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Chapter 11

Organizational Change in International Bureaucracies

Michael Bauer, Helge Jörgens, and Christoph Knill

Introduction

International organizations are important participants in the realm of world politics. An area in which this has become highly visible is the field of United Nations peace operations. Since the end of the Cold War, UN peace operations have increased in number, geographical focus, as well as in their overall complexity.¹ Numerous case studies on more recent UN peacekeeping missions show how their scope as well as their level of ambition is moving well beyond the principles of earlier peacekeeping missions. In the most complex cases, the presence of international organizations has begun to assume the character of *de facto* protectorates,² with international organizations such as the UN, the European Union (EU), or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) imposing globalized models of public administration upon “failed” or war-torn states. In the literature, this establishment of transitional administrations is described as “humanitarian occupation,”³ “benevolent foreign autocracy,”⁴ “international protectorates,”⁵ or simply as “international administrations,”⁶ a terminology that points to the paradoxical fact that international organizations have gone as far as to temporarily assume the powers of national governments, thereby, turning traditional perceptions of sovereignty and of the relationship between (some) nation states and intergovernmental organizations upside down.⁷

So far, much of the scholarly analysis of the changing role of international organizations in international politics has focused on high-level intergovernmental decision-making among member states. Consequently, with regard to UN peace operations, most studies have focused on

the role of the UN Security Council.⁸ Significantly less attention has been paid to changes of the internal structures, administrative procedures, and self-perceptions of international organizations. As a consequence, virtually nothing is known about the impacts these changes may have on the performance of international organizations. In other words, the dynamics as well as the impacts of administrative reform in international bureaucracies constitute a blind spot in international relations and public administration research.

Against this background, the authors argue in this chapter that in order to fully understand the role of international organizations in international peace operations, the dominant inter-governmental and inter-organizational perspective has to be complemented by an organizational perspective that 1) systematically explores how the internal structure and culture of international organizations changes and 2) develops hypotheses as to how these changes may affect organizational performance. Thus, while more traditional approaches to international relations would explain the changing role of international organizations in the field of peace operations, mainly as a result of changing state preferences in the aftermath of the Cold War,⁹ an organizational perspective adds changes within the administrative corpus of international organizations as a further and independent category of explanatory factors.¹⁰ Often, these changes result from organizational learning (see the other contributions in the Learning Section of this volume). However, as Thorsten Benner et al. note in chapter 10, organizational learning is only one among several potential causes of change and reform in international organizations.¹¹ Other potential causes of administrative reform include, for example, changes in the membership or the voting rules of international organizations, changes in their leadership, the imitation of organizational traits observed elsewhere, or the external imposition of organizational models by other, more powerful, actors. By opening its focus to the entirety of factors and mechanisms that

promote or obstruct administrative reform in international organizations, this chapter sketches out the broader context within which processes of organizational learning may occur.

Although the “organizational turn”¹² in the study of international organizations is still in its infancy, scholars in the area of peace operations have slowly begun to incorporate internal organizational dynamics in their analyses. For example, in an empirical study on UN peacekeeping in civil wars, Lise Morjé Howard observes that part of the changes in UN operations during the 1990s can be explained by an increased political and managerial autonomy of multilateral organizations vis-à-vis their member states:

There is indeed mounting evidence that the Secretariat often now functions as something significantly more than a talk shop or the handmaiden of the Security Council, and that it is even beginning to take on state-like qualities. For example, in many peacekeeping operations, members of the Secretariat are in positions to make foreign policy and even life and death decisions for people in states emerging from civil war.¹³

From a learning perspective, Thorsten Benner et al. have begun to analyze the emergence of an internal infrastructure for organizational learning in the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy.¹⁴ They find that, only belatedly, systematic management reforms have been initiated which are aimed at improving the UN’s institutional memory and promoting processes of institutional learning within that organization. However, as Seibel et al. point out in chapter 1 of this volume, the success or failure of organizational change and learning in the area of peacekeeping and the establishment of transitional administrations can only be explained adequately if one takes into account the specific governance structure of international peace operations, its inner and outer

organizational environment (see chapter 8 by Berthoin Antal, Junk, and Schumann in this volume). This governance structure is characterized by a complex and often problematic interplay between the intergovernmental arena, where states act according to their perceived national interests, and the organizational arena, where international bureaucrats and policy experts try to learn from past experiences and design effective transitional administrations for war-torn and contested territories. In a similar vein, Alex Veit and Klaus Schlichte argue that in order to fully understand organizational behavior in the field of peace operations, the complex interplay of three interconnected arenas needs to be analyzed: 1) multilateral negotiation and decision-making among nation states; 2) the interpretation and concretization of these decisions within an international organization's central bureaucracy; and 3) their execution by field personnel.¹⁵

What these few examples demonstrate is that the analysis of international organizations in world politics can clearly benefit from an explicit organizational research perspective. This is particularly true for the analysis of peace operations. Central to this organizational research perspective is a focus on organizational change in general and on administrative reform in particular. In the first section, the authors will briefly outline the contours of this slowly emerging research program that analyzes international bureaucracies as dynamic organizations rather than as static instruments of intergovernmental policymaking. The second section narrows down the analytical focus to the question of administrative reform in international organizations. Building on the results of a set of case studies on the United Nations, the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other international organizations, this section develops a set of hypotheses about the substance, timing, and the potential outcomes of administrative reforms in international organizations under varying

conditions and in different organizational environments. By falling back on these well-established case studies, this chapter lays the grounds for transferring these insights to the organizational setting of peace operations. The third section of the chapter concludes with four generalized recommendations as to how researchers and practitioners should proceed in order to improve the understanding of administrative reforms in international bureaucracies in general and in peace operations in particular. With its focus on organizational reform, this chapter serves as a theoretical complement to chapter 1 by Berthoin Antal, Junk, and Schumann in this volume, which focuses on organizational learning.

