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Introduction

Studying the Role and Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies

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1.1 Introduction

In recent years, scholars of public administration and international relations have increasingly turned their attention to the role and impact of international public administrations (IPAs), that is, the bureaucratic bodies of international organizations (IOs) (Bauer 2006; Bauer, Knill, and Eckhard 2017a; Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009b; Knill and Bauer 2016; Lenz et al. 2015). Within this research strand, there has been particular focus on the secretariats of multilateral environmental conventions as potentially influential actors in world politics (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009b; Jinnah 2014) and the degree to which these can act autonomously, that is, beyond the direct control of a treaty's member states (Bauer and Ege 2016; Eckhard and Ege 2016; Mathiason 2007). Moreover, scholars have started to explore the extent to which treaty secretariats are able to exert autonomous influence on the processes, outputs, and implementation of multilateral treaty negotiations as well as the causal mechanisms through which this influence is exercised (Biermann et al. 2009; Depledge 2007; Jinnah 2011; Knill and Bauer 2016: 950–956).

A milestone in this research was the study by Biermann and his colleagues (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009b) that described international environmental bureaucracies as active and consequential "managers of global change." The study identified three mechanisms through which these bureaucracies were able to influence the formulation and implementation of international environmental policies – cognitive, normative, and executive influence – and argued that the degree of influence depended to an important extent on the leadership and staff of international bureaucracies and their attitudes, preferences, and strategies (Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009a). Although the study dove deep into the role and influence of international environmental secretariats, it left some questions unanswered and raised a multitude of new ones, thereby setting the stage for an important and fruitful research program that brought about important insights into the institutions, processes, and actor constellations of global environmental governance as a whole.

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With this book, we would like to advance the debate on the influence of IPAs, answer some of the most important and still open questions, and outline how this lively field of research has evolved over a decade after the publication of the seminal work of Biermann and Siebenhüner (2009b). This book brings together contributions from many of the most renowned scientists in the field, presents new answers and research findings, and identifies current research gaps and perspectives for future research in an increasingly relevant field.

In this introduction, we not only review the scholarly literature that has followed the direction of Biermann and Siebenhüner (2009b) but also link it to some of the very early predecessors of the current IPA research agenda. Section 1.1 defines IPAs and distinguishes them from the wider IOs or treaty systems that they are an integral part of. Section 1.2 briefly addresses the question of whether and how IPAs should be expected to matter in global governance. Section 1.3 gives some examples where IPAs were found to have had an autonomous and discernible influence on international policy processes and outputs. Section 1.4 then asks for the determinants of IPA influence, gives an overview of the most relevant causal factors, and outlines how the chapters in this book contribute to the research on IPA influence.

1.2 From IOs to IPAs: Defining the Object of Analysis

In 1971, in a special issue of the journal *International Organization*, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye diagnosed what they called a "Mount Everest syndrome" in the study of IOs. They argued that scholars were studying international organizations simply because "they are there," not because they actually mattered (Keohane and Nye 1971: v). This harsh criticism marked the beginning of a period of scholarly neglect of IOs as actors in their own right. IOs were mainly conceived of as abstract sets of rules designed by states to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation (Keohane 1984; Martin and Simmons 2012). Only in the late 1990s did researchers begin to rediscover earlier conceptualizations of IOs as agents in their own right and to systematically study their role in world politics and their influence on international policy outputs (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009b; Hawkins and Jacoby 2006; Reinalda and Verbeek 1998). Rooted in theoretical frameworks such as principal–agent theory, sociological institutionalism, and other organizational theories, these studies have left the Mount Everest syndrome behind, allowing political science scholars to study IOs not merely because they are there but because there is strong theoretical and empirical evidence that they actually matter, not just as sets of rules but also as actors in their own right who are involved in processes of global policymaking.

Scholars utilizing a principal–agent perspective make the functionalist argument that nation-states (principals) delegate powers to IOs (agents) when they

fail to coordinate directly (Abbott and Snidal 1998; Tallberg 2010). Governments expect IOs to carry out only those tasks that are deliberately delegated to them. However, owing to incomplete delegation contracts and information asymmetries, IOs may increase their organizational autonomy and begin to pursue agendas of their own (Bauer and Weinlich 2011: 254). International civil servants who successfully manage to influence the mandate and institutional design of newly established intergovernmental organizations represent just one of many examples of this extension of autonomy (Johnson and Urpelainen 2014). From a principal–agent perspective, the influence of IOs is thus a direct result of their autonomy from member states, and the degree of autonomy is a function of the latter's limited ability to control and sanction the former (Liese and Weinlich 2006: 504). Consequently, principal–agent theorists explain varying degrees of IO influence primarily through differences in principal preferences, constellations, and decision rules (Da Conceição, 2010; Hawkins et al. 2006a), paying less attention to factors inherent to IOs. Principal–agent approaches are thus most effective in explaining differences in IO influence when external factors differ between cases. Where principal preferences and constellations are constant and varying degrees of IO influence persist, principal–agent theory has less insight to offer (Hawkins and Jacoby 2006).

