

## **Conditions of Influence: Policy Effects of IPA Autonomy in Comparative Perspective**

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### **Introduction**

Although a consensus has emerged that international public administrations (IPAs) wield independent influence over the development and implementation of public policies (Reinalda and Verbeek, 2006; Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009a; Nay, 2012; Skovgaard, 2017; Stone and Moloney, 2019), the questions of to what degree and under which precise conditions such influence occurs are still debated (Eckhard and Ege, 2016). Open questions remain as to how bureaucratic influence beyond nation-states might be defined and reliably observed and how the insights gained so far can feed into the construction of a more general theory of bureaucratic influence in emerging international and transnational governance configurations.

In light of this gap, this chapter puts the impact of structure-based bureaucratic autonomy on IPA policy influence center stage. In this regard, it investigates whether and how IPAs are actually able to influence the output of policy-making in international governmental organizations (IGOs) and under which conditions this might occur.

By investigating these broader research questions, the chapter adds to the debate in four ways. First, it specifies the concept of IPA influence by including bureaucratic policy preferences and by defining policy output as an appropriate unit of analysis. Second, it develops a comparative measurement scheme to systematically capture IPA influence, which offers a broadly applicable and systematic assessment of influence at the international level. This measure enables us to identify different degrees of IPA influence and provides solid ground for cross-case comparisons. Third, the chapter presents an explanatory framework to analyze the conditions under which international bureaucratic autonomy impacts IPA influence on policy output. These conditions are assessed empirically using a fuzzy-set

qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). Lastly, using in-depth comparative case studies, we examine and empirically observe strategies that international bureaucrats employ to wield influence. We distinguish between two types of influence strategies (strategies related to expertise and framing on the one side, and strategies related to procedural knowledge and policy involvement on the other) and systematically connect them to different configurations of context conditions.

By providing these insights and results, our contribution makes substantial theoretical-conceptual, methodological, and empirical contributions to the study of IPA influence. The *theoretical-conceptual* contribution is related to the goal of developing a more comprehensive theory of IPA influence. It does so by providing an integrative approach to conceptualize and specify IPA influence on IGO policy-making in a comparative manner. In *methodological* terms, we develop a measurement scheme for IPA influence that can be applied to identify bureaucratic influence in individual cases of policy change. With this measurement heuristic, it becomes possible to assess varying degrees of IPA influence in a comparative manner and to integrate process-tracing elements into a comparative perspective on IPA influence. This measurement scheme allows us to analyze cases with both positive and negative instances of IPA influence and to assess whether the explanation of the occurrence of successful influence differs from the explanation of its absence. The *empirical contribution* is related to our comparative empirical assessment and systematic connection of influence conditions and strategies. We compare 17 concrete cases of intraorganizational decision-making in four international organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Using fsQCA, we are able to clarify under which conditions policy influence by international secretariats takes place and under which it does not. Furthermore, we conducted two case studies to illustrate varying influence strategies international bureaucrats use.

In the next section, we revisit the debates in the study of international bureaucratic influence, while section 3 lays out the development of the conceptualization and operationalization of bureaucratic influence. In section 4, we then present the empirical findings of the project. Section 5 concludes and provides an outlook on future research.

### **State of the Art and Research Gaps**

Questions about how IPAs influence policy-making in general and how they affect policy outputs in particular dominate current research agendas (see Knill and Bauer, 2016; Margulis, 2018; Xu and Weller, 2018; Bayerlein et al, 2020; Thorvaldsdottir et al, 2021). Observing and explaining international bureaucratic influence in a comparative and disciplined manner thus lies at the core of the research puzzles that scholars presently attempt to solve. Because of the general trade-off between analytic depth and breadth, empirical research on IPA policy influence can be generally distinguished by considering whether it focuses primarily on the conditions or the mechanisms of influence.

With regard to conditions, the literature identifies different explanatory factors that affect the capacity of an IPA to influence policy-making, among which functional factors, power-related factors, and organizational factors figure as most relevant. Functional factors are related to the underlying policy (or the initial problem). It is argued, for instance, that a bureaucracy wields more influence where complex technical problems are concerned (Xu and Weller, 2004; Bohne, 2010) and states depend on bureaucratic expertise to solve them (Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014). Power-related factors, by contrast, concern the policy preferences of the most important member states and stakeholders (Steinberg, 2009; Copelovitch, 2010; Urpelainen, 2012). While some scholars study power-related factors under the term “politicization” (see Elsig, 2010), others frame them as a major aspect of “political salience” (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b: 334). Overall, however, there is a general

consensus that strong political preferences are associated with less bureaucratic influence and that the administration cannot exert influence against the clearly articulated will of the states that make up an IGO's "governing coalition" ((Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b: 334).

