NGO ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract
The paper presents conclusions of a research on consequences of the role acquired by NGOs directly engaged in the UN on the form of the international system. Is the role which NGOs gain in the UN big enough for us to be able to talk about emergence of a qualitatively new form of the international system? Drawing upon ideas by neo-liberal institutionalists and social constructivists, the presented research focuses on revealing possible contribution of NGO engagement in the UN to fulfilling traits characteristic for different alternative international system designs, such as global governance, multi-layered governance and world government. The research is based on preliminary determination of structural elements of these alternative international system designs which are then confronted with contribution towards their realization by NGOs engaged in the UN. This contribution is assessed independently for each of the structural element of the alternative international system designs with use of a method relevant for the nature of the concrete structural element. The study thus combines a number of both qualitative and quantitative methods through which contribution of NGOs engaged in the UN to a shift from the international system in its classical understanding towards each of the examined alternative forms is assessed. The research concludes with a realisation that NGO engagement in the United Nations really fosters advent of a new kind of international system the form of which combines several aspects of global governance and of multi-layered governance despite not leading to their realisation in full.

Points for Practitioners
Findings of this paper are essential for better understanding of working of the current international system and the role played within it by NGOs. The outcomes may be useful for NGOs engaging in the UN or interested in, as well as for the UN institutions and UN member states, for they can help these actors to understand better each other and also the effects of NGO engagement in the UN. Based on these finding, they may better develop their cooperation in a way which will enable them to maximize mutual benefits. The paper can be also a basis for further elaboration of the question of NGO regulation at the international level, and of how to better set next cooperation with NGOs by states and intergovernmental organizations.

Keywords
non-governmental organization, United Nations, international system

Introduction
Study of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the international system is not new. Many aspects of their involvement in international policy-making have already been discovered by other scholars. So were the modalities of their engagement in intergovernmental organisations, and the United Nations (UN) especially. However, most studies have limited themselves to a mere description of historical and/or current access of NGOs to the United Nations, or some of its structures, which does not give us the coherent picture of the role of NGOs in the organisation and the wider international system and its further consequences for the current and future development of world affairs.
Based on my previous research (Bobková, 2018) of the role of NGOs in the UN in which I tried to overcome the weaknesses of previous efforts by employing an alternative approach to the study consisting in employment of discourse analysis unused in this research area before, the next question which arises with the emerging role of NGOs on the world stage is the question of consequences of this role of NGOs on the very form of the international system. Is the role which NGOs gain in the UN big enough for us to be able to talk about emergence of a qualitatively new form of the international system?
Drawing upon ideas by neo-liberal institutionalists and social constructivists, the presented research focuses on revealing impact of NGO engagement in the UN on the shape of the international system. The role which NGOs gain with their involvement in the UN is assessed against analysis of different alternative international system designs, such as global governance, multi-layered governance and world government.

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The paper begins with a brief presentation of conclusions of my previous study on the role of NGOs in the UN which present a basis for selection of the international system designs towards which the current system seems to be heading due to the NGOs’ involvement in the UN. The same section presents the main characteristics of these alternative international system designs to enable the second section to assess the potential of the NGOs’ involvement in the UN to foster these particular characteristics and, by extension, advent of these alternative international system designs. The results are summarized in the third section preceding the paper’s conclusion. The analyses build mostly on primary data, such as official documents of the UN, information on NGOs from the Yearbook of International Organizations (UIA, 2016, 1992, 1981), as well as outputs of a survey conducted among NGOs and of interviews with representatives of selected UN institutions responsible for cooperation of these UN institutions with NGOs. The paper works particularly with data on a statistical sample of 212 NGOs which are divided in three groups of NGOs non-engaged, engaged or actively engaged in selected 29 UN institutions examined in this paper. The level of engagement was derived from the official documentation of these UN institutions on participation of NGOs in their structures.

1. Role of NGOs Engaged in the United Nations and Possible Alternative International System Designs

The first section of the paper briefly presents conclusions of the previous study on the role of NGOs in the UN. These outcomes represent a necessary basis for understanding not only the role of NGOs in the UN, but, by extension, also in the wider international system. They also enable us to determine which alternative international system designs the engagement of NGOs in the United Nations may be predisposed to lead to.

1.1. Role of NGOs Engaged in the United Nations

Since the role of NGOs at the UN can hardly be measured in terms of their share in UN outcomes, due to both diversity of factors by which these outcomes are influenced and the diverse and often subtle ways in which NGOs make their part, my previous research on the role of NGOs engaged in the United Nations (Bobková, 2018) used discourse analysis as an alternative approach to the study. The employed approach proved very useful and led the research to important conclusions. Firstly, the analysis of the NGOs’ discourse has shown that there has been a kind of saturation in what the NGOs feel that they may demand from the UN in terms of their access and participatory rights. Secondly, it showed that NGOs are becoming aware of that now more NGOs are interested in not only the mere work of the UN but also the way NGOs are treated at the organization. Thirdly, in spite of their real advancements in terms of their access to the UN, NGOs are taking on a more moderate tone in the communication with the UN. Some professionalization in their discourse was also observed. All of these findings are closely linked to the question of the role of NGOs at the UN. The most important finding is the revealed process of saturation of NGO demands or at least the realization of this process. The analysed texts have shown that NGOs are increasingly aware of the fact that the current situation of NGOs at the UN will not be subject to substantial changes anymore. At the same time, however, it seems that the position of NGOs at the UN has been strengthened. In earlier times, it was a problem to access the UNSG and it was possible to address him only upon his own request for inputs, while correspondence with him has become a common matter over the time. Moreover, while earlier inputs were written upon a request, later they were replaced by a more proactive approach from the NGOs side. This is a clear proof of lowering social distance between the UN and NGOs and of the relative power imbalance. Also, the relations between NGOs and the UN have improved – from those characterized as antagonist to more cooperative relations as in between understanding partners. The analysis has also shown that there is a greater diversity of NGOs who seem to be active in promoting NGO participatory rights at the UN than before.

Overall, the study has indicated that the role of NGOs at the UN has been somewhat strengthened from the turn of the century. To assess the transformative power of engagement of NGOs in the UN, the important observation was that the NGOs appear to have transformed from entities begging for more access to more equal partners. As a matter of the fact, NGOs also seem to have started to act as such. They communicate in a more formal and sophisticated way and try to address rather concrete issues and focus on tangible results rather than to follow idealistic dreams and shout for nearly the same treatment as the governments have. This ‘sobering-up’ means moderation not only in content of demands, but also in assertiveness and tone in which they are formulated. The lowering social distance and relative power imbalance of NGOs in the UN clearly shows that NGOs are becoming an integral part of the UN.

The question which this paper addresses is to which extent the engagement of NGOs in the UN and the role they acquire there can lead to a change of the wider international system. Is engagement of NGOs in the UN and the rise of their role there such an important phenomenon to influence the form of the international system as a whole? What is the transformative power of NGOs engaged in the UN?