Sociological institutionalism fills this gap by focusing on factors inherent to IOs as sources of administrative influence. Sociological institutionalism, in particular the "bureaucratic authority" variant employed by Barnett and Finnemore (2004), focuses on the normative and cultural roots of the influence of IOs (Fleischer and Reiners 2021). From this perspective, IOs become influential owing to their expertise, institutional memory, moral standing, and – based on these factors – their privileged position in social networks (Wit et al. 2020). IOs know more about technical and legal issues than their political masters (Derlien, Böhme, and Heindl 2011: 91) and have superior "informal knowledge about the history and evolution of institutional processes" (Jinnah 2010: 62; see also Biermann et al. 2009; Dijkstra 2010; Jinnah 2014). This bureaucratic authority (Hickmann 2019) of IOs forms the basis of their influence on processes of international rulemaking. Their political standing is further enhanced by their claim to defend the international common good based on scientific expertise (Busch and Liese 2017; Busch et al. 2021; Herold et al. 2021) rather than pursue vested interests. As a result, IOs and their bureaucracies try to uphold a reputation for neutrality by avoiding any impression that they are pursuing their own agenda (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 21).

While the reconceptualization of IOs as political actors in their own right builds on the implicit distinction between IOs on the one hand and their bureaucratic bodies or secretariats on the other, this distinction is not always made explicit and is still far from omnipresent in the field of international relations. As Weinlich (2014: 39)

puts it: "Most of the recent literature does not bother to make a distinction between international organisations and their bureaucracies. Often, scholars who are referring to international organisations as actors … are actually, albeit rarely explicitly, referring to the respective bureaucracy." Similarly, Eckhard and Ege (2016: 967), in their systematic review on how international bureaucracies influence the policies of IOs, conclude that only few studies "explicitly focus on the influence of IPAs as a dependent variable." Findings regarding the "bureaucratic footprint" in the policies of IOs are "a side-product rather than the actual objective of most studies." In order to more systematically study to what extent and through which causal mechanisms international bureaucracies can shape international policy outputs, IPAs must be treated as actors that are analytically distinct from the wider international organization or treaty system that they are a part of.

This distinction between IOs and their bureaucratic bodies has been most clearly made in the field of organizational studies. Organizational perspectives on IOs explicitly attribute explanatory power to the organizational features of the bureaucratic bodies of IOs: organizational design, secretariat leadership, and shared preferences among international civil servants (Jönsson 1986; Ness and Brechin 1988). Organizational design comprises the "formalized internal rules and procedures that assign tasks and positions in the hierarchy." When these are poorly specified, "conflicts, redundancies, inefficiencies, [and] delays" might ensue (Biermann et al. 2009: 55). Whether organizational structure actually influences international policy outputs depends to a great extent on the leadership provided by the IPA's top management, whose convictions regarding the role bureaucracy should play in international policymaking can vary considerably (Depledge 2007: 63; Siebenhüner 2009: 268; Siotis 1965). Strong leadership by executive secretaries "that is charismatic, visionary, and popular, as well as flexible and reflexive" is assumed to enhance a bureaucracy's effectiveness by increasing internal and external acceptance of and trust in top management and its abilities (Biermann et al. 2009: 58). Finally, the governance preferences of the international civil service – for example, whether civil servants value active political engagement as opposed to passive neutrality – may also account for varying levels of IPA influence (Bauer 2006: 44; Busch 2009a: 258).

Since the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a rapid convergence of these formerly distinct research agendas on international bureaucracies has been observed (Bauer et al. 2017; Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009b; Busch 2014; Dijkstra 2017; Ellis 2010; Fleischer and Reiners 2021; Trondal 2017; Wit et al. 2020). While in 2009, Biermann and Siebenhüner (2009c: 1) had still found it "remarkable" that in the academic field of international relations "the scholarly study of the influence of international bureaucracies has been a rather peripheral research object for most of the post-1945 period," Trondal (2017: 35), less than a

decade later, characterized IPAs as "a distinct and increasingly central feature of both global governance studies and public administration scholarship" (see also Martin and Simmons 2012: 329). These "*separate* international administrations that are able to act relatively independently from domestic governments" (Trondal 2017: 37, emphasis in original) are now seen to constitute a central and analytically distinct component of any attempt to build a common political order at the international level.

1.3 What Are International Bureaucracies?

Biermann and Siebenhüner (2009c: 6) define international bureaucracies "as agencies that have been set up by governments or other public actors with some degree of permanence and coherence and beyond formal direct control of single national governments (notwithstanding control by multilateral mechanisms through the collective of governments) and that act in the international arena to pursue a policy." While the authors follow earlier characterizations of IPAs, such as that of Siotis (1965: 178), who defined IPAs as "international bodies which have a distinct existence within a given system of multilateral diplomacy and which exercise administrative and/or executive functions, implicitly recognized or explicitly entrusted to them by the actors of the international system," they place greater emphasis on the autonomy and actorness of these organizations. This emphasis on autonomy is also taken up by Bauer et al. (2017: 2), who describe IPAs "as bodies with a certain degree of autonomy, staffed by professional and appointed civil servants who are responsible for specific tasks and who work together following the rules and norms" of a given international organization.