International Bureaucracies as Formal Organizations: Contours of an Emerging Research Program

Although international organizations have been the focus of scholarly interest for many years, there is still little systematic understanding of the factors and conditions that determine changes of their internal administrative structure.¹⁶ On the one hand, international relations (IR) has treated international organizations primarily as a sort of a device or platform for intergovernmental decision-making rather than as actors in their own right. International organizations were conceived of as the deliberate creation of dominant nation states and were assumed to emerge, change, and eventually disappear as a result of these states' strategic interests and preferences. By contrast, the bureaucratic interior of international organizations deliberately remained outside the analytical focus of much of the IR literature. This neglect was justified by the empirical observation that until the end of the 1980s, the role and performance of international organizations, in particular the United Nations, was determined predominantly by

the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and, only to a very small extent, by the internal bureaucratic dynamics of these organizations.

On the other hand, the sub-disciplines of public administration and policy analysis, which typically place great emphasis on the understanding of administrative structures and dynamics, have also shown surprisingly little interest in the internal workings of intergovernmental organizations. Even comparative studies of administrative reform tend to ignore international organizations and focus solely on the similarities and differences between national administrative systems.¹⁷ The only international organization that so far has received significant attention from public administration scholars is the European Union. What could be termed the “public administration turn” of studying the European Union¹⁸ has provided us with a number of important insights into the internal dynamics of the European Commission and its effects on supranational institution-building and domestic policy outcomes.¹⁹ And even though the interest in the European Commission as a supranational administration originated in the 1970s,²⁰ it is only since the dramatic resignation of the Commission under the Presidency of Jacques Santer in 1999 that the issue of administrative reform in the European Commission has received wider academic attention.²¹ In other words, despite interest in the EU administration, the literature on international organizations is characterized by a significant lack of empirical case studies about administrative reforms in international organizations.

The need for a more systematic research program that explicitly treats international organizations as independent actors in order to better understand their behavior and that is genuinely interested in their specific quality as organizations or bureaucracies, has been expressed before.²² However, only in the last years do we see the gradual emergence of a more comprehensive set of studies that explicitly treats international bureaucracies as formal

organizations.²³ The main characteristics of this “organizational turn in international organization theory”²⁴ are:

1. International organizations are seen as (partially) independent actors in international politics.
2. As such, their actions and, therefore, their contribution to processes of international governance are determined not only by external factors, but also by their internal structures and dynamics. In other words, “organizations themselves are important units of analysis, precisely because they take on a life and character of their own.”²⁵
3. In order to reach a better understanding of these internal processes, international organizations should be analyzed as formal organizations, thereby making use of the analytical perspectives and tools of public administration and organization research. In particular, organizational analysis of international administrations should explain how, why, and to what effect administrative reform takes place.

In sum, what is at stake in this emerging research program is a partial shift of focus from the *organization* to the *organizations* of the international system.²⁶ Ideally, this emerging research program would go hand-in-hand with a more systematic exchange of information between practitioners in international organizations and academics studying the internal structures and dynamics of these organizations. Such an exchange of information would need to work both ways, with practitioners providing inside information to academic researchers and, at the same time, using the findings of scholarly research for improving the performance of the individual organization. An important element of such a dialogue between scholars and practitioners could

be the systematic comparison of individual instances of administrative reform in international organizations. In the remainder of this chapter, the authors will try to open the “black box” of intergovernmental organizations by presenting the comparative findings of eleven case studies of administrative reforms in international bureaucracies (conducted by both academics and practitioners), and, as a result, they develop a preliminary set of hypotheses about their causes and mechanisms. These case studies explore the administrative reform processes within a variety of international organizations, namely, the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the OECD, the European Commission, the European Parliament’s General Secretariat, the European Central Bank (ECB), the Nordic Council, and the Council of Baltic Sea States.

By focusing on a broad range of examples of administrative reform rather than restricting this review to those cases that can *ex-ante* be identified as instances of organizational learning, the authors hope to get a more complete and unbiased picture of the factors that increase or reduce the potential for internal reform in international organizations and that can be transferred to the study of the organizational dimension of peace operations.

The authors focus on the determinants of administrative reform rather than on the substantive proposals of what could or should be reformed in international peacekeeping operations. They are convinced that the biggest obstacle to reform in international organizations is not the lack of innovative proposals about *what* could be improved, but the lack of strategic knowledge on *how* to actually implement some of the existing reform proposals. In other words, the authors agree with Edward C. Luck’s argument that scholars and practitioners “might utilize

their time more productively in thinking through how to advance existing proposals than in developing new ones that have little chance of implementation.”²⁷

Administrative Reform in International Bureaucracies: Empirical Findings

As the authors argued in the previous section, scholarly understanding of administrative reforms in international organizations, both in theoretical and empirical terms, is still rather limited and few theoretical attempts have been made to link the findings of existing studies to broader and more general theories in the fields of organizational studies and public administration. This research gap is particularly pronounced in the study of United Nations peace operations where scholars are only very reluctantly beginning to address the issue of administrative reform in the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy and to explore its causes and effects. At the same time, the long history of failed attempts to reform the UN bureaucracy underscores the need for a more systematic identification of the opportunities for and the obstacles to intentionally changing the organizational structure of international organizations.²⁸ In this section, the authors will, therefore, identify in an explorative manner the most important factors that have been found to either foster or hamper attempts to reform the administrative structure of international organizations and develop a set of hypotheses about how these factors may or may not translate into administrative reform. In addition to the aforementioned eleven original case studies, the authors will draw on additional empirical studies from the gradually emerging literature on internal structural change in international organizations.

Administrative reform can be caused by internal or external factors.²⁹ In the following sections, the authors will apply this distinction for a first systematization of their empirical material.