Based on the mere substance of engagement of NGOs in the UN and their role in the organisation, it seems that the current system is moving from the international system in its traditional neorealistic conception towards an
alternative design which allows for more space for NGOs, acting on the international stage not only through the agency of states, yet without necessary concessions of the role of states. It should also be a system which is international if not global in its scale and where the UN is of interest to states and NGOs alike. Especially the latter point could evoke the idea of a transformation of the current international system toward a kind of a world government. The role of NGOs in the UN, though not absolutely incompatible with the concept of the world government per se, leads to hypothesizing about advent of global governance or multi-layered governance. The following sub-sections are presenting a short description of these alternative international system designs to prepare a ground for testing to which extent the engagement of NGOs in the UN can contribute to fulfillment of their main characteristics.

1.2. Global Governance

The concept of global governance has been referred to quite a lot in relation to proliferation of NGOs at the international level (cf. Zürn, M., 2006, Weiss, T. G., Seyle, D. C., Coolidge, K., 2013). Some scholars mention it even in relation to activities of NGOs vis-à-vis the UN (cf. Weiss, Thakur, 2010; Stephenson, 2000: 292). It means that both the role of the UN and of NGOs seem to be compatible with the concept. Rosenau (1992), one of the founders of the concept of global governance, defines it as governance without government. According to him, governance “is a more encompassing phenomenon than government,” for it includes not only governmental institutions, but also “informal, nongovernmental mechanisms whereby […] persons and institutions […] satisfy their needs, and fulfil their wants” (Rosenau, 1992: 4). The Commission on Global Governance founded in 1992 defined governance as “the sum of many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. […] It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest” (Commission on Global Governance, 1995). For Weiss (2013: 99), global governance is “collective efforts to identify, understand, and address worldwide problems that go beyond the problem-solving capacities of states” which brings a “degree of stability, predictability, and order”. According to him, these mechanisms help to identify collective interests, overcome differences and lead to cooperation and problem-solving. According to Weiss (2013: 51-70), the term was conceived in relation to growing interdependence and globalisation, and rise in numbers and importance of non-state actors.

To well identify main characteristics of global governance, it is equally important to have a look at the gaps in achieving global governance identified by both proponents and opponents of the concept. These are, according to Weiss (2013: 128–152) a knowledge gap (lack of consent on the identification of the main problems), a normative gap (lack of consensus on generally acceptable norms), a policy gap (gap in acceptance of common principles, goals and in consent on activities through which these principles and goals should be implemented), an institutional gap (lack of institutionalisation), and a compliance gap (inability to assure compliance with agreed norms, policies). The other obstacles are defined by the WHO (2016) and Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler (1998), for whom the limits lie in the lack of formal participation and access to global forms of governance due to the limits set by states to interactions with NGOs. Anderson (2011) is very sceptical about both the advent of global governance and role that may be played within by NGOs and the UN.

Based on this literature, it may be argued that engagement of NGOs in the UN can foster global governance in case that it is capable to advance any of these areas:

- to help to identify and understand common (global) problems and collective interests
- to foster cooperation between global governance actors in management of common affairs (and to help to overcome divergences)
- to help finding agreement on principles, goals, solutions and measures
- to enhance governance legitimacy
- to help assuring compliance with what is agreed
- to help to rise in importance of non-state actors and involvement of civil society groups (from all over the world) and to formalisation of rules of engagement of non-state actors in global interactions
- to enhance interdependence and globalisation
- to foster institutionalisation of politics and herewith also stability and predictability

1.3. Multi-layered Governance

Activities of NGOs at the international level are sometimes associated also with multi-layered (or multilevel) governance. The pioneers of the concept used it for description of the European structural (cohesion) policy (cf. Marks, 1993; Hooghe, 1996). To Hooghe (1996: 18), multi-layered governance depicts a situation where “there is no centre of accumulated authority” but instead networks of cooperation are created between different combinations of governments on different levels of authority (either European, national or sub-national). Hooghe and Marks (2001: xi) define multi-layered governance as “diffusion of authoritative decision-making across multiple territorial levels”. The multi-layered governance is a kind of governance in which several structures
with their own authorities and decision-making powers work together creating territorially overlapping networks of mutually interwoven supranational, national and subnational governments (Kern and Bulkeley, 2009; Forsyth, 2009). The concept of multi-layered governance reflect the fact the decision-making is not solely a matter of a government on the national level anymore, but of more actors and more levels, which are mutually interwoven (Boland, 1999; Hooge and Marks, 2003). It supposes a combination of principles of subsidiarity and of delegation of decision-making to higher levels at the same time (Weiss, Seyle and Coolidge, 2013: 20; Marks, 1993: 401–402). The delegation of powers from national to supra- and subnational levels does not necessarily mean replacement of decision-making powers of a state but rather an enlargement of decision-making processes and their change – where decision-making of a state can also be a result of influencing by actors from other levels, be it lobby of regional or local levels or the states’ obligations stemming from international treaties (Keskitalo, Juhola and Westerhoff, 2013). At the same time, the decision-making processes are not influenced only in vertical direction, but also horizontally (Beer, 2017). In this context, Van Popering-Verkerk and van Buuren (2015) identify five patterns of multi-layered decision-making: top-down, bottom-up, collaborative decision-making, synchronisation by procedures and synchronisation by interactions.

Whilst Brühl and Rittberger (2001: 2) consider multi-layered governance and global governance for de facto synonyms, to others (cf. Weiss, Seyle and Coolidge, 2013; Balabán and Potůček, 2009), multi-layered governance is rather just one trait of global governance. For Zürn (2012), on the other hand, global governance, or “global multi-layered governance” is a specific form of multi-layered governance where there is no coordination centre, where processes of legitimisation and implementation are multiple, the global level is autonomous enough and individual layers influence each other and coordinate themselves.

1.4. World Government

The idea of world government is often connected to the UN (cf. Tinbergen, 1994: 88; Cronkite, 2000: 45). Lu (2016) defines the concept of world government as an idea of “all humankind united under one common political authority” with the aim to bring more effective solutions to global problems. Craig (2008) conceives the concept of world government as “a school of thought that supports the creation of international authority (or authorities) that can tackle the global problems that nation-states currently cannot”. These are especially “collective action problems” which harm everyone but no-one wants to solve them even though a solution would bring benefits to all. Wendt (2003) sees creation of a world government (a sovereign political entity with constitutional authority above all nations) inevitable, while Deudney (2006) considers it to be in interest of states if they want to avoid destruction of the world by nuclear weapons. For Waltz (1979: 100-101), creation of a world government is the only possible change of the international chaotic system whereby chaos can give a way to hierarchy. When compared to the concept of global governance, the idea of world government is characterised by a higher degree of concentration of the authority in international relations, a higher degree of formality, bigger centralisation, existence of a coercive power, and superiority of the authority to other subject of the international relations. Craig (2008) sees global governance as a looser system than world government. Baumann and Dingwerth (2015) argue that world government means a move from anarchy to hierarchy, whilst global governance represents a move from anarchy to heterarchy.