Most IPAs are "issue-specific" bureaucracies (Bauer 2006: 28). Except for the secretariats of universal IOs, such as the United Nations Secretariat, their functions are usually closely related to a policy domain or to the topic of a multilateral treaty. Within these policy domains, IPAs engage in activities "such as conducting studies, preparing draft decisions…, assisting states parties, and receiving reports on the implementation of commitments" (Churchill and Ulfstein 2000: 627). Their tasks "typically range from generation and processing of data, information and knowledge over providing administrative, technical, legal and advisory support in intergovernmental negotiation processes to ensuring and monitoring compliance with multilateral decisions" (Busch 2014: 46–47). In 1994, Sandford (1994: 19) argued that international secretariats invariably act in a servant-like fashion: "Underlying all secretariat activities is the notion of service. Secretariats exist to service the treaty parties." More recent research by Knill et al. (2018), however, shows that the servant-like IPA is just one among several possibilities. Distinguishing different administrative styles of IPAs, the authors show that the servant style is no

longer the default behavior of international bureaucracies but that IPAs may just as well adopt entrepreneurial or even advocacy-oriented administrative styles. While these styles may vary between different IPAs, they may also vary across issue areas or phases of the policy cycle (Bayerlein, Knill, and Steinebach 2020; Knill et al. 2018; see also Well et al. 2020). This diversity of administrative styles indicates that – despite not having any formal decision-making powers – IPAs often attempt to move beyond the role of passive servants and to influence the processes and outputs of their respective IOs or treaty systems. Against this backdrop, Trondal (2017: 36) sums up: "It has been shown that the task of IPAs has become increasingly that of active and independent policy-making institutions and less that of passive technical supply instruments for IGO plenary assemblies."

Consequently, much of the more recent scholarly literature on IPAs has focused on whether and through which causal mechanisms international bureaucracies can become influential actors in international politics.

1.4 Examples of IPA Influence

While there is little doubt that IPAs may have an autonomous influence on international policy processes and outputs, concrete examples of IPA influence are still relatively scarce. A main reason is the methodological challenges of observing the often-hidden activity of IPAs. In addition, it is often methodologically difficult to link the actions of IPAs to observed changes in the processes or outcomes of multilateral negotiations. The fact that IPAs either do not reveal their political preferences or pass them off as preferences of other actors makes it even more difficult to clearly identify IPA action (or the preferences of IPAs) as the cause of observed policy changes.

A prominent example of IPA influence was the role UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his bureaucracy played in developing the principle of a "Responsibility to Protect." Characterizing the UN Secretary-General as an international norm entrepreneur, Johnstone (2007: 124) argues that this strategy "is likely to be most effective when he uses the United Nations to crystallize emerging understandings among states and non-state actors, rather than striking out in entirely new normative directions." In an earlier study, Bhattacharya (1976) found that the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) significantly contributed to the agreement on the Generalized System of Preferences that was reached in 1970. The factors that enabled the secretariat to become influential were secretariat ideology, charismatic leadership by UNCTAD's Secretary-General Raul Prebisch, and coalition-building activities by secretariat staff.

IPA influence may also be relatively high in newly emerging policy domains. Levinson and Marzouki (2016: 70), in their study of the role of IOs in the field of

global internet governance, observe that the secretariats of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) played "a role in crafting ideas, first to be adopted by the member states and then disseminated externally, often with 'allies' or 'partners.'" They find that the UNESCO Secretariat developed the idea of "internet universality," the Secretariat of the Council of Europe ensured a stronger emphasis on human rights and stakeholder participation, and the OECD Secretariat was responsible for a stronger shift toward data protection in global internet governance.

In the environmental field, a first research strand focused predominantly on individual bureaucracies such as the OECD environmental directorate (Busch 2009b), the biodiversity secretariat (Siebenhüner 2007, 2009), and the World Bank Environment Department (Gutner 2005; Nielson and Tierney 2003). For example, Bauer (2009: 300) shows that "the desertification secretariat was pivotal in the establishment" of a permanent subsidiary body for implementation, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. This subsidiary body was established against the preferences of most donor countries. The example shows how treaty secretariats can actively shape the international institutions they are supposed to serve rather passively. Siebenhüner (2009: 272) finds that the biodiversity secretariat has traditionally been "entrusted with the drafting of decisions of the conference of the parties." While in highly contested issue areas these drafts provided by the secretariat were usually amended or rewritten by the negotiation parties, secretariat proposals on more technical issues often passed with only minor amendments.

Building on this research, a second wave of case studies linked the study of environmental bureaucracies to current research topics from a range of political science subdisciplines such as international relations and international public administration. Examples are studies on how treaty secretariats deal with the institutional fragmentation of global governance (Jinnah 2014), questions of delegation and agency in global environmental politics (Wagner and Mwangi 2010), or studies on the interplay of public and private governance at different levels of government (Chan et al. 2015; Dingwerth and Jörgens 2015; Newell, Pattberg, and Schroeder 2012). For example, focusing on institutional fragmentation, Jinnah (2012: 113) finds that "nearly all tools" used by the conferences of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) "to mandate overlap management activities can be traced back to one document produced by the Secretariat in 1995." This example shows that IPA input may create path dependencies that perpetuate individual instances of IPA influence over longer periods.

Recently, innovative methodological approaches, combining quantitative social network analysis (SNA) with qualitative case studies, have been developed to

overcome the methodological challenge of identifying the policy preferences of international secretariats. By focusing on issue-specific information flows between international bureaucracies and other actors in the global climate and biodiversity policy networks, these studies offer the potential to look behind the scenes of multilateral environmental negotiations and to trace the policy outputs of IOs or multilateral treaty systems back to IPA action (Goritz, Jörgens, and Kolleck 2021, 2022; Goritz et al. 2020; Jörgens, Kolleck, and Saerbeck 2016; Kolleck et al. 2017; Mederake et al. 2021).