The Influence of External Factors

External factors comprise those influences that emerge from the organization's broader environment. In most of the case studies analyzed, external factors were found to be an important, albeit not the only, source of administrative reform. This finding is in line with previous research, most notably a series of case studies on change in the internal decision-making procedures of intergovernmental organizations conducted by Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson and colleagues which found external forces, especially nation states, to be the single most important causal factors.³⁰

The authors distinguish two types of external factors that may cause or inhibit administrative reform in international organizations. These are effects of the organizational domain, that is the specific structure and the actor constellations of the policy areas where an international organization operates, and effects of a changing constituency, that is the constellation of an international organization's member states.

Organizational Domain: The Structure of the Policy Sector

The findings from the eleven case studies indicate that the organizational environment in which international organizations operate can have an important impact on the occurrence or non-occurrence of administrative reforms. This causal relationship, however, goes beyond a mere mechanistic linkage of domain changes leading to respective organizational responses. Such an assumption would not only mean overlooking the fact that organizations may have considerable autonomy from their environment and are capable of shaping and affecting this environment,³¹ but. it also neglects – and this is the central argument the authors are able to induct from the

various cases studies – the fact that specific characteristics of the organizational domain affect its influence on administrative reform.

Of particular importance in this respect is the *homogeneity of the organizational domain*. It makes a difference whether an international organization fulfills very narrowly- defined tasks within a rather homogeneous organizational environment or whether the organization is active in a variety of different sectors, implying that it operates within a much more heterogeneous domain. Modeling the relationship between an organization and its relevant environment in terms of a “signaling game,”³² the authors expect an organization to receive clearer and less ambiguous signals (for example, to reform in order to combat organizational deficits) if it operates in a homogenous domain than is the case for organizations operating in a more heterogeneous domain. In the latter case, it is quite conceivable that organizations receive contradictory signals and, hence, remain more hesitant when deciding upon respective changes.

To illustrate this point a bit further, it is helpful to consider the examples of the European Central Bank, the United Nations, the European Commission, and the OECD. The ECB has a single major task and operates in a professional environment of great homogeneity (as regards the efficiency-driven norms and concepts of the economic sector) in which management standards are generally undisputed and well-accepted. As a result, it is hardly surprising that the ECB has undertaken considerable reform of its internal management practices and, hence, responded to the rather clear signals from its domain.³³ The United Nations, the European Commission, the OECD, and other organizations engaged in the large- scale rebuilding of states through peace operations, by contrast, are responsible for a huge variety of outputs and, hence, are confronted with highly-differentiated environments. Against this backdrop, it comes as no surprise that those organizations have for many years been and, in the OECD case, still are

reform laggards.³⁴ This becomes particularly clear in the case of the UN where successive failures to improve interdepartmental coordination mechanisms and information flows or to reform human resource management³⁵ correspond with an extremely complex and heterogeneous organizational environment.³⁶ Based on these considerations, the authors formulate the following two hypotheses:

1. *Hypothesis 1*: The extent to which changes in the organizational domain trigger administrative reforms in international organizations depends on the degree of domain homogeneity. The more homogeneous the organizational environment, the more the authors expect far-reaching and swift changes in order to close potential gaps to developments in the organizational domain. By contrast, the great heterogeneity of the organizational domain that characterizes the United Nations in general, and UN peace operations in particular, can be expected to constitute a significant obstacle to administrative reform, especially if this reform is aimed at a better coordination between the different levels of the organizational hierarchy or between the different UN agencies operating in different policy areas.³⁷ and
2. *Hypothesis 2*: Domain heterogeneity can be expected to increase with the number of tasks for which an organization is responsible. The speed and scope of administrative reforms should be more pronounced in single-purpose organizations, for example, the European Central Bank, than in multi-purpose organizations, for example, the UN as a whole, as well as individual peace operations.

Due to their aforementioned three-tiered structure,³⁸ the organizational environment of UN peace operations is characterized by a particularly high degree of complexity and heterogeneity. The different political arenas within which peace operations are located – the central UN bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the field offices, on the other – may send diverging signals and, consequently, obstruct the chances for administrative reform. A case in point is the direct transfer of the administrative model of the international administration in Kosovo to East Timor, a decision made by UN headquarters in New York. Although the administrative model developed in Kosovo was soon regarded as inadequate to the situation in East Timor, UN field officials did not succeed in adapting it to the Timorese reality.³⁹

Organizational Constituency: The Member States

In addition to the characteristics of an organization's domain, one might expect similar influences emerging from the nature of its constituency. Do the reform orientations and reform developments in the member states of an international organization make a difference in terms of administrative reforms? Furthermore, does it make a difference whether the member states reflect a rather homogenous group in terms of socio-economic and political conditions?

Interestingly, the evidence of the cases analyzed by the authors does not support these expectations. There seems to be no clear and straightforward linkage between constituency characteristics and administrative reform developments. For instance, reform developments in the ECB and the European Commission differ sharply, notwithstanding the fact that they have almost the same constituency.⁴⁰ In addition, the authors found that administrative reform in the European Commission is more pronounced than within the OECD, although in the OECD there is a higher number of member states that can be classified as pioneer states of public

management reforms.⁴¹ The authors, thus, expected much more reform activity in the OECD than in the European Commission. These findings are rather surprising from the perspective of intergovernmentalist approaches,⁴² which expect that international organizations are highly responsive to the interests of their members. However, they do confirm the findings of a study by Michael Barnett and Liv Coleman who argue that the way in which an international organization responds to its external constituency depends to an important degree on the “congruity between the organizational culture and the content of the environmental pressures.”⁴³ In their study on organizational change in the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Barnett and Coleman found that marked differences between INTERPOL’s organizational identity and the external demands of nation states to focus more strongly on political crimes led the organization to adopt strategies of avoidance or defiance, thus refuting external demands for organizational and programmatic change. INTERPOL only gave up its opposition to the demands of its constituency when states started to create new international organizations to fulfill the desired functions which, in turn, threatened INTERPOL’s organizational standing in the area of crime control and prevention. Melanie Schreiner et al. in chapter 9 of this volume identify in their analysis of organizational learning in the Liberian peace operations community a similar impact of organizational identity. However, while Barnett and Coleman found a strong and homogeneous organizational identity to partially immunize international organizations against *external* demands, Schreiner et al. argue that it also increases their *internal* capacity for strategic learning and problem-solving and, thus, seems to be an important determinant for organizational change from within.