Finally, some studies suggest that organizational features related to IGO design and competencies (such as executive structures, administrative resources, and organizational competencies) are relevant explanatory factors for IPA influence. In particular, scholars studying (potential) bureaucratic influence across organizations, and thus focusing on the IPA as the central unit of analysis, have identified certain organizational prerequisites as relevant for the explanation of IGO outputs and behavior (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b; Trondal, 2011; Weinlich, 2014; Kassim et al, 2017). For instance, autonomy and independence are often conceptualized and operationalized using bureaucratic characteristics, which, it is argued, allow IPAs to act independently from member states (Haftel and Thompson, 2006; Brown, 2010; Bauer and Ege, 2016; Heldt, 2017). Overall, however, systematically studying the impact of (formal and informal) organizational factors on IPA influence across cases is not very prominent in contemporary empirical works. By contrast, organizational features are more commonly the focus of in-depth policy studies, where such features are conceptualized as causal mechanisms through which IPA influence operates during the policy process.

In these case studies, the mechanisms behind successful IPA influence constitute the center of scholarly interest. Successful influence is often attributed to the characteristics of the administration itself (Mayntz, 1978: 82; Xu and Weller, 2008: 39–43; Nay, 2011). Scholars emphasize that IPAs are able to classify information, fix meanings, and diffuse norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). It is especially their superior moral authority and expertise that significantly enhance IPAs' power. According to this perspective, bureaucratic authority—such as the perceived expert status of the IPA and its professional experience, control over information, and neutrality—is considered the most important mechanism through which IPAs influence policy output (see Busch and Liese,

2017; Liese and Heinzl, this volume). A prominent research strategy is to trace influence back to crucial individuals within the organization who, by acting as policy entrepreneurs, are able to promote change, eventually changing the content of the final output (Haas, 1964; Kamradt-Scott, 2010; Nay, 2011; Knill and Bauer, 2016; Jörgens et al, 2017; Skovgaard, 2017). Since IPAs usually lack coercive means to exert influence, they must resort to their knowledge-brokering, capacity-building, and negotiation-facilitation capacities (Biermann et al, 2009: 47; Jinnah, 2010; Nay, 2012: 59) to develop appropriate strategies for influence.

Although recent research has contributed to this debate by taking stock of formal and informal administrative patterns (see, for example, Trondal et al, 2012; Bauer et al, 2017; Knill et al, 2019), a systematic empirical analysis that links administrative patterns to IGO policy-making and IPA influence is still missing. What is more, findings of different case studies are often contradictory and biased toward one end of the influence continuum. As a consequence, “many current accounts either dismiss secretariats as faceless clerks, concerned chiefly with convening debates among states, or lionize them through empirical descriptions of influence” (Manulak, 2016: 2). One of the main reasons for these contradictory findings is that most IPA research is characterized by a focus on single instances of influence and by a bias toward “revealing that IPAs are successful in achieving influence but do not contrast these successes with failures” (Busch, 2014: 57). This not only makes the occurrence of IPA influence appear more common than it actually is but also biases the empirical assessment of a theory of IPA influence (see Mahoney and Goertz, 2004). One of the few studies that considers a negative case of influence, Eckhard, Patz, and Schmidt (2018: 2), highlights “the dysfunctional effects of an absence of bureaucratic influence.”

In sum, scholars have collected evidence for the claim that international bureaucracies can be powerful actors who are able to use their central position within the organization, their informational advantage, and their authority vis-à-vis member states to influence IGO actions and decisions. However, while the causal mechanisms through which IPAs have influenced

policy-making in particular cases are relatively well understood, the conditions under which this influence occurs (and their relative importance in terms of explanatory power) are still a matter of academic controversy (Widerberg and van Laerhoven, 2014: 304). Previous studies have—often inductively—identified several factors that might enable influence to occur (see, for example, Liese and Weinlich, 2006: 515). Yet neither a more consistent theory of IPA influence nor an integrative approach that allows for the analysis of several explanatory factors under a common theoretical framework has yet emerged.

### **Studying the Consequences of Bureaucratic Autonomy**

When studying the role of IGOs in policy-making, it is important to keep in mind that IGOs exert both service and program functions (Cox and Jacobson, 1973: 5) and that the actual share of either of the two varies substantially between IGOs and over time. The service function includes any form of development assistance or technical cooperation that the IPA offers to individual stakeholders, whereas the program function refers to norm-setting activities that are more closely related to the traditional understanding of policy-making. Thus, when applying a definition of influence that puts policy content center stage, it is these norm-setting (often regulatory) activities of an IGO that are of particular concern. Accordingly, we understand bureaucratic influence as a particular aspect of an IGO decision that can be attributed to the presence and specific behavior of the IPA. We start from the assumption that successful IPA influence requires the existence of explicit administrative preferences in favor of a particular policy option, as well as efforts on the part of the administration to justify or defend this option. Moreover, there needs to be a congruence between these IPA preferences and the final policy output (Ege et al, 2019: 13) that can be traced back to the specific influence strategies applied.