Albeit incomplete, this selection of examples illustrates some of the many potential sources of IPA influence. The next section provides a systematic review of the literature on factors that potentially affect the ways and extent to which international bureaucracies can influence international policy outputs.

1.5 Determinants of IPA Influence

Already in 1974, Keohane and Nye (1974: 52) argued that "[m]ost intergovernmental organizations have secretariats, and like all bureaucracies they have their own interests and goals that are defined through an interplay of staff and clientele. International secretariats can be viewed both as catalysts and as potential members of coalitions; their distinctive resources tend to be information and an aura of international legitimacy." More recently, and based on a set of case studies, Bauer, Knill, and Eckhard (2017b: 182–189) distinguish five sources of IPA influence: First, and contrary to an instrumental view that conceives of IPAs as mere instrumental arrangements created to support intergovernmental cooperation, they argue that IPAs are inherently autonomous and even more so than their national counterparts (see also Bauer and Ege 2017). Second, they find that IPAs are entrepreneurial, meaning that they use their autonomy to advocate their own policy ideas and preferences (see also Jörgens et al. 2017; Knill et al. 2017). Third, expertise and information are more important tools for IPAs than rules and formal powers. While the formal mandates and legal competencies of IPAs are rather limited when compared with those of national bureaucracies, their strategic use of expertise, ideas, and procedural knowledge combined with their often central position in issue-specific information flows (nodality) forms the basis of their impact on global policy outputs (see also Busch and Liese 2017). Fourth, IPAs are able to overcome budgetary restrictions by generating new sources of financing. Although IPAs are much more vulnerable to budgetary instability than national bureaucracies, they find ways of mobilizing "budgetary means from alternative sources in order to reduce their dependence on member state contributions" (Bauer, Knill, and Eckhard 2017b: 187; see also Patz and Goetz 2017). Finally, the authors find that IPAs actively shape their organizational environment. They

do so by setting up and forming structures of multilevel administration and by creating informal alliances with nonstate actors at all levels of government. IPAs then typically occupy a central position in "their" domain-specific organizational environment, especially within domain-specific information flows (see also Benz, Corcaci, and Doser 2017; Jörgens, Kolleck, and Saerbeck 2016). With an explicit focus on international environmental bureaucracies, Wit et al. (2020) identify three general sources of IPA influence: their degree of organizational autonomy, their ability to deliver specific governance functions, and the way in which the complex multilevel and multiactor structure of the international system enables IPAs to become active participants in processes of global governance. In the following, we will zoom in on some of these potential determinants of IPA influence.

Autonomy from Their Principals

Verhoest et al. (2010: 18–19) define autonomy as "the extent to which an agency can decide itself about matters that it considers important." With regard to IOs and IPAs, Hawkins et al. (2006b: 8) define autonomy as "the range of potential independent action available to an agent after the principal has established mechanisms of control…. That is, autonomy is the range of maneuver available to agents after the principal has selected screening, monitoring, and sanctioning mechanisms intended to constrain their behavior." The autonomy of IPAs is mainly defined by the amount of discretion that the member states of an international organization or treaty system decide to grant their bureaucracy. Bauer and Ege (2016) refer to this as an IPA's "formal autonomy" (see also Chapter 2).

But the initial delegation of a certain degree of autonomy to an IPA through formal mandates is not the only factor that determines the bureaucracy's range of maneuver. Various other factors have been found to affect an IPA's autonomy. The first one is the fact that IOs and their IPAs are formal organizations whose "organizational development" (Schmitter 1971) cannot fully be controlled from the outside. Schmitter (1971: 918), building on Keohane's (1969) notion of institutionalization, describes organizational development of IOs as

> a process whereby an initially dependent system, created by a set of actors representing different and relatively independent nation-states, acquires the capabilities of a self-maintaining and self-steering system. Any system with such emergent properties remains, of course, related to and interdependent with its environment, but it becomes increasingly flexible, i.e., it is able to survive changes in that environment, and autonomous, i.e., "[its] course cannot be predicted from knowing only [its] environment."

Against this backdrop, we distinguish between the delegated or *formal* autonomy of an IPA and the autonomy resulting from its internal organizational strategies and development, which can be referred to as its *organizational* autonomy.

Several factors can affect an IPA's organizational autonomy. The first one has to do with the structure of the principal–agent relationship that is typical for international bureaucracies. In IOs and treaty systems, a bureaucracy's principal is often less homogeneous than at the national level. Vaubel (2006), for example, argues that international bureaucracies tend to be more autonomous from their principals than their national counterparts because the chains of delegation are longer and more complex. As Dehousse (2008) points out, international bureaucracies are normally controlled by multiple principals. Distinguishing "multiple" from "collective" principals, Dijkstra (2017: 603) describes the consequences for IPA autonomy as follows (see also Nielson and Tierney 2003): "We speak of a collective principal when the member states collectively interact with an agent. In the case of multiple principals, member states also unilaterally interact with the agent." If an international organization or treaty system is characterized by multiple principals, there is a potential chance for secretariats to team up with selected states with whom they share some interests against the interests of other states. Multiple principals may thus strengthen a secretariat's organizational autonomy and constitute a potential precondition for secretariat influence beyond their formal mandate. In contrast, as Jönsson (1986: 44) points out, "hegemonic and polar issue structures, where issue-specific capabilities are concentrated in one or a few states, can be expected to allow less room for maneuver by IOs than fragmented structures."