While the *nature of the constituency* appears to have an ambiguous impact and is strongly dependent on further intervening factors such as “organizational security,”⁴⁴ the opposite is the

case when it comes to *changes in the constituency*. Several case studies report strong increases in reform activities as a result of such changes. This holds true not only for the respective developments in the Nordic Council (where membership decreased),⁴⁵ but also in the European Commission and the European Parliament, where prospects of enlargement constituted an important driving force for administrative reforms.⁴⁶ Similar evidence is presented by Dimitris Bourantonis in his account of UN Security Council reform. In his historical study, he found that the increasing size of the UN's membership was the single most important factor pressing for change in the composition of the Security Council. Regarding the reason for the 1963 reform that lead to an increase in the number of Security Council members, he writes that "(t)he dramatic increase in UN membership, which continued unabated until 1963, upset the ratio of the total number of members of the UN to the number of seats in the Security Council and brought about pressures for a reconsideration of the original composition of the Security Council and, more particularly, its non-permanent category."⁴⁷ Another prominent example where significant changes in the UN membership triggered reform initiatives is the *Jackson Report* on the United Nations Development System.⁴⁸ This administrative capacity study was a direct response to the accession of a large number of developing countries that had gained independence from their former colonial powers in the course of the 1960s and the related substantial increase in the UN system's development budget projected for the coming years.⁴⁹ Finally, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*⁵⁰ – which offered recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient the UN's capacity for preventive diplomacy, peace-making, and peacekeeping – followed a rapid increase in UN membership. In this case, however, as in other reform initiatives in the area of UN peace operations, situational factors

such as the end of the Cold War and actual performance deficits clearly played a more important role as triggers of reform.

The great influence of an increase in the number of member states on change and reform in international organizations is also supported by the path breaking empirical study on decision-making in international organizations by Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson et al. In an early overview of this and other studies on change and reform in international organizations, Lawrence S. Finkelstein comes to the conclusion that “(t)he greatest motor of change (...) has been the generation of new states which have both altered the composition and voting balances of the international organizations they joined in a massive influx and also posed a new agenda of problems to be dealt with.”⁵¹

In this context, however, it should be emphasized that constituency changes per se may only be a necessary, but not sufficient condition for triggering reforms. As indicated in the case studies, increases or decreases in membership were typically linked to the perception among the member states of existing performance deficits which were expected to further increase with membership changes.⁵² Consequently, for the European Central Bank, due to its absolute independence from its constituency and its high degree of agenda-setting power, “(e)nlargement (...) has not proved to be a catalyst for transformative institutional change.”⁵³ Similarly, Dimitris Bourantonis’ study of UN Security Council reform shows that increases in the number of UN member states do not automatically result in organizational change and reform. Due to the strong resistance of the permanent Security Council members, on the one hand, and disagreement among the reform-oriented member states on the other, an increase in the number of member states in the 1990s and a widely-shared desire for reform did not result in further changes to the size or composition of the Security Council.⁵⁴

These considerations suggest the following two hypotheses on constituency effects:

1. *Hypothesis 1*: The characteristics of an international organization's constituency (in particular, with regard to homogeneity of public management orientations and socio-economic and political conditions) have no significant effect on the speed and scope of management reforms in the organization.
2. *Hypothesis 2*: The speed and scope of administrative reforms in international organizations increase with the extent to which pre-existing concerns on performance gaps coincide with changes in the organization's constituency. In the case of the United Nations, such a coincidence of changes in priorities and interests of member states and an awareness of existing performance deficits was found, for example, in the area of development assistance. In the future, however, a significant growth of UN membership is rather improbable. Consequently, impetus for change can be expected from changes in the relative power or the interests of member states, rather than from changes in their number.

The Influence of Internal Factors

Whether or not international organizations change their internal administrative structures is also affected by factors that are endogenous to the organization in question, including the nature of the organization, its size, its leadership and internal politics, its organizational culture and identity, as well as the internal origin of reform attempts.

The nature of the organization: supranational vs. intergovernmental

It seems plausible that the nature of an organization and, in particular, its status as a supranational or intergovernmental body, has an impact on respective administrative reforms. This argument is based on the assumption that supranational organizations have a higher degree of autonomy from their members than is the case for their intergovernmental counterparts. As a consequence, a much higher responsiveness from intergovernmental organizations to changes in their member states' preferences should be expected; hence, also implying that the speed and scope of administrative reforms should be more pronounced than in supranational organizations.

This expectation, however, is not supported by the case studies. On the contrary, rather far-reaching reforms were found in the ECB,⁵⁵ the European Parliament⁵⁶ and, with some delay, in the European Commission.⁵⁷ Reforms in intergovernmental organizations, however, remained rather piecemeal and were certainly not more pronounced than those in the supranational bodies studied.⁵⁸

How can this puzzling finding be explained? The authors argue that there is no contradiction to existing theories in which the degree of organizational autonomy is seen as an important factor affecting the policymaking capacity and policy impact of international organizations. It is hardly disputed that a supranational organization, such as the European Commission, in contrast to intergovernmental organizations, enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy and, hence, has independent influence on policymaking within the European Union.⁵⁹ (However, while autonomy may make an important difference for an organization's role in policymaking, this need not necessarily be the case when it comes to questions of internal operational autonomy and internal affairs.⁶⁰ It is well conceivable that member states leave to international organizations (regardless of their status as either supranational or intergovernmental

bodies) rather broad leeway, as these issues do not directly interfere with their domestic or foreign policy interests.

