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A Matter of Will and Action: The Bureaucratic Autonomy of International Public Administrations

Chapter 2

A matter of will and action: The bureaucratic autonomy of international public administrations

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Abstract

This chapter explores how the concept of bureaucratic autonomy can be applied to the empirical study of international administrations. To this end, we start with an overview of classical Public Administration scholarship on bureaucratic autonomy. Based on what we consider the most relevant differences between the national and international spheres, we present a multi-dimensional concept of bureaucratic autonomy that is suitable for the analysis of international administrations. We then suggest a number of indicators that allow us to compare varying degrees of autonomy at different conceptual levels across administrations. Based on the data of twenty administrations, we illustrate possible causes and consequences of autonomy and lay out trajectories for future research.

Introduction

This chapter conceptualizes the bureaucratic autonomy of international administrations and suggests a measurement strategy to capture its variation across twenty international (governmental) organizations (IOs). Max Weber famously theorized bureaucratization as the main characteristic of rational-legal authority and an inevitable tendency of modern life; he framed it as both necessary and somehow 'dangerous' (1978). Bureaucracy is necessary because it constitutes the most efficient way to administer a society, but it is also dangerous insofar as it may use its unique expertise to escape legitimate political control. This tension between the autonomy needed by a public administration to execute its delegated tasks effectively, and the concern that this autonomy might hamper political control and fuel illegitimate competence encroachment, has long troubled Public Administration (PA) scholars ever since Weber.

It is fair to say, however, that concern regarding bureaucratic autonomy in Western democracies has been less pronounced in recent years than in the decades directly following Weber's writing. Much of this has to do with the 'containment' of Weber's pessimism concerning the combined processes of bureaucratization and autonomization by integrating the PA viewpoint into a broader perspective of checks and balances of power in national political systems. Possible excesses of bureaucratic autonomy1 have come to be seen as potentially 'hedged' by other institutions that have emerged along with the consolidation of national democracies. Such 'stabilizers' include national public administration law, independent media, and political party competition. Decreasing academic concern with the perils of bureaucratic autonomy in national constellations are thus understandable (Page 2012). When we shift, however, from the national to the international level, the factors taming the autonomy of bureaucracies in domestic settings might be less effective. Moreover, international organizations are not organized the same way as national political systems, and therefore it is likely that international bureaucracies will develop specific capacities that could exploit different structures and actor constellations, eventually reshaping the balance between autonomy and control at the international level. This chapter thus seeks to explore the extent to which traditional concerns regarding bureaucratic autonomy become newly relevant when we shift our gaze to international public administrations. By 'international public administrations' (IPAs), we mean the secretariats of IOs that constitute the international counterparts to administrative bodies at the national level (NPAs). The relevance of bureaucratic autonomy in global governance contexts has increased as international organizations and, in turn, the bureaucracies upon which they rely have been delegated an ever-growing number and range of tasks over the last three decades (Lenz et al. 2015, 147).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, we give an overview of classical Public Administration scholarship with respect to bureaucratic autonomy and discuss the various issues traditionally associated with this concept (section 2). In order to, then, adapt traditional understandings of autonomy to the IPA context, section 3 outlines what we consider the most relevant differences between the national and international spheres. Next, section 4 summarizes what we consider the two major perspectives on the autonomy concept in current empirical research. Combining insights from these two approaches, section 5 introduces a multi-dimensional concept of bureaucratic autonomy designed for application to the context of international organizations. Subsequently, we suggest a number of indicators to facilitate collecting systematic information on the different dimensions of autonomy and to compare varying intensities

of these dimensions across a number of international secretariats. The empirical results are presented in section 6. Finally, we conclude by arguing that applying the concept of bureaucratic autonomy to international constellations is worthwhile in two regards: first, it complements existing efforts to systematically compare the intra-organizational elements of international organizations' secretariats; and second, it customizes a traditional PA concept for a new empirical constellation, suggesting valuable implications for the discipline of PA itself and helping to put the classic interest in how administrative bodies interact with their political environment back on the agenda.

Bureaucratic autonomy: the public administration perspective

Bureaucratic autonomy is a long-standing concern in the analysis of national administrations (Carpenter 2001; Egeberg and Trondal 2009; Huber and Shipan 2002; Page 1992). Building on the Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy, PA research has focused on (intra-)bureaucratic characteristics as the main source for bureaucratic 'autonomization'. The most important characteristics that render bureaucracies autonomous are hierarchical organization, continuity, impersonality, and bureaucratic expertise stemming from administrative specialization and division of labor (Beetham 1987). In Weber's model of bureaucracy, public officials have a clearly defined sphere of responsibility and they are directly accountable to and controlled by their hierarchical superior(s). They are tenured professionals, whose employment is decoupled from the time-limited office terms of their political leaders. Moreover, bureaucrats are supposed to make impersonal decisions relying solely on formally prescribed rules and standard operating procedures, which are non-arbitrary and independent of competing (party) political interests. Finally, expertise constitutes the most important criterion for selecting, training, and promoting civil servants. Therefore, a merit-based career and recruitment system is 'the logical means of filling the available positions with the best qualified personnel' (Peters 2001, 87).

Starting out from these ideal-typical characteristics of bureaucratic structure and personnel, PA scholars have empirically investigated the relationship between the bureaucratic apparatus and its political leadership (Aberbach et al. 1981; Demir and Nyhan 2008). It is generally argued that the same factors that enable the bureaucracy to fulfill its tasks efficiently are also important sources of power and influence, which can allow the administration, in turn, to develop a 'life of its own' and escape the control of its political principals (Eisenstadt 1958, 103).