The increased organizational autonomy of international secretariats does not just become visible in their influence on multilateral policy outputs. International bureaucracies are also important actors in the process of creating new IOs or redefining, and often expanding, the mandates of existing ones (Johnson 2013, 2014; Johnson and Urpelainen 2014). For example, Johnson (2014: 6) shows that "[i]nternational bureaucrats working in pre-existing IGOs can – and do – advocate the creation of new institutions, participate in the institutional design process, and dampen the mechanisms by which states endeavor to control new institutions." The fact that the majority of IOs created in the past five decades are so-called emanations, that is, IOs that were created not by states but by other IOs (Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2005; Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996), opens a potential new and institutional sphere of influence for international bureaucracies. Similar dynamics might also occur when an IPA attempts to redefine or expand its own mandate (see, e.g., Barnett and Coleman 2005). Against this backdrop, Chapter 5 by Nina Hall analyzes how and to what extent the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was successful in integrating climate adaptation into its mandate. Hall argues that UNDP administrators, rather than states, played a critical role in mandate expansion by deciding "*whether* and *how* to expand into a new issue area" and then lobbying states to endorse this expansion. The chapter contributes to an emerging literature

on how the leaderships of IPAs navigate financial, ideational and normative opportunities to expand their bureaucracies' mandates. Chapter 7 by Katharina Michaelowa and Axel Michaelowa argues that IPAs may also profit from new sources of revenue within their treaty systems. The authors show that the increased revenue from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) both directly and indirectly strengthened the role of the climate secretariat. Conversely, when this revenue decreased, the UNFCCC Secretariat lost part of its autonomous regulatory influence on the CDM and "tried to reorient CDM resources for support of the Paris Agreement negotiations and implementation of national mitigation action."

Another factor that may affect an IPA's organizational autonomy is salience or visibility of its actions. As Finkelstein (1974: 501) observed already in 1974, "[i]nstitutional autonomy correlates with lack of salience to the powerful members." Consequently, many studies find that IPAs attempt to maintain an image of neutrality, deliberately hiding their own policy preferences behind those of their IO's or treaty system's member states or other actors. If IPAs attempt to influence multilateral negotiations, they often do so in an "invisible" "or behind the scenes" way (Bauer 2006: 32; see also Well et al. 2020). Mathiason (2007), for example, refers to the political influence of international secretariats as "invisible governance." Jinnah (2014) writes that "[f]rom the outside of an organization, office secretaries are nearly invisible." With regard to the World Trade Organization, Bohne (2010: 116) finds that "[i]nfluences of the Secretariat and of chairpersons on the substance of negotiations are hidden, informal, and highly contingent upon times and personalities." In addition, Beach (2008: 220) cites an official of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union saying that "[l]e Secrétariat du Conseil n'existe pas."

However, maintaining a low-key profile is not the only way in which IPAs can increase their organizational autonomy. IPA scholars increasingly observe that international secretariats step out from behind the scenes and put themselves in the spotlight of multilateral negotiations, side by side with their principals and a range of nonstate and substate actors. A case in point is the secretariat of the UNFCCC. In 2009, Busch found that the climate secretariat was caught in a "straitjacket" of "formal and informal rules" imposed by the UNFCCC member states that "ruled out any proactive role or autonomous initiatives" and led to an "organizational culture that bars staff … from exercising any leadership vis-à-vis parties and from assuming a more independent role" (Busch 2009a: 261). Today, this characterization no longer seems accurate as several scholars consider that the climate secretariat is "loosening its straitjacket" (see Chapters 3 and 7). In reaction to the failure of a globally binding post-Kyoto agreement on climate change at the UN Conference of the Parties (COP15) in 2009 in Copenhagen (Dimitrov 2010) and confronted

with long-lasting stalemate among the formal negotiating parties, the UNFCCC Secretariat no longer acts as a passive servant to the negotiating parties. Instead, it has increasingly turned its attention to other nonparty actors at different levels of government in order to gain leverage on the substance and processes of global climate governance.

This changing role of international environmental treaty secretariats is reflected in new concepts of IPAs as orchestrators (Abbott and Snidal 2010; Abbott et al. 2015; also see Chapters 3 and 8) or as attention-seeking bureaucracies (see Chapter 4). For example, Bäckstrand and Kuyper (2017: 765) argue that "a crucial outcome of the Paris Agreement is that the UNFCCC has been consolidated as the central orchestrator of non-state actors and transnational initiatives in global climate governance." Jörgens et al. (2017) suggest that IPAs may attempt to strengthen their autonomy by actively attracting the attention of policymakers in order to feed their own policy-relevant knowledge and preferred policy recommendations into multilateral negotiations. Both concepts argue that the complex and dynamic institutional structure of multilateral agreements provides the organizations acting inside them with multiple options for strategic positioning (on the opportunity structure provided by environmental treaty systems, see Gehring 2012). In these cases, the underlying logic of action of international bureaucracies shifts from "shirking" to "attention-seeking." Interestingly, the possibility that "international secretariats or components of secretariats" could "form explicit or implicit coalitions with subunits of governments as well as with nongovernmental organizations having similar interests" had already been suggested by Keohane and Nye (1974: 52).

To the extent that international environmental bureaucracies develop their own policy preferences and are able to feed them into international and national decision-making processes, this influence may raise problems of democratic legitimacy. In Chapter 8, Karin Bäckstrand and Jonathan W. Kuyper analyze the normative problems associated with the practice of orchestration by international secretariats. The authors argue that "orchestration engenders a democratic duty" on the orchestrator "to ensure that their own actions, and those of intermediaries, are democratically legitimated by those affected, including both targets and additional actors implicated in the orchestration relationship." They illustrate their argument with an empirical case study of the UNFCCC Secretariat's orchestration efforts in the context of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action.

