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International public administrations: a critique

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ABSTRACT

Recent decades have seen an expansion and proliferation of administrative bodies at the international level. An emerging literature on 'international public administrations' attempts to conceptualize and theorize these bodies, by applying a public administration perspective to international organizations. This essay critically examines how this literature addresses key issues relating to international administrative bodies: bureaucratic autonomy, administrative behavior and policy-making influence. It argues that existing theorizing suffers from two important weaknesses: concepts are poorly developed and not firmly rooted in public administration scholarship, and the literature pays insufficient attention to international administrations' relationship with politics. The essay proposes an alternative theoretical framework for understanding international public administrations, centered on the notion of 'public service bargains'. Drawing on this perspective, the essay indicates promising avenues for research on international administrations focusing on expertise, bureaucratic representation and multi-level public service bargains.

KEYWORDS International public administrations; international bureaucracies; international organizations; public service bargains; political-administrative relationship

Introduction

The increasingly transnational character of societal challenges has led to an expansion of international governance structures. An important element of this development is the rise of administrative bodies at the international level, which have grown in size, number and importance. While the European Commission is the most prominent example, other bodies include the United Nations Secretariat and the Staff of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The growth of these bodies has challenged existing theories of international relations. Traditionally, international organizations were seen as arenas for power struggles or cooperation between states, in line with dominant realist and liberal theories. The secretariats of international organizations

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were seen as little more than support bodies for negotiations between member states. Yet, in recent decades, some international relations scholars have argued that international organizations should be regarded as actors in their own right, which act with some degree of autonomy from member states and may exert an independent influence on global public policies (e.g., Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 2004; Chwieroth 2009). These studies highlight how organizational features of international organizations matter for their behavior and influence.

These insights have inspired a nascent literature on the administrative aspects of international organizations, discussed under the headings of 'international bureaucracies', 'compound bureaucracies' and 'international public administrations' (Bauer et al. 2017; Knill and Bauer 2016; Trondal et al. 2010; Xu and Weller 2008). This literature adopts a public administration perspective to conceptualize key aspects of international administrative bodies, such as their autonomy, behavior and influence. This is undoubtedly a worthwhile endeavor. Whereas international relations scholars have neglected the administrative features of international organizations, public administration scholars have paid scant attention to what happens when public administration goes international. Scholarship on international public administrations thus brings an increasingly important class of public organizations into public administration research.

However, so far, this literature has only partly succeeded in providing a foundation for public administration research at the international level. First, the theorizing of key dimensions of international public administrations has remained under-developed and not firmly rooted in existing public administration scholarship. Second, the literature has paid insufficient attention to international administrations' relationship with politics, traditionally a key concern for public administration scholars (Aberbach et al. 1981; Peters 1988). Without a proper understanding of the role of politics or the political regime within which bureaucracies exist one can hardly appreciate the functioning of public administrations, including international administrations.

The goal of this essay is to contribute to public administration research on international organizations by critically reviewing existing literature on international public administrations (hereafter IPAs) and by suggesting an alternative theoretical approach for understanding these bodies. We first examine how existing literature deals with three key topics relating to IPAs: bureaucratic autonomy, administrative behavior and policy-making influence. We review contributions that seek to conceptualize and theorize international organizations as public administrations or bureaucracies. While the review is not exhaustive, we believe it covers central scholars and arguments in the debate about IPAs. We then propose an alternative theoretical framework for studying IPAs, centered on the notion of 'public service bargains' (Hood and Lodge 2006). Drawing on this perspective, we indicate some specific

avenues for future research on international administrations, concerning expertise, bureaucratic representation and multi-level bargains.¹

International public administrations

Bureaucratic autonomy

Bureaucratic autonomy refers to the independence of administrative organizations from the influence of other political actors. In international organizations, it usually refers to the independence of the permanent secretariat from the member states. The notion of autonomy is crucial to the whole idea of researching IPAs: If the behavior of international secretariats merely reflects member state preferences, there is little reason to study these organizations. Indeed, the claim that international organizations enjoy autonomy was at the core of Barnett and Finnemore's seminal article on the power and pathologies of international organizations, where they argue that 'many IOs exercise power autonomously in ways unintended and unanticipated by member states at their creation' (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 699).

Bureaucratic autonomy has also been central in recent efforts to theorize IPAs. Bauer and Ege have proposed a conceptualization of the bureaucratic autonomy of international secretariats, which distinguishes between 'the ability of international secretariats to develop autonomous bureaucratic preferences (autonomy of will) and their capacity to transform these preference into action (autonomy of action)' (Bauer and Ege 2016: 1020; see also Ege 2017). They argue that whereas autonomy of will is determined by the cohesion of the administration and its capacity for differentiation from its political principals, autonomy of action reflects statutory powers and administrative resources (pp. 1024–25). However, this conceptualization has some important weaknesses. First, the argument that autonomy of will and autonomy of action are determined by distinct factors is questionable. For instance, administrative resources such as personnel resources may influence not only the capacity for action but also the ability to develop autonomous preferences (Carpenter 2001; Chwieroth 2009). Similarly, organizational factors like leadership may condition the ability to form independent preferences *and* to act on these preferences.