We conceive of “bureaucratic influence” as that particular aspect of a policy output that can be attributed to the presence or specific behavior of the administration. It is based on

the counterfactual reasoning that if the administration had not been there (or had not acted the way it did), the result would have been different (see, for example, Busch, 2014). Following Biermann et al (2009: 41), IPA influence is thus “the sum of all effects observable for, and attributable to, an international bureaucracy” (see also Liese and Weinlich, 2006: 504).

### **A Theoretical Framework for a Condition-Based Analysis of IPA Influence**

The literature identified a variety of conditions under which IPAs are influential (Eckhard and Ege, 2016). Synthesizing the research discussed above and considering research on policy problems (Peters, 2005; Thomann et al, 2019), we focus our analysis on three factors that we argue are particularly important conditions enabling IPAs to successfully engage in strategies of bureaucratic influence: the complexity of policy problems, political contestation, and bureaucratic autonomy.

#### **(Programmatic) Complexity**

Policy problems vary with regard to the capacities that are required to address them (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b; Thomann et al, 2019). Although IGO decision makers receive policy-related support from their constituents (for example, governments, permanent missions, and social partner associations), this expertise is not always sufficient to adequately address the problem at hand, especially if it is programmatically complex (Peters, 2005).

Programmatic complexity denotes the degree to which a policy is demanding or difficult to address because of its underlying requirements for context-specific knowledge or technical expertise. Under such circumstances, members of the governing coalition rely on the IPA for policy solutions and expertise (Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014; Busch and Liese, 2017).

Examples of policy problems that are characterized by high programmatic complexity are those that require comparative knowledge of individual country contexts or the development of effective solutions that work across contexts. The need for a particular kind of knowledge

that results from such a programmatically complex policy problem creates opportunities structures that the IPA may (or may not) use to eventually influence the underlying decision.

### **Contestation**

Whether the IPA can influence policy-making depends also on the policy preferences of the members of the governing coalition. After the initial delegation of competences, however, governing coalitions are highly volatile (Haas, 1964: 385). Thus, while the general salience of a policy issue for IGO stakeholders is important (see Cox and Jacobson, 1973), a certain degree of post-delegation contestation can be considered a necessary condition for the IPA to exert influence by collaborating with like-minded stakeholders (Dijkstra, 2017). Contestation is usually related to the solution of a problem but can—as the climate change debate illustrates—sometimes even concern the definition of the problem itself. While IPAs may choose to respond conciliatorily or adversely (Heinkelmann-Wild and Jankauskas, 2020), it is the contestation of an issue that opens up room for maneuver in the first place. If, by contrast, all relevant stakeholders had already agreed on a solution, the IPA would be unable to influence the output.

### **Bureaucratic Autonomy**

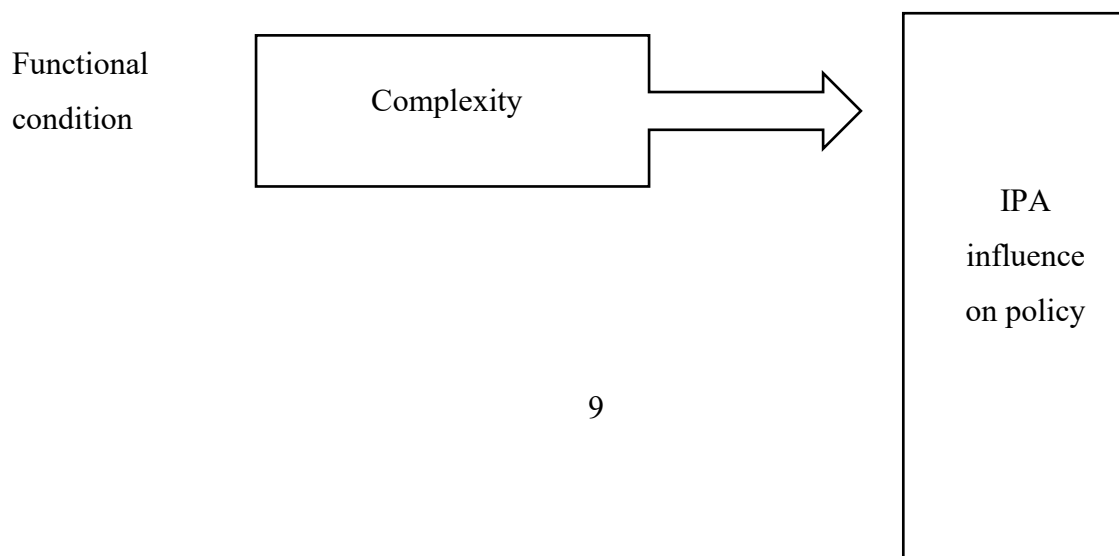
Besides the administrative capacity requirements of a policy and the contestation of the issue, there are also characteristics of the administration itself that may explain when an IPA is able to exert influence. The secretariat's autonomy from member states, especially, constitutes an important resource that, under specific conditions, can be used to influence policy (Weinlich, 2014: 62). Organizational autonomy provides the administration with a certain amount of room for maneuver that goes beyond its formally delegated discretion (Carpenter, 2001). During policy preparation and application, this autonomy can enable administrative agency and entrepreneurial individual behavior, which may eventually find its expression in a