New Conceptualizations of IPAs' Organizational Autonomy

Which concepts and theories can best describe the changed role and strategies of international bureaucracies in an international environmental and climate policy arena characterized by institutional fragmentation (Keohane and Victor 2011;

Zelli and Asselt 2013) and a diversification of actors (Hale and Roger 2014)? What are the implications of this reconceptualization for the future analysis of secretariat behavior? Against this backdrop, Michael W. Bauer et al. in Chapter 2 develop a model to explain why and how IPAs become influential actors in world politics. The authors base their model on the concepts of structural autonomy and administrative styles and lay out a strategy for their measurement. Based on these two measures, which represent the formal (structural autonomy) and informal (administrative styles) sources of IPA influence, they compare the empirical pattern of autonomy and style in a sample of eight administrations. The chapter concludes by putting forward propositions about the potential consequences of typical combinations of autonomy and style for international bureaucratic influence.

Chapter 3 by Thomas Hickmann et al. studies the UNFCCC Secretariat's proactive role in bringing nonstate actors that are supportive of the secretariat's policy preferences into the UNFCCC negotiations. It does so, for example, through secretariat-led initiatives such as the Lima–Paris Action Agenda or the Non-state Actor Zone for Climate Action. While Hickmann et al. base their case study on the concept of IOs as orchestrators, Chapter 4 by Mareike Well et al. proposes to conceive of international secretariats as attention-seeking bureaucracies. Well et al. argue that in order to become influential, international bureaucracies need to not only possess policy-relevant expert knowledge but also exploit the complex structures and actor constellations of multilateral treaty systems in ways to make negotiators take notice and adopt some of the bureaucracy's policy positions. The authors argue that in order to influence the outcomes of multilateral negotiations, international secretariats need to actively and strategically seek to attract the attention of the negotiating parties to their preferred problem definitions and policy prescriptions. This argument is illustrated with two case studies on the strategic behavior of the secretariats of the CBD and the UNFCCC.

Centrality of IPAs within Multilateral Negotiation Systems

Besides its formal and organizational autonomy, an IPA's influence on negotiation processes and outputs is also characterized by its centrality in issue-specific policy networks. As Sandford (1994: 17) observed, "[s]ecretariats are the organizational glue that holds the actors and parts of a treaty system together." Similarly, Jinnah (2012: 109) characterizes secretariats as "the operational hubs of [their] regimes." This centrality allows IPAs to interact with a wide range of actors and potentially occupy a brokerage position between actors who do not interact directly with each other. Jönsson (1986: 45) refers to this as a "linking-pin position" and highlights that "[i]n order to assume an effective linking-pin position, an organization needs to have a location in the issue-specific network which allows it to reach, and to

be reached by, other important organizational actors. Multiplexity of direct and indirect links with these actors can be expected to enhance the leverage of the prospective linking-pin organization." In a similar vein, Fernandez and Gould (1994: 1460) argue that "organizational actors linking otherwise unconnected pairs of actors play a critical role in policy domains because they permit information to flow easily among a large and diverse set of actors, which in turn allows actors to coordinate their efforts to formulate and influence policies." In their study of influence in the US health policy domain, the authors find "that occupancy of brokerage positions in the network of communication among organizational actors is positively related to influence" (Fernandez and Gould 1994: 1456).

In the environmental field, several studies have shown that treaty secretariats such as the climate or biodiversity secretariats occupy very central positions both in issue-specific communication flows and in issue-specific cooperation networks (Goritz, Kolleck, and Jörgens 2019; Jörgens, Kolleck, and Saerbeck 2016; Kolleck et al. 2017; Saerbeck et al. 2020; Well et al. 2020; see also Chapter 9). For example, using Twitter data, Kolleck et al. (2017) find that the UNFCCC Secretariat occupied a central and potentially influential position within education-specific communication networks in UNFCCC negotiations from 2009 to 2014. Saerbeck et al. (2020) corroborate this finding with data from an original large-N survey, showing that the climate secretariat was among the five most central organizations during the negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement. More than other actors, it maintains strong links with a wide range of state and nonstate actors, which allows it to act as a policy broker between different types of actors in global climate governance.

Studying the centrality of IPAs in policy networks and how this centrality relates to the potential influence of IPAs on negotiation processes and outputs requires innovative methods. Against this backdrop, Jörgens, Kolleck, and Saerbeck (2016) argue that SNA a promising method for assessing the political influence of IPAs. Instead of relying on an actor's openly expressed policy preferences or on its reputation for being influential, SNA infers influence from the actor's relative position in issue-specific communication networks (Kolleck 2016). However, descriptive techniques of SNA are only able to assess an actor's potential influence. In order to study whether IPAs are actually willing and able to exploit this potential, inferential techniques of SNA as well as a combination of quantitative SNA with qualitative methods may result in a more accurate picture of secretariat influence and lead to a better/deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms through which it becomes possible. Kolleck et al. (2017), for example, combine SNA with participant observation in their study on the role of the climate secretariat in promoting climate change education. Kolleck (2016), Kolleck, Jörgens, and Well (2017), and Goritz, Jörgens, and Kolleck (2021, 2022) apply current advancements of the inferential techniques of SNA to enable inferential conclusions based on large datasets. Saerbeck et al.