This section represents a series of analyses through which impact of engagement of NGOs in the UN on the international system shape/design is assessed. It is based on previous outline of the role of NGOs engaged in the UN and assesses the possible contribution of NGOs engagement in the UN on global governance, multi-layered governance and world government though analysing impact on individual traits of these alternative international system designs as depicted above.

2.1. Global Governance

Given the complexity of the global governance concept, the contribution of NGOs engaged in the UN towards establishment/reinforcement of global governance is assessed in several individual areas, referring to the mains characteristics of the global governance as pointed in the previous section.

- contribution towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests

Identification of problems and pointing to the need for solving them is one of the main missions of NGOs in general. The UN level is used by NGOs especially for drawing the attention towards problems of global scale or those which are ignored on national levels but the solution is in the wider interest. The international orientation of NGOs engaged in the UN (Jebavá, 2017) indicates the global character of the problems which NGOs point to at the UN. Tallberg et al. (2015: 216) argue that the need for information for their political decision-making is basically the main reason why intergovernmental organizations show interest in cooperation with NGOs. IGOs are unable to arrange for the necessary information by themselves, and so are not their member states (Moravcsik, 2004). For this reason, they refer to NGOs who specialize on the particular topics and for which the collection and assessment of information is often the main business (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). The proximity to the local level gives NGOs also the much needed expertise. Given the fact that the IGOs and their member states
and not able to assess the correctness of the information provided by NGOs to the full, the NGOs act not only as simple providers of the information but are also able to influence the way in which the problems are understood. According to NGOs responding to a questionnaire, awareness-raising of UN institutions about topics dealt by NGOs is one of the main reasons for NGOs engagement in the UN (42 % of respondents). The nature of cooperation also lies in 55 % in widening of the perspective with which the UN institution works. A request for information or expertise by a UN institution is considered as the main success of NGO cooperation with the UN (selected by 59 % of respondents), 21 % of respondents would consider changing the focus of the UN institution as a success of the engagement. 55 % of NGO respondents are persuaded that NGO engagement in the UN contributes towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests.

To test whether the engagement of NGOs in the UN can really contribute to identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests, a statistical analysis was made. It tested whether the claim about NGOs potential to contribute in this field is statistically dependent on the level of engagement of the NGO, making this claim, in the UN. The level of engagement of the NGO in the UN coded 1 for NGOs not engaged in the UN, 2 for NGOs engaged, and 3 for NGOs actively engaged, was counted as an average between the value with which the NGO was listed in the statistical sample, and the value based on its self-assessment. The average value was considered independent variable, whilst the information on whether the claim about potential of NGOs engaged in the UN for contribution towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests was made (codified as 1), or not (codified as 0) became the dependent variable.

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H0: \( \pi_1 = \pi_2 = \pi_3 = \pi_4 = \pi_5 = 0.2 \) (level of engagement of the NGO to the UN does not influence its contribution towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests)

H1: non H0 (level of engagement of the NGO to the UN influences its contribution towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests)

Since the exact distribution is not known, the hypothesis was tested by non-parametric test – Pearson’s chi-squared test \( (\chi^2) \). At 95% significance level, the critical value for four degrees of freedom is 9.5. As the chi-squared statistics of 12.72727 exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis has been rejected. As a consequence, it can be said that there is statistical evidence that level of engagement of an NGO to the UN influences ability of the NGO to contribute towards identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests.

- to foster cooperation between actors in management of common affairs (and overcome divergences)

It is expected that NGO engagement in the UN may lead towards more cooperation between NGOs themselves and with next actors, incl. the UN. The higher interaction can contribute towards overcoming of divergences. It was showed already that change in the role of NGOs in the UN involves a decrease in social distance between NGOs and the UN and improvements of their mutual relations (Bobková, 2018). The increased cooperation between NGOs engaged in the UN is evident already from the percentage of the actively engaged NGOs working through a wider NGO coalition (72 %) compared to the percentage of engaged NGOs (64 %) and non-engaged NGOs (29 %).\(^2\) Using comparative analysis of three UN world conferences in 1990s, Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler (1998: 28) prove that the main obstacle to cooperation between NGOs seem to be differences in their age, length of engagement with the UN and their affiliation to either global North or global South.

First, it may be interested to know whether these differences play a role in engagement between NGOs in the UN. It has already been proved that the age of NGOs does not influence the level of engagement of the NGO in the UN. So does not the wealth or political freedoms of a country of origin of the particular NGO (Jebavá, 2017). To complete these outcomes, an analysis was made to determine if there is an influence of the geographical division (both origin and the address of headquarters of the NGO) measured in terms of belonging of the particular country to either global North (coded as 1) or global South (coded as 2).\(^3\) The dependence of the level of engagement in the UN (coded as 1 for NGOs not engaged in the UN, 2 for NGOs engaged and 3 for the actively engaged NGOs) on the geographical division (independent variables) was measured separately in two linear regression analyses. The correlation coefficient has been very low in both cases what indicates extremely low strength of the linear relationship between the variables. The test statistics, testing the correlation coefficient, has been much lower than the critical value corresponding to the given number of levels of freedom and the significance level \( \alpha=0.05 \) according to Student’s t-test in both cases as well. This leads to a conclusion that belonging of neither the country of origin nor the country of the main seat of the NGO to the global North/South matter for its level of engagement with the UN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of country of origin</th>
<th>Impact of country of the main seat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.02547723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.00830066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Calculations made for NGOs from the statistical sample, based on data by UIA (2016).

\(^3\) For division, see the map by Wikimedia Commons contributors (2018).
Second, the impact of these characteristics of NGOs representing main lines of divergences between them and main obstacles to their cooperation (age, length of cooperation with the UN, country of origin and of the main seat in terms of division global North/South)\(^4\) on cooperation of NGOs with both other NGOs and IGOs was measured. The highest value of coefficient of determination, measuring proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variable(s), though still very low (0.0644), was found for regression analysis measuring relationship between age of NGOs and number of IGOs with which the NGOs cooperate. However, Pearson’s chi-squared test ($\chi^2$) has not confirmed significance of this relationship either. As the chi-squared statistics of 946,1215 does not exceed the critical value at the 95% significance level (1033,193), the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. It means that there is not enough evidence that the age of an NGO influences the number of IGOs which it cooperates with. As a matter of the fact, it can be said that neither the origin nor the age which used to pose the main obstacles to cooperation between NGOs, do present a factor to influence the level of cooperation with other NGOs, the UN, or other IGOs.

