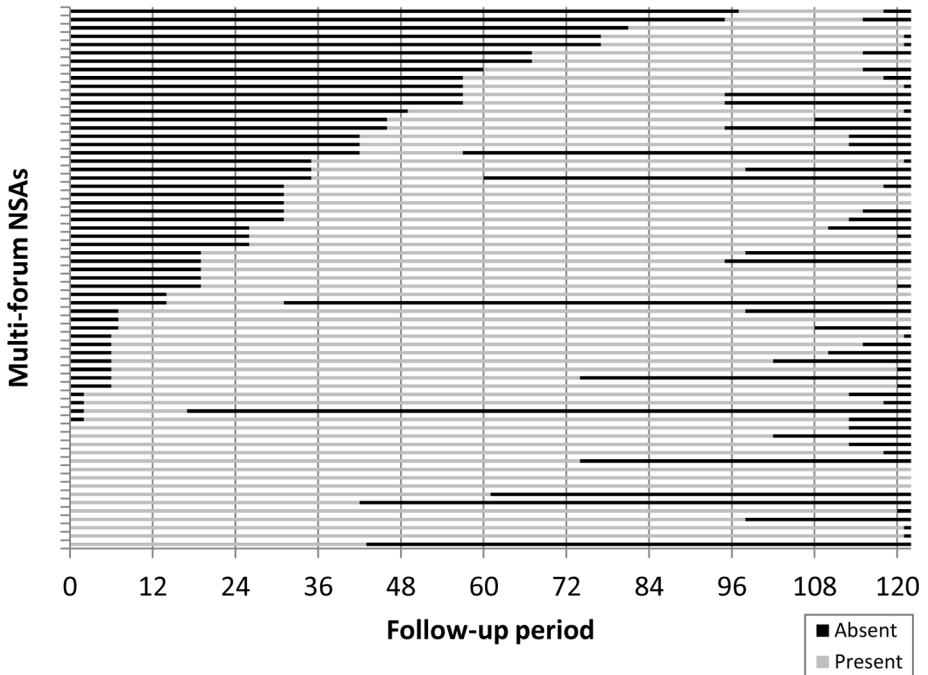
Figure 2
Follow-up Period of Multi-Forum NSAs—Forestry Regime Complex

Each line corresponds to one multi-forum NSA. The abscissa counts the months, taking the first negotiation meeting covered by the study as a starting point.

organizational skills enhance the capacity to target the right audience for information diffusion by helping to "find the right angle to have your message sent." Second, networking helps finding "interesting people you can then invite as experts during the negotiations," providing scientific support for exerting ideational influence.

Moreover, the interviewees explained that being able to attend several negotiating forums was an asset in terms of centrality and access. To further illustrate the centrality of multi-forum NSAs, the two case studies additionally relied on social network analysis. Based on the lists of participants to the negotiating processes of the two regime complexes, network maps of NSAs were generated, including all categories of registered participants except for governments, specialized UN agencies, and inter-governmental organizations. In these maps, each node represents one NSA participating in the negotiations of the complex; each link between two nodes represents the meetings two NSAs have both participated in. The nodes that are central to such a network represent the NSAs

Figure 3
Follow-up Period of Multi-Forum NSAs—GR Regime Complex

Each line corresponds to one multi-forum NSA. The abscissa counts the months, taking the first negotiation meeting covered by the study as a starting point.

that participated in negotiation meetings at which other well-connected NSAs were also present. These are the meetings that NSAs consider the most important to exert their influence. Based on this analysis and the network maps, Table 2 shows the ten NSAs found to be most central to the forestry regime complex. It further shows that eight of these ten are multi-forum NSAs. In the case of GRs, results are even more significant, as all central NSAs are multi-forum NSAs (Table 3).

Interviewees further confirmed that multi-forum NSAs are often under pressure to identify the key meetings to attend—and over time improve their skills to do so. Several respondents stressed that negotiating meetings are not always worth attending or are simply too numerous or too dispersed (both substantively and geographically). Some NSAs therefore closely followed the attendance patterns of other important NSAs in order to identify "where [the] action is and where we should be."