Indeed, various case studies underline that while the level of autonomy as regards policy delivery of international organizations may vary, virtually all organizations appear to be rather independent when it comes to the regulation of their internal administrative affairs. Hence, the supranational or intergovernmental nature of international organizations seems to be of limited relevance when accounting for the speed and scope of reforms of their administrative structure.

Hypothesis: The nature of an international organization (in particular, its status as supranational or intergovernmental body) has no significant effect on the speed and scope of management reforms in the organization.

Organizational size

The extant literature on change in international organizations also suggests that the size of an international organization has an impact on the scope as well as the procedural patterns of administrative reforms. In this context, size is not only a matter of the number of staff per se, which can range from some dozens to several thousand civil servants, but is also closely related to the extent to which international organizations have been designed for single or multiple tasks.

More specifically, the smaller an organization is, the less likely it will be able to independently influence its organizational environment. Consequently, small organizations may be much more responsive to developments and challenges emerging in their domain. Administrative reforms in smaller, international organizations, therefore, should be more likely to reflect a pattern of continuous incremental adaptations. Tobias Etzold's case study on reorganization processes in the Nordic Council illustrates the assumption that smaller

organizations, with a rather limited spectrum of responsibilities, are more responsive to their environment and, therefore, are more apt to respond to changing requirements through incremental, but continuous internal reforms.⁶¹

For larger organizations, by contrast, reform patterns may reflect a less responsive pattern, assuming that these organizations either have a more autonomous position towards their environment as a result of their higher influence in their domain or that these huge bureaucratic entities are just less apt to adapt quickly to changing requirements. In a historical account of administrative reform initiatives in the UN Secretariat from its creation through the 1980s, W. Andy Knight finds that “the reform of the Secretariat has been among one of the most difficult tasks because of the resistance such efforts encounter from the UN staff members, some member state representatives and the International Civil Service Commission.”⁶²

The reform patterns of large international organizations will, hence, reveal a less continuous, but also less incremental pattern. As larger organizations can afford to leave a bigger gap between their own structures and their environment, reforms, when actually perceived as being necessary, are more likely to go beyond merely piecemeal adjustments. This can be expected at least in terms of reform rhetoric, leaving issues of deficient implementation aside. The much delayed, but far-reaching “Kinnock reform” of the European Commission, which only became possible when the Commission came under severe legitimating pressures, serves as a prominent example of this pattern.⁶³

Hypothesis: The smaller an international organization is in terms of size, the more responsive it is to changes in its environment, implying that administrative reforms follow a pattern of continuous and incremental adjustments.

Leadership and internal politics

The adoption and implementation of administrative reforms require a certain degree of consensus among the actors involved. This consensus, however, can hardly be expected to emerge “out-of-the-blue,” as reforms, in many instances, are highly contested between potential reform beneficiaries and reform opponents seeking to preserve the status quo or favoring other reform options and directions.

Against this background, successful reformers are not only required to build coalitions for achieving the necessary majorities in the decision-making process, they also have to ensure the compliance of important stakeholders during the implementation stage. Successful administrative reforms in international organizations are strongly dependent upon the strategic and tactical capabilities of their leadership in order to overcome internal resistance to change. In other words, internal reform processes matter for the magnitude of administrative reform, and the design of these processes is strongly affected by the existence of committed political entrepreneurs within the organization and their leadership skills.⁶⁴ A comparison of the successive UN Secretaries-General shows that leadership skills and norm entrepreneurship vary considerably among these office holders and these attributes can be decisive for the success of a variety of reform efforts.⁶⁵ A case in point is Ian Johnstone’s account of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s entrepreneurship in establishing the United Nations responsibility to protect norm. Johnstone argues that without the strong engagement and the skillful leadership of Kofi Annan, this conceptual basis for modern peace operations may not have been adopted in its present form.⁶⁶ Thorsten Benner et al. in chapter 10 support this argument. In their analysis of organizational learning in the UN peace operations bureaucracy they argue that “(a)n active

‘supporter’ or an effective ‘leadership alliance’ appear to be key factors” in organizational learning processes and in driving “a certain lesson toward its institutionalization.”⁶⁷

Four decades ago, Robert W. Cox already pointed to the importance of leadership for organizational change in intergovernmental organizations noting that "(t)he quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organization(s)."⁶⁸ The relevance of this argument becomes apparent throughout the literature on change and reform in international bureaucracies, but is most pronounced and empirically-demonstrated in a comparative study by Soo Mee Baumann, Markus Hagel, and Barbara Kobler on the role of “reform brokers” in the modernization of eight international organizations.⁶⁹ This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: The speed and scope of administrative reform in international organizations increases the more committed and skillful leadership exists within the organization. This applies both to universal international organizations, such as the United Nations as a whole, and to sub-organizations, such as transitional administrations established by the United Nations in post-conflict territories.

The impact of organizational crisis

What is the impact of organizational crisis on the speed and scope of administrative reforms? Case studies indicate that there is no straightforward relationship between crisis perception and reform. This can be traced to three aspects:

1. While the existence of a crisis can be seen as an important condition for administrative reforms to take place, this does not automatically lead to the actual adoption of respective

reforms. There may still be powerful actors within the organization who successfully oppose reform proposals.

