

Policy Reporting to UNESCO:

An Analysis

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Abstract

As one of the United Nations' specialized agencies UNESCO encourages countries to further development in regard to preserve culture, education and science. These obligations are fixed within frameworks. To fulfil the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CoCE), countries should report cultural policies and measures to UNESCO. Despite these reporting obligations, there is variation in countries' reporting behaviour. This study examines how institutional and socioeconomic factors shape countries' reporting of policies to UNESCO between 2012 and 2024. Using a country-year dataset combining UNESCO, V-Dem and World Bank data, the analysis estimates Poisson, negative binomial and logistic regression models to examine the extent as well as the intensity of reporting. The findings provide only limited support for the hypotheses that richer and more democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies. Civil participation and the interaction between economic development and corruption provide also limited evidence. Overall, however, the findings indicate that institutional factors might provide more fitting explanations for UNESCO policy reporting than economic development or regime type alone.

Key words: UNESCO, cultural policy, policy reporting, regression analysis, institutional capacity

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1 **Introduction**

In 2025, alongside Nicaragua (UNESCO, 2025a) the United States announced that they would leave UNESCO at the end of 2026 (UNESCO, 2025b), making it the third time for the US to leave. The first time was in 1983 under Reagan (Shaffer, 2021). During this time the US grew unhappy with UNESCO's direction and the growing power of the Global South, the US named further concerns about budget as well as press freedom (Shaffer, 2021). Their leave affected UNESCO's finances strongly. However, in 2003 the US rejoined after UNESCO underwent organizational adjustments (Shaffer, 2021). The next time the United States announced their leave in 2017 to formally end in 2019, Israel joined in (Ahren, 2018), citing reasons such as growing anti-Israel stances as well as calling for reforms (Nauert, 2017). UNESCO's efforts to discourage them from leaving were fruitless. A presidency later the United States rejoined UNESCO which underwent structural changes in the meantime. This allowed the United States to contribute financially for the first time since 2011 when due to US law the payments were suspended (UNESCO, 2023b). However, with President Trump's second presidency the United States decided to leave again which was not surprising to UNESCO, which already prepared in advance to limit the financial impact of the event (UNESCO, 2025b). Reasons according to the US for leaving the third time are that UNESCO supports values, causes and aims that are not in line with US stances for example being anti-Israel (Lukiv, 2025). This leads to the suspicion that the UNESCO, which was founded in 1945 with the initial aims of "rebuilding schools, libraries, and museums" (Mingst, 2026) and later extended to help resolve "poverty, high rates of illiteracy, and underdevelopment" (Mingst, 2026) and to protect "natural environment and humanity's common cultural heritage" (Mingst, 2026) as with the World Heritage List, possesses enough political influence and power that countries want to signal their stances through their membership as well as absence.

Like other international organizations and cooperations, UNESCO's principles are improving cooperation between state and non-governmental actors (World Heritage Centre, n.d.) which is manifested through their guidelines (Singh, 2010, p. 9) like the World Heritage Convention or UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CoCE) (UNESCO, 2026c). The Monitoring Framework of the CoCE on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions lays out guidelines and aims for developing policies on the national level to protect and further culture and its interplay with sustainability (UNESCO, 2026c). Culture, hereby, includes not only heritage but also cultural

industries like “the arts and creative sectors that encompass, but are not limited to, fine and performing arts, cultural heritage, publishing, film, television, music, photography, design, and cultural tourism”(Singh, 2010, p. 4). The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression requires of the (so-called) Parties to the Convention to submit every four years information about their efforts in regards to the goals of the convention, i.e., policies and measures that were taken (national or international) to further cultural expression (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 32). By adopting and ratifying the CoCE, countries agree to adopt policies and measures in accordance with the goals of the convention, to cooperate and provide information to UNESCO and other Parties. This includes reporting cultural policies to UNESCO regularly. However, there is a variation as not all countries fulfil the reporting obligations and fulfil them regularly. Previous research on reporting obligations to international organizations has identified a variety of reasons why countries comply or not comply with reporting obligations to international organizations. However, little research has been done on countries’ reporting behaviour to UNESCO specifically. Therefore, the question arises: how institutional and socioeconomic factors shape countries’ reporting of policies to UNESCO?

This question addresses a gap in the existing literature on international treaty compliance. A large body of policy research focuses on ratification and adaptation, with less attention given to subsequent self-reporting obligations. Existing studies emphasize mechanisms such as peer pressure, domestication and reputational benefits (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020), while a smaller amount of research focuses on explanatory factors like administrative and economic capacity (Karlas, 2022) or social factors when it comes to compliance with international treaty or agreement obligations. A majority of them looking at international weapons or trade agreements. However, comparatively little research has focused on cultural international treaties and countries’ compliance to them i.e. World Heritage Convention (Al Shallah, 2023). Previous research on cultural policies has often focused on individual cases or comparative studies of a small number of countries which provide insights into national policy-making and highlight the differences between countries (Bonet & Zamorano, 2021; Dražeta et al., 2026). These small-N comparative studies, providing insights into national policy-making, are more common than large-N studies when looking at factors that explain why countries self-report to international organizations.

Research on UNESCO focuses often on content analysis of frameworks such as the World Heritage Convention and its effects (Bouvier & Wu, 2021; Brahmam, 2023). Compared to this,

other UNESCO conventions such as the above mentioned CoCE (Burri, 2013) have received less scholarly attention. This study therefore examines whether socioeconomic and institutional characteristics explain variation in countries' reporting behaviour of cultural policies to UNESCO.

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this paper is to examine intensity and extent of countries' compliance with UNESCO's cultural policy reporting. In particular, the paper aims to study the relationship between compliance and institutional and economic factors in the hopes to find a positive association between policy reporting and respectively economic development and democracy. Additionally, the paper contributes to cross-country research and world region comparisons on policy reporting.

Structure

This paper proceeds as follows. First, a literature review will be conducted. Next, the theoretical framework and the hypotheses will be outlined. Subsequently, the data, methods and variable operationalization will be presented. Then the empirical findings will be elaborated on and discussed. Finally, the study concludes by identifying possible limitations of this study as well as suggesting topics for future research.

2 Background

The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CoCE) was created because cultural goods have an economic and cultural nature (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 66). This is reason that in 1993 at the end of the Uruguay Round, which describes trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), France and other francophone countries pushed to exclude cultural goods such as films, music and similar from the international rules determined by the WTO. This was strongly opposed by the United States, and the push failed at the time (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 66). However, the idea was well received by many countries and found support which led to the initial drafting phase at the end of 2003 (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 68). In a number of meetings with, i.e. the UNESCO Executive Council, Experts and International Organizations, a draft was produced (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 3–5). The CoCE was finalized and then adopted on the 20th of October 2005 in Paris, France and took effect on the 18th of March

2007 (UNESCO, n.d.-a). 148 states agreed to the convention, however, the United States and Israel opposed it (Burri, 2013, p. 357). The CoCE has as of now 162 Parties, meaning countries and territories (UNESCO, n.d.-a). It is the “first legally binding international instrument on culture” (Burri, 2013, p. 357). CoCE is a framework that focuses on the protection and recognition of cultural expressions. Cultural expressions are defined as “expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content” (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 7).

Besides this, the main principles of the CoCE are information sharing and transparency (UNESCO, n.d.-c) as well as emphasizing national sovereignty (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 103–104). The main obligations of the CoCE are fixed in multiple articles i.e. 5, 7, 9 and 19. In Article 5 and 7 it is stated that the content of cultural policies and measures are in accordance with the CoCE when they are adopted (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 163, 199, 245, 481) and that Parties to the convention have to create an environment favourable to cultural diversity (Coppedge, Michael, et al., 2026a, p. 199). With the acceptance of Article 9 Parties agree to share information in the form of periodic reports to UNESCO. Cultural policies and measures are “measures relating to culture, whether at the local, national, regional or international level that are either focused on culture as such or are designed to have a direct effect on cultural expressions of individuals, groups or societies, including on the creation, production, dissemination, distribution of and access to cultural activities, goods and services” (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 7). They are only reporting to UNESCO if they are taken to protect and promote cultural diversity both domestically and internationally (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 267–268). Additionally, with Article 19 countries must share their knowledge regarding “data collection and statistics on the diversity of cultural expressions” (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 481).

When countries become Parties to the convention, they are obligated to provide reports, so-called quadrennial periodic reports (QPR), on policies and measures implemented that support the CoCE’s aim and hindrances they have faced in enforcing the convention as mentioned above (UNESCO, n.d.-a). The QPRs must be submitted every four years. For this, a monitoring framework has been developed which put in writing the aims, areas, markers and methods of authentication for submitting reports and the monitoring of them (UNESCO, n.d.-c). The contents support evidence-based policymaking, direct the gathering of data and information and enables comparison of the implementation process globally. Further, the monitoring framework

is changeable which means it can be adapt over time i.e. as of now it is under revision (UNESCO, n.d.-c). The purpose of the submission of the reports goes beyond being bureaucratic, they are the main method through which non-governmental agents i.e. citizens can track and assess the advancements made in implementing the CoCE (UNESCO, n.d.-c).

In addition, while Article 9 is mandatory, the quality of the QPRs is determined by the Parties based on their capacity and other resources (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 281). The reasons for this are infrastructure differences which refer to technical capacities i.e. data infrastructures, trained personnel or a lack in policy research (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 272) and statistical and factual scarcity which refers to data gathering problems i.e. lack of standardization (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, p. 241). To improve this situation, UNESCO offers specialized training to the Parties i.e. statistics (UNESCO, 2023a, pp. 77–78). In this context, civil society participation is recognized to improve the quality of the QPRs (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 33).

The reporting of the QPRs is three step process (UNESCO, 2023a, pp. 32–34). The first step is drafting and submission. The designated national point of contact compiles relevant data from ministries and civil society and then drafts the report (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 34). UNESCO provides a template for this. The second step is taken by the UNESCO Secretariat and Intergovernmental Committee which receive the QPRs. The submitted QPRs are reviewed, commented (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 34). Lastly, the QPRs are then presented to the Conference of Parties who formally acknowledge them and then the QPRs are published online for the public (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 34).

The reports contain qualitative and quantitative analysis regarding four main thematic themes (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 265–267): Cultural policies and measures, international cooperation and preferential treatment, the integration of culture in sustainable development policies and cultural expression under threat (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 265–267). Measures and policies reported under the topic cultural policies and measures which focuses on public spending or institutional actions are i.e. the Kulturpass (engl. Culture pass) (UNESCO, 2024a, p. 12) or Iceland’s Music Act (2023) (UNESCO, 2024b, pp. 10–11). In the theme international cooperation and preferential treatment actions such the Swedish Icelandic Collaboration Fund (UNESCO, 2024b, pp. 32–33) or TheMuseumsLab, a transcontinental network (UNESCO, 2024a, pp. 86–87) are reported. The third topic is the integration of culture in sustainable development policies i.e. Green Culture Hub (UNESCO, 2024a, pp. 106–107) or

Visual Arts Policy (2023-2030 (UNESCO, 2024b, pp. 50–51). The last theme covers cultural expression under threat i.e. law on equal status and equal rights of the sexes (UNESCO, 2024a, pp. 56–57) or Frequencies. Sharing Feminisms festival (UNESCO, 2024a, pp. 121–122).