However, to evaluate contribution of engagement of NGOs in the UN to the global governance in terms of fostering cooperation between the actors, it is pertinent to determine whether engagement in the UN leads to cooperation between NGOs of different traits mentioned above (age, length of cooperation, belonging to global North/South). To do so, a matrix of NGOs in the statistical sample was made to determine the cooperation among them. Based on data on these NGOs by UIA (2016), a linkage was discovered between 41 out of these 212 NGOs (some of the linkages are declared bilaterally). The total number of discovered linkages was 35. The relevancy of assigning these linkages to engagement of NGOs to the UN stems from the finding that only 1 of these NGOs is not engaged in the UN whilst 29 of them (i.e. 71%) are engaged actively.

First, cooperation of NGOs from global North/South was assessed. Only 5 of the 41 NGOs (12%) belong to countries of the global South. On the other hand, they participate at 9 (26%) of the 35 linkages. Just 2 of these are linkages between NGOs from global South. It means that 78% of linkages concerning NGOs from global South were linkages with NGOs from global North. The proportion of NGOs from global North/South declaring this “mixed” linkage unilaterally was very similar. Couples of NGOs participating at the “mixed” linkages were found as actively engaged in the same UN institutions in all the cases. It was proved that the cooperation between NGOs from global North and global South is facilitated by their engagement in the UN.

Second, the level of cooperation between NGOs of different age was assessed. For this, information on age of the 41 NGOs was added to the matrix. The hypothesis built on the presumption that different age is an obstacle to cooperation between NGOs says that the older an NGO is, the older its NGO partners are. The relationship was assessed by linear regression where age of the linkage declarant was considered to be the independent variable and age of the partner NGO (or average of ages in a couple of cases of a linkage to more NGOs) was the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient was 0.438467743. The test statistics (2.535024215) exceeds the critical value for Student’s t-distribution ($t_{0.975}$) for the given number of levels of freedom (205). The null hypothesis on non-existence of the relationship was rejected. However, the relatively low correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination indicate that the relationship is not too strong. It cannot be asserted then that NGOs always look for partners of a similar age.

Third, the same kind of analysis was made to discover relation between length of participation in the UN of cooperating NGOs. Just the collection of data was not that easy since it had to be searched for in historical documents of UN institutions or through NGOs websites. For 8 of 41 NGOs it was not possible to determine the start of engagement in the UN. The complication of cooperation of some NGOs with more than one other NGO was addressed by assessing the relationship through Pearson’s chi-squared test ($\chi^2$). As the chi-squared statistics of 301,67 does not exceed the critical value at the 95% significance level (328,58) for 288 levels of freedom, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The analysis has shown that difference in the length of engagement in the UN does not represent an obstacle for mutual cooperation between NGOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperation of NGOs of different age</th>
<th>Cooperation of NGOs of different length of engagement in the UN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>$\chi^2$-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coefficient of determination</td>
<td>significance level $\alpha$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test statistics</td>
<td>number of levels of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical value</td>
<td>critical value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.438467743</td>
<td>301.66666667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.192254</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.535024215</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>328.5804013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{4}\) Clark, Friedman a Hochstetler, 1998; Nowak, Schwartz, 1994; Elbers a Schulpen, 2013
Fourth, cooperation of NGOs across different thematic focus was analysed. This was done in an effort to
discover whether NGO engagement in the UN fosters cooperation between NGOs from different fields as well.
The primary thematic focus of the 41 NGOs was deduced from the declared aim of the NGO (UIA, 2016). A set
of 14 categories of different thematic focus was prepared and coded in a following manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic focus</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Science and technology</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social policy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Religion/Faith</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>World management</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main thematic focus of the declarant of the linkage was considered independent variable, whilst that of the
partner as dependent variable. The calculation of the correlation coefficient (0.78) has shown a statistically
important relationship between both variables. The analysis has proved that NGOs usually seek for partners
among NGOs which have a similar main thematic focus as themselves. This has its logical reasoning. At the
same time, it can be seen that the cooperation is not limited only to NGOs with similar thematic focus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperation of NGOs of different focus</th>
<th>Coop. of NGOs with UN institutions of different focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coefficient of determination</td>
<td>coefficient of determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test statistics</td>
<td>test statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical value</td>
<td>critical value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.776798</td>
<td>0.309971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.603415133</td>
<td>0.0961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.085922794</td>
<td>5.699856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>∈ (1.64; 1.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifth, since NGOs cooperate usually with more UN institutions, it was analysed, whether there is any pattern in
their choice of UN institutions regarding their thematic focus. Since it is not a question of cooperation between
NGOs only, the analysis could encompass NGOs from the whole statistical sample, which are either engaged or
actively engaged in the UN. The primary thematic focus for all 140 NGOs was again deduced from their
declared aims (UIA, 2016) and coded accordingly. The same coding was used for the main thematic focus of the
UN institutions. Where an NGO cooperated with more UN institutions, a couple of independent variable (focus
of the NGOs) and each of the dependent variables (corresponding to focus of each of the UN institutions),
was made. A total number of 307 couples (statistical observations) were generated. Again, the linear regression
analysis has shown existence of a statistically significant relationship. The strength of the relationship is not too
high (0.31) and the coefficient of determination shows that the primary thematic focus of an NGO explains the
choice of the UN institution with which the NGO cooperated only to 9.61%. In fact, this number can be a bit
higher for the statistics envisages only the main thematic focus and in fact, there can be some overlap. However,
the high dispersion of the focus of the UN institutions in which NGOs are engaged gives evidence to the NGOs
are trying to influence topics which are of interest to them also at fora which are not principally focused on these
topics even though there may be some overlap too. In conclusion, it can be said that NGO engagement in the UN
tends to foster cooperation and help to overcome divergences even between actors of different thematic focus.

- to help finding agreement on principles, goals, solutions and measures
A contribution to finding agreement on principles, goals, solutions and measures could be summarised as
contribution to achieving agreement on policy. A case study analysis shows several instances where NGOs where
crucial in finding an agreement on a complex policy in a particular field. It can be the Kyoto Protocol, a policy of
fight against global warming, or the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) enumerated already by
Weiss (2013: 140). Contribution of NGOs towards the Kyoto Protocol even deserved being called an important
step towards the “global civil society” by Oberthür and Ott (1999: 272). NGOs were very active already when
the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to which the Kyoto Protocol is related, especially through
the alliance of Climate Action Network (Betsill, Corell, 2008: 64). The role of NGOs in negotiating CTBT is
doubted by some (Ripsman and Paul, 2010: 48) but the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization
itself considers role of the international Peace Movement and other NGOs as crucial.

NGOs were equally instrumental in finding an agreement on Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (drafted by NGO
coalition International Campaign to Ban Landmines (UNOG, 2018) or in establishment of the new UN Human
Rights Council (Global Policy Forum, 2018). Role of NGOs in negotiating the Rome Statute of the International
Criminal Court (Vedder, 2007: 192) cannot stay unmentioned either.