2. It is well conceivable, and often the case, that organizations reform themselves in the absence of crisis. Change without crisis can either occur because organizations anticipate potential problems in the future or react to them at an early stage. Moreover, change without crisis can occur as a result of isomorphic adjustments to developments in the organizational environment. In the case studies analyzed, reform in organizations were rarely seen in the face of open crisis, but, rather, in response to organizational changes within their peer group or as a pre-emptive measure in view of alternations in their environment. In other words, questions of organizational legitimacy seem to be more important than issues of functional performance in order to bring about organizational change.⁷⁰ This point is driven home by various case studies; in particular, Tim Balint and Christoph Knill's analysis of the reform of human resource management in the OECD,⁷¹ Tobias Etzold's study on reorganization processes in the Nordic Council and the Council of the Baltic Sea States,⁷² Michael Kerler's analysis of administrative reform at the World Bank,⁷³ and Veith Mehde's account of administrative reforms as a means to enhance the legitimacy of the European Commission.⁷⁴ From a realist or a principal-agent perspective, this finding may be surprising. But if one takes into account that legitimacy is on one of the major sources of international organization (IO) authority,⁷⁵ and a principal reason why states regularly seek the mandate of an international organization before engaging in critical actions, such as peace enforcement operations,⁷⁶ it becomes apparent that the quest for international legitimacy constitutes an important source of organizational change.

3. The link between crisis and reform is further complicated by the fact that the very nature of organizational crisis matters. As argued by Tim Balint and Christoph Knill, it makes a difference whether a crisis stems from a kind of dissatisfaction with the performance of an international organization or whether it is the result of a search for a new organizational identity and mission.⁷⁷ In the case of performance challenges, one would expect administrative reforms to be seen as useful devices to improve the situation. Johan P. Olsen, therefore, rightly characterizes performance crises as useful “reality checks.”⁷⁸ Cases in point are the failures of peace operations in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Somalia in the course of the 1990s which constituted the single most important trigger for the far-reaching structural and programmatic reforms proposed in the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, the so-called “Brahimi Report.”⁷⁹ Organizational identity crises, by contrast, may have a paralyzing effect.⁸⁰ Without a clear idea of the future mission of an organization, reform momentum may easily be lost. Would-be reformers do not know with certainty what is most important to focus on and where to start improvement. An example of how an internationally-operating organization can be paralyzed when its core function is openly disputed is given by Michael Barnett and Liv Coleman in their study on organizational change at INTERPOL.⁸¹

Hypothesis: The extent to which the existence or perception of crises affects administrative reforms in international organizations depends on the nature of the crisis. The more crises are linked to the organization’s very identity (implying that its core functions are disputed) rather than mere operational performance gaps, the more diminished the organization’s capability of

responding swiftly and comprehensively to the challenges. The more a crisis affects an organization's core, the lesser the likelihood that crisis actually triggers systematic reform endeavors.

Political vs. administrative origin of organizational reforms

A fundamental dichotomy that may affect results, goals, and processes of administrative reforms refers to the question of whether these reforms are initiated predominantly by administrative actors or by political leaders within the organization in question. As political and administrative actors may pursue rather different reform objectives and be guided by different interests, it seems plausible that this distinction has an impact on the speed, scope, and the very character of administrative reforms.

Administrative reformers seem to be concerned primarily with issues of functional performance. This implies that reforms dominated by the administration of an international organization are more directed towards incremental adjustments in order to improve and optimize the organization's operative capacities. If, by contrast, reforms are politically driven, issues of legitimacy towards the organizational environment rather than aspects of functional performance may play a dominant role. Moreover, as politicians generally have an incentive to demonstrate a profound impact of their activities, they strive for more fundamental rather than piecemeal developments. At the same time, however, the potential ignorance towards functional issues may imply that one-sided political reforms may suffer from far-reaching implementation problems if they are not supported by the administration. As a consequence, there is a higher potential that politically-driven reforms will, instead, remain at a symbolic level, with

fundamental reform announcements being trimmed down to minor changes during the implementation stage. These considerations suggest the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis: The more administrative reforms of international organizations are dominated by administrative actors, the more incremental changes will be observed in order to improve functional performance. By contrast, the more reforms are driven by political actors, the higher the probability of more fundamental reform attempts in order to increase an organization's external legitimacy.

Hypothesis: The more political actors dominate administrative reforms of international organizations, the higher the likelihood of implementation deficits, given the gap between political legitimacy concerns and issues of functional performance advocated by the organization's administration.

Conclusions

This account of the causes and conditions of administrative reforms in international bureaucracies is primarily an explorative exercise. Based on a set of case studies of administrative reforms in international organizations, the generalizations and preliminary hypotheses presented here are attempts to gather facts, systematize observable patterns, and propose possible explanations for the wide array of organizational reforms that are regularly observed at the international level. In other words, the results presented here are the starting point for future discussion rather than a synthesis to settle competing claims and theories.

In view of this explorative character of the authors' analysis, this chapter concludes with four recommendations as to where, in their opinion, researchers interested in analyzing the planning and implementation of peace operations as well as practitioners in that field may want

to focus their work and what they should keep in mind in order to further improve the understanding of administrative reforms of international organizations.

Invest in Good Description

First, and above all, more reliable empirical data on the phenomenon of administrative reform in international bureaucracies is needed. There is an unjustified disdain in contemporary social science for describing political events. While the primary aim of social sciences is to make causal inferences, it should not be forgotten that causal explanations need to be based on sufficient and adequate description. However, with respect to explaining administrative reform in international organizations, there is still not enough known about the factual and potential cases for developing already well-specified concepts and general explanations. In particular, better tools are needed for evaluating and comparing the speed and scope of administrative reform. Furthermore, more is needed to be known about the various elements of administrative reforms (financial-budgetary, personnel and institutional) and their respective importance for organizational change on the whole. Thus, more research is needed on ways to optimize categories of change and on exact operationalizations in order to relate empirical observations more precisely to theoretical concepts. Good description is an indispensable requirement for the development of sound theories. The emergence of an “organizational turn” in the study of international organizations may provide the necessary impetus for political science scholarship to broaden the empirical foundation for a better understanding of processes of organizational change in international bureaucracies.