The interviews also supported the assumption that multi-forum NSAs gain greater access to the negotiations over time. Some are invited to submit review

Table 2
The Ten Most Central NSAs in the Network of NSAs Participating in the Forestry
Regime Complex[a]

Rank	Multi-Forum NSA?	Centrality*	Name
1	Yes (3)	0.88	Friends of the Earth International
2	Yes (3)	0.88	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
3	Yes (3)	0.86	WWF
4	Yes (3)	0.70	The Nature Conservancy
5	No	0.66	Tropical Forest Foundation
6	Yes (3)	0.63	Greenpeace International
7	Yes (3)	0.62	Center for International Forestry Research
8	Yes (3)	0.62	International Forestry Students Association
9	No	0.61	International Wood Products Association
10	Yes (2)	0.61	World Resources Institute

[a]Tables 2 and 3 only include NSAs that attended at least two negotiation meetings in order to eliminate less relevant data.
*Centrality corresponds to "degree centrality," measured as the number of ties of each node, using the Pajek software. This value has then been normalized. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of the attended forums.

Table 3
The Ten Most Central NSAs in the Network of NSAs Participating in the GR
Regime Complex

Rank	Multi-Forum NSA?	Centrality*	Name
1	Yes (3)	0.96	CropLife International
2	Yes (2)	0.96	International Chamber of Commerce
3	Yes (2)	0.94	Tulalip Tribes of Washington Governmental Affairs Department
4	Yes (3)	0.94	International Seed Federation
5	Yes (3)	0.92	Third World Network
6	Yes (2)	0.91	Berne Declaration
7	Yes (2)	0.91	Russian Association of Indigenous People of the North
8	Yes (2)	0.86	Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism
9	Yes (2)	0.85	Saami Council
10	Yes (2)	0.85	Assembly of First Nations

*Centrality corresponds to "degree centrality," measured as the number of ties of each node, using the Pajek software. This value has then been normalized. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of the attended forums.

Table 4
Strategies of Multi-Forum NSAs in the Forestry Regime Complex[a]

Number of Different Forums Attended	Strategy	Number of Multi-Forum NSAs that Followed This Strategy (percentage of total)
2	Forum linking	3 (21.4%)
	Forum shopping	3 (21.4%)
	Forum shifting	8 (57.1%)
3	Forum linking	3 (25%)
	Forum shifting	9 (75%)

[a]Only the NSAs that attended at least four negotiation meetings and two forums, or five negotiation meetings and three forums are included in Tables 4 and 5. In the case of forests, this includes 14 two-forum NSAs and 12 three-forum NSAs. In the case of GR, this includes 34 two-forum NSAs and 17 three-forum NSAs.

reports on the proposals made during negotiations, while others are invited to informal expert groups which frame future negotiating items. This is explained by their long-term involvement but also by the value added through the information they provide: "Increasingly people are coming to us. We have been around for twelve years so we add value to others."

To summarize the results from the interviews and network analysis, multi-forum NSAs have most organizational and ideational resources and have benefited from greater access and centrality in the negotiations of the two complexes examined here. Nonetheless, these findings are but first empirical assessments and need to be corroborated by further studies on the (likely stronger) influence of multi-forum NSAs on the negotiations of both complexes.

In addition, the framework developed in this article allows for a first indication of the three types of strategies (forum shopping, shifting, and linking), based on the attendance patterns that multi-forum NSAs show in complex institutional settings. Tables 4 and 5 present the extent to which these strategies can be observed in the two cases examined here. While all three strategies are used by all multi-forum NSAs, there is a clear tendency toward forum linking for the NSAs engaged in the GR complex, whereas NSAs involved in the forests complex are more inclined to forum shifting. In fact, there are more "three-forum NSAs" in the case of forests than in the case of GRs (see Table 1), which implies that NSAs involved in the forestry complex are more aware of the existing relationships between the different forums. Still, these NSAs are working against the integration of the complex.