- to enhance governance legitimacy
NGOs are often portrayed as a voice of people. And they try to present themselves as such. This is why their
influence on governance legitimacy has been a subject to already quite a number of studies, regarding especially
the domestic level but increasingly so also the international one – be it the EU (Rohrschneider, 2002; Anderson,
1998) or other IGOs (Pallas a Urpelainen, 2012; Bernauer a Gampfer, 2013). On the other hand, NGOs
themselves face some accusations of democratic deficit (Ossewaarde, Nijhof and Heyse, 2008; Walton et al.,
2016). Constructivists assume that engagement of NGOs in the UN can influence its legitimacy, but their identity and legitimacy can be also influenced in return (Nash, 2010: 129).

Political legitimacy can be defined as right and acceptance of political institutions and their decisions. It can be viewed either from descriptive (factual acceptance of authority and of the need to follow its instructions) or normative perspective (right to rule and create rules, acceptability or justifiability of an authority on the basis of meeting some criteria of acceptability) (Peter, 2017). There appears to be another perspective, i.e. the sociological view, which does not talk about the “right” to rule but about its “acceptability” to those concerned (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006; Walton et al., 2016; Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2015). This is also where the space for NGOs is vis-à-vis the UN – to influence the UN’s acceptability by wider society.

IGOs use cooperation with NGOs as one of the ways to enhance their legitimacy (Scholte, 2004; Dombrowski, 2010) and overcome the “legitimacy crisis” which has burst out in 1990s and took on forms of campaigns, protests, demonstrations (like the one against WTO in Seattle in 1999) or establishment of parallel fora (such as those established by NGOs parallel to the UN world conferences in 1990 (Clark, Friedman, Hochstetler, 1998) or the World Social Forum, held parallel to the World Economic Forum in Davos since 2001). These events went the scholars to believe that legitimacy enhancement needs NGOs to be mainstreamed and involved directly in IGOs (Bäckstrand, 2006; Steffek, 2013; Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2015).

Based on these studies, it is assumed that engagement of NGOs in the UN should enhance its democratic character and, by extension, its legitimacy from sociological point of view. This idea was voiced also by the then UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali (1995: 345) and the Commission on Global Governance (1995: 254).

To test contribution of NGO engagement to the legitimacy of the UN, strength of relationship between level of NGO engagement in the UN and confidence of people in the UN (expressing its sociological legitimacy) was statistically verified. The dependent variable (confidence of people in the UN) was measured on the basis of replies by respondents to the latest World Values Survey (WVS) (Inglehart, et al. 2014). The number of NGOs in consultative status by ECOSOC (DESA NGO Branch, 2019) for the given country (each out of 58 which were involved in the last WVS) served as an independent variable. Given the non-proportionally high number of NGOs from the USA, the USA were excluded from the statistics to avoid distortion by extremes. Since a linear relationship is expected between the level of NGO engagement in the UN and the social legitimacy, the confidence level for the given country was counted by multiplying the number of replies by WVS respondents 3 times for “great deal” of confidence, 2 times for “quite a lot”, once for “not very much”, and by zero for “none at all”. The sum of these multiplied numbers of responses was divided by the total number of respondents (from the given country) who opted for one of these four choices. The linear regression analysis did not confirm existence of a statistically significant relation between the number of NGOs with the consultative status by ECOSOC and the confidence of people of the given country in the UN. This leads to a conclusion that sociological legitimacy of the UN measured by confidence of the people is not influenced by NGO engagement in the UN.

| Impact of NGO engagement on the UN legitimacy | correlation coefficient | 0.215361 |
| coefficient of determination | 0.04638022 |
| test statistics | 1.635536048 |
| critical value | 2.00 |

The question of impact of NGO engagement on the UN legitimacy was further assessed only in relation to respondents who consider democracy as a crucial value. The calculation was the same, only taking in account solely responses on the question of confidence in the UN given by this specific category of respondent. These were filtered through their response on another question in the WVS (Inglehart, et al. 2014) regarding the importance of democracy for them. In this case, a statistically important (though not very strong) relation between NGO engagement and confidence in the UN was proved. The limited strength of the relationship can be explained by higher importance of other factors in their assessment of legitimacy of the UN.

| Impact of NGO engagement on the UN legitimacy in the eyes of those for whom democracy is crucial | correlation coefficient | 0.27150289 |
| coefficient of determination | 0.073713819 |
| test statistics | 2.092103708 |
| critical value | 2.00 |

| Impact of NGO engagement on the UN legitimacy in the eyes of those who do not trust their governments | correlation coefficient | 0.216309163 |
| coefficient of determination | 0.046789654 |
| test statistics | 1.643092023 |
| critical value | 2.00 |

Last, relationship was calculated also in relation to responses on the question of confidence in the UN given exclusively by respondents, who miss trust in their own government. In this case, the relationship was not found

5 The survey was covering also Hong Kong and Taiwan which are not officially recognised as countries and as such, the DESA NGO Branch does not make statistics on them.
statistically important which means that for those who lack tract in their governments, efforts by NGOs to substitute them in the UN, does not really make a change in perception of the UN legitimacy.

To conclude, the analyses have proved that the UN legitimacy is influenced by NGO engagement in the UN only partially, namely in the eyes of the people for whom democracy is a crucial thing. This can be explained by the fact that NGO engagement in the UN is perceived by them as a symbol of higher representation/participation. However, the analyses have equally shown that legitimacy cannot be limited to inclusion alone. This does not mean that NGOs engaged in the UN do not raise the legitimacy of the UN. However, they are unable to do so by their mere participation.

- to help assuring compliance with what is agreed

The international order is defined by the absence of a superior authority which makes question of law enforcement truly complicated. The concept of global governance presents an effort to substitute this absence by a system of governance which will enhance predictability on the international level and with that also compliance with agreed norms and obligations.

In practice, there are different efforts to assure international law compliance, which Dicks (2013) divides in three methods: (1) court tribunals, arbitration, dispute settlement and regional and international courts, (2) monitoring mechanisms, and (3) military actions by state/s. The last method definitely does not represent a step towards enhanced predictability foreseen by the concept of global governance, especially if it lacks regulation which is practically impossible with prohibition of use of force by the UN Charter. Regarding the first method, NGOs have a limited role here (e.g. the above mentioned role of NGOs in negotiating of the Rome Statute) (Vedder, 2007: 192); at the same time, the method is not perfect due to voluntary character of acceptance of their jurisdiction and lack of authority able to assure for execution of their decisions.

Another method is the practice of regular reporting on fulfilling of accepted obligations and work of monitoring mechanisms. Even though this method also lacks the authority able to redress revealed deficiencies, their moral authority and external exposure play their role. Publicity of breaches of international law puts violator in a difficult situation characterised by distrust by other actors and their hesitation to cooperate with the violator linked to their fear of losing other partners and their own repute. Growing globalisation is raising efficiency of these mechanisms further. Role of NGOs in these monitoring mechanisms, and particularly in the UN, is crucial. This is why they are sometimes labelled as “watchdogs” (Yaziji, Doh, 2009: 9). This role is noticeable especially in the UN Human Rights Council, especially, but not only, during so-called Universal Periodic Reviews where member states rely to a great extent on information on situation in reviewed countries provided by NGOs.