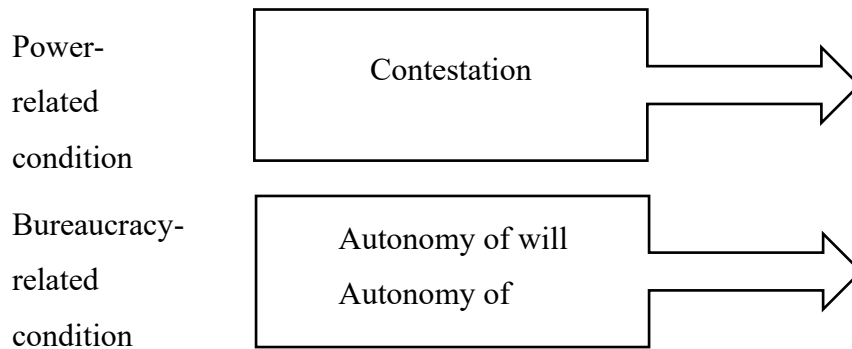


particularly designed policy that would not have occurred without the involvement of such an autonomous IPA. The literature distinguishes various kinds of autonomy (Verhoest et al, 2004). In the context of IPAs, it has been argued that especially structural features that are related to executive characteristics, administrative resources and organizational competences determine whether an organization can act independently of its members (Haftel and Thompson, 2006; Brown, 2010; Trondal, 2011; Hooghe and Marks, 2015; Heldt and Schmidtke, 2017). Based on the view that autonomy “means, above all, to be able to translate one’s own preferences into authoritative actions” (Maggetti and Verhoest, 2014: 239), an administration requires both the capacity to develop autonomous preferences (autonomy of will) and the ability to translate these preferences into action (autonomy of action) (see Caughey et al, 2009). To yield influence, it is expected that both autonomy of will and autonomy of action are important conditions. Based on preliminary results (Bauer and Ege, 2017), we expect that autonomy of will is particularly important to enable IPA influence on policy adoption because it captures the capacity of the administration to provide and defend independent programmatic options. In contrast, autonomy of action is related to both administrative powers and resources and should thus be more important to explain IPA influence during policy application.

Figure 1 summarizes the conditions and the four empirical factors that are expected to explain the occurrence and non-occurrence of IPA influence on public policy outputs:

**Figure 1:** Summary of a Theoretical Framework for IPA Influence





### Analyzing the Conditions that Lead to IPA Influence

We use fsQCA to formally evaluate the expected interactions between autonomy, context factors, and IPA influence in our dataset of 17 cases. QCA is a set-theoretical method, which is increasingly applied to the comparative study of complex public policy phenomena and is especially suited for the analysis of datasets with an intermediate number of cases (Rihoux et al, 2011; Schneider and Wagemann, 2012: 12). Shaped by the back-and-forth between ideas and empirics, QCA allows us to focus on the causal complexity and conditionality behind IPA influence. This entails the assumption of causal asymmetry, the idea that occurrence of influence can have a different explanation other than its absence. What is more, “instead of assuming isolated effects of single variables, the assumption of *conjunctural causation* foresees the effect of a single condition unfolding only in combination with other . . . conditions” (Schneider and Wagemann, 2013: 78, emphasis in original). Hence, it takes account of the fact that a phenomenon (outcome) can be produced by various combinations of the same explanatory factors (conditions) (Rihoux et al, 2011: 12). Since we seek to disentangle the effect of bureaucratic autonomy on IPA influence and its interplay with functional and power-related factors, QCA is a particularly suitable method for this analytical step. QCA treats conditions and outcome as sets in which every policy case has a certain membership. Fuzzy sets allow for degrees of membership scores that can vary between full membership (score 1; for example, fully successful IPA influence) and full non-membership

(score 0; for example, no IPA influence). A set membership below the crossover point of 0.5 indicates that the outcome or the respective condition was partly or fully absent, whereas a set membership above 0.5 indicates that the outcome or the condition was partly or fully present.

Consequently, the use of QCA as an analytical tool enables us not only to gather in-depth insight in our selected policy cases but also to formulate generalizable statements about the autonomy-influence nexus (Rihoux et al, 2011: 15-16).