For the evaluation of the QPRs through UNESCO and online availability of the QPRs to the public multiple datasets are available. First, the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (Von Schorlemer & Stoll, 2012, pp. 358–359). This platform provides policy profiles, indicators, comparisons on cultural spending and so on (*Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends | Culture Policy Database*, 2023). The second was the WorldCP database which is no longer active. It was closed in 2017 (Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). Third, the cultural policies and measures dataset, which is used in this paper, contains information on cultural policies and measures reported by the Parties under the CoCE. (UNESCO, 2026a). The data consists of information provided by the QPRs on content of policies, implementing agencies and so on.

3 Literature review

3.1 Cultural policy and UNESCO Conventions

One can define cultural policy as “the sum total of the conscious and deliberate usages, action or lack of action in a society, aimed at meeting certain cultural needs through the optimum utilisation of all the physical and human resources available to that society at a given time” (UNESCO (1969) according to Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020, p. 6) which is thereof an expression of the political and cultural sphere (Vestheim, 2012, p. 497).

One strand of research on UNESCO focuses on how international cultural frameworks are developed and implemented at the national level. Research on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention) highlights the importance of community participation in the development and implementation of cultural policy (Aikawa-Faure, 2022, pp. 53–55) . The Convention itself was developed through discussions and exchanges between experts and representatives of UNESCO member states (Aikawa-Faure, 2022, p. 56). In other words, the states participating in the policy making process play an important role in deciding and defining their future obligations as well as common terminology of the Convention (Aikawa-Faure, 2022, p. 65; Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020, p. 9). The Convention combines state-led measures and community participation in the safeguarding of cultural heritage (Aikawa-Faure, 2022, p. 65). Community participation is also relevant to the

CoCE which provides the basis for the cultural policies and measures examined in this study. Furthermore, research on UNESCO's cultural policy program has shown that international frameworks can influence the incorporation of cultural policy into national government structures with few exceptions (Australia, Canada and the United States) due to domestic structures (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020, p. 1). The success of the program was due to domestication, in which external concepts are adapted into the domestic sphere to appear inherently local, as well as peer pressure between countries (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020, p. 1,4). This shows that UNESCO does not simply impose cultural policy frameworks on states. Rather, it acts as a standard setter (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020, p. 4) while states remain influential in the process of how frameworks are interpreted and implemented.

The variation in national implementation is also visible in other research for example the ICH Convention implementation in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These three countries have experienced struggles in implementing the Convention (Dražeta et al., 2026, p. 55) because with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, their cultural heritage and national identity became the main point of disputes. In this case the nation state wants the majorities' identity to be the only present in the state, but the guidelines of the ICH Convention encourage states to accept multiple cultural identities within a states' (Dražeta et al., 2026, p. 64). This case illustrates again that international organizations are standard setters and provide frameworks, but at the end the implementation is at the discretion of the states (Dražeta et al., 2026, p. 65).

The CoCE has limited constraining power which is relevant for the reporting behaviour. The Convention previously received criticism for its lack of "binding obligation[s][...], substantive incompleteness [...] and its ambiguous relation towards other international instruments" (Burri, 2013, p. 358). In other words, the CoCE formulates obligations for its Parties, however, strong enforcement mechanisms and substantial repercussions for non-compliance are not given. Therefore, the CoCE can be characterized as quite diplomatic, as it avoids confrontation and reinforces state's sovereignty while providing limited guidance for future implementation as well (Burri, 2013, p. 360).

Nevertheless, the absence of enforcement mechanisms does not mean that the Convention has no influence. Research suggests that Parties do follow at least some of the obligations, although the Convention's effects in the international sphere remain limited (Burri, 2013, p. 370). From this follows that UNESCO frameworks represent a form of international governance in which compliance is not based on coercion. Rather it is dependent on domestic political priorities,

institutional conditions and the capacity of states to implement and report policies and it decided by the countries how to respond to the respective framework.

The reporting mechanism is particularly relevant in this regard. Parties to the Convention are expected to provide information on policies and measures under the aim of “promot[ing] the diversity of cultural expressions at the different stages of creation, production, distribution, dissemination, and participation” (Burri, 2013, p. 367) including topics of copyright, training programs to promotional events (Burri, 2013, p. 368). Research on this Convention further suggests that even where legal obligations are limited, regular assessment against predetermined benchmarks can promote compliance and improve implementation (Guèvremont & Varin, 2023, p. 79). However, reporting has been observed to be distributed unevenly across countries. In the early stages of reporting, starting in 2012, mostly the Global North submitted policies and measures (Guèvremont & Varin, 2023, p. 68). The distribution of policy reporting can be related to the research question as one wonders, why or how reporting behaviour of countries varies.

3.2 Compliance

Research on compliance with international agreements and treaties has identified several factors that can influence whether states follow international obligations. One explanation emphasizes social and behavioural mechanisms. International and domestic organisations can create peer pressures by making countries’ behaviour visible to other states and the states’ population. For example, Tingley and Tomz (2022, p. 445) found that social pressure can increase support for compliance with the Paris Agreement in the United States, although the strength of the effect varied between political groups. Similarly, domestication and peer pressure are mechanisms through which UNESCO influences states to comply with international frameworks (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020). These findings suggest that compliance depends not only on formal obligations but also on the social and political environment of a state.

A second explanation focuses on the economic and administrative capacity of states. In some cases states do not fulfil international obligations not because they are unwilling to do so, but because they lack the resources and systemic capacities necessary for implementation (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). This administrative capacity can include the “knowledge and training of personnel responsible for environmental policy, adequate financial resources, the appropriate

domestic legal mandate/authority to accomplish program implementation, and access to relevant information” (Simmons, 1998, p. 83).

Further evidence from research on international self-reporting supports the relevance of capacity. Karlas (2022b, p. 531) examined reporting obligations across 25 international agreements regarding arms, environment and human rights. Karlas (2022, pp. 533–534, 540) tests in a logistic regression model for treaty support with the factors: policies conform with the agenda, administrative capacity of a state and different kind of state peer groups (institutional, cultural and economic). The findings show that self-reporting is positively associated with the economic and administrative capacity of the state and the region (Karlas, 2022, p. 531). Compared to this, democracy, commitment to international agreements and the alignment of domestic measures with those agreements, find little support (Karlas, 2022, p. 531). This further suggests that self-reporting may depend on whether governments possess the resources and administrative structures necessary to fulfil reporting obligations.

Other researchers suggest that the regime type factors into inter-state relations (Simmons, 1998, p. 83) and therefore into compliance. Especially democratic governments are assumed to be more inclined to uphold and follow-through with international treaty obligations (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). Democracies are generally characterised by stronger rule-of-law institutions and greater constraints on government action. Therefore, compliance with international rules is more compatible with this regime type because of existing domestic political and structural practices (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). This is contrary to the findings of Karlas (2022b) where democracy finds little support as an explanatory factor. Additionally, reporting to international organizations can have positive effects for the rule of law in a country (Koliev et al., 2021, p. 494). This must not necessarily be achieved through coercive means as previous research mentioned above found. In addition to for example peer pressure and domestication influencing reporting behaviour, powerful non-governmental actors i.e. NGOS take part in decision-making processes especially in regimes with participatory elements like liberal democracies. For example, evidence from a study in the context of the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that compliance in reporting to the ILO is most effective in democracies with a high number of NGOs related to labour (Koliev et al., 2021, p. 494). To add to the argument of peer pressure, it was also found that democracies shames other countries more into conforming to norms by international organizations than autocracies (Koliev, 2020, p. 538). Further, the

assumption that countries with less resources shame more than countries with more resources finds partial support (Koliev, 2020, p. 551).

Overall, it can be said that research on UNESCO and its Conventions focuses on the contents of the frameworks and its effects rather than on why countries comply with self-reporting. On the other hand, research on compliance with international agreements focuses often on behavioural explanations such as peer pressure. However, there is research that shows that the regime type as well as economic and other institutional conditions have explanatory power when it comes to reporting, especially self-reporting.

4 Theory

The previous section reviewed empirical research on UNESCO and on compliance with international agreements. Building on these findings, this section develops the theoretical framework used to explain countries reporting behaviour. It first discusses theories of compliance before deriving hypotheses on the roles of economic development and regime type.

Compliance can be defined as “the extent to which States Parties adhere to (or diverge from) the obligations imposed upon them under [the] regime’ and obligations ‘as rules or requirements” (Al Shallah, 2023, p. 624). Compliance does not mean it is effective (Burri, 2013, p. 369). Simmons (1998, p. 78) further distinguishes between two compliance categories: *first order* and *second order*. First order refers to compliance in regards to treaties and agreements, while second order refers to from above imposed compliance (Simmons, 1998, p. 78). Further, in measuring compliance it is a challenge to discern distinctive dominators that differentiate compliance from non-compliance in international treaties and agreements as obligations are formulated in flexible terms, allowing for the interpretation under states discretion (Simmons, 1998, p. 78).

Several theoretical perspectives explain why states comply international obligations. From a realist perspective, international laws are not the determinants of countries’ behaviours, but their power and national interests are (Simmons, 1998, p. 79). Consequently, a country’s agreement to a treaty is not automatically followed by compliance (Simmons, 1998, p. 79). Rational-functionalist approaches similarly assume that states act in favour of their power and national interests. However, contrary to realists, rational-functionalists regard international treaties and institutions as tools that can facilitate cooperation and solve collective-action problems (Simmons, 1998, p. 80). From this perspective, compliance and upholding the

agreement has usually greater benefits long-term, namely improving the actors reputation internationally regarding the rule of law, reciprocity and avoidance of the rise of long-term domestic problems as their behaviour is perceived as being more predictable (Simmons, 1998, pp. 81–82). Furthermore, Downs and Rocke ((1995) according to Simmons 1998, p. 82) argue that states' internal actors are responsible for shaping compliance because unclear and weak repercussions by international agreements are a result of the demands of these internal actors to be able to react to in-state developments without violating treaty obligations.

Economic Development

Another theoretical explanation emphasises national administrative and economic capacity as factors to fulfil international treaty. According to Simmons (1998, p. 83), states might be unable to fulfil their obligations, not because they don't want to, but because they lack the resources necessary for implementation. Administrative capacity includes as mentioned before a country's "knowledge and training of personnel responsible for environmental policy, adequate financial resources, the appropriate domestic legal mandate/authority to accomplish program implementation, and access to relevant information" (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). These resources are particularly relevant for reporting obligations, which require governments to identify relevant policies, collect information from different administrative actors and communicate this information to an international organisation. This argument is in line with previous research on UNESCO and international reporting. UNESCO conventions largely rely on cooperation, peer pressure and domestication rather than coercive enforcement (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020; Burri, 2013). Consequently, fulfilling reporting obligations depends substantially on states' own institutional capacities. Likewise, Karlas (2022, p. 531) finds that economic and administrative capacity consistently explain reporting across international agreements, whereas government commitment and democracy receive considerably less empirical support. Since economically developed countries generally possess greater financial and administrative resources, they should be better equipped to fulfil UNESCO's reporting requirements. From this the first hypothesis can be derived:

H1: Richer countries are more likely to report cultural policies than poorer countries.