Moreover, Bauer and Ege's conceptualization is not firmly rooted in relevant public administration debates about the autonomy of bureaucratic organizations (Carpenter 2001; Hammond and Knott 1996). One conceptual issue that receives little consideration is the key distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* autonomy (Yesilkagit and Van Thiel 2008). The distinction captures that a public organization does not always enjoy the formal autonomy delegated to it by politicians. Public organizations may have been given great formal autonomy, e.g., if they were designed as independent agencies. Yet, the real

autonomy that public organizations exercise often reflect the specific tasks they fulfill or the capacity of their leadership to manage unforeseen events.

Another issue that is mentioned but not well captured by the conceptual framework is how bureaucratic autonomy evolves over time. Over time, bureaucratic organizations take on a life of their own, which involves the development of distinct organizational goals, preferences and culture (Selznick 1949). Barnett and Finnemore (1999) allude to this when saying that international bodies can act in ways ‘unintended and unanticipated’ by their founders. Scholars often point to this kind of ‘autonomization’ processes in the European Commission, with the emergence of strong organizational interests and attachment to supranational ideals (Egeberg 2006; Ellinas and Suleiman 2012). But these processes have also been observed in less likely settings: Xu and Weller show how the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) gained considerable policy influence despite its limited formal mandate, based on the accumulation over time of technical expertise and experience with trade issues (Xu and Weller 2008). Public administration scholars have also paid increasing attention to how organizations enhance their autonomy through the establishment of a strong ‘bureaucratic reputation’ (Carpenter 2001) – a notion applicable also to international bodies (Busuioac 2016; Rimkutė 2018).

Administrative behavior

A second central topic in research on IPAs is administrative behavior. Civil servants working for international organizations operate in an environment where they face conflicting pressures: from member states, the international organization itself, interest groups, etc. How, then, do international civil servants act, and what determines their behavior?

Trondal and colleagues have argued that international bureaucracies are characterized by inbuilt tensions between different *behavioral logics* (Trondal et al. 2010). They see administrative behavior as driven by civil servants’ identification with specific ‘roles’, i.e., an attachment to specific principles and actors. In international bureaucracies, officials face competing role expectations. Trondal and colleagues identify four main roles: a Weberian role based on neutrality, administrative rules and attachment to the department; a transnational epistemic role involving reliance on scientific expertise and attachment to transnational expert communities; an intergovernmental role centered on defending national interests; and a supranational role based on allegiance to the international bureaucracy and promotion of supranational interests. The behavior of international civil servants will gravitate towards one or more of these roles. Which role or behavioral logic dominates varies across international bureaucracies, depending on organizational features such as formal structures, recruitment procedures, inter-organizational

relationships and staff characteristics (Trondal et al. 2010: 9; see also Egeberg 2006). This work is a good example of how public administration research can 'go international'. It shows how classic public administration questions about administrative roles and behavior can be addressed in the specific context of international secretariats. Yet, this approach can be criticized for being overly structural. Whether behavior can be 'read off' the structures of an IPA is questionable, given that these bodies face competing organizational concerns and pressures that may be addressed in different ways.

Another concept that has been proposed for understanding behavior in IPAs is *administrative styles* (Knill et al. 2016, 2018). Knill and colleagues have sought to conceptualize administrative styles in international organizations, describing administrative styles as 'the standard operating procedures and routines that characterize the behavior and decision-making of bureaucracies' (Knill et al. 2016: 1059). They differentiate between administrative styles in three phases: policy initiation, where international civil servants can act as 'servants' or 'entrepreneurs'; policy formulation, where they can be 'strategic' or 'satisficing'; and policy implementation, where they can take an 'interventionist' or 'mediating' approach (pp. 1059–61; Knill et al. 2018 offer a slightly different typology). However, this conceptualization is both unclear and unsatisfactory. First, equating administrative styles with standard operating procedures is a conflation of two distinct notions and sits awkwardly with the behaviors described as styles. Is acting as an entrepreneur really a standard operating procedure? Second, the authors do not provide a clear theoretical foundation for the notion of administrative styles.

More substantively, their concept of administrative styles in international organizations focuses narrowly on the administrative end of the political-administrative relationship. This offers a limited view, given that administrative styles are always developed in relation to political principals and other stakeholders. The authors disregard a long tradition of public administration scholarship that has developed concepts and typologies for describing political-administrative relationships. This tradition goes back to Max Weber's bureaucratic model and its norm of neutral civil servants (Weber 1978). Aberbach et al. (1981) later presented four 'images' to describe the variations in political-administrative relationships, where civil servants can be seen as either simply implementing policy, providing facts and knowledge, defending client interests, or participating in policy-making just like politicians. Hood and Lodge's (2006) work on 'public service bargains' offers a fine-grained typology of the bargains that underlie political-administrative relationships (further discussed below). Compared to the conceptualization of Knill and colleagues, this literature provides carefully theorized concepts of administrative behavior that are sensitive to the political context in which civil servants operate. As we will argue later, these concepts are also readily applicable to IPAs.