- to help to rise in importance of non-state actors and involvement of civil society groups (from all over the world) and to formalisation of rules of engagement of non-state actors in global interactions

NGOs which engage in the UN usually strive not only for advancing their opinions on issues which the UN deals with, but also for their enhanced access and role which would give their voice the necessary importance. If they manage to push the limits, they usually help other NGOs as well and contribute to overall rise in involvement and importance of non-state actors. Institutionalisation or formalisation of the rules then represents a defence against arbitrariness of actors who may, sooner or later, want to limit non-state actors.

Despite an increase in powers and overall role of NGOs in the UN over the time (Bobková, 2018), NGOs have not been very successful in getting the rules of engagement in the UN formalised. An example of this is discrepancy between actual rising possibilities of engagement and formal rules in the UN Security Council and General Assembly (Ruhlman, 2015: 68). Also in ECOSOC, the cooperation with NGOs is more enlarging than deepening. Whilst UN conferences and informal hearings offer increasing opportunities for NGO engagement, the formal consultative rights in the main UN bodies do not change (Ruhlman, 2015: 69). An exemption to this can be found in the case of the UN Human Rights Council (Jebavá, 2015), but this is rather a consequence of transformation of the previous Commission into Council rather than of deepening of formal rules. In other UN institutions, formal rules usually do not change much in time and at times, they are not even much formalised but rather based on informal practices fixed in time. The non-standardised forms of cooperation, however, are on rise and often much ahead of the formal rules, even though their extent differs a lot between the UN institutions (Jebavá, 2015, Ruhlman, 2015).

Most NGOs engaged in the UN are still NGOs from the West, or “global North”. The statistical sample of 76 NGOs actively engaged in the UN contains 38 NGOs from Europe, 27 from North America, 1 from Australia and only 6 from Africa and 4 from East Asia. However, it is very difficult to determine geographical representation in reality, for it cannot be often done solely on the basis of identification of a country of origin or the main seat. Their physical presence, but also international orientation usually surpasses borders of these countries. Besides that, there are many NGO coalitions operating in the UN these days, which, even though from the West by themselves, can regroup NGOs from different corners of the world. Among the 76 actively engaged NGOs in the statistical samples, 72% of them are members to some larger NGO coalitions (among non-engaged NGOs the percentage is 29% only).
• to enhance interdependence and globalisation

To measure influence of NGOs engagement in the UN on interdependence and globalisation, time difference in number of other NGOs and IGOs with which NGOs cooperate was assessed. On the basis of backward determination of an UN institution through engagement in which the engaged and actively engaged NGOs were involved in the statistical sample of 212 NGOs and analysis of accessible documentation of such an institution and the NGOs as well, the year of beginning of the NGO engagement in the UN was specified for 114 out of 136 NGOs. The historical year with which the number of NGOs’ partners in 2016 (UIA, 2016) was compared was chosen on the basis of frequency of different years of first engagement and availability of the information on examined NGOs in previous volumes of the UIA’s yearbook. With this, the yearbook from 1992 (UIA, 1992) was selected for the comparison. For 5 NGOs, data from a previous yearbook (UIA, 1981) was used. The list of NGOs for which the necessary information was found consists of 32 NGOs.

First, on the basis of a hypothesis that NGO engagement in the UN leads towards enhanced cooperation with other actors, linear regression analysis was made to assess relationship between level of engagement of NGOs in the UN (independent variable) and the change in number of IGOs between 2016 and 1992 (in five cases 1981). The hypothesis of impact of NGO engagement on the change in number of IGOs with which NGOs cooperate was confirmed. The more an NGO cooperates with the UN, the more partnerships with other IGOs it has.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of NGO engagement on the change in number of IGOs with which the NGO cooperates</th>
<th>Impact of NGO engagement on the UN legitimacy in the eyes of those who do not trust their governments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0,420211463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coefficient of determination</td>
<td>0,176577674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test statistics</td>
<td>2,53639684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical value</td>
<td>2,04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, the impact of NGO engagement in the UN on change in number of other NGOs with which the NGO cooperated was assessed. The analysis was conducted in analogous way. The test of correlation coefficient has again confirmed statistically strong relationship. At the same time, it can be said that NGO engagement in the UN has a more significant impact on the rise in numbers and connectivity with other NGOs than with other IGOs.

The impact of NGO engagement in the UN on the change in numbers of other organisations with which an NGO cooperated was confirmed also through the survey aimed at NGOs (87 % of (actively) engaged NGOs have confirmed the findings of these analyses). It was also discovered that there is a difference between differently engaged NGOs in their involvement in larger NGO networks (coalitions). Whilst the percentage of NGOs involved in some larger NGO coalition is “only” 29% among non-engaged NGOs, the percentage rises to 64% for engaged NGOs and exceeds 72% for NGOs actively engaged in the UN (measured for the statistical sample of 212 NGOs). As a matter of the fact, NGO engagement in the UN leads to enhancement of cooperation of NGOs with other actors to the measure where they form coalitions between themselves. Engagement of NGOs in the UN is therefore linked to increase not only in connectivity to other actors but also their interdependence.

Finally, impact of NGO engagement in the UN on globalisation was measured. Globalisation is a more complex phenomenon than just a growing cooperation and interdependence between actors. It is about creation of “global […] structures in individual areas of social activity and different fields of human activity through raising internal complexity of these structures and gradual creation of connections between partial global structures”, both horizontally and vertically (Lehmannová, 2010: 11). NGO engagement in the UN is itself an example of vertical connectivity, whilst the growing cooperation between engaged NGOs an example of horizontal connectivity. The cooperation between NGOs across different thematic areas examined above is a proof of connectivity between different fields of human activity. On the basis of this, a hypothesis about impact of NGO engagement in the UN globalisation level can be drawn. The hypothesis was tested first as measurement of a relationship between number of NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status from a particular country and KOF index of globalisation for that country (Gygli et al., 2019), using the dataset of 57 countries used previously in analysis of impact of NGO engagement in the UN on UN legitimation (see above). The linear regression analysis method made at 5% significance level has shown that the relationship is not statistically important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of number of NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status on country’s globalisation level</th>
<th>Impact of no. of NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status on country’s political globalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0,032171992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coefficient of determination</td>
<td>0,001035037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test statistics</td>
<td>0,240877832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical value</td>
<td>2,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since engagement in the UN is mostly of political nature, the same relationship was tested for only the political component of globalisation, i.e. the dependent variable was expressed this time as political globalisation index.
This was done with the aim to prove whether NGO engagement in the UN has at least a partial impact on globalisation. This time, the linear regression analysis has proved a statistically significant relationship. It means that while NGO engagement in the UN expressed by number of NGOs accredited by ECOSOC consultative status does not have an impact on globalisation in general but positively influences level of political globalisation. Last, given the fact that globalisation is a process uneven in many directions, including its geographical dimension, and thus the influence needed to be similar in all countries for the previous regressions to show a statistically significant relationship, the impact of NGO engagement in the UN on globalisation level was measured also not across the countries but comprehensively (for the whole world) in time. This not only overcomes the problem of geographical differences but also enables us to overcome the issue of a limited link of NGOs to countries of their origin, and to assess the impact of NGO engagement in the UN in historical perspective. Correlation between total number of NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status (Willetts, 2015; ECOSOC, 2016a a 2016b) and the KOF index of globalisation was measured for years 1970 to 2016.