### **Operationalization of Influence Conditions**

When operationalizing the explanatory factors, we included autonomy of will and autonomy of action as two separate conditions in the analysis because we expect the effects of the two sub-concepts on the outcome to differ. The respective data on the autonomy of will and autonomy of action is already available from the results of our analysis presented in the previous section. To operationalize the functional condition, we coded the technical complexity of the policy at hand.

A policy is considered highly complex (coded 1) if access to context-specific knowledge or technical expertise is essential to address the underlying problem. Such knowledge or expertise includes, for example, comparative statistical data, knowledge of individual country contexts, development of effective solutions that work across contexts (owing to the transboundary nature of the problem), or the requirement of multisectoral expertise (that is, agriculture and fisheries; garments and electronics). We considered a policy being rather complex (coded 0.66) if access to context-specific knowledge or technical expertise is useful but not essential. Rather low complexity (coded 0.33) is attributed to a policy if for certain dimensions of the issue, context-specific knowledge or technical expertise is helpful but overall the problem is not very complex. For policy problems with a low level of complexity (coded 0), no context-specific knowledge or technical expertise is necessary,

because, for example, it was a purely diplomatic question or obvious how the problem could be addressed.

The power-related condition is operationalized by taking into account the political contestation of the policy at hand. To do so, we identified the most visible governments during the decision-making process, noting who was in favor of and who opposed a particular solution. Furthermore, we took into account high politicization in the media, social media, or lobbying from NGOs. According to this information, we developed an indicator of contestation, which is coded 0 if, although individual measures might have been (partly) contested, there was a common understanding of how the underlying problem could and should be addressed. A policy is considered contested (coded 1) if the political discourse surrounding a policy output is characterized by strong and possibly heterogeneous preferences among the governing coalition regarding possible solutions. This may have resulted in difficult and long negotiations or consultations and requires a contestation of the goals, not only of the measures.

### **Measurement of International Bureaucratic Influence**

The point of departure for operationalizing IPA influence and an eventual evaluation of the different conditions is that the administration needs to be involved in the (negotiation) process leading to the policy output. The IPAs (in the form of individual IGO staff members) could have been involved, for example, in the development and/or implementation of a particular policy by providing procedural or policy-relevant expertise to decision makers, policy addressees, and/or policy targets. This requires active involvement during the policy process that exceeds the mere provision of a passive conference service (such as booking accommodation, providing IT infrastructures, translation, and so on).

If the IPA was not involved, this policy would be considered an irrelevant case that does not help us to test the different conditions (Mahoney and Goertz, 2004). Declaring a case

“irrelevant” should not be done lightly as it introduces further scope conditions to the findings. Applied to the present case, this means that the results are valid only for situations in which the IPA was involved in the first place.

If IPA involvement is given as a scope condition, we argue that observing IPA influence depends on three essential elements: (1) the existence of explicit administrative preferences in favor of a particular policy option; (2) efforts on the part of the IPA to justify or defend this option (openly or behind the scenes); and (3) the congruence between an IPA’s preferences and the final policy output. If all these three elements are present, the case at hand can be considered an instance of successful bureaucratic influence. Adding analytical depth and providing an assessment of the “degree of preference attainment” (Dür, 2008: 566), we distinguish between partial preference attainment and full preference attainment in order to differentiate “rather successful” from “fully successful influence.” These elements not only provide us with observable implications for influence to be considered successful (that is, all elements need to be present) but also allow for a more nuanced assessment of different degrees of influence.

In our analysis, we follow a process-oriented approach on the one hand, where scholars scrutinize influence attempts and individual preferences, access to decision makers, decision makers’ responses, and the degree to which preferences are reflected in outcomes. On the other hand, the approach of comparing preferences with the content of policy outputs draws on the idea that a conservative and realistic observation should, by definition and irrespective of the underlying mechanisms, manifest itself in the outcome (for these two approaches, see Dür, 2008: 562–69). The following table summarizes the different elements used to operationalize IPA policy influence.

**Table 1: Measuring IPA Influence**

Constitutive element	Description	Influence	Possible scores
Policy preferences	The IPA expressed clear preferences in favor of a specific policy option.	No influence	0
Policy preferences + Entrepreneurialism	The IPA expressed clear preferences in favor of a specific policy option, and there are visible efforts to defend this option.	Rather unsuccessful influence	0.33
Policy preferences + Entrepreneurialism + Congruence (partly)	The IPA was able to achieve an observable effect but only parts of its preferences are reflected in the policy output.	Rather successful influence	0.66
Policy preferences + Entrepreneurialism + Congruence (fully)	The IPA was able to achieve an observable effect and its preferences are reflected in the policy output to a major degree.	Fully successful influence	1

### Case Selection

Our research approach is inspired by what has been referred to as structured, focused comparison (George and Bennett, 2005: 65–124). The interviews and secondary data we gathered are defined and standardized by a set of general analytical categories (conditions and policy outputs), which are empirically linked through mechanistic processes (strategies). This allows a structured comparison. To identify policy cases, we applied a two-step case selection, starting at the organizational level and then narrowing down to individual policies. During both steps, the selection criteria are based on a “most similar systems design” (Przeworski and Teune, 1982: 32), which allows us to hold a number of organizational and policy-related factors constant and focus on selected explanatory factors (that is, influence strategies) that can be expected to vary across cases. Since we are particularly interested in the autonomy-influence nexus, we selected IGOs with different configurations of structural autonomy (that is, of administrative cohesion, administrative differentiation, administrative power, and resources).