Regime type

Another explanation focuses on political institutions. Simmons (1998, p. 83) argues that the regime type factors into inter-state relations. Specifically, democracies are more inclined to

uphold and follow-through with international treaty obligations because their political system is characterised by the rule of law, institutional constraint and established legislative procedures (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). Their governments are accustomed to being constraint by domestic laws and processes that they cannot change. Further, democracies trust international organization more because they are used to being constraint and to trust that the legislative and judicative branches are working independently (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). Democratic leaders are likewise trusting international institutions as they are familiar with institutional checks and balances. Therefore, regimes that are used to constraints might be more willing to fulfil commitments at the international level. Additionally, the longer a democratic system is in place, the higher is the acceptance of accepting international rules and even adopting them into national law (Simmons, 1998, p. 84). Other compliance literature offers further support for the expectation that democracies are generally more supportive of international norms and are more willing to promote compliance among other states through mechanisms such as shaming in case of non-compliance from other countries (Koliev, 2020, p. 538). To note is that Karlas (2022) found this assumption unsupported. Research on the International Labour Organization further indicates that reporting mechanisms are particularly effective in democracies with active civil society organisations (Koliev et al., 2021), suggesting that participatory political environments facilitate compliance. Similarly, UNESCO's cultural conventions emphasises community participation and cooperation between governments and non-state actors (Aikawa-Faure, 2022), which may further strengthen reporting in more democratic political systems. From the second hypothesis can be derived:

H2: Democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies than autocracies.

Civil participation

Civil society participation in political processes is included as a rival explanatory variable to assess whether it explains reporting beyond economic development and regime type, therefore, it will be discussed in the theory section. The CoCE mentions that civil society is part of the process as it has an important role in achieving the goals of the convention (UNESCO, 2023a, p. 10). The QPRs and their publication offer the possibility to the public to track and assess the advancements made in implementing the CoCE (UNESCO, n.d.-c). Further, the inclusion of civic society in the CoCE because participation is beneficial is supported by previous research (Aikawa-Faure, 2022; Koliev et al., 2021). Koliev (2021, pp. 494–495) presents first that previous research argued that administration of forcible measures are needed to ensure countries

comply with their obligations. However, international organizations often cannot administer these measures Koliev (2021, p. 494). Here, civil society's participation comes into play. Further, Kahn-Nisser (2024, pp. 361–362) refers to the Slovakia's UN Committee Against Torture review in which information generated by civil society shadow reports to balance severe criticism about child protection and state institutions with praise for Slovakia's reception of Ukrainian refugees. The author further presents different shaming styles: "socializing shaming [and] disciplining shaming" (Kahn-Nisser, 2024, p. 362). Socializing shaming (SS) is for example criticism directed toward a specific policy or practice, while disciplining shaming (DS) is for example not necessarily related a specific policy. Furthermore, in SS the progress is judged based on the comparison between the past and now, while in DS the progress is compared to (international) standards (Kahn-Nisser, 2024, p. 362). These examples illustrate how civil society participation has an effect on the behaviour of the state, which mechanisms are used and that civic participation encourages compliance with international obligations by increasing domestic engagement and oversight (Karlas, 2022; Koliev et al., 2021). Lastly, this is supported by Karlas (2022) who looks at the role of civil society and NGOs to country's ratification to international treaties. Relevant here is that in democracies political leaders are dependent on civil society to maintain power and therefore, they have an incentive to fulfil civil society's needs. Consequently, one can suspect that democratic governments have higher incentives to fulfil international treaties when it is in the interests of civil society such as the CoCE.

Corruption

Corruption is included as a control variable to assess whether it explains reporting beyond economic development and regime type, therefore, it will be shortly discussed in the theory section.

Hong et al. (2025, pp. 1–2) argues that anti-corruption campaigns are positive relationship with corporate ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) disclosures. Through examining Vietnam's 2016 anti-corruption campaign, the study shows that the positive effect is especially high in the Social dimension of ESG (Hong et al., 2025, p. 1,3). Further, companies want to restore stakeholders' trust quickly by using disclosures (Hong et al., 2025, p. 1,3). In addition, companies were more inclined to respond to anti-corruption measures when they had political connections as they are under public scrutiny (Hong et al., 2025, p. 1).

The study by Aïssaoui and Fabian (2022, p. 1) demonstrates that the impact of corruption on development is highly contingent upon a country's relative economic standing . Using a longitudinal panel data from 173 countries, they examine how corruption interacts with economic, social and political globalization (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 15). In low-income countries, corruption is an obstacle of a country's ability for economic development, it is “sand in the wheels” (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 17). Particularly beneficial to counter corruption are international treaties as they are furthering the economy and have coercive obligations (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 17). In lower-middle-income countries corruption is not always a hindrance, it can have positive effects, it is “grease in the wheels” (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 18). In this stage, social globalization begins to show its effectiveness in successfully reducing corruption (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 18). In upper-middle-income countries, economic development creates opportunities for elite for gaining wealth, while social globalization reduces corruption (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 18). In high-income countries, daily affairs are less affected by corruption (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 18). However, the country's economic development can be negatively affected by political globalization because it clashes with the domestic structure already in place (Aïssaoui & Fabian, 2022, p. 18).

Therefore, corruption does not only affect economic development but also shapes states and organizations behaviour. This suggests that corruption may influence a country's willingness to engage with international obligations i.e. policy reporting to UNESCO.

5 Data and Method

5.1 Data

My empirical analysis relies on multiple data sources from UNESCO, the World Bank and V-Dem. First, the UNESCO dataset on member records provides information about 207 countries and their entrance and absences from UNESCO as well as distinctive regional groups (UNESCO, 2026b). However, it does not provide information about which countries are not members of UNESCO. For this, information from another UNESCO data on member states was added to the member records data. While most variables of the member records data were deemed not relevant for this analysis i.e. such as geometry or country names in other languages, the data provides additional information about the different status of memberships as it includes non-members and observer states as well (UNESCO, 2024c).

Next, while both datasets have a region variable, their categories are to some extent different. The member records data contained five categories: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, while member states data included the previous mentioned categories as well as five others combining multiple regions within one category. This was solved by keeping the member records variable on regional groups and adding missing regions after merging both datasets.

Regarding the variable on membership status in the member records data two categories existed, member and associate member. The member states data had four categories: Member State, Observer, Associate Member and Non-Member. Associate Members have the same obligations as full members (UNESCO, 2026d) but Observers do not. The categories of the member state data were kept as they were more comprehensive. However, after merging the two datasets, three countries had missing values, Liechtenstein, Yugoslavia and the European Union. The observations for the European Union were dropped because my paper uses countries as level of analysis and not supranational institutions. Further, the membership information about Yugoslavia was dropped because during the time period given by the below-described cultural policy data, Yugoslavia did not exist anymore. Its successor states are included in the data set. Upon joining both datasets into the so-called membership data, two countries, Liechtenstein and the Holy See, became additional units of analysis, which means the count of countries went up to 209.

The third UNESCO data is on cultural policies and measures. It gathers data in the context of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. The current dataset contains observations from 2012 to 2024. The data set consists of policies and measures and information about them which is submitted by the Parties of the Convention, presumably on a regular basis, to fulfil the CoCE (UNESCO, 2026a) which aims at culture becoming sustainable (UNESCO, 2018). The goals of the CoCE can be linked to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically seven of them. SDGs included are “quality education (4), gender equality (5), decent work and economic growth (8), reduced inequalities (10), peace, justice and strong institutions (16) and partnerships for the goals (17)” (UNESCO, 2018) which are attributed to the four goals of the CoCE: “Support sustainable systems of governance for culture, achieve a balanced flow of cultural goods and services and increase the mobility of artists and cultural professionals, integrate culture in sustainable development frameworks, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNESCO,

2018). While in this paper the SDGs are not necessary for the analysis, they are relevant to mention as they are a defining feature of the data set because cultural policies and measures that are not in line with these goals are not reported and therefore not presented in the data set.

The raw dataset provided by UNESCO on cultural policies and measures contains 8155 observations of 30 variables (UNESCO, 2026a). In preparation of the dataset observations for the European Union existed as well and were dropped for the same reasoning as above. Further, each row in this cultural policy dataset stood for one policy which meant that for the analysis to be useful the observations were accumulated to country-year and saved in two variables. One consisting of the policy count for each country-year, and a second binary variable if a policy was reported in the respective country-year or not.

In the next step, the cultural policy and membership data were joined together, during this process country-year rows with zero policy count were added when no observation for the country existed in that year, which results in every country having 13 rows, each for one year. Next, the membership of countries and territories that joined or left during the observation period, Åland Islands, Anguilla, Montserrat, New Caledonia and the United States of America, was adapted to their individual status for the respective year. After this, the joined UNESCO data consisted of 2717 observations and six variables.

The next data source is Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). The V-Dem project measures different concepts of democracy by using data from different sources i.e. more than 600+ indicators as well as more than 4000 Country Experts (V-Dem, 2026). I have used data from the 16th version of V-Dem which contains 593 indicators as well as 251 indices from various data sources, and was published in March 2026 (Coppedge, Michael, et al., 2026b). The dataset consisted originally of 2,8092 observations of 4,618 variables. For the purposes of this paper, the data was reduced to the relevant variables which will be further described in the variable operationalization section. To note is that the untouched V-Dem data consists of 202 countries. However, upon narrowing it to the time frame of and merging it with the UNESCO data (2012 – 2024) 36 countries that exist in the UNESCO data do not exist in V-Dem. This could be due to the fact that they are microstates, dependent territories or special entities such as Andorra, Åland Islands or Holy See (see appendix A. List 1). However, that is a limitation of the data which affects my analysis as for about 17% of countries within in the data set are missing values and therefore, measures for democracy. These will then be dropped in the regression analysis.

The last data set was provided by the World Development Indicators and Other World Bank Data by downloading the relevant observations through commands in R (Arel-Bundock & Bacher, 2026). The World Development Indicators are provided by the World Bank which offers cross-country data regarding various issues i.e. environment, economy as well as social (The World Bank Group, 2026). The chosen variables of this dataset will be presented below. This data was also joined with the previous one. Lastly, seven countries and territories (see appendix for A. List 2) were dropped from the dataset as they had no values for the main independent variables and would therefore not be included in the regression model at all.

5.2 Variable operationalization

In the following part the variable operationalization will be presented which will highlight differences in coding the variables and the reasoning behind using them.

The analysis uses two dependent variables. Both are a measure for compliance in policy reporting. One dependent variable denotes the yearly count of submitted policies by country-year, constructed from UNESCO data on cultural policies and measures. The lowest possible value is 0 and the variable has no missing values. The second dependent variable is a binary variable which measures if in a country-year compliance in policy reporting took place. The value 1 stands for reporting took place, 0 for it did not.