| Impact of number of NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status on globalisation level 1970-2016 |
|------------------|------------------|
| correlation coefficient | 0.971859 |
| coefficient of determination | 0.94451 |
| test statistics | 27,67584 |
| critical value | 2,015 |

The relationship between both variables has proved to be extremely strong. It is best described by a logarithmic regressions analysis where the coefficient of determination shows an extremely high value of 0.99 (see the chart above). However, the finding must be assessed with prudence. It is impossible to assume NGO engagement in the UN to be the only explanation for globalisation. Apart for causal relationship, the extremely high correlation can be partly caused by the same factors influencing both the NGO engagement in the UN and the globalisation level. However, it is without a doubt that NGO engagement in the UN plays its part when it comes to globalisation.

- **to foster institutionalisation of politics and herewith also stability and predictability**
  
  Weiss (2013: 145) argues that a policy which is not anchored in institutional structures has a temporary, episodic, idiosyncratic nature. An institutional structure has been considered thus as a precondition for higher stability, sustainability and predictability. Despite the “institutional gap” identified by Weiss (2013: 145) when it comes to the UN, the UN is an institution which guarantees a certain degree of stability and predictability. The engagement of NGOs in the UN implies significance attributed by NGOs to the UN. By using their engagement in the UN for advancing their own goals and views, NGOs further strengthen position of the UN in the world. Though sometimes striving for their transformation, NGOs engaged in the UN need to obey some rules and manoeuvre within borders set by the UN. This makes their activities more predictable. It is an important trait, in which they diverge from other actors operating outside the institutionalised part of the international system and especially from those who openly oppose the established institutions (such as terrorist groups, mafia, etc.). NGO engagement in the UN can thus be considered as a contribution to further institutionalisation, stability and predictability of politics.

2.2. **Multi-layered Governance**

This subsection assesses contribution of NGO engagement in the UN to fulfilment of characteristics on multi-layered governance as briefly described in the first section. Thakur and Van Langenhove (2007: 17-18) argue that the UN should become the centre of multi-layered diplomacy. From the multi-layered governance perspective, the UN can be considered as a representative of the supranational level (Beer, 2017). Even though member states play the main role in its institutions and it is them to take the main decisions, the UN as such hand a number of its bodies and agencies evince some aspects of supranationality.  

NGOs, for their turn, can be considered as representatives of the level below states. Even though many of them are international, engaged in broader NGO coalitions, and their membership and focus often exceed state borders, they are organisations which are established per national law of a country of their origin and need to respect it. The narrowing social distance between the UN and NGOs and improvement of their cooperation going behind the cooperation mediated by member states lead to a more direct interaction between the supranational and subnational levels. Given the fact that member states in the UN (including those that do not cooperate with NGOs much otherwise) are forced to react in the UN to proposals and remarks by NGOs, it can be said that NGO engagement in the UN also stimulates more intensive interaction between NGOs and member states.

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6 Supranationality aspects are defined e.g. by Etzioni (2001).

7 This is illustrated very well by Universal Periodic Reviews in the UN Human Rights Council
The system which NGO engagement in the UN makes materialize does not have any power centre where all the authority would be accumulated. None of the actors (UN, its member states or NGOs) has a clear superiority above others. The UN was created by its member states who decide to a large extent on internal policies as well and the UN cannot interfere in matters which fall within states’ authority. At the same time, the UN is not just a puppet of states. This is because individual member states are exposed there to pressure by other states which they cannot fully ignore; at the same time, the UN itself has a certain degree of authority towards member states even though delegated to it by member states. An example of this is the principles to which the member states are bound by ratification of the UN Charter. The UN Charter even enables the UN to “ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security” (Art. 2(6)). Under given conditions, the UN (through the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Security Council) can also suspend a member states “from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership” or expel it from the UN (Art. 5 and 6 of the UN Charter). At the same time, engagement of NGOs in the UN which is independent of states’ will shows a certain authority of NGOs as well, although there is also a kind of checks and balances in the form of set rules and limits under and within which NGOs may engage in the UN. NGOs are created under national laws but they advance their own agenda which means that there is not a direct hierarchical link as in the case of federations. Besides that, NGOs are often established in other countries than those which the agenda advanced by them in the UN concerns. NGOs usually do not have the voting power in the UN institutions, but is does not mean that they cannot influence the decision, be it through lobby at states’ representatives or direct statements in the UN institutions. In the UN we can see several layers as defined by multi-layered governance, where there is no hierarchy of authorities. All the three identified layers (the UN, its member states and NGOs) take part within their given limits on decision-making in the UN and its institutions to the extent when the individual actors influence each other within and across the layers in such intricate processes that in the end, it is not possible to determine the share of the actors and layers in the finally adopted solution. The complexity of decision-making processes is further amplified with NGO engagement in the UN.

The described situation is very close to the global multi-layered system as defined by Zürn (2012). However, with the direct engagement of NGOs in the UN and appearance of direct link between lower layers (NGOs) and politically higher layer (the UN), processes of legitimation and implementation are not necessarily two-tier as devised by Zürn (2012: 738) anymore.

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The scheme uses C for “coordination centre for different policies, upward arrows symbol process of legitimation and downward arrows process of implementation. Both processes lack a clear coordination centre in Zürn’s global multi-layered system as well as in the system created by NGO engagement in the UN and at the same time, the processes are multiple for different thematic areas function independently of each other (in the UN through different UN institutions) although they may overlap. NGOs in the UN reinforce their access and role independent of member states. This does not have to be interpreted as an effort to bypass them. Another interpretation can lie in realization of the fact that to get a role no concession by the states is needed.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that NGO engagement in the UN has a potential to lead to creation of a specific multi-layered governance system where actors of formally three layers (UN, states and NGOs) do not have a clear centre of shared authority, work independently of each other and yet are influencing each other within the UN. A need for cooperation between these actors arises and takes on different forms. A new form of cooperation is the direct relation between supranational (the UN) and sub-national (NGOs) levels. Engagement of NGOs in the UN reinforces cooperation (transmission of authority, ideas, legitimacy) between layers and within layers alike (see subsection on global governance). We can observe the whole range of processes as described by van Popering-Verkerk and van Buuren (2015: 965-966): “top-down” (e.g. NGOs’ share in

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8 An exemption to this are representatives of employers and employees in the International Labour Organization.
implementing UN programs in field), “bottom-up” (presentation of an NGOs’ opinion pre-negotiated between them in a UN institution), synchronisation by procedures (informal interactions horizontally which are synchronised by vertical interactions - e.g. exchange of view between NGOs and states in the framework of Universal Periodic Review in the UN Human Rights Council), synchronisation by interactions (horizontal procedural interactions and vertical informal interactions – e.g. informal interactions between the UN and NGOs where NGOs are excluded from formal interactions but interact formally between themselves (e.g. within NGO coalitions)) and collaborative decision-making (proposal of a decision is formed in many informal interactions within and between layers). The multiplicity of legitimation and implementation processes stem also from diversity of UN institutions and NGOs engaged in them. NGO engagement in the UN has a potential to reinforce this specific system of multi-layered governance in which a higher number of interactions between actors from different layers participating at decision-making can be found.