For practitioners, this means that more time should be invested in trying to understand why past reform attempts have succeeded or failed. Instead of developing new reform ideas,

practitioners should focus on improving the conditions for the successful implementation of existing ones. Although many of the determinants of administrative reform in the international organizations identified in this chapter are structural in nature, and thus cannot be actively changed, reform entrepreneurs within or outside the organization can derive valuable cues for future action from a systematic analysis of the obstacles to previous reform attempts.

Focus on the Actors

A further challenge is to connect macro-level reform change with micro-level behavior of real world human actors. The understanding of individual actors' preferences, their utility functions as well as the implications of culturally- or nationally- bound behavioral patterns, is still very limited. For example, it may be that culture and nationality are not significant factors since such differences are business-as-usual for transnational administrative elites like the cosmopolitically-educated and socialized workforce of international organizations. However, as mentioned above, the case studies analyzed suggest that reform promoters often have a background of a particular administrative reform culture through their experience in their "home country." In fact, little is known about whether, and to what extent, particular role understanding, images of political order, particular career paths (predominant national or international socialization), particular patterns of staff representation and unionization, and flexible or rigid career structures actually affect administrative reforms in international organizations. This intra-organizational level of analysis has so far been widely neglected in the study of international organizations.

Encourage Dialogue between the Sub-disciplines

It would be a huge mistake to analyze administrative reforms in international bureaucracies only from the perspective of distinctive academic sub-disciplines. Rather, the challenge is to identify common ground and to combine tools, theories, and explanations from the various related sub-disciplines (i.e, public administration, international relations, organization theory, and political science). However, as it stands now, a problematic division of labor is seen among the disciplines where “international lawyers remain hard at work proposing new IOs or proposing institutional reforms to correct the 'birth defects' of the IOs that we now have,”⁸² while scholars of international relations continue to play down or even deny the autonomous agency of intergovernmental organizations as well as their independent influence on international governance processes. Political scientists and IR scholars who are acquainted with the driving forces of organizational reform in international administrations as well as the political and institutional obstacles that prevent an optimal design of international organizations could contribute a more cautious note to the often overly optimistic debate among national policymakers and international lawyers.

Do Not Lose Sight of the “So What” Question

Finally, the authors encourage researchers intending to explore the field of administrative reforms of international organizations not to lose sight of the “so what” question. In other words, we should not stop at describing and explaining organizational change as the dependent variable. It is rather an important step of further research to take administrative reforms of international organizations as the independent variable and ask what difference particular patterns of reforms make for actual policy outputs and policy outcomes. If we know more about these relationships, the discussion of organizational change in international bureaucracies could be fruitfully linked

to questions of policymaking under the conditions of multilevel governance that are of crucial importance for policy analysts, organizational sociologists, and scholars of international relations as well as professionals and politicians.

In sum, this chapter has attempted to systematize empirical findings on the determinants of administrative reform in international bureaucracies. So far, the study of change in international organizations has focused either on the institutional rules of intergovernmental decision-making or on the substantive goals and programs of international organizations. Administrative reform within the bureaucratic apparatus of international organizations, by contrast, is only beginning to attract the attention of scholars in the fields of public administration and international relations. This is especially true for the analysis of UN peace operations. Only belatedly are scholars paying closer attention to the administrative underpinnings of peace operations and the ways in which administrative reforms both within the UN bureaucracy and within individual peacekeeping programs can improve their performance. By summarizing insights from empirical studies of administrative reform in a variety of international organizations and across a wide range of policy areas, this chapter aims to contribute to the emerging literature. However, instead of developing concrete proposals for reforming the organizational basis of UN peace operations, this chapter presented inductively-derived generalizations and preliminary hypotheses about the determinants of and obstacles to organizational change in international organizations. As such, the results, on the one hand, constitute a starting point for practitioners in their attempt to improve the organizational foundations of UN peace operations and, on the other hand, provide a set of hypotheses that can be further tested and refined by scholars of public administration and international relations.

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² Seibel, "Moderne Protektorate als Ersatzstaat; and Simon Chesterman, "East Timor," in Mats Berdal and Spyros Economides, eds., *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 192-216.

³ Gregory H. Fox, *Humanitarian Occupation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴ Simon Chesterman, "Transitional Administration, State-building and the United Nations," in Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur, eds., *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), pp. 339-358; and Simon Chesterman, *You, The People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

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⁶ Richard Caplan, *International Governance of War-torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

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⁸ See the contributions in Vaughan Lowe, Adam Roberts, Jennifer Welsh, and Dominik Zaum, eds., *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁹ Paris, *At War's End*, pp. 13-16.

¹⁰ Ramesh Thakur, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 13.

¹¹ Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann, "Internationale Bürokratien und Organisationslernen: Konturen einer Forschungsagenda," *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 16, no. 2 (2009): 203-236. See, also, chapter 10 by Benner et al. in this volume.

¹² David C. Ellis, "The Organizational Turn in International Organization Theory," paper prepared for the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco, California, March 26-29, 2008, unpublished manuscript.

¹³ Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*, p. 340.

¹⁴ Thorsten Benner, Andrea Binder, Philipp Rotmann, "Learning to Build Peace? United Nations Peacebuilding and Organizational Learning: Developing a Research Framework," Research Paper Series 7 (Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute, 2007) and chapter 10 by Benner et al. in this volume.

¹⁵ Alex Veit and Klaus Schlichte, "Internationale Organisationen als verkoppelte Arenen: Wieso scheitern State-BUILDER?," in Klaus Dingwerth, Dieter Kerwer, and Andreas Nölke, eds., *Die Organisierte Welt: Internationale Beziehungen und Organisationsforschung* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2009), pp. 95-115.