The first hypothesis that richer countries are more likely to comply with reporting cultural policies than poorer countries, is tested with economic development. Economic development is measured via the GDP per capita variable by the World Bank data (WDI). The values of this variable are in US Dollars (Arel-Bundock, 2010). The second hypothesis that democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies than autocracies, is tested with regime type. Regime type is an ordinal variable by the V-Dem data set was taken. The variable has four values: closed autocracy (0), electoral autocracy (1), electoral democracy (2) and liberal democracy (3) (Coppedge, Michael, et al., 2026a, p. 317).

Civil society participation in political processes is included as a rival explanatory variable to assess whether it explains reporting beyond economic development and regime type as previous research indicates that civic participation encourages compliance with international obligations by increasing domestic engagement and oversight and civic participation is a principle encouraged by UNESCO (Aikawa-Faure, 2022; Koliev et al., 2021). Civil society participation

in political processes is an interval index, and its values range from 0 (low) to 1 (high participation) by the V-Dem data set.

The control variable included in the analysis is the political corruption of a country. Political corruption captures the governance quality. Higher levels of corruption can weaken bureaucratic effectiveness and reduce governments' capacities to implement and comply with international obligations. Therefore, controlling it might isolate whether reporting is explained by economic development and civil participation rather than administrative quality. Political corruption variable is an interval index. The values range originally from 0 (low) to 1 (high corruption), however, to match the direction of the other variables and for easier interpretation, the scale was reversed. Now low values mean high corruption and high values low corruption. The index covers six types of corruption: legislative, judicial as well as executive, and within executive between corruption due to bribery, corruption due to embezzlement as well as corruption rulers/cabinet and public sector (Coppedge, Michael, et al., 2026a, p. 330).

The control variables country, membership, year and region are included in the regression with fixed effects. The variable region consists of five categories: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2026b). The definition of regions and allocation of countries to regions follows UNESCO's suggestion (UNESCO, n.d.-b, 2024c). The variable country consists of the names of the countries and territories within the dataset. The variable year consists of the years 2012 to 2024 which is the entire observation period from the UNESCO data on cultural policies and measures (UNESCO, 2026a). Another control variable is membership where the value 0 stands for non-members, 1 for observers, 2 for associate members and 3 for member states. Membership is a precondition for the reporting obligations rather than an institutional or socioeconomic factor of reporting behaviour. The dataset includes both members and non-members. Non-member countries are kept because they provide information on the absence of reporting and allow the analysis to capture the variation in reporting behaviour across countries better. Further, being a member is a choice of a country which means the opportunity is open to them but refuse it, refuse to participate and submit policies. Therefore, it is included in the analysis as a fixed-effect.

5.3 Method

To examine the research question and test the hypotheses, this study employs regression analysis. Two dependent variables are analysed. The first is the number of cultural policies and

measures reported by a country to UNESCO in a given year, which is a count variable. The second is a binary variable indicating whether a country submitted at least one policy in a given year. The dependent variables require each a different regression model.

As the first dependent variable consists of non-negative integer counts, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is not appropriate (Osborne, 2017; Zelterman, 2022, p. 215). OLS assumes a continuous and normally distributed dependent variable, whereas the number of reported policies is discrete, positively skewed, and cannot take negative values (Osborne, 2017). Count data therefore more appropriately analysed using a generalized linear model (GLM) with a Poisson distribution (Ford & Elhai, 2008). The Poisson model assumes that the dependent variables follows a Poisson distribution, in which the expected number of events equals the variance (Zelterman, 2022, p. 214). The models estimates the logarithm of the expected number of reported policies as a linear function of the explanatory variables (Zelterman, 2022, p. 216). The formula looks like this:

$$\log(\lambda_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{EconomicDevelopment} + \beta_2 \text{Regime} + \beta_3 \text{CivilParticipation} + \beta_4 \text{Corruption} + \beta_5 (\text{EconomicDevelopment} * \text{Corruption}) + \gamma_r + \delta_t$$

where,

(λ_i) : expected number of reported policies

α : intercept

$\beta_1, \dots, \beta_5$: coefficients for the explanatory variables

$\beta_5 (\text{EconomicDevelopment} * \text{Corruption})$: interaction term

γ_r : region fixed effects

δ_t : year fixed effects

To complement the count analysis, the study also estimates logistic regression models. Logistic regression is appropriate because the second dependent variable is dichotomous, indicating whether a country submitted any cultural policy in a given year. Rather than modelling the number of policies, the logistic model estimates the probability that a country reports at least one policy. The formula looks like this:

$$\log\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{EconomicDevelopment} + \beta_2 \text{Regime} + \beta_3 \text{CivilParticipation} + \beta_4 \text{Corruption} + \beta_5 + \beta_5 (\text{EconomicDevelopment} * \text{Corruption}) + \gamma_r + \delta_t$$

where,

$\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right)$: probability that country I submits a report to UNESCO

β_0 : intercept

$\beta_1, \dots, \beta_5$: coefficients for the explanatory variables

$\beta_5(\text{EconomicDevelopment} * \text{Corruption})$: interaction term

γ_r : region fixed effects

δ_t : year fixed effects

Together, the Poisson and logistic regression models provide complementary perspectives on UNESCO reporting behaviour. While the count models analyse the extent of reporting, the logistic regression examines the decision to report at all (intensity).

6 Results

6.1 Descriptive statistics

The final dataset consists of 2,626 observations and 11 variables. The data covers 202 countries and their policy reporting behaviour between 2012 to 2024. During 2012 to 2024 132 countries reported a total of 8,007 policies, while 70 countries never reported. As UNESCO itself has 194 member states in 2026 (UNESCO, 2024c), it means that not all members have complied with reporting policies to UNESCO. Furthermore, the number of observations varies across variables due to missing data in the original data sources. This variation is relevant for the regression analysis, as the different models estimate using different sample sizes depending on the variables included.

The minimum number of policy submitted is 0 and the maximum number is 163 which the United Arab Emirates did in 2024. On average, countries submitted three policies in a year. Comparing this to the overall range and to the standard deviation which is three times the mean (see Table 1), it shows that most countries have a relatively low number of policies submitted each year, and that only a small number of countries submitted a high number. In fact, only four country-years have a policy count above a hundred and in 2,268 country-years no policies were submitted. This means that only in 13.6% (358) of country-year observations at least one policy was submitted.

Most observations are from countries that are members of the UNESCO 95.5%, only 28 observations which is 1.1. % are from non-member states. The dataset has no observations from countries and territories that are observer states. The number of observations for regime type is smaller than the country-years existing in the dataset. This means there are a number of missing

values. The same is present for political corruption, civic political participation with 2,249 observations, for economic development with 2,565.

Electoral autocracy and electoral democracy are the most common regime type in the dataset with together 64.7%, so about two thirds. The other third consistent of 14 % full autocracies and about 21.3% liberal democracies.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

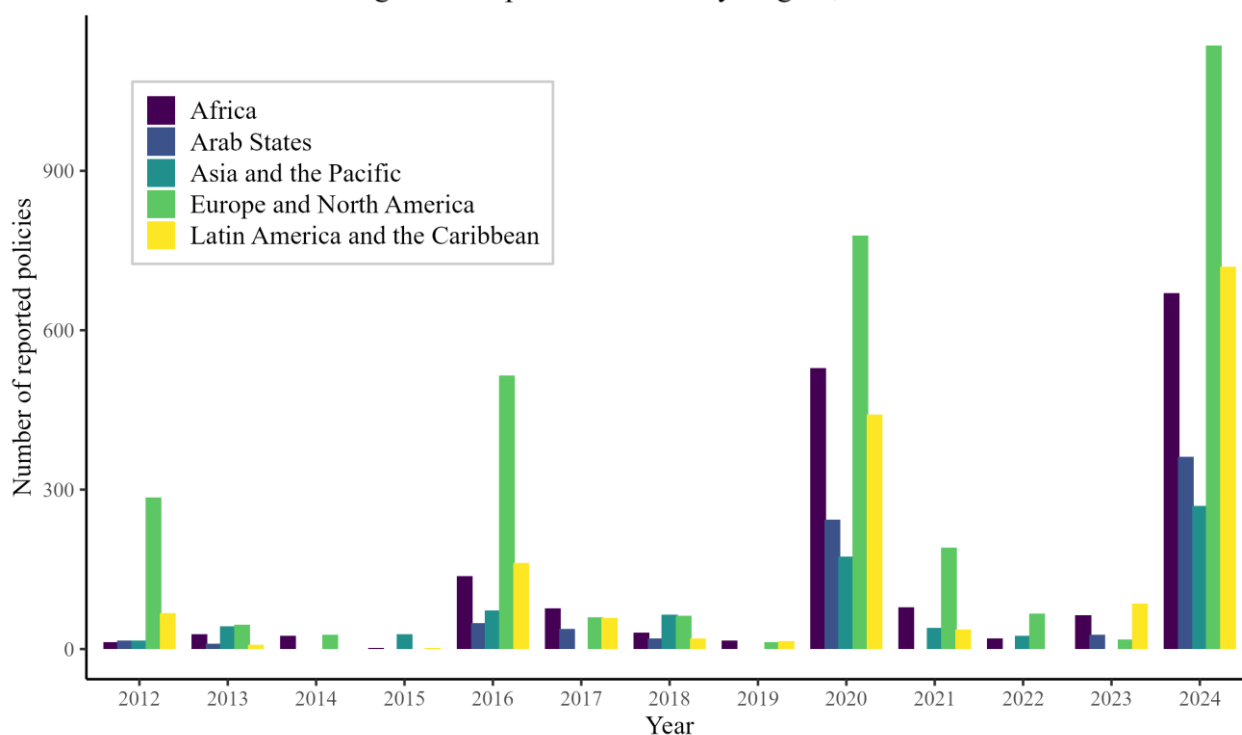
Variable	N (%)	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Number of policies		3.05	10.82	0.00	163.00
Economic development		17746.96	27915.91	216.23	288001.57
Civil participation		0.49	0.19	0.02	0.88
Political corruption		0.50	0.31	0.03	1.00
Submitted					
No	2268 (86.4%)				
Yes	358 (13.6%)				
Membership					
Non-member	28 (1.1%)				
Observer	0 (0.0%)				
Associate member	91 (3.5%)				
Member	2507 (95.5%)				
Regime					
Full autocracy	315 (14.0%)				
Electoral autocracy	762 (33.9%)				
Electoral democracy	693 (30.8%)				
Liberal democracy	479 (21.3%)				
Region					
Africa	624 (23.8%)				
Arab States	234 (8.9%)				

Variable	N (%)	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Asia and the Pacific	598 (22.8%)				
Europe and North America	676 (25.7%)				
Latin America and the Caribbean	494 (18.8%)				

Regions are relatively equally distributed between about 19% to 24 % each. The exception are the Arab States with only about 8.9%.

Figure 1 shows the total number of reported policies by region and year. Within the observation period Europe and North America have the highest number of reported policies in eight years. Asia and the Pacific have the highest number of submission in two years, 2015 and 2018.