(2020) combine their survey-based SNA with insights from thirty-three semistructured interviews to better understand whether and how the climate secretariat uses its brokerage position to shape issue-specific information flows.

Nevertheless, the centrality and influence of international bureaucracies are not necessarily limited to individual issue areas. Often, they can also be found to operate at the boundary between two or more neighboring policy subdomains. Based on her research on overlap management between international environmental regimes, Jinnah (2012: 108) argues that their "characteristics uniquely position secretariats to manage regime overlap more efficiently and effectively than other actors." "When it comes to coordination of daily, weekly, or even monthly activities between large numbers of actors across two or more international regimes, there is nobody better suited to manage the process than Secretariat staff" (Jinnah 2012: 109). In a similar vein, Jönsson (1986: 42) suggests that at the international level "[b]oundary-role occupants … are typically found within the secretariat." We therefore expect international bureaucracies to occupy central positions at the intersection of different environmental issue areas. In fact, their centrality and potential for influence may turn out to be even greater if we shift our focus from individual IPAs to networks of bureaucracies operating at different levels of government within a given policy domain.

Against this backdrop, Barbara Saerbeck et al. explore in Chapter 9 whether a global administrative space in environmental governance is emerging that combines the development and strengthening of independent administrative capacities at the international level with the increasing integration of a broad range of governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at different levels of government. This administrative space constitutes a complex multilevel and multiactor structure for the management of global environmental policies. Based on an original dataset covering issue-specific cooperation and communication flows between organizations and with regard to the negotiation and implementation of two international environmental conventions, the UNFCCC and the CBD, the authors use SNA to describe and analyze the structure and integration of administrative networks in the environmental field. The exploratory study finds a relatively stable pattern of mutual interaction among the two convention secretariats, other IOs, national and subnational ministries and agencies, research institutes, and NGOs that can be interpreted as an indicator for the emergence of a global environmental administrative space.

International Civil Servants

Not only the organizational and relational aspects of international bureaucracies but also the characteristics of the international civil servants who work within these bureaucracies can affect the role and influence of IPAs (Ege 2020). In the

literature, several characteristics of international bureaucrats have been pointed out that may affect an IPA's potential influence.

First, and contrary to its national counterparts, the international civil service is multinational. The staff of IOs or of departments within them are never recruited from just one member country. Even in the case of the directorates general of the European Commission, which are led by nationally appointed commissioners and therefore are sometimes regarded as national domains within the supranational Commission, the civil servants stem from various member states. As a consequence, international civil servants are motivated by departmental, epistemic, and supranational concerns rather than national loyalties (for the European Commission, see Trondal 2006).

Second, international civil servants can be expected to be at least partially driven by professional or normative beliefs. As professionals they are committed to developing and promoting effective solutions to the policy problems they are confronted with. As Michaelowa and Michaelowa in Chapter 7 remind us, "since bureaucrats are not hired at random, but from a community of people who self-selected into this specific field of activity in the first place, they should also be expected to be more dedicated to this field than the average citizen." It is against this backdrop that Barnett and Finnemore (1999: 713) characterized international civil servants as "the 'missionaries' of our time."

Third, various studies suggest that civil servants at all levels of government – from IPAs to independent regulatory agencies to national and subnational bureaucracies – may form domain- or issue-specific epistemic communities that share a set of normative and causal beliefs regarding problem definitions and policy preferences to address these problems. These epistemic beliefs are supranational rather than rooted in notions of national interest. Already in 1971, Jacobson (1971: 780) argued that civil servants operating at different levels of government but within the same issue area develop common sets of interests and priorities. Referring to these epistemic communities as "metabureaucracies," he observed:

> The secretariats of international organizations are indeed bureaucracies, but the conference machinery is also composed predominantly of bureaucrats. … The bureaucrats who make up the conference machinery of international organizations, particularly those operating in technical fields, have interests that are often very closely linked with those of the international secretariat; there is a sectorially shared sense of priorities. Hence the conference machinery does not exercise control over an international secretariat in the same way that, for example, a legislature does.
>
> *Jacobson (1971: 780)*

There seems to be a global administrative space that emerges not only around bureaucratic organizations but also around their permanent staff. Already in 1974, Levi (1974: 51–52) referred to this as "an international political culture," which "is

evident in several aspects of international politics. The similarity in the behavior of officials representing their states on the international scene, in the demands they present, in the solutions they suggest, is astonishing. They appear to have lost most of their 'national character.'"

In sum, we expect that in political arenas where civil servants at all levels of government have significant autonomy of action, notions of national interest are less prominent and cooperation is more focused on supranational gains. This would especially be the case in policy domains where a densely populated international administrative space can be observed (see Chapter 9).

1.6 Methodological Chances and Challenges of Studying IPA Influence

In methodological terms, a key challenge for IPA researchers is to measure the influence of international bureaucracies against that of other relevant actors. Unlike national and subnational governments, political parties, NGOs, or private sector lobby groups, international secretariats normally refrain from stating their policy preferences in publicly available position papers or manifestos. As a consequence, most of the established methods to empirically infer the influence of political actors – the attributed influence method and the assessment of preference attainment (Betsill and Corell 2008; Dür 2008; Klüver 2013) – are of limited use when focusing on international bureaucracies. New methods for assessing the influence of international bureaucracies that complement and go beyond the traditional combination of interviews and document analysis need to be developed.