The single most important power source of the administration is its superior technical expertise. The administrative knowledge gained through professional education (usually in law), regular training, and long-term experience with political decision-makers as well as with policy addressees creates information asymmetries that favour the bureaucracy—asymmetries which can then be exploited in different phases of the policy process. Moreover, formal recruitment from selected universities, a closed career system, and a pronounced professional ethos together with established organizational routines not only facilitate the emergence of a relatively stable administrative culture but safeguard the independent fulfilment of public tasks in the long run and isolate the bureaucracy from political interference.

Several authors have built on Weber's work to examine the relationship between the political and administrative sphere of public organizations. Luther Gulick's classic work

(1937) on the implications of formal-structural designs constitutes a standard point of reference. Gulick comparatively analyzes concepts such as structural bureaucratic capacity, horizontal and vertical specialization, and also the organizational environment (see Egeberg 1999 for a modern interpretation). Another classic study is the Aston Group project (Pugh and Hinings 1976), which translates Max Weber's ideal type into empirically measurable dimensions. In her seminal sociological work, Renate Mayntz advances the debate further. Rather than comparing real world administrations with the Weberian ideal type, Mayntz aims to identify empirical variation in the administrative characteristics that facilitate bureaucratic autonomization or 'self-empowerment' (1978, 64–73). Most importantly for our purposes, Mayntz argues that the politically neutral but nonetheless loyal mentality of public officials, combined with high professional ethics, may limit autonomous administrative behavior. Furthermore, the heterogeneous social backgrounds of civil servants that prevents their collective identification with a single social class or group (i.e., partisanship) and the absence of personal dependency on outside support can also decrease the tendency toward ever more autonomous administrations (1978, 67). Mayntz also lists the size of the bureaucracy and its social cohesion as structural factors that are related to bureaucratic autonomy. This relationship is ambiguous, however, as an increase in size may, on the one hand, increase the administration's political weight but, on the other hand, deprive the administration of its inner coherence and ability to engage in collective action (1978, 68). Mayntz considers a centrally organized bureaucracy with a small group of administrative leaders a particularly powerful and autonomous form of organization. Finally, she argues that an administrative monopoly on the fulfillment of certain service tasks may help the bureaucracy to enforce its goals, push for self-interested claims, and thus increase its autonomy (see also Wilson 1989, 182). Turning to the social and political environment, a pact between the administration and powerful social groups, as well as a weak political leadership, are also considered crucial factors (1978, 69).

While Mayntz relies mostly on theoretical reasoning and the empirical results of several isolated analyses to enumerate these factors, the work of Schnapp (2004) is perhaps the most comprehensive comparative study to address what can be conceived of as the structural dimension of bureaucratic autonomy. Schnapp provides a measurement framework that actually enables a large-n comparison of the (structurally defined) potential of political bureaucracies to influence policy-making. The author distinguishes between different phases of the political process and uses, for instance, the personnel resources of the bureaucracy (relative to those of political actors) to operationalize the chances of bureaucratic agenda-setting. Schnapp also operationalizes the capacity of the bureaucracy to interact strategically by measuring the personnel homogeneity of top-level bureaucrats—something that can, itelf, be constrained by the political leadership by means of formal politicization. Finally, the opportunity for the bureaucracy to deviate from political targets in the implementation phase—i.e., bureaucratic drift—is determined by the number of political veto players and the presence of political cleavages within the government (Schnapp 2004, 237).

Besides these and similar empirical investigations into the characteristics of bureaucracy, this research tradition has comprised often stylized and abstract political economy approaches to politico-administrative systems (Epstein and O'Halloran 1999; Huber and Shipan 2002; McCubbins et al. 1987). More recently, major efforts have been devoted to descriptive comparisons of administrative change in the context of the New Public Management waves (Kickert 2008; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004) but not to the analysis of the changing roles, functions, and impacts of national ministerial

bureaucracies in increasingly interdependent multilevel administrations (for exceptions, see Egeberg 2006; Page and Wright 2007; Peters and Pierre 2004). One may thus argue that with regard to the national level, PA studies have increasingly shifted away from their earlier interest in conceptualizing and empirically studying how administrative bodies interact with their political environment. While the prominence of principal-agent theory has drawn the attention of PA scholars to delegation contracts and political control, the internal structure of public administrations (e.g., their degree of functional specialization and decentralization, and the quality of command structures and administrative leadership) has only rarely been systematically linked to organizational decision-making and hardly ever to policy outcomes (Hammond 1993).

Bureaucratic organization at the international level: how is it different?

The fact that international organizations are increasingly studied as organizations (Ness and Brechin 1988) with a particular focus on their internal administration (Barnett and Finnemore 2004) already indicates that international and national bureaucracies have a lot in common. International organizations, like most political organizations, are characterized by hierarchy, division of labor between units, specialization, merit-based recruitment, and other characteristics that undoubtedly justify classifying international secretariats as bureaucracies. There is no shortage of evidence that the logic of bureaucratic power as envisaged by Weber applies to international bureaucracies, at least in principle (see for example Xu and Weller 2004, 37). Yet there is also evidence of important differences. Already in 1975, Weiss cautioned scholars 'not to lump together national and international bureaucratic analysis' but to take into account the distinct characteristics 'peculiar to international administrative structures' (1975, 54). International bureaucracies differ from their national counterparts in several ways and revisiting the concept of bureaucratic autonomy thus requires careful appreciation of the specificities and transformative potentials of the international level.2

Differences between national and international administrations can be found in the external environment of the IO, the organizational context in which the administration is embedded, and the characteristics of the administration itself. In this chapter, we focus on the structural aspects of bureaucratic autonomy, that is, on IPAs' internal set-up, their competences, as well as their financial and personnel resources. Thus, differences in the organizational context and characteristics of the administration are particularly relevant for the conceptualization and measurement of international bureaucratic autonomy.