Figure 1. Reported Policies by Region, 2012–2024



Similarly, Africa also ranks the highest in two years, 2017 and 2019. Latin America and the Caribbean rank first in 2023. The Arab States do not rank first in any of the given years. Furthermore, a spike in policy reporting can be observed every four years, so 2012, 2016, 2020 and 2024, which is the in the 2005 Framework fixed time interval for reporting policies.

In 2012 the region with the highest number of reported policies was Europe and North America. Within this region Portugal is the country with the highest number of reported policy (28) which makes it also the country with the most submitted policies overall, across all regions (see Table

2). Within this time period Portugal is not the only country that is the top-reporting overall as well as the top-reporter of the top-reporting region of the respective year. The same can be described for Croatia in 2014 with 12 policies, Republic of Korea in 2015 with 16 policies, Canada in 2016 with 56 policies, Côte d'Ivoire in 2017 with 39 policies, Gambia in 2015 with 16 policies, Türkiye in 2021 with 69 policies, Serbia in 2022 with 34 policies (see Table 2). Differences for the top-policy reporting country are given in 2013 were China submitted the highest number of policies, 26, overall as well as in 2018 with Niger which also submitted 26 policies that year. Then in 2020 the United Arab Emirates with 117 policies, Uganda in 2023 with 45 policies and the United Arab Emirates with 163 in 2024.

Looking at the highest reporting countries by region and year it shows that five of them are classified as liberal democracies, four as electoral democracies, three as electoral autocracies and one as a closed autocracy. However, the Republic of Korea is present two times in this list and has not undergone a regime change between 2014 and 2018. Therefore, the actual number for liberal democracies are four. This distribution of regime type changes when only looking at the highest reporting country in a year overall. Three of the regime types are equally apparent: full autocracy, electoral autocracy and liberal democracy with each three countries. While four countries have electoral democracy.

Table 2. Top-reporting countries and regions by year

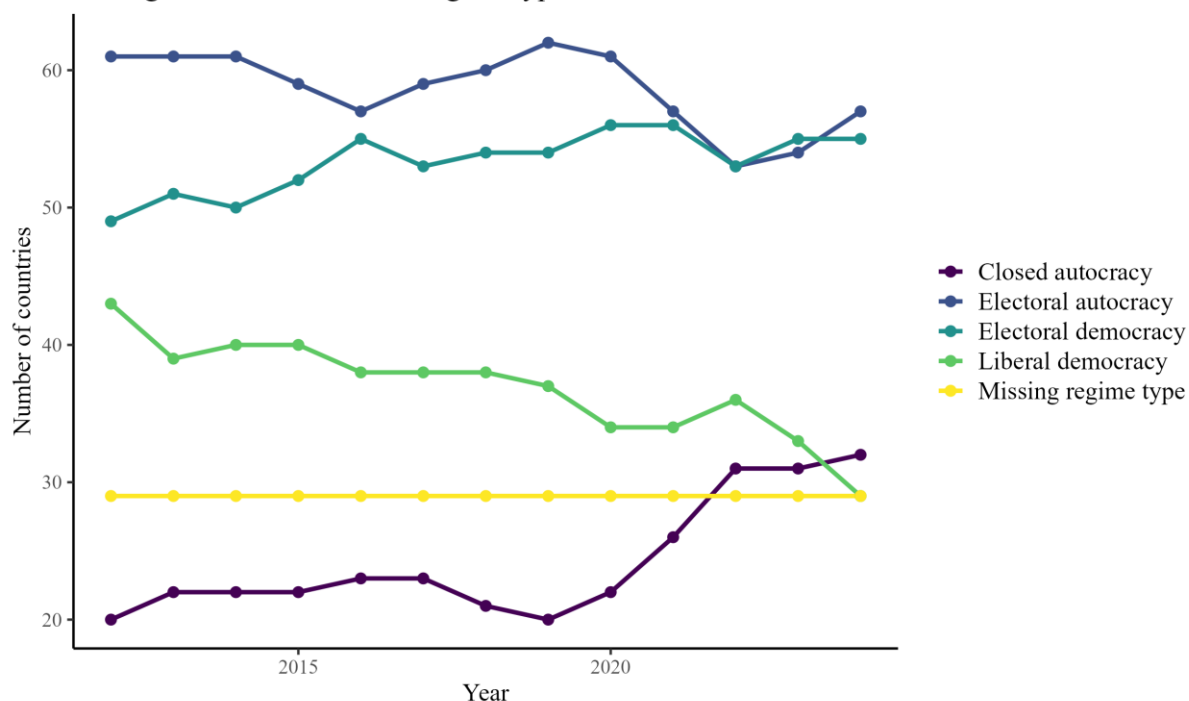
Year	Top country	Country PC	Top region	Region PC	Top country within the top region	Country CP
2012	Portugal	28	Europe and North America	285	—	—
2013	China	26	Europe and North America	46	Armenia	11
2014	Croatia	12	Europe and North America	27	—	—
2015	Republic of Korea	16	Asia and the Pacific	28	—	—
2016	Canada	56	Europe and North America	515	—	—
2017	Côte d'Ivoire	39	Africa	77	—	—

Year	Top country	Country PC	Top region	Region PC	Top country within the top region	Country CP
2018	Niger	26	Asia and the Pacific	65	Republic of Korea	26
2019	Gambia	16	Africa	16	—	—
2020	United Arab Emirates	117	Europe and North America	778	Germany	99
2021	Türkiye	69	Europe and North America	191	—	—
2022	Serbia	34	Europe and North America	67	—	—
2023	Uganda	45	Latin America and the Caribbean	86	Haiti	35
2024	United Arab Emirates	163	Europe and North America	1,136	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	101

Note: PC stands for policy count. The top country within a region is only named if it is not the top country overall. The region of the top country is not named unless the region is the top region in the respective year.

Figure 2 shows the regime type trend for dataset over time. The biggest regime category is electoral autocracies, However, in 2020 it decreases until 2022 before rising again but not to its

Figure 2. Distribution of regime types over time, 2012–2024



former height. Electoral democracies also increase relatively steadily over time. While liberal democracies decrease from in 2012 43 countries to 29 in 2024. At the same time, the number of closed autocracies increases sharply from 2019 on. These observations are in line with the recent trend of democratic backsliding, the so-called third autocratic wave, described in political science literature (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019).

Figure 3 (see appendix Figure A.1) describes the distribution of economic development among different regime types divided into two groups, countries that submitted policies and countries that did not. Across the four regime types, the differences in the GDP per capita between submitting and non-submitting countries of each category is small. However, between the regime types the economic development varies more. Liberal democracies, whether they submit or not, show a substantively higher GDP per capita than autocracies as well electoral democracies in the dataset. Furthermore, closed autocracies have the second highest economic development, followed by electoral democracies, and at last electoral autocracies have the lowest GDP per capita.

Lastly, in Table 4 policy submission in the different region based on membership can be seen. The regions Africa, Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean have no countries that have no membership with the UNESCO. However, the dataset does not claim to be comprehensive of all countries and territories in the world. In Asia and the Pacific only New Caledonia has country-year without submission. New Caledonia joined the UNESCO during the observation period. For non-membership in the region Europe and North America only three countries have had no membership between 2012-2024. The first one is Liechtenstein which has not joined UNESCO during the entire period. The other two countries are Israel and the United States of America. Israel left UNESCO in 2019, as did the United States. However, they rejoined later in 2023. As for every country 13 years are given in the dataset, the (re-)joining and leaving explains the number of observations for the non-members.

Table 4. Policy submission by UNESCO membership status and region

Region	Membership	N	Submission rate (%)	Policy submission (mean)
Africa	1	624	12.82	2.71
Arab States	1	234	12.82	3.27
Asia and the Pacific	0	5	0.00	0.00

Region	Membership	N	Submission rate (%)	Policy submission (mean)
Asia and the Pacific	1	593	6.58	1.24
Europe and North America	0	23	0.00	0.00
Europe and North America	1	653	22.51	4.90
Latin America and the Caribbean	1	494	12.55	3.28

Further looking at the submission rates of regions including the member states of UNESCO it becomes apparent that the submission rate overall and over time remains relatively low. The highest submission rate has Europe and North America with 22.51% and the lowest Asia and the Pacific with 6.58%. The other submission values are about 13%.

Deducting from the descriptive statistics it can be said that the dataset provides a broad variety in different types of countries regarding regime type, economy, membership of UNESCO as well as economic development. However, policy reporting by the countries remains low with about 14%.

6.2 Reporting policies: Intensity

In the following part Logistic Regression was used to examine the intensity of policy reporting, meaning whether a country submitted policies each country-year as the dependent variable. The results are presented in a table and reported as odds ratio (ORs). An OR shows indicates how the odds of submitting at least one policy change with a one-unit increase in the respective independent variable, while holding the other variables in the models constant. An OR of 1 indicates no change of the odds, meaning no effect. While values above 1 mean an increase in the odds of the event happening. This means a positive relationship. Values below 1 indicate a decrease in the odds of the event happening, meaning there is a negative relationship. The odds for a positive relationship are calculated by subtracting 1 from the odds ratio 1 and then multiplying it by 100, while the odds ratio for negative relationship are calculated by subtracting the odds ratio from 1 and then multiplying it by 100.

6.2.1 Logistic Regression

For testing my hypotheses, richer countries are more likely to comply with reporting cultural policies than poorer countries and democratic countries are more likely to report cultural

policies than autocracies, Logistic Regression was used as the dependent variable is whether a country submitted a policy or not (binary variable). Six different models were tested. The first and second model test respectively one independent variable with the dependent variable. In model 3 both independent variables are tested together with the dependent variable. In Model 4 the rival independent variable civil participation is added. In Model 5 the fixed-effects, country, membership, region and year, are added. The final model (Model 6) consists of all variables of Model 5 as well as the control variable corruption and the interaction between economic development and corruption is added. All of these models can be seen in Table 5. The logistic regression without an interaction between economic development and corruption can be found in the appendix (see Table A.1.).

The relationship between economic development, measured as $\log(\text{GDP per capita})$ and submitting policies is statistically significant in all models. In Model 1 with a one-unit increase in economic development, the odds of submitting policies increases by 13%, holding all other variables constant. In Model 3 the odds increase by 10.1%. In Model 4 and 5 the relationship is no longer statistically significant. With a one-unit increase in economic development, the odds of submitting policies increase by 10.2% (Model 4) and 70.8% (Model 6). The relationship reverses direction in Model 5, the odds of submitting policies decreases by 3.1%.

Next, results regarding the relationship between regime type and reporting policies will be described. The reference category for regime type is closed autocracy which means that the associations of the different regime types with the number of submitted policies is comparison closed autocracies. In Model 4 the relationship between electoral autocracy and submitting policies is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), in all other models the relationship is statistically insignificant. In all models the relationship is negative. With adding civil participation in Model 4, the odds of submitting policies decrease by 47.7% in Model 4. Upon adding the control variable as well as fixed effects, the decrease becomes higher in Model 5 (48.3) to be slightly smaller in Model 6 (44.4%).