These first illustrative results suggest that multi-forum NSAs may, to a certain extent, gear their strategies according to their interests and change the shape and nature of the regime complex in question: forum shifting is favored by the

Table 5
Strategies of Multi-Forum NSAs in the GR Regime Complex

Number of Different Forums Attended	Strategy	Number of Multi-Forum NSAs that Followed This Strategy (percentage of total)
2	Forum linking	18 (38.3%)
	Forum shopping	16 (34%)
3	Forum shifting	13 (27.7%)
	Forum linking	4 (100%)

multi-forum NSAs engaged in the forestry complex—which can be classified as highly fragmented and conflictive—while forum linking is largely practiced by multi-forum NSAs engaged in the GR regime sub-complex—which, in the institutional sample analyzed here, can be seen as more integrated and cooperative.

Notwithstanding the different strategic patterns observed in the two complexes, it is intriguing that all the multi-forum NSAs interviewed for this study pursued forum linking as a strategy. The interviewees generally believed that targeting one forum over another would be damaging for their reputation. Instead, working in different forums was seen as helping them build trust and showing a willingness to be proactive, qualities that they considered as essential. Some mentioned that being present across key forums was useful to propose bridges between topics, altering or connecting preferences across issues and arenas.

These observations suggest that multi-forum NSAs are likely to adapt their strategies to their interests, but also to their external environment, with reputation being at play in this case. Again, these and other findings can only be regarded as a first empirical assessment that needs further examination using a bigger sample.

Conclusion

The influence of NSAs varies in a context of institutional fragmentation compared to a traditional one-forum negotiation setting. This article has presented an analytical framework to compare the influence of multi-forum NSAs with the influence of other NSAs in such a context. Deriving and further developing a set of assumptions from different strands of literature, the article has argued that multi-forum NSAs may reinforce their organizational and ideational powers, and gain better access and centrality during the negotiations of individual regimes part of larger complexes.

The first and illustrative findings provided here strongly suggest that the role and behavior of NSAs in the context of institutional fragmentation are

highly relevant, and should be integrated in the debates on regime complexity and fragmentation. By engaging in particular strategies such as forum shopping, forum shifting, and forum linking, multi-forum NSAs may even be able to further influence the evolution of regime complexes. Because regime complexes change the rules of the game, and because NSAs have to carefully weigh and prioritize their (costly) participation in different forums and negotiations, some multi-forum NSAs have a strong interest in influencing the development of regime complexes. Further studies could show to what extent NSAs may even be more successful in doing so than some governmental players with limited diplomatic services, which might not be able to afford such a comprehensive strategy.

Drawing on the cases of forestry and GRs, the article has illustrated some of these arguments. Again, further research is needed to deepen our understanding of the cases analyzed here and to investigate the applicability of this framework to other cases. Comparisons across integrated and fragmented regime complexes, and across complexes mobilizing many NSAs (as was the case here) and few NSAs would be particularly relevant.

The article concludes with a brief look at additional implications of the analytical framework, which also merit further examination. First, the empowerment of multi-forum NSAs may be at the detriment of other categories of NSAs. While participating in several forums in parallel is an option for well-organized advocacy-oriented NSAs, long-term involvement is not an option for other types of activist groups. These are likely to become marginalized when confronted with multiple negotiating processes. Participating in multiple forums requires material resources that weaker groups, in particular indigenous and local communities and NGOs from the Global South, often lack. In other words, regime complexes lower process-based legitimacy:[70] the dynamics observed favor NSAs that are, for whatever reason, already powerful. While the framework presented in this article is embedded in a pluralist view of international politics, this conclusion propels it toward some of the tenets of critical international political economy,[71] and suggests a novel topic for further research from this camp.

The results of this study also raise the problem of the "critical distance" of multi-forum NSAs with respect to negotiating processes.[72] While being closer to these processes, their ability to reflect on their own judgment is likely to decrease. Further research on the behavior and agenda (and changes thereof) of multi-forum NSAs over time could show to what extent socialization or learning effects take place, e.g., in terms of softening the position of more radical groups, but also making it more difficult to maintain a diversity of opinions.

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70. For a discussion of process-based legitimacy, see Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and McGee article, this issue.
71. E.g., Newell 2008.
72. Boström and Hallström 2010, 54–55.

Finally, this study suggests new research questions on the role of "bridging" organizations that participate in more than one regime complex. The complexes on forestry and GRs analyzed here have 24 NSAs in common. These NSAs working across issue areas could thus serve a critical role by transmitting information and establishing links between both complexes.[73]

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