

Introduction

Measuring

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While the previous part, *Documenting*, presented and discussed methods to research and understand what international organizations (IOs) produce, such as archives, documents, discourses, statistics, and visual artifacts, this section turns to the use of numbers and quantitative data in the research on IOs. We present how researchers can rely on multiple methods to measure different dimensions of multilateralism.

In social sciences, scholars have to a large extent relied on numbers to describe and understand social phenomena. IO studies are no exception (see interlude IV—*Challenging IOs through Numbers*). Historically, quantitative data have been used to understand states' behavior within IOs, and in particular voting behavior (see chapter 14—*Voting Analysis*). Scholars have also developed quantitative tools to count the number and type of IOs. Thanks to these research efforts, IO scholars can now use a variety of databases on IOs that provide characteristics such as membership and institutional design. More recently, scholars have started using quantitative information to study other sets of actors aside from states, such as IO staff and leadership (see box t—*Navigating Human Resource Statistics* and box u—*Building Databases on Individuals*) and civil society organizations. In addition, quantitative methods are increasingly used to research IO documents such as recorded speeches and reports (see chapter 17—*Computerized Text Analysis*).

Quantitative methods allow scholars to achieve various research objectives. First and foremost, with numbers, scholars can provide a systematic description of phenomena over time and across many units. Numbers

enable researchers to highlight trends and carry out comparisons (see chapter 15—*Statistical Analyses with IO Data*, and chapter 16—*Large-N Data and Quantitative Analyses*). Second, large-N methods can deepen our understanding of causal relations by looking at relationships between variables across many cases. Although causal inference can be achieved based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches, statistical methods examine the relation between two variables (or more) in a covariational perspective. Third, numbers enable researchers to seize interactions between and among actors in a systematic way (see chapter 17—*Computerized Text Analysis*, chapter 18—*Multiple Correspondence Analysis*, and chapter 19—*Social Network Analysis*). The contributions present methods able to objectify the relationships and links between different entities in a way that can be insightful to answer research questions on power dynamics and cooperation between IO actors, for instance.

In this part entitled *Measuring*, the reader will find two types of contributions. The first one presents why and how researchers use quantitative data—either produced by researchers themselves or using data emanating from IOs (see chapter 14—*Voting Analysis*, chapter 15—*Statistical Analyses with IO Data*, and box t—*Navigating Human Resource Statistics*). Contributions shed light on the potential but also the challenges related to the use of IO statistics, for instance, in terms of access, comparability, and validity. The second type of contributions focuses on quantitative methods of data analysis (see chapter 16—*Large-N Data and Quantitative Analyses*, chapter 17—*Computerized Text Analysis*, chapter 18—*Multiple Correspondence Analysis*, and chapter 19—*Social Network Analysis*). In addition to strict statistical analyses, scholars also mobilize quantitative methods to examine and present data that may have been collected thanks to other methods such as interviews or document analysis to name a few. This acknowledgment comes as a kind reminder that quantitative and qualitative methods should not be put face to face, in an antagonistic perspective, but rather integrated to best answer our research questions (interlude IV—*Challenging IOs through Numbers*).