2.3. World Government
Given the fact that NGO engagement in the UN presumes focus by different actors, including NGOs, on the UN, the role of NGOs in the UN as per se does not preclude establishment of a certain kind of world government embodied by the UN. Different scholars (Lu, 2016; Wendt, 2003; Held and McGrew, 2002: 8) agree on the fact that the world government concept has not been introduced in practise so far. The question is, however, whether NGO engagement in the UN cannot lead towards it.
First, even though analysis of NGO activities behind the UN exceeds scope of this paper, it cannot be presumed that NGO engagement in the UN limits their activities outside the UN institutions. Second, and most importantly, NGO engagement in the UN may reinforce the UN role but not to an extent for it to become an authority which could be labelled world government. Layering, as identified in the previous subsection on multi-layered governance, cannot be confused with hierarchical power distribution as envisaged by the world government concept. The multi-layered system which NGO engagement in the UN has tendency to reinforce is characterised by lack of an authoritative centre and mutual independence of actors from different layers which participate in governance. The lowering social distance between the UN and NGOs is a proof of the opposite tendency than creation of a hierarchy. Besides that even advocates of world government who foresee the UN as the foundation for the world government (Tinbergen, 1994: 88; Cronkite, 2000: 45), do not operate with NGOs in their proposals. Slaughter (2015) who elaborates on NGOs’ role in the UN in context of the idea of world government argues that the UN per se does not have predispositions to become world government (mainly for the lack of its capacity to exercise its authority above states) and NGOs engaged in the UN do not help it either for they focus more on achieving goals of those whom they try to protect and represent rather than to sacrifice their limited resources to achieving important systematic changes such as centralisation of global governance in world government. The ideas of world government and engagement of NGOs in the UN are linked up probably only by an NGO called World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, but the role of NGOs in the UN in their conception seems to be limited only to NGOs’ contribution to ensuring accountability of superior federal bodies of the world government (WFM-IGP, 2018). Even though the monitoring role of NGOs in the UN remains one of the important aspects of their engagement in the UN (see subsection on global governance), it is not by far the only motivation for which NGOs engage in the UN and not even the only thing on which the engaged NGOs focus on.

3. Discussion of the Findings
The previous section was analysing possible contribution of NGO engagement in the UN to a change of international system. It was building on previous research of the role of NGOs in the UN and analytical description of possible alternative international system designs towards which the current one may head under the influence of NGO engagement in the UN, namely global governance, multi-layered governance and world government. A number of analyses were conducted to reveal possible contribution of NGO engagement in the UN to different characteristics of the three alternative international system designs. The least contribution was found in relation to the concept of world government. Whilst the interest of NGOs and other actors in promoting their ideas and goals through the UN may evoke a kind of focus on the UN, and this presumption is further reinforced by the growing numbers of NGOs with consultative status by ECOSOC (demonstrating the willingness to engage in the UN), the concentration of interest is not accompanied by concentration of power and authority which the concept of world government assumes. NGO engagement in the UN may reinforce the position of the UN in the world; at the same time, it is especially the role of NGOs which is rising by their engagement in the UN. Besides that, the NGO engagement in the UN does not mean concession of states. There is a kind of system of checks and balances between individual actors (the UN, its member states and NGOs) where each of them has set limits of manoeuvring and where there is no clear hegemon among them.

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9 The biggest success of movement for world government is establishment of the International Criminal Court.
There is no hierarchy between actors. Also the shrinking social distance between the UN and NGOs engaged in its institutions and the decreasing relative power imbalance are rather a proof of dispersion of the authority rather than its concentration in one authoritative centre which the concept of world government presumes.

The observed situation is much closer to concepts of global and multi-layered governance both of which reject the idea of an authoritative centre. They both present a move from anarchy not towards hierarchy but heterarchy, where authority is dispersed among more elements among which there is no clear relation of subordination. These elements are the UN, its member states and NGOs. The analyses in the previous section have shown that NGO engagement in the UN contributes to identification and understanding of global problems and collective interests, to finding agreement on principles, goals, solutions and measures as well as to assuring compliance with what is agreed. It has also a fundamental impact on reinforcement of cooperation between individual actors of international system regardless their differences and on overcoming the differences among them. NGO engagement in the UN strengthens both horizontal and vertical cooperation between actors. Interactions between actors take on different formal and informal forms as the concept of multi-layered governance presumes. The mutual cooperation sometimes even exceeds to mutual interdependence (cooperation of NGOs in NGO alliances, dependency of NGOs on opportunities for engagement in the UN offered to them against dependency of the UN on NGO information). NGO engagement in the UN also significantly fosters globalisation, especially the political globalisation, and institutionalisation of international politics. On the other hand, NGO engagement in the UN per se is not a sufficient precondition for enhanced legitimacy of the UN. NGO engaged in the UN also lag behind in formalisation of rules of engagement of non-state actors in global interactions.

To conclude, it can be said that engagement of NGOs in the UN reinforces a number of characteristics typical for both global and multi-layered governances. The role of NGOs in the UN can be an element contributing to transformation of international system, namely toward designs approximating to concepts of global governance and/or multi-layered governance.

Conclusion
This paper does not aim at showing the current state of international system or naming it, but to analyse the transformative potential of NGO engagement in the UN, i.e. its ability to foster some of its characteristics specific for different international system designs. This is done with the intention to show possible impact of the role acquired by NGOs directly engaging in the UN on their position in the wider international system and consequently also on the international system’s shape.

The international system in its classical neorealist understanding puts the emphasis on a state as the main actor of international relations and studies power distribution in the anarchic inter-state environment. However, the mere existence of the UN, and especially engagement of NGOs in its institutions, their increasingly established position on this level and lowering social distance between the UN and NGOs presume a possible shift from the classical international system towards some of its alternative designs.

The set of analyses has shown that NGO engagement in the UN really fosters advent of a new kind of international system the form of which combines several aspects of global governance and of multi-layered governance despite not necessarily leading to their realisation in full. Whether the same pattern can be observed in other intergovernmental organisations, where the international system stands now and to which extent the NGO engagement contributes to its transformation vis-à-vis other factors, are points open to further research. The presented paper can be considered not only as a great starting point for the further research, but presents by itself an important insight into the situation on the ground which has a significant impact on many aspects of international politics.

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