Organizational context refers to the government and parliament in national political systems and the political bodies (i.e., the executive board and the assembly of governmental representatives) at the IO level. In this respect, international bureaucracies are arguably in a more advantageous position—in the sense of having fewer constraints—as it seems easier to exercise control over bureaucracies in national systems than in the international sphere (Frey 1997, 119). Notwithstanding some important differences between parliamentary and presidential systems (see Strøm 2000), political control and steering at the national level is ensured (inter alia) by administrative rules and procedures enshrined in the respective country's constitution and administrative law (including a system of administrative courts), by ministerial or presidential oversight, by different legislative chambers, and also by more

informal scrutiny on the part of well-organized political parties, civic groups, and the media (Hood, 2004).

At the international level, in contrast, longer chains of delegation, the absence of direct political control, and a lack of constitutional checks and balances normally found in the realm of the state may increase the autonomy of international bureaucracies (Elsig 2011; Langrod 1963, 47). While the international bureaucracy is directly accountable to the executive head (i.e., the Secretary-General or functional equivalent), who may use senior management staff to steer the secretariat, the relationships between political and administrative actors are much less institutionalized. For instance, political parties and coalitions of likeminded government representatives or societal groups—even those with some degree of organizational capacity—are rarely able to exert more than sporadic oversight. Moreover, political control over the secretariat becomes more difficult as the IPA may be able to exploit the greater preference heterogeneity among political principals from diverse cultural or geographical backgrounds during the execution of already established decisions (Cortell and Peterson 2006).3 Adopting a decision, in contrast, is much more difficult in international organization as majority thresholds in the legislative assembly are high and policy coalitions between member states are less stable than in national systems, where the government usually holds the majority in the main legislative organ (in parliamentary systems at least). This constellation may limit administrative influence because international secretariats' proposals are rarely backed by a previously established legislative majority. On the other hand, it has been shown that international secretariats may exert more informal influence by acting as a broker (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009; Jinnah 2010) who uses persuasive strategies to facilitate agreement among states (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2012; see also the chapter of Saerbeck et al. and Benz et al.). Overall, international legislation 'must inevitably remain vague and leave wide scope for administrative interpretation', which, in the end 'contributes to increase the real importance of the secretariat' (Langrod 1963, 47; see also Liese and Weinlich 2006, 497). Depending on whether political control is conceptualized as endogenous or exogenous to bureaucratic autonomy (see Kim 2008), these differences in the political environment of the administration may be directly (as observable implications) or indirectly (as context factors or scope conditions) relevant for the study of bureaucratic autonomy at the international level.

Turning to the differences pertaining to the administration itself, it can be argued that national administrative contexts are characterized by a relatively clear separation of competences (involving a limited number of government levels or subsystems), familiar procedures (inspiring trust and acquaintanceship with the course of action), a well-known (and often limited) number of actors and relatively stable actor constellations, iterative modes of political exchange, and a common value system based on a homogenous politico-cultural background. All of these factors facilitate a common understanding of problems and help produce similar preferences with respect to potential solutions.

International secretariats differ from their national counterparts in terms of internal structure and the characteristics of their personnel. Most importantly, IPAs are much smaller in staff size and have less (and often less stable) financial resources at their disposal; furthermore, those financial resources often include voluntary contributions that donors earmark for specific purposes. International administrations are also characterized by a high degree of cultural heterogeneity as their staff are recruited from different countries. This diversity can be offset, to some extent, by the emergence of a common organizational culture (Vetterlein 2012) and the dominance of certain

professional groups (Gould 2006), but the ability of international secretariats to act as one cohesive entity cannot be assumed in the same way as in national constellations. This tendency is even aggravated by the fact that administrative permanence in terms of lifelong employment is the exception rather than the rule in international organizations. On the other hand, interdependent problems, overlapping competences between the institutions involved, volatility in actor relations, and procedural ambiguity are likely to increase the potential of administrative bodies at the international level to act autonomously.

In sum, bureaucratic autonomy at the international level appears to be less well contained and controllable than is the case in national contexts. International bureaucracies, albeit organizationally less cohesive than their national counterparts, appear to benefit from changing opportunity structures and actor relationships in ongoing global affairs (Cerny 2010). While it is difficult to come to a final assessment of how these internal characteristics interact with differences in the direct political environment, it seems particularly important at the international level to take into empirical account the variation between different international secretariats when conceptualizing international bureaucratic autonomy. It is to scholarship outside the public administration field that we now turn to in order to learn more about how questions of autonomy and independence have been empirically approached in international and transnational contexts.

Approaching autonomy from a relational and sociological perspective

IOs and their secretariats have been studied as forums of transnational policy-making, particularly in the areas of environmental policy (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009), treaty reforms (Beach 2004), and management change (Bauer and Knill 2007). Other scholars have applied an actor-centered perspective and studied international bureaucrats as teachers of norms (Finnemore 1993), as orchestrators of international regulation (Abbott and Snidal 2010), or as crucially important actors in the creation of new organizations (Johnson 2013).

This research has found that international bureaucracies can be powerful entities. It describes the conditions under which non-elected bureaucrats can use their central position, privileged access to information, technical expertise, and professional authority to influence the course of things (Vibert 2007). In terms of theory development, the dominant theme has been how best to conceptualize the relationship between the bureaucracy and its political principals. Few studies, however, have used internal bureaucratic structures to systematically study under which conditions and to what extent international bureaucratic influence emerges autonomously from political superiors (Eckhard and Ege 2016). As demonstrated in section 2, it is exactly these intra-bureaucratic features that constitute an important research focus for the discipline of PA. Since this perspective has been only sporadically extended to international bureaucracies (for recent exceptions see Kim et al. 2014; Stone and Ladi 2015), a key concern of Public Administration research—that is, the question of whether and how administrative patterns can be linked the capacity of the bureaucracy to act autonomously from politics—has rarely been studied at the international level (see Ege and Bauer 2013; Heady 1998; Liese and Weinlich 2006; Ness and Brechin 1988). In order to get to the bottom of how bureaucratic autonomy can be systematically studied

in the international context, we briefly set forth what we consider the two most pertinent approaches to the study of autonomy.