In Model 2 a one-unit increase in electoral democracy is associated with the odds of reporting policies increasing by 38.5%. A smaller but same directive relationship can be observed in Model 3. The odds ratio in Models 2 and 4 have statistical significance ($p < 0.1$), while the odds ratio in Models 3, 5 and 6 are not statistically significant for electoral democracy. In Model 4 to 6, the relationship direction is reversed. The odds of reporting policies decrease by 38.5% when electoral democracy increases by one-unit in Model 4. However, the decrease becomes

upon adding the control variable and fixed effects, in Model 5 it is 8.9% and in Model 6 3.2%.. Liberal democracy is statistically significant in Model 2 and Model 4, the odds of reporting policies increase by 87.6% in Model 2 and decrease by 40.9% in Model 4, when liberal democracy increases by one-unit. In the other models the relationship is not statistically significant. Further, in Model 4 to 6 the relationship is reversed.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Economic Development	1.130** (0.045)		1.101+ (0.063)	1.102 (0.065)	0.969 (0.496)	1.708 (1.101)
Electoral autocracy		0.795 (0.163)	0.760 (0.164)	0.523** (0.123)	0.517 (0.356)	0.556 (0.387)
Electoral democracy		1.385+ (0.271)	1.250 (0.252)	0.615+ (0.161)	0.911 (0.718)	0.968 (0.765)
Liberal democracy		1.876** (0.376)	1.397 (0.317)	0.591+ (0.183)	0.820 (0.768)	0.851 (0.802)
Civil participation				8.911*** (4.797)	13.267 (29.671)	12.714 (29.011)
Corruption						514043.976 (4714184.634)
Interaction (ED × C)						0.209 (0.226)
Num.Obs.	2565	2249	2202	2202	2202	2202
AIC	2060.5	1907.2	1885.2	1869.8	1484.1	1486.0
BIC	2072.2	1930.1	1913.7	1904.0	2560.9	2574.2
Log.Lik.	-1028.236	-949.618	-937.586	-928.894	-553.070	-552.014

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
F	9.649	10.384	8.013	9.271		
RMSE	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.27	0.27
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Region fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Membership	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Entries are odds ratios (ORs). Closed autocracy is the reference category for regime. Economic Development is $\log(\text{GDP per capita (in US\$)})$.

In other words, the odds of submitting policies decreases by 18% (Model 5) and 14.9% (Model 6) when the control variables and fixed effects are introduced which is less of a decrease than in the previous model. In Model 3 in which economic development and regime type were tested together, liberal democracy remains a positive relationship with the odds increasing by 39.7% when liberal democracy increases by one-unit.

Civil participation is statistically significant in Model 4. The odds for submitting policies increases by 791.1% when civil participation increases by one-unit (Model 4) which is the highest increase that is statistically significant. The increase is even more pronounced for Model 5 and 6 upon adding the control variable and fixed effects.

Corruption and its interaction with economic development are not statistically significant in any model (including the one in the appendix). A one-unit increase in corruption, less corruption, is associated with an increase in the odds of reporting policies (514043.976) which is the strongest increase found throughout the models. The interaction between corruption and economic development is associated with a decrease by 79.1% in the odds of submitting policies. The strongest increase in the odds of reporting policies is the one-unit increase of civil participation by 733.4% (Model 4) and 702.9% (Model 5).

Following this, it can be said that economic development is not a stable predictor for reporting policies as it changes directions with the introduction of fixed effects and control variables.

Similar, liberal democracy is except for Model 2 and 4 not statistically significant and even changes direction from Model 4 on. This is a mixed result. However, looking at electoral autocracy and electoral democracy, more open regimes than closed autocracies become less likely to submit policies when governance quality and institutional factors are added. The rival independent variable, civil participation, has a seemingly more robust relationship as it remains positive, but not statistically significant throughout the models. Particularly civil participation relationship is stronger and consistently positive with reporting policies compared to economic development and regime type.

6.2.2 Logistic Regression: Model Diagnostics

To assess the reliability of the logistic regression, several robustness checks were conducted, namely, country-clustered standard errors, ROC-AUC and Cook's Distance and the model fit statistics are described.

First, the model fit statistics will be described. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) declines with every model as variables are added (see Table 5). This means that of all the models, Model 6 provides the best model fit. The same can be said for Log-likelihood but for the BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) for which the best fit is Model 5.

Second, the country-clustered standard errors were chosen as the dataset of country observation over time and to account for possible within country dependence. The results of the logistic regression do not change in direction after clustering standard errors but their significance changes slightly. Economic development is no longer statistically significant, while the relationship between economic development and policy reporting remains negative. A small change takes place for corruption which becomes slightly significant ($p < 0.1$). The interaction term between economic development and corruption becomes statistically significant ($p < 0.5$). Overall, the findings of the country-clustered standard errors indicate that the results of the logistic regression are robust.

Second, the ROC-AUC test. The AUC is 0.9044 which means that the predictive abilities of model are high and the model is able to distinguish between countries that submit and countries that do not.

Third, assessing influential observation with Cook's Distance (see Appendix) shows that 187 observations exceed the conventional threshold, making them more influential. However, the

magnitude remains limited. Furthermore, these observations are meaningful for the analysis and are not perceived as data errors, therefore they were not removed.

6.3 Reporting policies: Extent

In the following part Poisson regression was used to examine the intensity of policy reporting, meaning the number of reported policies by each country-year as the dependent variable. The results are presented in a table and reported as incidence rate ratios (IRRs). An IRR indicates how the expected rate of submitted policies changes with a one-unit increase in the respective independent variable, while holding the other variables in the models constant. An IRR of 1 indicates that there is no change in the rate, meaning no effect. Values above 1 indicate that there is an increase in the rate of submitted policies, meaning there is a positive relationship. while values below 1 indicate a decrease in the rate of submitted policies, meaning there is a negative relationship. The percentage of the increase is calculated by subtracting 1 from the IRR and then multiplying it by 100, while the percentage of the decrease is calculated by subtracting the IRR from 1 and then multiplying it by 100.

6.3.1 Poisson Regression

For testing my hypotheses, richer countries are more likely to comply with reporting cultural policies than poorer countries and democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies than autocracies, in the Poisson Regression the dependent variable is the number of submitted policies. Six different models were tested. The first and second model test respectively one independent variable with the dependent variable. In model 3 both independent variables are tested together with the dependent variable. In Model 4 the rival independent variable civil participation is added. In Model 5 the fixed-effects, country, membership, region and year, are added. The final model (Model 6) consists of all variables of Model 5 as well as the control variable corruption and the interaction between economic development and corruption is added. All of these models can be seen in Table 5. The Poisson Regression without an interaction between economic development and corruption can be found in the appendix (see Table A.2.).

The relationship between economic development and the number of submitted policies is positive in all models except Model 5. In Model 1 a one-unit increase in economic development, measured as $\log(\text{GDP per capita})$, is associated with an expected increase of 20.7% in the number of policies submitted. The percentage rises to 36.6% in Model 3, to 38.2% in Model 4

and 44.6% in Model 6. However, upon adding the rival independent variable, civil participation, in Model 4, the relationship direction reverses. A one-unit increase in economic development is now associated with an expected decrease of 19.5% in the policies submitted. Furthermore, the association is statistically significant in all models for economic development and number of submitted policies.

Table 6. Poisson Regression Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Intercept	0.567*** (0.041)	2.908*** (0.096)	0.195*** (0.021)	0.093*** (0.011)	0.320 (362.943)	0.004 (3.994)
Economic Development	1.207*** (0.009)		1.366*** (0.015)	1.382*** (0.016)	0.805* (0.076)	1.446** (0.181)
Electoral autocracy		0.839*** (0.034)	1.029 (0.044)	0.640*** (0.030)	1.255* (0.130)	1.382** (0.146)
Electoral democracy		1.390*** (0.053)	1.421*** (0.056)	0.581*** (0.030)	1.310* (0.146)	1.436** (0.161)
Liberal democracy		1.650*** (0.064)	0.927+ (0.039)	0.310*** (0.019)	0.939 (0.124)	1.016 (0.134)
Civil participation				13.532*** (1.418)	0.429* (0.172)	0.487+ (0.202)
Corruption						80066.541*** (129163.750)
Interaction (ED × C)						0.260*** (0.049)
Num.Obs.	2565	2249	2202	2202	2202	2202

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
AIC	38023.9	35934.0	34699.3	34048.1	14389.6	14341.7
BIC	38035.6	35956.8	34727.8	34082.3	15466.3	15429.9
Log.Lik.	-19009.942	-17962.979	-17344.666	-17018.046	-7005.796	-6979.874
F	585.336	183.023	307.354	360.634		
RMSE	10.88	11.55	11.56	11.51	6.60	6.61
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Region fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Membership	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Entries are incidence rate ratios (IRRs). Closed autocracy is the reference category for regime. Economic Development is log(GDP per capita (in US\$)).

Next, results regarding the relationship between regime type and the number of submitted policies will be described. The reference category for regime type is closed autocracy which means that the associations of the different regime types with the number of submitted policies is comparison closed autocracies. In Model 2 a one-unit increase in electoral autocracies is associated with an expected decrease of 16.1% in the number of policies submitted. The negative association between number of policies and electoral autocracies can also be found in Model 4 (36%). The association is statistically significant for all models except Model 3 in which economic development was tested together with regime type. The relationship reverses three times between Model 2 to 5, from negative to positive, positive to negative and back to positive. The association between the number of policies and electoral democracy is positive in all models except Model 4. The relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) for all models. A one-unit increase in electoral democracy is associated with an expected increase of 39% in Model 2, 42.1% in Model 3, 31% in Model 5 and 43.6% in Model 6. An expected decrease of 41.9% in the number of reported policies when electoral democracy increase by one-unit can be expected in Model 4.

The association between liberal democracy and the number of submitted policies is positive in Model 2 and 6. However, the results are only statistically significant for Model 2 and 4. A one-unit increase in liberal democracy is associated with an expected increase of 65%

For the relationship of the rival independent variable, civil participation, and the number of submitted policies is positive in Model 4 but negative in Model 5 and 6. Further, the association remains its statistical significance even upon adding corruption and its interaction term. In Model 4 a one-unit increase in civil participation is associated with an expected increase of 1,253.2% in the number of submitted policies. While in Model 5 the expected decrease is 57.1% and in Model 6 51.3%.

Corruption and its interaction with economic development are positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) in Model 6. The relationship between corruption, less corruption, is associated with an increase in the expected rate of reported policies (80066.541). The interaction between corruption and economic development is associated with a decrease of 74% in the expected rate of reported policies, when the interaction increases by one-unit.