Against this backdrop, Chapter 7 by Michaelowa and Michaelowa combines longitudinal data on staff and budget growth with expert interviews, document analysis, and data obtained from CDM databases to infer changes in the climate secretariat's influence on the technical regulation of the CDM mechanism over time. The authors argue that the increased revenue from the CDM both directly and indirectly strengthened the role of the bureaucracy. Conversely, when this revenue decreased, the UNFCCC Secretariat lost part of its autonomous regulatory influence on the CDM and "tried to reorient CDM resources towards support of the Paris Agreement negotiations." In Chapter 3 by Hickmann et al. and Chapter 5 by Hall, the authors also take a longitudinal stance as they analyze the growing autonomy and influence of international environmental secretariats and their executive leadership over time. In Chapter 6, Lynn Wagner and Pamela Chasek systematically study change in secretariat financing over time in order to shed light on the ways in which states attempt to gain "control over the focus of activity and level of ambition that secretariats can undertake." Wagner and Chasek's account complements Chapters 5 and 7 in that it zooms in on the states' side of the principal–agent relationship, that is, on how the parties to

international environmental conventions attempt to exert control over IPAs such as the convention secretariats, and contrasts this view with the agent perspective expressed in Chapters 5 and 8. The chapter explores the negotiation dynamics and budget decisions regarding three UN conventions – the UNFCCC, the CBD, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – as well as the two multilateral scientific bodies, the International Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Contrasting the finding of some of the previous chapters that international secretariats are to a certain extent able to circumvent control by their state principals, Wagner and Chasek show that states continue to oversee and control their bureaucratic agents beyond the original delegation contract. Recurring program and budget negotiations are found to be a key mechanism that enables states to react to tendencies of secretariats to increase their autonomy and their subsequent influence on the policies of IOs.

1.7 Conclusion

This book unites a variety of innovative contributions, new conceptual approaches, and empirical findings by some of the most renowned authors in this field of study. It offers a comprehensive resource for the study of IPAs in global environmental politics. Conceptually, it is thought to provide both theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as cutting-edge empirical studies, each with clear reference to the policymaking role of international environmental bureaucracies. Methodologically, it uses different quantitative and qualitative techniques to measure the influence of IPAs to an empirical test and provides a solid overview on the chances and challenges of research methodologies in an increasingly relevant research field. Empirically, it gives an overview of pioneering case study research on international environmental bureaucracies across different issue areas in environmental policymaking. The book is thus aimed both at scientists from the fields of global environmental policy and international administration and at practitioners who are directly confronted with the challenges of these new forms of transnational influence.

Hence, the book will appeal to researchers in the field of global environmental politics and also to practitioners working for international administrations, IOs, national delegations, or civil society organizations. For practitioners, the book's subject is relevant and timely for at least three reasons: First, members of national delegations at multilateral negotiations arguably have a vital interest in understanding how different actors strive for influence and control during and in between negotiations, in order to determine the relationship to other actors that is beneficial for them. Therefore, understanding the role of IPAs as actors in global

environmental politics, their interests, motives, and strategies, can be a strategic advantage. While the principal–agent relationship between national delegations and IPAs can be regarded as one prominent, widely shared point of reference for practitioners (in the present example in their role as parties, i.e., principals), in this book we argue that understanding IPAs as partially autonomous actors with their own interests and motivations will provide valuable insights for (state) practitioners regarding their own strategic interaction with IPAs and other actors during and between multilateral negotiations. Parties can also conceive of IPAs as potential partners, rather than agents or instruments. They can thus seek productive collaboration with them, use the relationship with them strategically, or tap into IPAs' unique expertise about policies and processes. As argued in Chapter 4 by Well et al., IPAs try to present themselves this way when they act as "attention-seeking bureaucracies." Thinking beyond the principal–agent roles can have a practical advantage for practitioners and in this sense be liberating and productive. This is also true for nonstate practitioners because nonstate actors in multilateral negotiations increasingly have a fingerprint on multilateral processes and may use their relationships to IPAs to further their goals. Chapters 2 to 4 work with concepts that emphasize this perspective. On the other side, Chapters 6 and 7 show very clearly what merit the principal–agent approach continues to have by providing a detailed analysis of how parties exert or gradually lose control over IPAs owing to their (in)ability to control secretariat financing.

Second, IPAs act as brokers and strategically connect negotiation parties as well as nonparty and party stakeholders with one another. This perspective is empirically underpinned in Chapter 9. It invites practitioners to understand the actor network they work in as an emerging global administrative space, in which the connection to IPAs can be of strategic importance for the impact one organization can have in the policy network. Conceiving of IPAs as brokers of information and policy ideas in international environmental politics and positioning oneself vis-à-vis these actors can be a powerful tool.

Finally, state and nonstate practitioners may be interested in understanding how democratically legitimate certain practices observed among IPAs are (Chapter 8). This allows questions to be answered about the normative desirability of IPAs' tendency to become actors in their own right. Understanding these aspects is certainly valuable for informing and justifying state and nonstate policies and choices in an evolving multilateral setting, for example, with regard to institutional design, development, or reform concerning existing or emerging policy issues.

We hope that with this book we can stimulate debate on the influence of international secretariats in global environmental governance, inspire and inform practitioners in the field, advance knowledge, and encourage further studies in a dynamic and increasingly relevant field of research.

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