The first could be called the relational approach; it is firmly rooted in principal–agent theory and most common among rational-institutionalist IR (e.g., Hooghe and Marks 2015). The second approach, which more closely resembles the traditional understanding of autonomy in PA as sketched out in section 2, could be called sociological, as the prime focus is the characteristics of bureaucratic actors and structures as well as their working environments (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009).

A more detailed account of the different empirical studies within the two approaches is presented elsewhere (Bauer and Ege 2016). It suffices here to point out that empirical studies within the relational approach to bureaucratic autonomy emphasize the delegation logic behind agency discretion and focus on the interaction mode between principals and agents. Organizational resources and the supervision relationship between agent and principal are put center stage and thus, perhaps unsurprisingly, research so far has focused upon individual bureaucratic agency rather than on organizational bureaucratic structures. The major question raised by the relational approach is how to control the bureaucratic power to act.

The sociological approach, in contrast, offers a more inward-oriented perspective on bureaucratic capacities for collective decision-making and independent information processing. However, scholars have yet to compare a greater number of international secretariats along these lines. Research has remained either strictly focused at the national level or, if international secretariats have been examined, mostly limited to small-n comparisons using case study designs. The sociological approach's main concern is clarifying the organizational preconditions of independent bureaucratic action, building on capacities to handle information and to collectively put forward particular programmatic options. Combining relational and sociological views, students of regulatory agency have developed a variety of empirical measurement options, though their applicability to international secretariats has yet to be proven (Maggetti 2007). Against this background, having the means to act, as well as the freedom to develop independent positions, appear to be the two key factors underpinning the relational and sociological dimensions of bureaucratic autonomy (Bauer and Ege 2016).

## Conceptualizing and measuring international bureaucratic autonomy

Based on a synthesis of relational and sociological aspects, we suggest conceiving of the bureaucratic autonomy of international secretariats as the combination of the (in our terms, 'sociologically' grounded) capacity to develop independent preferences ('autonomy of will') and the ('relationally' grounded) ability to translate these preferences into action ('autonomy of action') (see also Caughey et al. 2009; Maggetti 2007).

In order to develop autonomy of will, an administration first requires the 'administrative cohesion' to overcome obstacles to collective action and to interact with political actors as a unified organizational entity (see Mayntz 1978, 68). Cohesion enables the bureaucracy to develop a 'single set of corporate goals', which allows its members to work toward the same cause (Caughey et al. 2009, 3). If such an ability is missing, 'pockets of autonomy' within the lower echelons of the bureaucracy—at the unit or departmental level—are likely to emerge (Cortell and Peterson 2006, 263; Trondal et

al. 2012). Such 'pockets' restrict the administration's ability to construct and maintain a common identity and to function as a unified entity working toward the fulfillment of its mandate (see Selznick 1949). The development of an autonomous will also requires what we call 'administrative differentiation', which refers to the bureaucratic capacity to develop preferences that can potentially differ from those of the political principals.

'Autonomy of action' refers to the ability of an administration to translate these preferences into action. Within the nation state, this aspect of autonomy is highest if an administration has 'a monopoly jurisdiction (that is, they have few or no bureaucratic rivals and a minimum of political constraints imposed on them by superiors)' (Wilson 1989, 182). Even though IOs compete with other IOs over competences and resources (Busch 2007), the main power cleavage at the international level is not so much a matter of bureaucratic rivalries but of conflict between the secretariat and the member states. Thus, autonomy of action crucially depends on statutory powers (i.e., formal secretarial competences vis-à-vis political principals throughout the policy cycle) and can be understood as independent administrative resources (Brown 2010; Hooghe and Marks 2015). Figure 2.1 provides an overview of our conceptualization of bureaucratic autonomy.

Figure 2.1 The dimensions of structural bureaucratic autonomy
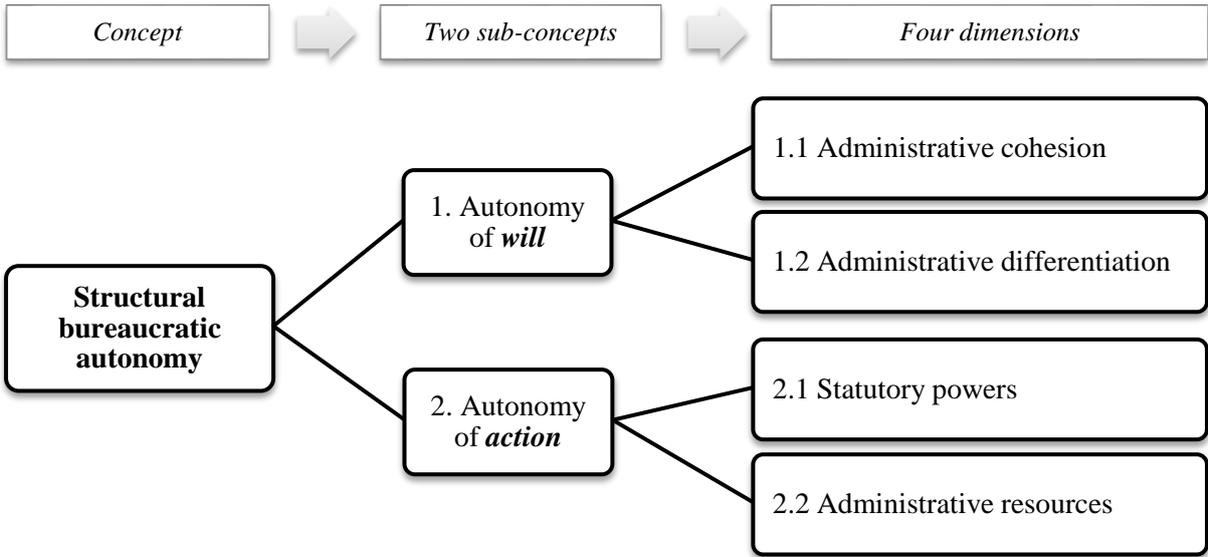
This specification of autonomy as an at least partly relational concept raises an important question: from whom is the international secretariat considered to be autonomous? We are interested in determining the potential impact of international bureaucracies on policy-making. Thus, we study the bureaucracy's autonomy from political actors and, more generally, from politics, throughout the policy-making process. The political actors in question are the member states of the organization and their representatives within the different political bodies of the IOs. In order to study bureaucratic autonomy empirically, we focus on the secretariats of the following twenty IOs:

1. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
2. European Central Bank (ECB)

3.   European Union (EU)
4.   International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
5.   Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
6.   International Labour Organization (ILO)
7.   International Monetary Fund (IMF)
8.   International Maritime Organization (IMO)
9.   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
10. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
11. United Nations (UN)
12. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
13. World Bank Group (WB/IBRD)
14. World Health Organization (WHO)
15. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
16. World Trade Organization (WTO)
17. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
18. International Organization for Migration (IOM)
19. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
20. UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Next, we propose a number of indicators that enable the systematic collection of information regarding the levels and intensities of autonomy. While for 'autonomy of action' the indicators can rely on a well-developed body of literature, operationalizing 'autonomous will' is more challenging. This is perhaps no coincidence, as the factors focused on here have been more prominent in qualitative works and the empirical basis of 'cohesion' and 'differentiation' is arguably—unlike competencies and resources—more difficult to observe. We therefore take as our point of departure the observation that administrative structures allow bureaucrats to operate jointly as unified actors to varying degrees, and draw on characteristics of the international secretariat's structure and staff in order to operationalize 'autonomy of will'.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the ten indicators and how they are related to the different dimensions and sub-dimensions of bureaucratic autonomy (including the assumed link between theoretical dimensions and observations).4

Table 2.1 Dimensions, sub-dimensions, and operationalization of bureaucratic autonomy

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Name of indicator and description
1. Autonomy of will		
1.1. Administrative cohesion (to overcome problems of collective action)	Organizational centralization *More centralization indicates greater administrative cohesion.*	staff_hqratio: Ratio of staff (to total staff) working at IO headquarters.
	Homogeneity of personnel *Greater homogeneity in the national origin of staff indicates greater administrative cohesion.*	staff_homogen: Ratio of ten largest nationalities (in terms of staff) to total organizational personnel.
	Mandatory internal mobility of personnel	staff_mobility: Degree to which organizational rules enforce internal staff mobility.

		High personnel mobility indicates weaker administrative cohesion.	1: no mobility rules; 0.5: mobility is voluntary, but explicitly encouraged; 0: mobility is mandatory.
		Length of employment *Longer terms of employment indicate greater administrative cohesion.*	staff_permratio: Ratio of staff with open-ended contracts to total number of staff.
1.2. Administrative differentiation (potential to develop distinct preferences)		Independence of administrative leadership *Independent administrative leadership indicates greater administrative differentiation from political principals.*	sg_internal: Share of heads of administration recruited from within the organization. Only the last five SGs are considered.
		Capacity to provide, collect and process independent information *The capacity to access and process information that does not come from member states indicates greater administrative differentiation.*	research: Centrality of research bodies at different hierarchical levels: 1: existence of a research body at the *department* level (directly below the SG); 0.66: existence of two or more research bodies at the *division* level (two hierarchical levels below the SG); 0.33: existence of one research body at the *division* level (two hierarchical levels below the SG); 0: no research body at division level or above.

2. Autonomy of action

| **2.1. Statutory powers (to realize autonomous preferences)** | | Agenda-setting competences of the SG
More agenda-setting power for the SG indicates greater potential to realize autonomous administrative preferences. | sg_agenda: Degree to which the administrative head is involved in setting the (provisional) agenda for legislative meetings.
1: SG is responsible for preparation of the draft agenda and items cannot be removed prior to the actual legislative meeting;
0.66: SG is responsible for preparation of the draft agenda, but items can be removed (through objection by a single member state, or decision of the executive body) prior to the actual meeting;
0.33: the executive body, not the SG, is responsible for preparation |

		of the draft agenda and items cannot be removed prior to the actual meeting; 0: the executive body, not the SG, is responsible for preparation of the draft agenda and items can be removed prior to the actual meeting.
	Sanctioning competence *More competence for the organization regarding the sanctioning of non-compliant member states indicates greater potential to realize autonomous administrative preferences.*	sanctioning: Sanctioning powers of the organization vis-à-vis its members (see Brown 2010 for a similar measure): 1: autonomous capacity to impose sanctions; 0.66: power to call for sanctions against noncompliant members; 0.33: denial of membership benefits (e.g., voting rights and IO services); 0: only 'naming and shaming' by issuing reports or admonitions. (sanctions related to the failure of member states to pay mandatory contributions are not included).
2.2. Administrative resources (to realize autonomous preferences)	Size of human resources *More administrative personnel indicates greater potential to realize autonomous administrative preferences.*	staff_perpolicy: Number of total secretarial staff per policy field. 1: the organization employs 1500 staff or more per policy field; 0.66: the organization employs between 1000 and 1499 staff per policy field; 0.33: the organization employs between 500 and 999 staff per policy field; 0: the organization employs less than 500 staff per policy field.
	Independence of financial resources *More independent sources of revenue indicate greater potential to realize autonomous administrative preferences.*	income: Degree to which the organization can rely on independent sources of income. 1: self-financing; 0.5: mandatory contributions; 0: voluntary contributions. In case an organization relies on several financial resources, we use the source with the highest share of the budget.