Model 1 shows support for hypothesis 1 and Model 2 shows support for hypothesis 2. Further, testing the independent variables together in Model 3 one can deduct that economic development potentially accounts for part of the effects of liberal democracy as the relationship reverses for liberal democracy and the association for economic development increases for about 15% more in the expected number of policies. However, this cannot be said for electoral democracy as the positive association remains and even increase slightly. Upon adding the rival independent variable, civil participation, in Model, the association between economic development association turns negative which indicates that civil participation accounts for part of the explanatory previously attributed to economic development. However, after adding the fixed effects and the interaction term with corruption in Model 6, the relationship becomes positive again and remains statistically significant. This suggests that the relationship between economic development and reporting is related to the level of corruption rather than disappearing upon adding institutional factors. Similarly, the regime type odds ratios change considerably across the different models. In particular, liberal democracy loses its positive association once economic development is included, while electoral autocracy and electoral democracy change direction depending on the model. This suggests that part of the relationship between regime type and the number of submitted policies is explained by institutional factors rather than regime type alone.

Civil participation is strongly and positively associated with the number of submitted policies in Model 4. A one-unit increase in civil participation is associated with an expected increase of 1,253.2% in the number of reported policies. However, after adding the fixed effects in Model 5 and the interaction term in Model 6, the relationship reverses and becomes negative, respectively the expected decrease is 57.1% and 51.3%. The coefficients remain statistically significant in Model 5 and slightly significant in Model 6 ($p < 0.1$).

Corruption and its interaction term with economic development are both positive and statistically significant in Model 6. The significant interaction suggests that the relationship between economic development and the number of submitted policies depends on the level of corruption, and therefore the effect of corruption should not be interpreted independently from it. The interaction term indicates that the positive effect of economic development becomes weaker as corruption changes. In other words, the expected increase in the number of reported policies which is associated with higher levels of economic is moderated by corruption.

Overall, it can be said that the results show mixed evidence for the hypotheses. In the models without rival independent variable, control variable and fixed effects, both economic development and democracy are positively associated with the number of submitted policies and therefore support both hypotheses. However, once civil participation, fixed effects and the control variable, corruption, with the interaction term with economic development are introduced, the support becomes less consistent as the regime type coefficients change direction across the different models multiple times. Economic development remains statistically significant across all models, although its effect seems to be related to the level of corruption. Therefore, the first hypothesis that richer countries are more likely to comply with reporting policies than poorer countries, receives partial support. Likewise, the second hypothesis that democratic countries are more likely to report policies than autocracies, receives partial support, as the estimated effects of regime type are not consistent across the different models. Overall, the final regression suggests that institutional and administrative factors have potentially more explanatory power than economic development and regime type alone.

6.3.2 Poisson Regression: Model Diagnostics

First, the goodness-of-fit statistics (AIC, BIC, and Log-Likelihood) will be described. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) declines with every model as variables are added (see Table 6). This means that of all the models, Model 6 provides the best explanation of variation in the

number of submitted cultural policies. The same can be concluded from the BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) and the Log-Likelihood as the value declines for the BIC and becomes less negative for the Log-Likelihood.

The model diagnostics below are without country-fixed effects as they returned a warning that `glm.fitter(x = X, y = Y, weights = w, etastart = eta, offset = offset, : NA/NaN/Inf in 'x'` when country-fixed effects were added.

Second, the Pearson residual plot (see Appendix) shows large positive residuals. This means that the number of submitted policies are underpredicted for a number of observations. Further, the residuals have a larger spread when the fitted values are small. This indicates that the variance is not adequately represented by the Poisson model. Additionally, a large number of observations are below zero.

Third, the dispersion statistic of 15.14 is much larger than 1. This indicates significant overdispersion which means that the data possesses more variation than assumed. The main assumption of the Poisson Regression is that the variance is the same or nearly the same as the mean. This suggests that statistical significance is overstated or standard errors are underestimated.

Deducting from this model diagnostics, it can be assumed that the Poisson Regression is not the most fitting model, especially because of overdispersion which goes against a main assumption of the Poisson model. Therefore, a negative binomial regression will be conducted.

6.3.3 Negative Binomial Regression

The results of the Negative Binomial Regression are interpreted the same as for the Poisson Regression as the results are reported as incidence rate ratios (IRRs). For the Negative Binomial Regression, the variables of Model 5 of the Poisson Regression will be used except for country-fixed effects (see Table 6). The country-fixed effects are excluded because of model estimation problems. The model returned a warning that `glm.fitter(x = X, y = Y, weights = w, etastart = eta, offset = offset, : NA/NaN/Inf in 'x'` when country-fixed effects were added.

The relationship between economic development and the number of submitted policies is positive but not statistically significant. A one-unit increase in economic development, measured as $\log(\text{GDP per capita})$, multiplies the expected rate by 1.051, representing a 5.1 % increase in the rate while holding all other variables constant. This would suggest that for

economic development in this model after testing and controlling for other variables, regime type, civil participation, corruption and its interaction with economic development, membership, region and year, richer countries do not submit more policies than poorer countries. Furthermore, electoral autocracy and electoral democracy have also a negative relationship with the number of reported policies. Electoral autocracy multiplies the expected rate by 0.632, representing a 36.8% decrease in the rate, while electoral democracy multiplies the expected rate by 0.627, representing a 37.3% decrease in the rate. However, neither relationship is statistically significant. Next, liberal democracy has a positive relationship with the number of submitted policies. A one-unit increase in liberal democracy multiplies the expected rate by 1.724, representing a 72.4% increase in the rate. However, this relationship is also not statistically significant. Therefore, the results do not provide statistically significant evidence for the assumption that democracies submit more policies than autocratic regimes.

A one-unit increase in civil participation 3.237, representing a 223.7% increase in the rate. However, this association is not statistically significant. Compared to this, the level of corruption is statistically significant with an IRR of 337.833. Since the model include an interaction between corruption and economic development, the coefficient for corruption should not be interpreted independently. The interaction between economic development and corruption is statistically significant, with an IRR of 0.521. This indicates that the positive relationship between economic development and the number of submitted policies becomes weaker as the level of corruption increases. In other words, the effect of economic development on policy submission is related to the level of corruption.

Following this, it can be said that Hypothesis 1 finds no evidence with negative binomial regression. For Hypothesis 2 the results are not statistically significant in the negative binomial regression (NBR) as well. Therefore, they do not provide evidence that democracies submit more policies than autocratic regimes. For the civil participation, the results of the NBR partially do not support the findings of the Poisson Model. For corruption, the results of the NBR support the findings of the Poisson Regression Model 6.

Table 7. Negative Binomial Regression Model

	(1)
Intercept	0.000 (21221686.143)
Economic Development	1.051 (0.195)
Electoral autocracy	0.632 (0.362)
Electoral democracy	0.627 (0.434)
Liberal democracy	1.724 (0.573)
Civil participation	3.237 (0.791)
Corruption	337.833* (2.495)
Interaction (ED × C)	0.521* (0.289)
Num. Obs.	2202
AIC	4799.7
BIC	4947.8
Log.Lik.	-2373.843
RMSE	1.10
Membership	Yes
Region fixed effects	Yes
Year fixed effects	Yes

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Notes: Entries are incidence rate ratios (IRRs). Closed autocracy is the reference category for regime. Economic Development is log(GDP per capita in US\$).

7 Discussion

In this section the findings, limitations and possible future research are discussed. In general, the findings provide limited support for the assumption that economic development and

democracy increase a country's policy reporting to UNESCO. While both economic development democracy are positively associated with reporting in the simpler models, these relationships become weaker and in some cases reverse direction, once institutional controls and fixed effects are introduced. Therefore, the findings suggest that policy reporting to UNESCO under the CoCE is more strongly associated with institutional and administrative characteristics than with countries' economic wealth or political regime alone. This finding is consistent with Karlas (2022) who argues that the capacity to report may be more important than the willingness to comply. However, regarding democracy these findings are opposing another strand of literature which assumes that democratic systems lead to compliance more than autocratic regimes (Simmons, 1998). Compared to this, civil participation shows consistently a positive relationships with policy reporting, although the results are not statistically significant in the NBR. This suggests that capacity and institutional factors might be more important for reporting behaviour than economic development and regime type alone.

Regarding the first hypothesis which is that richer countries are more likely to report cultural policies than poorer countries the results provide limited evidence to support this claim. Economic development is positively associated in models without controls and fixed-effects, which supports the hypothesis. This finding is in line with Karlas (2022b) which finds that economic and administrative capacities are positively associated with states' fulfilment of self-reporting obligations. However, this association is not consistent upon introducing additional variables. In the Poisson models, the economic development becomes negative in Model 5 upon introducing fixed-effects but turns positive in Model 6 when corruption and its interaction term are added. As Poisson model is not the best fit because of overdispersion. The Negative Binomial model further provides evidence that the relationship between economic development and the number of reported policies is positive but not statistically significant. This indicates that richer countries do not submit more policies than poorer countries once the other variables are controlled for. The interaction between economic development and corruption is statistically significant which suggests that the relationship between economic development and reporting is dependent on the level of corruption. Another possibility is that GDP per capita is not the best measure for economic capacities of a state. In any case, support for the first hypothesis is limited.

Regarding the second hypothesis which is that democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies than autocracies the results are more mixed. The simple models provide

support for the assumption. This finding is in line with previous research (Simmons, 1998; Koliev et al. 2021) which suggests that democracies are more likely to comply with international obligations. However, this relationship becomes weaker once economic development, and the control variables are introduced. In the final model of the Poisson regression with all variables and fixed-effects included the coefficients for regime type change direction across models and in the NBR none of the regime type categories is statistically significant. Electoral autocracy and electoral democracy are negatively associated with the number of policies reported relative to closed autocracies, while liberal democracy has a positive association, none of the relationships have consistent direction across models and partly inconsistent statistical significance. Therefore, support for the second hypothesis is limited. In other words, the regime democracy alone does not explain reporting behaviour. One possible explanation for this is that institutional and administrative factors associated with democratic governance may be more relevant for explaining compliance in reporting obligations than the regime itself.

Thirdly, the most consistent findings in relation to reporting policies are provided by civil participation. Unlike economic development and regime type, civil participation remains a strong positive association with policy reporting in the logistic models and the simpler Poisson model. However, its association becomes negative in the Poisson models with fixed effects and control variable added and in the Negative Binomial model it loses statistical significance but is positive again. Civil participation is not clearly across models a strong positive predictor. However, the claim is at least partially supported in the logistic regression. This is in line with previous research (Koliev et al., 2021) who argued that NGOs and civil society contribution increase reporting compliance to international organizations. The reason for this is that participation allows for non-state actors to become involved and further cultural policy processes.

Additionally, a lower level of corruption is positively associated with the number of policies reported and is statistically significant in the final Poisson model and in the NBR. However, corruption does not have statistical significance in the logistic model predicting whether a country reports or not. This finding suggests that the extent of policy reporting might be influenced by corruption rather than the decision to report at all. In addition, the significant interaction term between economic development and corruption in the regression models indicate that the relationship between economic development and policy reporting becomes

more negative with lower level of corruption. This suggests that economic development should not be looked at without the quality of governance. Overall, this supports the argument that compliance with reporting obligations depends not on governments themselves but also on the broader institutional environment.

Overall, these findings suggest that international cultural policy reporting under the UNESCO CoCE is associated less by a country's economic development or regime type, but rather by institutional and administrative factors such as civil participation and Internet access. While previous research frequently emphasizes peer pressure, democracy and other behavioural explanations of compliance, the results are in line with previous research that compliance with self-reporting obligations require governments to possess the participatory and informational capacity to collect and communicate policy information. The findings should be accepted cautiously as none of the regression models provided a clear trend across different model specifications.