¹⁶ Andrea Liese and Silke Weinlich, "Die Rolle von Verwaltungsstäben internationaler Organisationen: Lücken, Tücken und Konturen eines (neuen) Forschungsgebiets," in Jörg

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¹⁸ Adrienne Héritier and Christoph Knill, "Differential Responses to European Policies: A Comparison," in Adrienne Héritier, Dieter Kerwer, Christoph Knill, Dirk Lehmkuhl, Michael Teutsch, and Anne-Cécile Douillet, eds., *Differential Europe: The European Union Impact on National Policymaking* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 257-294; and Christoph Knill, *The Europeanisation of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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²¹ This development is best illustrated by the fact that Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert included a chapter on the European Commission only in the second edition of their seminal study on public management reform. See Pollitt and Bouckaert, *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). See, also, Michael W. Bauer, "The Politics of Reforming the European Commission Administration," in Michael W.

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²² Gayl D. Ness and Steven R. Brechin, "Bridging the Gap: International Organizations as Organizations," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (1988): 245-273.

²³ See, for example, Michael Barnett, and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Bauer and Knill, eds., *Management Reforms in International Organizations*; Dingwerth, Kerwer, and Nölke, eds., *Die Organisierte Welt*; Darren Hawkins, David A. Lake, and Daniel L. Nielson, eds., *Delegation and Agency in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Thorsten Benner et al. in chapter 10 in this volume.

²⁴ Ellis, "The Organizational Turn in International Organization Theory."

²⁵ Ness and Brechin, "Bridging the Gap," p. 270.

²⁶ Ibid., Ness and Brechin, p. 246,

²⁷ Edward C. Luck, "Reforming the United Nations: Lessons from a History in Progress," Occasional Paper Series (New Haven, CT: Academic Council on the United Nations System, 2003) and in Jean E. Krasno, ed., *United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), pp. 350-397.

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³² Peter A. Hall and Robert J. Franzese, Jr., “Mixed Signals: Central Bank Independence, Coordinated Wage Bargaining, and European Monetary Union,” *International Organization* 52, no. 3 (1998): 505-535.

³³ Gabriele Glöckler, “From Take-off to Cruising Altitude: Management Reform and Organizational Change of the European Central Bank,” in Michael W. Bauer and Christoph Knill, eds., *Management Reforms in International Organizations* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2007), pp. 84-95 and Michael W. Bauer and Helen Foerster, “Tagungsbericht administrative Reformen in internationalen und supranationalen Organisationen,” *Integration* 29, no. 4 (2006): 344-349.

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³⁹ Wolfgang Seibel, “Moderne Protektorate als Ersatzstaat: UN-Friedensoperationen und Dilemmata internationaler Übergangsverwaltungen,” in Gunnar Folke Schuppert and Michael Zürn, eds., *Governance in einer sich wandelnden Welt* (Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für

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⁴⁰ Glöckler, “From Take-off to Cruising Altitude: Management Reform and Organizational Change of the European Central Bank” and Michael W. Bauer, “The Politics of Reforming the European Commission Administration.”

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⁴⁵ Tobias Etzold, “Reorganization Processes in Small International Organizations: The Nordic Council and the Council of the Baltic Sea States,” in Michael W. Bauer and Christoph Knill, eds., *Management Reforms in International Organizations* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2007) 149-161.

⁴⁶ Schön-Quinlivan, “Administrative Reform in the European Commission”; Michael W. Bauer, “The Politics of Reforming the European Commission Administration;” and Tarvo Kungla, “‘Raising the Game’: Administrative Reform of the European Parliament General Secretariat,” in Michael W. Bauer and Christoph Knill, eds., *Management Reforms in International Organizations* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2007), pp. 71-82.

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DRAFT

The Management of Peacekeeping

Coordination, Learning, and Leadership in UN Peace Operations

Julian Junk, Francesco Mancini, Till Blume, and Wolfgang Seibel (eds.)

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Table of Contents

Foreword	1
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Terje Rød-Larsen

Acknowledgements	
-------------------------------	--

Introduction: The Management of UN Peacekeeping	
---	--

Julian Junk and Francesco Mancini

Chapter 1. Coordination, Learning, and Leadership: Challenges of Peace Operations	
---	--

Wolfgang Seibel, Julian Junk, Till Blume, and Elisabeth Schöndorf

Part I: Coordination

Chapter 2. Coordination and Networks	
--	--

Anna Herrhausen

Chapter 3. Network and Transaction Costs Theories: Lessons from Bosnia-Herzegovina	
--	--

Michael Lipson

Chapter 4. Peace Operations as Temporary Network Organizations	
--	--

Jörg Raab and Joseph Soeters

Chapter 5. Integrated DDR: Lessons for Coordination in Peace Operations?.....	
---	--

Tobias Pietz

Chapter 6. The Elusive Coherence of Building Peace	
--	--

Cedric de Coning

Chapter 7. The Coherence Conundrum in Peace Operations	
--	--

Asith Bhattacharjee

Part II: Learning

Chapter 8. Organizational Learning and Peace Operations

Ariane Berthoin Antal, Julian Junk, and Peter Schumann

Chapter 9. Learning and Identity in the Field

Melanie Schreiner, Rüdiger Klimecki, and Sebastian Döring

Chapter 10. Bureaucracy and Learning at Headquarters

Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann

Chapter 11. Organizational Change in International Bureaucracies

Michael Bauer, Helge Jörgens, and Christoph Knill

Part III: Leadership

Chapter 12. Leadership in Organizations: A Review

Sabine Börner

Chapter 13. Leadership in Peace Operations: A Secretary or a General?

Simon Chesterman and Thomas M. Franck

Chapter 14. The Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General

Manuel Fröhlich

Chapter 15. Role Models of Leadership in Peace Operations: Lessons from Kosovo

Frederik Trettin

Conclusion: Linking, Coordination, Management, and Leadership

Francesco Mancini and Julian Junk

Acronyms

Bibliography

The Contributors