Source: Authors' compilation.

In order to allow for comparison across dimensions and sub-dimensions the values of each indicator range from 0 to 1. Because an additive approach would increase the
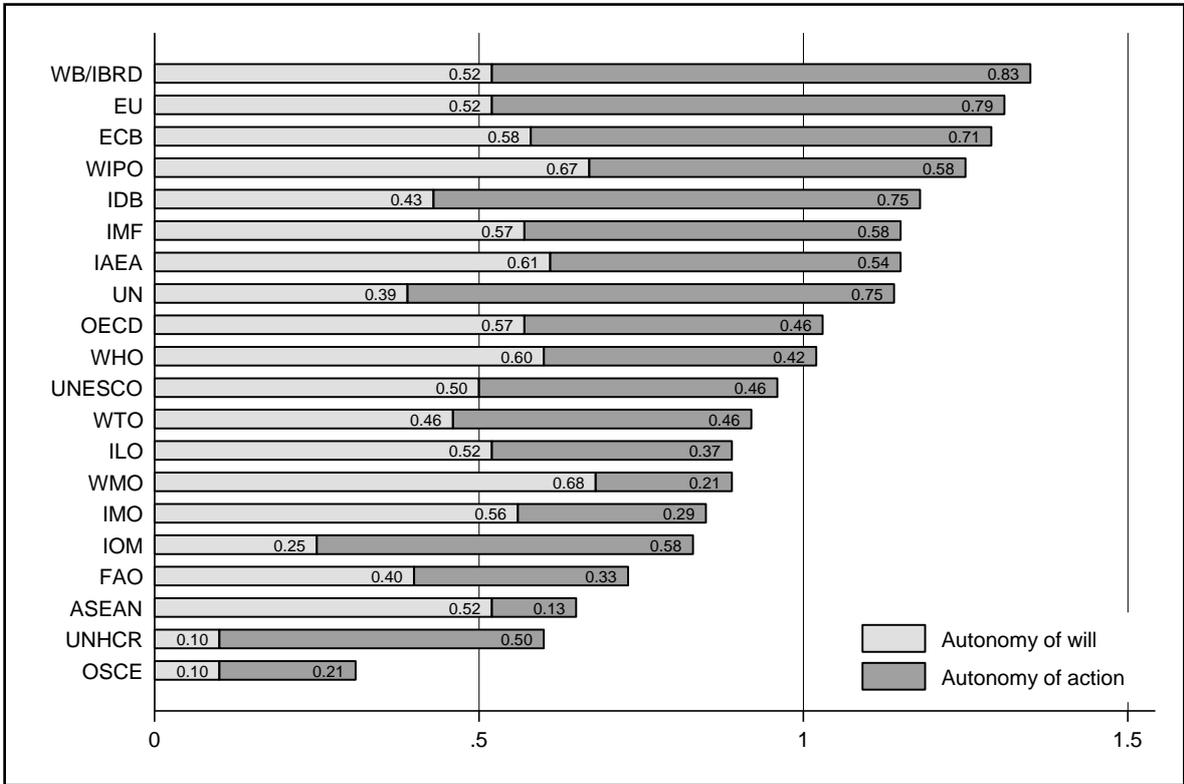
weight of those dimensions that consist of several sub-levels, we used averaged values to combine sub-level scores.

Empirical results and possible implications

Figure 2.2 presents the results of the data collection process by showing the structural autonomy of each IPA in descending order. In addition to these overall autonomy scores, the values of the two sub-concepts are displayed in order to show the composition of the aggregate values.

Figure 2.2 shows that bureaucratic autonomy varies between IPAs. At the upper end of the autonomy scale are mostly those IPAs that one would intuitively expect to rank high in this regard. This includes prominently studied bureaucracies that have been attributed substantial autonomy, such as the World Bank secretariat, the European Commission administration, and the administration of the ECB. On the other hand, the secretariats of the WIPO and IDB, respectively, which have not featured prominently in previous research, also turn out to be quite autonomous administrations. Given the measurement logic applied here, a word of caution seems in order when interpreting these results. While the autonomy concept is able to capture different intensities of structurally defined potentials, it is not able to capture the actual tasks of the IPA under study. For instance, the WIPO secretariat is active in a clearly defined and rather technical issue area: the protection of intellectual property. Within the narrow confines of this mandate, however, the WIPO secretariat turns out to be quite autonomous. The UN secretariat, in contrast, is less autonomous in the ranking of the aggregated values (at least with regard to its autonomy of will score).

Figure 2.2 Aggregated values of bureaucratic autonomy in twenty IOs

Source: Authors' calculations. *Note:* The maximum autonomy value in the figure is 2. Data availability was a problem for four observations within the sub-concept of autonomy of will. In order to aggregate

the data despite these missing values, imputed values were used. Therefore, we estimated the values for staff homogeneity for the IDB (0.69) and permanent contracts for the IMO (0.35), IDB (0.39) and WTO (0.35) by considering the values of cases that are similar with regard to membership and staff size.

Considering, however, that its manifold activities reach further into the domain of national sovereignty, the lower values of the UN secretariats (as compared to the WIPO administration) may nevertheless be more relevant when it comes to the influence of these administrations in real world policy situations such as managing international peacekeeping. Moreover, it should be noted that the UN is active in twelve distinct policy areas, while the WIPO secretariat's policy portfolio is limited to only one policy area (Hooghe and Marks 2015, appendix B). Thus, looking at the different intensities of autonomy may help to comparatively assess how autonomous an IPA is with regard to its will and action; yet the salience and scope of substantive organizational tasks should also be duly considered. Moreover, we conceptualize political control capacities of member states as an exogenous phenomenon. Because co-managing bureaucracies such as the European Commission administration face stronger political control from member states (see Bauer 2006; Ege 2016), this too needs to be considered when studying actual IPA behavior.