Several limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study can only identify statistical association but cannot establish causal relationships. Second, while the selection of the explanatory and control variables was oriented on the theory and previous literature, the list is not exhaustive. Consequently, omitted variables might influence the observed relationships. Third, the different regression models use different sample sizes due to data availability which makes a comparison between the models limited. Another limitation is that the UNESCO data on cultural policies and measures contains only policies that can be related to at least one SDG which means that the data contains only cultural policies related to SDGs, but countries cannot or opt-out of reporting them because they cannot be attributed to sustainability. In addition, the data on cultural policies and measures contains data only from 2012 to 2024 but does not show submissions for the last two years, 2025 and 2026.

The results and the theory presented leave room for future research regarding multiple manners. Possible future research could be done concerning the connection to 2030 SDGs and UNESCO SDGs as well as smaller n-scale comparisons of countries to explain individual trends. Another possible area would be to conduct a text analysis of the submitted policies or summaries of them from the UNESCO data set and then it would be possible to check for policy trends over time. Future research could look into more direct indicators of administrative and social capacity or public administration resources, such variables might be more appropriate measures for reporting capacities than GDP per capita.

This study examined how institutional and socioeconomic factors shape countries' reporting of policies to UNESCO. The analysis draws upon data from UNESCO, V-Dem and the World Bank between 2012 to 2024, the unit of analysis were country-years. The analysis tested whether richer and democratic countries are more likely to report policies and whether they report a greater number of policies. However, the findings provide limited support for both hypotheses.

The first hypothesis proposed that richer countries are more likely to comply with cultural policy reporting requirements than poorer countries. Economic development was positively associated with policy reporting in simpler models. However, this relationship did not remain stable, once institutional controls and fixed effects were introduced. The relationship weakened and lost in statistical significance. Therefore, the findings do not provide consistent evidence that higher levels of economic development increases countries' reporting of cultural policies.

The second hypothesis proposed that democratic countries are more likely to report cultural policies than autocracies. Similar to the economic development the hypothesis found support in simpler models. However, the relationship became weaker or reversed as well, once institutional controls and fixed effects were introduced. Therefore, the findings are not able to provide consistent evidence that democratic regimes increase countries' reporting of cultural policies.

The most consistent findings are that the interaction between economic development and corruption is relevant for the intensity of policy submission. Together with the findings on civil participation, even though they are not consistent across models, may indicate that institutional and administrative factors may be more relevant for reporting behaviour than regime type or economic development alone.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that reporting under the UNESCO CoCE is not consistently explained by countries' economic development or political regime alone. Instead, the results indicate that institutional and administrative factors might be more relevant. However, the findings are also not consistent for this. These findings contribute to the literature on international compliance by suggesting that fulfilling self-reporting obligations may be less influenced by countries' willingness to comply than by their institutional and administrative capacity to collect, organise and communicate policy information efficiently.

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10 Appendix

A. List 1: Countries and territories with no observations available for regime, corruption as well as participation:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Andorra | 10. Faroes | 21. Nauru |
| 2. Antigua and Barbuda | 11. Grenada | 22. Palau |
| 3. Aruba | 12. Kiribati | 23. San Marino |
| 4. Brunei Darussalem | 13. Saint Kitts and Nevis | 24. Sint Maarten |
| 5. Bahamas | 14. Cayman Islands | 25. Tonga |
| 6. Belize | 15. Saint Lucia | 26. Tuvalu |
| 7. Curaçao | 16. Liechtenstein | 27. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| 8. Dominica | 17. Monaco | 28. British Virgin Islands |
| 9. Micronesia (Federated States of) | 18. Marshall Islands | 29. Samoa |
| | 19. Macao, China | |
| | 20. New Caledonia | |

A. List 2: Countries and territories with no available observations for the independent and control variables:

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. Anguilla | 3. Holy See | 5. Niue |
| 2. Cook Islands | 4. Montserrat | 6. Tokelau |
| 7. Åland Islands | | |

A. List 3: Countries and Territories with at least one observation not available for GDP per capita. Missing time period in brackets, if not observations for whole time period is missing:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Cuba (2021-2024) | 4. San Marino (2024) | 7. British Virgin Islands |
| 2. Eritrea | 5. South Sudan (2016-2024) | 8. Yemen (2019-2024) |
| 3. Democratic People's Republic of Korea | 6. Syrian Arab Republic (2023-2024) | |

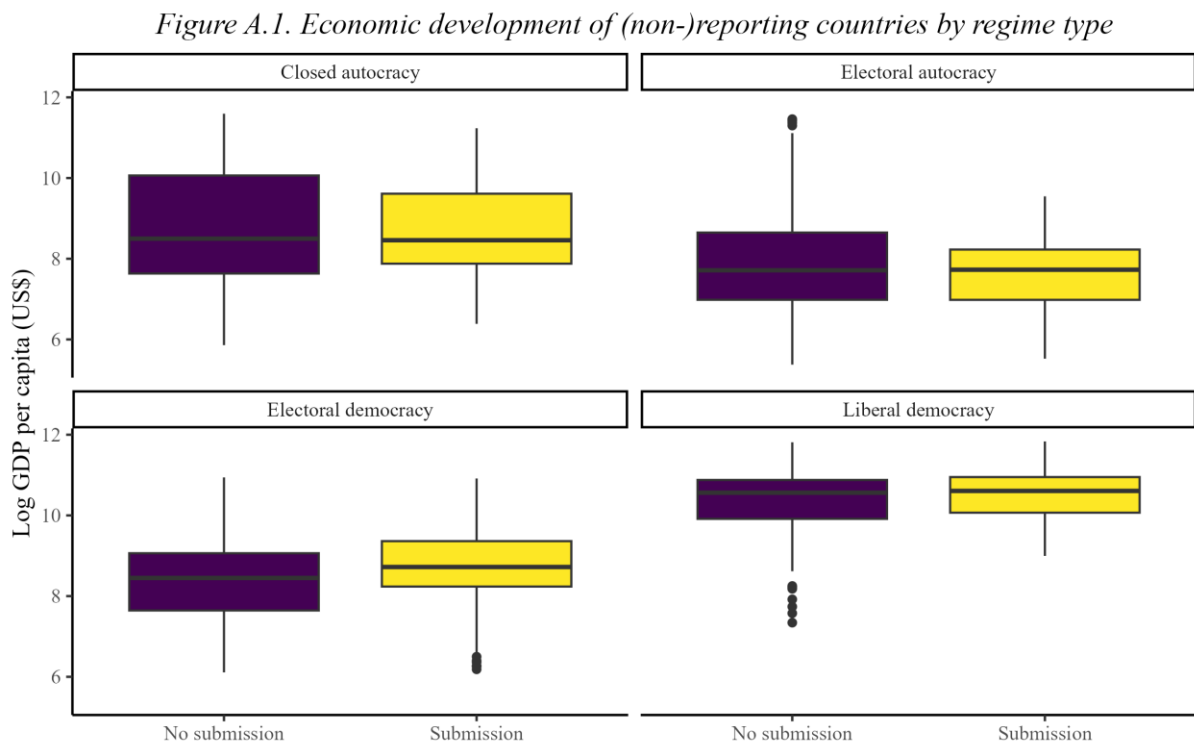


Table A.1. Logistic Regression without Interaction Term

	Model 7
Economic Development	0.965 (0.497)
Electoral autocracy	0.521 (0.360)
Electoral democracy	0.908 (0.716)
Liberal democracy	0.814 (0.766)
Civil participation	12.817 (29.084)
Corruption	1.169 (2.032)
Num.Obs.	2202
AIC	1486.1
BIC	2568.6
Log.Lik.	-553.066
RMSE	0.27
Country fixed effects	Yes
Region fixed effects	Yes
Year fixed effects	Yes
Membership	Yes

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Entries are odds ratios (ORs). Closed autocracy is the reference category for regime. Economic Development is measured as $\log(\text{GDP per capita, current US\$})$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Significance levels: + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Figure A.2. Cook's Distance for Logistic Regression Model 6

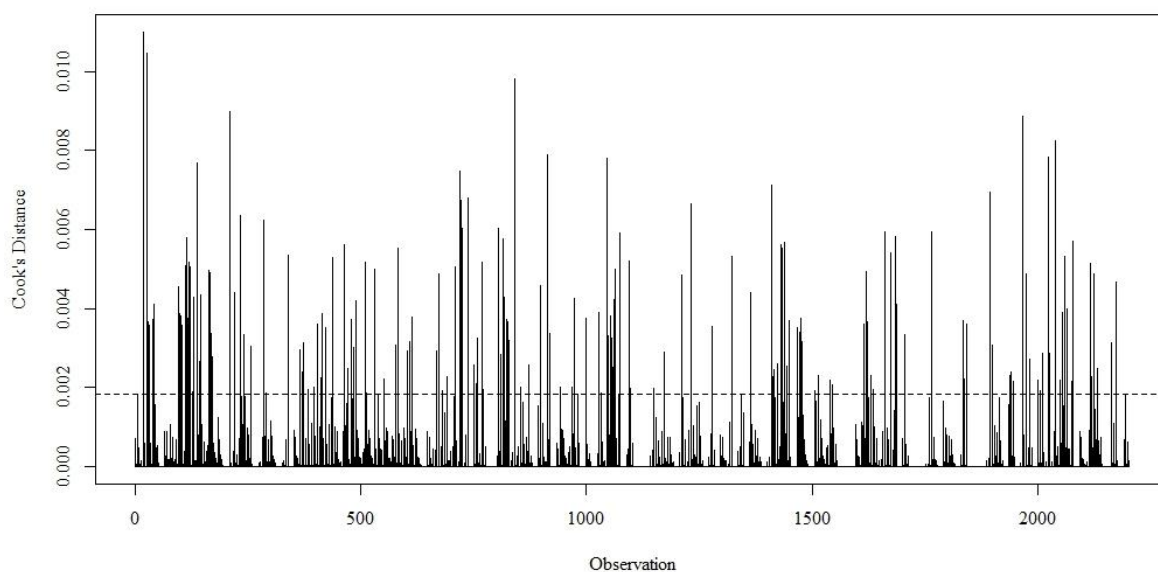


Table A.2. Poisson Regression without Interaction Term

	Model 7
Economic Development	0.805* (0.076)
Electoral autocracy	1.255* (0.132)
Electoral democracy	1.310* (0.146)
Liberal democracy	0.939 (0.124)
Civil participation	0.429* (0.176)
Corruption	0.996 (0.312)
Num.Obs.	2202
AIC	14391.6
BIC	15474.0

	Model 7
Log.Lik.	-7005.796
RMSE	6.60
Country fixed effects	Yes
Region fixed effects	Yes
Year fixed effects	Yes
Membership	Yes

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Entries are odds ratios (ORs). Closed autocracy is the reference category for regime. Economic Development is measured as $\log(\text{GDP per capita, current US\$})$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Significance levels: + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