On the other hand, the organizational context factors that may also affect IPA influence are held constant. We selected organizations from the same issue area (all IGOs are active in the field of social regulation) with a similar age (all IGOs are older than 50 years), and with equality-based voting rights for each member state (all IGOs are committed to the one-state-one-vote principle).

To identify organizations that are characterized by a high diversity of autonomy-related features, we chose from Ege's (2017) four ideal-typical configurations of autonomy: autonomous bureaucracies, ideational bureaucracies, politicized bureaucracies, and managers of the status quo.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, we selected UNESCO, the ILO, the FAO, and the WHO as the empirical context in which we conduct the condition-based analysis of IPA influence. As shown in Table 2, both UNESCO and the ILO can be characterized as managers of the status quo since they show neither autonomy of will nor autonomy of action. Managers of status quo are expected to be relatively passive during policy-making and rather provide technical assistance or monitor tasks, which are clearly specified by their political principals. The FAO is an ideational bureaucracy that shows autonomy of will but lacks autonomy of action. This type of bureaucracy is expected to be especially influential in the early stages of policy-making, particularly in problem definition and policy initiation. The WHO can be characterized as politicized bureaucracy. This type has no autonomy of will but a strong capacity for autonomous action and is expected to exert influence in the later stages of the policy cycle, especially in the application of organizational decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> In our previous sample, we included the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which can be classified as autonomous bureaucracy. Because of a low response rate in our online survey, however, we decided to not consider it further.

**Table 2:** Bureaucratic Autonomy Configurations and Ideal-Type Correspondence of Four Ipas

IPA of	COH	DIFF	WILL	POW	RES	ACTION	TYPE
	AND			AND			
UNESCO	0	1	0	1	0	0	manager of status quo
ILO	0	1	0	0	1	0	manager of status quo
FAO	1	1	1	1	0	0	ideational bureaucracy
WHO	0	1	0	1	1	1	politicized bureaucracy

Source: Ege, 2017.

The next step was to identify suitable policy cases by means of an online survey among IPA staff members and stakeholders (permanent representations and transnational actors [TNAs] involved in the respective issue area) of the four IGOs. Since we expect bureaucratic policy influence to vary depending on whether the policy output is an institutional or a substantive policy, we also asked about both kinds of policies separately. Policies were selected first by grouping answers according to the IO’s area of activity. Second, similar and related answers were summarized and counted. Third, follow-up research on those answers that were most frequently mentioned was conducted and we dismissed cases that could not be linked to a concrete decision in one of the decision-making bodies of the four IGOs. Cases where the IPA has decided or acted without any involvement of member state representatives or where the IPA was not involved at all were considered irrelevant cases because they do not provide information that would help us testing the conditions of IPA influence (Ege et al, 2019; see Mahoney and Goertz, 2004 for the more general argument). Furthermore, decisions that were taken more than ten years ago were not considered either,



since they would be too difficult to reconstruct in follow-up interviews. According to this procedure, we selected the 17 policies shown in Table 3.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 3:** Selected Policies

ILO	WHO	UNESCO	FAO
Resolution on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains 2016 (ILO_GSC)	Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 (WHO_NCD)	Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education 2015	Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management 2017
Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work 2019 (ILO_CENT)	Universal Health Coverage: Resolution on Community Health Workers 2019 (WHO_CHW)	2015 Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries 2014 (FAO_SSF)
Forced Labour (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation 2014 (ILO_FL)	WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies 2015 (WHO_CFE)	Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education 2019	Agreement on Port State Measures 2009 (FAO_PSM)
The Governance Initiative: Reform of the Governing Body 2011 (ILO_GB)	Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors 2016 (WHO_FENSA)	UNESCO (Revised) Comprehensive Partnership Strategy 2019 (UNESCO_PART)	FAO's Strategy on Climate Change 2017 (FAO_CCS)
			Rome Declaration on Nutrition 2014

## Empirical Findings

Table 4 shows the different combinations of conditions and the outcome that we observed in our cases. Values of 1 indicate that a factor is more present than absent, while values of 0 indicate that the factor is rather or fully absent (for presentation purposes, differences in degree between 0 and 1 are not shown in this table). The first three configurations depict FAO decisions, characterized by high autonomy of will and low autonomy of action, which without exception resulted in high levels of IPA influence. Next, we see WHO decisions, with low autonomy of will but high autonomy of action, which resulted in high influence when complexity and contestation were low but low influence where complexity and contestation

<sup>2</sup> Since we could not find suitable interview partners for every policy we had selected based on this procedure, we had to replace two of the preselected policies.

were high. Lastly, we see three configurations with low autonomy, capturing UNESCO and ILO decisions, with varying degrees of IPA influence (Ege et al, 2021b).