The data gathered here also allows us to compare scores at the dimensional level. In order to illustrate this, we focus on the two dimensions of autonomy of will, which, in contrast to the resources and competences of IPAs, are rarely studied empirically. In order to scrutinize more closely the empirical pattern within the autonomy-of-will scores, Figure 2.3 presents the respective results by distinguishing between IPAs' internal cohesion and their potential for administrative differentiation.

Figure 2.3 Values of administrative cohesion and differentiation in the sample of twenty IOs

Source: Authors' calculations. Note: Since the number of indicators varies between cohesion (four indicators) and differentiation (two indicators), average values have been used to aggregate the data.

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Aside from the OSCE, UNHCR, and the IOM, all of which are characterized by both low cohesion and low differentiation, the configuration of the remaining cases shows that structurally cohesive secretariats appear to have a lower capacity to develop differentiated policy options that might deviate from the preferences of their political principals. How can we make sense of this result? We think that the negative relationship between coherence and differentiation can best be understood by considering the functional requirements of the secretariats within the broader mandate of the IOs. A classic typology to systematize basic organizational functions is to differentiate between forum (or program) organizations on the one hand and service (or operational) organizations on the other (Cox and Jacobson 1973, 5). A forum organization's primary function is international norm-setting. In this type of IO, the secretariat is directly involved in the (preparation of) decision-making. The secretariats of service organizations, in contrast, are more active in project implementation and service-delivery to clients.

Despite the fact that 'real world' IOs usually serve both functions at the same time, it is argued that the WHO, ILO, and UN lean more towards the forum function, while the IAEA, WB, and IMF can be viewed as typical service organizations (Rittberger et al. 2013, 23). Also the IMO, IDB, or WIPO provide several important operational services to their members. Unfortunately, a systematic measurement of the degree of each of the two functions is missing. Nevertheless, our results seem to suggest that that the more pronounced the program function of an organization, the more it possesses a secretariat with substantial administrative differentiation. Being able to provide independent and innovative policy solutions in order to assist member states during decision-making is thus a crucial task of secretariats in program organizations. Service organizations, by contrast, require less administrative differentiation but possess higher degrees of internal cohesion in order to deliver services to their members and manage projects successfully. With this logic in mind, our data suggest that there seems to be a tendency for secretariats in program IOs to cluster in the bottom right quadrant (low cohesion, high differentiation) of Figure 2.3, whereas the administrations of service IOs are more often located in the upper left quadrant (high cohesion, low differentiation). While these results provide a clue as to why some administrations feature particular patterns of autonomy, they also show that considering administrative differentiation alone leaves aside an important internal property of collective administrative agents, especially at the international level.

Overall, we contend that the dimensions we have used to measure international bureaucratic autonomy are empirically relevant properties of IPAs. Turning from the causes of autonomy to its consequences, we expect that the understanding of organizational behavior and decisional outputs can be advanced by reflecting on these features of bureaucratic autonomy (at both the dimensional and sub-conceptual level). Obviously, we cannot engage in a comprehensive examination of this proposition here. What we can do, however, is illustrate the usefulness of our approach by highlighting interesting implications that particular configurations of autonomy have for actual organizational behavior and policy-making.

Firstly, the OECD secretariat shows high values for internal cohesion and relatively weak values for administrative differentiation. Overall, this structural configuration is indicative of the bureaucracy's relatively low capacity to play an autonomous role in OECD policy-making, which is highly consensus-oriented and conducted in various committees under the close scrutiny of member state representatives (Armingeon and Beyeler 2004). Despite its strong research capacities (reflected in a value of 0.66), which indicate that the OECD secretariat is an important hub of data collection and

analysis, our structural data supports previously voiced criticisms that its set-up is far from ideal. If member states want to make full use of the secretariat's potential to assume a more independent role, and have it function not only as a statistical office or service platform but as an international think tank, then they must establish 'procedures that guarantee the complete autonomy of the organization and its employees. Without autonomy, we cannot expect anyone to come up with an inconvenient truth' (Marcussen and Trondal 2011, 615).5

Secondly, the World Bank shows moderate, but nevertheless substantial values for both dimensions of autonomy of will. What is more, the administration possesses the highest values of 'autonomy of action' in the sample (see Figure 2.2). Vetterlein (2012) illustrates the potential consequences of this structural constellation for the way in which the World Bank looks at a particular policy problem. Her study reveals that the global poverty agenda was substantially shaped by the internal advocacy of World Bank staff who acted as norm entrepreneurs in favor of a particular definition of poverty. Without a substantial degree of internal cohesion and administrative differentiation (possibly facilitating the emergence of a particular organizational culture), such an active role would hardly have been possible. On the other hand, Vetterlein also shows that because of the general bureaucratic tendency towards standardization and simplification of complex social issues, autonomous bureaucratic behavior can result in dysfunctional policy solutions (2012, 37).

A third interesting case is the secretariat of the WHO. Located in the bottom right quadrant of Figure 2.3, the WHO administration is characterized by the highest values for administrative differentiation in the sample, but shows a particularly low degree of internal cohesion.6 What are possible consequences of such a constellation for the WHO's capacity to manage global health? Let us try to illustrate this with an example from the recent activities of the organization: the outbreak of Ebola in 2014. The WHO's reaction to the Ebola outbreak was characterized by a delayed response, slow deployment of medical experts, and insufficient co-ordination (Boseley 2015; see also World Health Organization 2015). How the WHO managed the Ebola crisis suggests that high administrative differentiation alone is insufficient for the successful management of a global disease outbreak. Instead, it appears that a certain degree of internal cohesion—which in the case at hand was missing—is crucial. Against this background, the WHO administration's particular configuration of autonomy of will could help to explain why the WHO response to the Ebola epidemic was so flawed in a situation requiring quick, coordinated action.