**Table 4:** Truth Table

AWILL	ACTION	COMPLEX	CONTEST	Cases
1	0	1	0	<b>FAO_SOILM, FAO_PSM, FAO_CCS</b>
1	0	1	1	<b>FAO_SSF</b>
1	0	0	1	<b>FAO_FOOD</b>
0	1	1	1	<b>WHO_NCD, WHO_FENSA</b>
0	1	0	0	WHO_CFE, WHO_CHW
0	0	1	1	<b>ILO_GSC, ILO_CENT</b>
0	0	1	0	<b>UNESCO_HERIT, UNESCO_HE, ILO_GB</b>
0	0	0	0	<b>UNESCO_ALE, UNESCO_PART, ILO_FL</b>

Note: Bold: case displays high levels of influence; not bold: case displays low levels of influence. The raw data can be found in Table A1 in the annex.

**Analyses of Necessity and Sufficiency**

The most notable finding is that in all cases where IPAs exercised low levels of influence, IPAs also had low levels of autonomy of will. This indicates that low levels of autonomy of will are a necessary condition for low levels of IPA influence. From the perspective of the political principals, this implies that limiting the ability of the administration to form its own distinct preferences is adequate to prevent it from influencing international organizations’ (IOs’) policy outputs. At the same time, since in only 5 out of 17 cases the IPA experienced high levels of autonomy of will, the relationship between low autonomy of will and low influence, while substantively interesting, is not surprising (empirically trivial) and should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 5:** Sufficient Conditions for High IPA Influence

Solution	M1: AWILL*COMPLEX + AWILL*CONTEST + COMPLEX*CONTEST			→ INFL
<i>Uniquely Covered Cases</i>	FAO_SOILM, FAO_PSM, FAO_CCS;	FAO_FOOD FAO_SSF	ILO_GSC, ILO_CENT; WHO_NCD, WHO_FENSA	
<i>Multiple C.C.</i>				
<i>Consistency</i>	1	0.830	0.864	
<i>PRI</i>	1	0.795	0.829	
<i>Raw coverage</i>	0.311	0.156	0.405	
<i>Unique coverage</i>	0.218	0.063	0.312	
			<i>Solution consistency</i>	0.877
			<i>Solution PRI</i>	0.860
			<i>Solution coverage</i>	0.687

Note: FAO\_SSF is a multiple covered case; it is a member of all three paths because it displays the configuration AWILL\*COMPLEX\*CONTEST. Read as: \* = “and”, + = “or”, ~ = “not”, → = “is sufficient for.”

Table 5 suggests that all the IPAs studied can, in general, influence IO policy-making. This means that in cases that are both contested and complex, even IPAs that lack autonomy of will stand a chance to influence organizational policy outputs. If one of these two conditions (either political contestation or issue complexity) is absent, however, autonomy—in the variant of bureaucratic autonomy of will—becomes the decisive factor. Accordingly, in highly contested cases (see, for example, FAO\_SSF), autonomy of will enables the secretariat to actively advocate for a certain outcome and mobilize relevant actors. The IPA is thus able to steer the process actively and entrepreneurially and, not least, can bridge divides between the negotiating parties. In scenarios with high complexity (see FAO\_CCS), autonomy of will and the related research capacities may allow the secretariat to successfully tackle the issue and to strategically use its expertise, for example by actively framing information or the broader discourse and selectively present problems/or their solutions or by preparing the first policy draft. Other cases that are covered by this solution path show that this result is not restricted to inward-oriented organizational decisions—such as administrative reforms—but can be observed in more substantial decisions such as soil management (FAO\_SOILM) or shipping regulations (FAO\_PSM). In sum, when the policy issue was not simultaneously

complex and contested, then high levels of autonomy of will led the international secretariat to exert significant influence. Autonomy of action, by contrast, appears to be irrelevant for high IPA influence in the analyzed cases.

As table 6 shows, levels of autonomy of will—together with different combinations of issue contestation and low complexity—are conducive to low levels of IPA influence.