With these examples, we do not claim that structural autonomy as conceptualized by our approach can explain bureaucratic action comprehensively. But the examples at least highlight areas in which one may look for relevant consequences of autonomy, thus illustrating the potential added value that can be gained by considering structural bureaucratic autonomy levels as a crucial variable in the complex interplay between actors and institutional configurations at the international level.

Conclusions and way forward

This chapter has explored the classical concept of bureaucratic autonomy and adapted it in order to investigate and compare the autonomy of international bureaucracies. IPAs differ in several regards from their national counterparts and these differences need to be taken into account when comparatively studying structural bureaucratic autonomy at the international level. To this end, the chapter has put forward a

differentiated conceptualization of the bureaucratic autonomy of international secretariats. We have distinguished between two crucial components of bureaucratic autonomy—autonomy of will and autonomy of action—and proposed a set of indicators to measure both empirically.

The empirical results for twenty international secretariats reveal differential patterns in autonomy intensities—not least with respect to the will and action component of the concept and their respective dimensions. In other words, the concept of bureaucratic autonomy captures a potentially relevant component of the empirical reality of global policy-making. It can thus help to inform expectations about bureaucratic behavior in concrete policy-making situations. Structural bureaucratic autonomy levels cannot be equated with bureaucratic influence; however, capturing bureaucratic autonomy in the way suggested offers a solid starting point for engaging in disciplined comparisons of large numbers of international bureaucracies and their respective (potential) ability to exercise such bureaucratic influence.

Beyond improving our analytical toolbox for reconstructing global policy processes, there are at least three areas in which structural bureaucratic autonomy research can further contribute to current debates. Firstly, questions of organizational efficiency and effectiveness can be linked to differential intra-bureaucratic potentials and thus bureaucratic impact in global policy-making can be more systematically studied. Secondly, assessments of structural bureaucratic autonomy are relevant for designing appropriate democratic legitimation and control strategies for international bureaucracies operating beyond states and transcending national borders. For example, for international bureaucracies with relatively low scores on either the 'will' or 'action' component, less sophisticated control and responsivity mechanisms will probably suffice than those needed for bureaucracies displaying medium or high levels in both autonomy components. Hence, important implications for practical study design can be gleaned from our analysis. Thirdly, and most importantly from the perspective of this volume, studying the structural autonomy of international bureaucracies contributes to the emerging Public Administration perspective on current internationalization processes and demonstrates how to adapt PA theory for international contexts. Given the current trend towards internationalization, it seems both justified and appropriate to put bureaucratic autonomy in the international governance arena on the research agenda. In addition, as highlighted by public protests in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, the policy involvement of IOs has become increasingly controversial (Zürn et al. 2012). Questions about accountability, legitimacy, and democratic control of international institutions are being raised with new vigor. Owing to its long-standing interest in and attention to questions of bureaucratic autonomy, we see particular potential within PA scholarship, whose proponents could and should participate more actively in these practically and academically relevant debates (see Eckhard and Ege 2016).

In turn, analyzing international bureaucratic autonomy may also give a fresh impetus to national PA research. Three major implications of our analysis for the study of national administrations can be highlighted. First, our structural perspective may inspire comparative PA scholars to re-visit the autonomy concept with a view to developing a disciplined comparative strategy applicable also to national or sub-national administrations. The point is that with our approach idiosyncrasies of national administrative systems can be accommodated and thus higher numbers of administrations can eventually be compared—if followed, such a strategy promises greater analytical leverage and more potential for achieving generalizable findings. Second, our suggestion to distinguish between 'autonomy of will' and 'autonomy of

action' can also be taken up by national PA scholars to sharpen their research tools. Third, employing indicators reflecting sociological theories and relationships as conceptualized by economic approaches' common ground allows for empirical analysis that overcomes unproductive ontological demarcations. All three aspects, if further developed, may indeed improve national PA's potential to link empirical analysis of administrative features with explaining policy outputs and effects.

Overall, considering that PA has lost sight of its earlier interest in conceptualizing and empirically studying how administrative bodies interact with their political environment (Jann 2009), the recent creation of a new sphere of international public administration (Kim at al. 2014) opens a window of opportunity for the discipline of PA to revisit classical autonomy questions in light of new empirical developments (Bauer and Ege 2014).

Notes

[1] Power abuses of the civil service are described extensively by proponents of the economic theory of bureaucracy; especially by public choice scholars during the 1970s and 1980s (see Ostrom and Ostrom, 1971). The British satirical sitcom *Yes Minister* provides several illustrative examples of such bureaucratic excesses (Considine, 2006).

[2] In their structure and task, the secretariats of international organizations resemble political administrations—i.e., ministerial administration at the central or federal level of the nation state—because both kinds of bureaucracies are relatively distant from the daily lives of citizens and direct service delivery, and usually rely on other actors during policy execution. Therefore, we consider the ministerial administration an appropriate point of reference for a comparison of IPAs and NPAs.

[3] For the European Commission, which is equipped with an agenda-setting monopoly in EU legislation, this argument also holds for policy adoption (Pollack, 1997).

[4] For a more detailed presentation, explanation, and justification of the indicators, please see Bauer and Ege (2016).

[5] Yet, there is also more recent evidence suggesting that the structural weakness of the OECD secretariat is compensated by more informal capacities in form of a particularly active 'administrative style' (Enkler et al., 2015). If the goal is to understand the role of IPAs during IO policy-making more comprehensively, the perspective needs to be extended to include also more informal administrative tools.

[6] The low values of internal cohesion of the WHO administration corresponds to what Graham (2014) refers to as high 'internal fragmentation' when pointing out similar (pathological) consequences of this feature for WHO performance.

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