**Table 6:** Sufficient Conditions for Low IPA Influence

Solution	~ AWILL* ~ AACTION*COMPLEX*~CONTEST + ~ AWILL*AACTION *~ COMPLEX* ~CONTEST → ~INFL		
<i>Uniquely Covered Cases</i>	<b>UNESCO_HERIT</b> ; UNESCO_HE, ILO_GB	WHO_CFE; WHO_CHW	
<i>Consistency</i>	0.838	0.802	
<i>PRI</i>	0.756	0.754	
<i>Raw cov.</i>	0.261	0.210	
<i>Unique cov.</i>	0.261	0.210	
		<i>Solution consistency</i>	0.822
		<i>Solution PRI</i>	0.755
		<i>Solution coverage</i>	0.471

Note: “deviant case consistency in kind” displayed in bold. Read as: \* = “and”, + = “or”, ~ = “not”, → = “is sufficient for”.

We also conducted post-QCA case studies to better understand, first, what factors were at play in cases that our solution terms could *not* explain and, second, why some cases deviate from our solution term. These in-depth case comparisons reveal that stakeholder trust in the administration and the salience of a decision for the entire group of stakeholders are additional explanatory factors. More information and a more detailed discussion of the analysis (including descriptive statistics and diagnostics) and the post-QCA case studies can be found in Ege et al (2021b).

**Analysis of Bureaucratic Influence Strategies**

We conducted two case studies to identify relevant bureaucratic influence strategies—tracing the influence of the secretariat of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the “global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases” and the influence of the International Labour Office on the “resolution concerning decent work in global supply

chains.” Our analysis revealed that international bureaucrats do have policy preferences and work strategically to achieve them (for a more detailed analysis, see Ege et al, 2021a). In both cases, which were characterized by high levels of political contestation and programmatic complexity (see table 4), the secretariats were able to influence the policy output by using a combination of expertise-based and process-based strategies. Both IPAs used the expertise-related strategy of framing to raise awareness, overcome opposition, and make recommendations. Furthermore, they were both actively involved in putting the topic on the IOs’ agendas. Due to its tripartite structure and the general constellation of interest, however, the ILO secretariat was much more cautious in pushing for its preferred policy output, especially during the negotiation process. In contrast to the WHO secretariat, which employed several process-related strategies in close cooperation with like-minded states and the chair, the office was eager to appear impartial. It could, however, make strategic use of its room for maneuver in the preparation of the draft resolution. The fact that both IPAs were able to use a combination of knowledge-based and procedural strategies even in highly contested and politicized negotiations suggests that IPAs may have an advantage over national bureaucracies, which (in similar constellations) are unlikely to be able to rely on procedural strategies to the extent that IPAs can.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have conceptualized bureaucratic influence as an aspect of a policy output that can be attributed to the presence and specific behavior of the IPA. To obtain a more nuanced assessment of different degrees of influence and observable implications for influence to be considered successful, we have defined three constitutive elements of successful IPA influence: (1) the involvement of the IPA in the preparation of the decision, (2) the existence of explicit administrative preferences in favor of a particular policy option

and efforts on the part of the IPA to justify or defend this option, and (3) the congruence between an IPA's preferences and the final policy output.

This perspective allows us to conceptualize, specify, and measure IPA influence on IGO policy-making in a comparative manner. Based on these suggestions, we have presented a measurement scheme for IPA influence that can be applied to identify the bureaucratic influence in individual cases of policy change. With this measurement heuristic, it becomes possible to integrate process-tracing elements into a comparative perspective on IPA influence.

Following both a condition-based and process-based approach to the analysis of IPA influence allowed us to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions under which influence occurs and to demonstrate the underlying causal relationship between those conditions and IPA influence. Our results indicate that the level of autonomy of will is systematically linked to bureaucratic influence. Hence, the potential for bureaucratic autonomy makes a difference in the policy-making of IGOs. In scenarios with high contestation only, autonomy of will helps the IPA to actively structure the process and apply procedural strategies of influence. In scenarios with high complexity only, autonomy of will enables the IPA to make use of its ability to develop independent policy solutions and rely on expertise-based influence strategies. Surprisingly, autonomy of action appears irrelevant for high levels of IPA influence.

Our findings provide insights into the influence potential and strategies under different constellations of context conditions. To help future research with regard to which types and degrees of influence to expect and to put the current results into perspective, we developed expectations with regard to varying influence potential and strategies under different constellations of context conditions. Future research could focus on the analysis of those different scenarios to obtain a more complete picture of IPA influence.

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## Annex

**Table A1:** Raw Data Matrix

<b>Case</b>	<b>AWILL</b>	<b>AACTION</b>	<b>COMPLEX</b>	<b>CONTEST</b>	<b>INFLUENCE</b>
WHO FENSA	0	1	1	1	0.66
WHO CFE	0	1	0.33	0	0.33
WHO CHW	0	1	0.33	0	0
WHO NCD	0	1	1	1	1
ILO GSC	0	0	1	1	1
ILO CENT	0	0	1	1	0.66
ILO FL	0	0	0.33	0	0
ILO GB	0	0	0.66	0	0
FAO SSF	1	0	0.66	1	1
FAO PSM	1	0	0.66	0	0
FAO CCS	1	0	1	0	1