Policy-making influence

Beyond the autonomy and behavior of international administrations, how much influence do these bodies have on public policies and what determines their influence? The question of influence is crucial for establishing IPAs as important actors in global governance and has repeatedly been addressed in the literature. Barnett and Finnemore argue that international organizations may exercise power independently, and that their power derives from two basic features: 'the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority that they [IOs] embody' and their 'control over technical expertise and information' (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 707). Xu and Weller (2008) argue that the influence of international civil servants depends on various aspects of the structure, competence, legitimacy and culture of the organization. Knill and Bauer (2016), lamenting the lack of systematic concepts for mapping and explaining IPA influence, assert that the varying influence of these bodies 'primarily depends on the tools IPAs have at their disposal' (p. 952). Relying on Hood's taxonomy of governmental resources, they distinguish between 'nodality', 'authority', 'treasure' and 'organization' as sources of influence. A recent review of empirical studies mentions expertise and authority, entrepreneurial activity/leadership and issue characteristics as frequently cited determinants of IPA influence (Eckhard and Ege 2016).

The picture that emerges is rather blurry: What determines the influence of IPAs remains poorly understood and defined. On the one hand, blanket claims about the 'rational-legal authority' of international organizations are hard to pin down and difficult to assess. Is rational-legal authority something an organization has or something it earns? If IPAs draw their influence from the sheer fact of being bureaucracies, why is there so much variation in the influence of these organizations? And how would one examine this kind of argument empirically? On the other hand, compiling laundry lists of factors that may condition influence suggests a lack of a coherent underlying theoretical perspective. If one says that influence is determined by structure, culture, leadership, competence *and* legitimacy, one is really not saying much. It merely raises further questions about which factor or factors are most important, through which mechanisms they determine influence and how they interact.

Research agenda: public service bargains in international public administrations

Although existing work on IPAs has made a significant contribution by highlighting the administrative aspects of international organizations, the literature review has pointed to conceptual and theoretical weaknesses in this literature. Most fundamentally, this work builds on a too limited view of

public administration. Public administration is traditionally the discipline that studies public bureaucracy and its ties to the political and societal environment (Peters 2001; Wilson 1989). Bureaucracy is an inseparable part of the political system, which means that to grasp the functioning of administrative systems one needs to examine politics and administration in conjunction. Understanding the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats is therefore crucial to an account of changes in public administration.

How has the internationalization of policy-making transformed political-administrative relationships? Internationalization has affected both sides of the relationship. On the administrative side, rule-making authority and administrative capacities have been delegated to international organizations and regimes, and national administrations have become interwoven through transgovernmental networks (e.g., in securities or medicines regulation) or even integrated in multi-level administrative systems, such as within the EU (Bauer and Trondal 2015; Slaughter 2004). On the political side, decision-making is no longer confined to national parliaments and executives. National ministers have become increasingly involved in supra- and international policy-making fora, and greater powers have been granted to elected bodies at the international level such as the European Parliament. Yet, internationalization has affected the bureaucratic and political side differently (Yesilkagit 2012). The creation of new administrative structures has seldom been paralleled by new mechanisms for political control of these administrations. The fact that administrative developments have outpaced political ones raises challenges in terms of control and legitimacy (e.g., Bauer and Trondal 2015) and stokes the fear of what Weber called *Beamtenherrschaft*, i.e., unchecked bureaucratic rule.

To understand the consequences of internationalization for political-administrative relationships, we propose a research agenda based on the theoretical framework of ‘public service bargains’.

Public service bargains

The ‘public service bargains’ framework was developed by Hood and Lodge (2006). At the core of this model is the idea that public administrations rest on explicit or implicit agreements between public servants and those they serve, that is, politicians, political parties, citizens and clients. These agreements – which can be codified in law or rest on tacit understandings – are what Hood and Lodge refer to as ‘public service bargains’. The notion of a bargain implies that the relationship between bureaucrats and their political masters is based on an exchange. In a public service bargain, ‘politicians normally expect to gain some degree of political loyalty and competence from bureaucrats or public servants, and those public servants normally expect to gain some assured place in the structure of executive

government, a definite sphere of responsibility and some mixture of tangible and intangible reward' (Hood and Lodge 2006: 7). Yet, exactly which competences or qualities bureaucrats bring to the job, what degree of loyalty is expected, and what responsibilities and rewards they receive in return, varies greatly.

Hood and Lodge distinguish between two main types of bargains: 'agency' bargains and 'trustee' bargains. In agency bargains, public servants are regarded merely as servants of their political masters: they are subject to the control and direction of the political principal and enjoy little autonomy. In trustee bargains, public servants enjoy a more independent role: 'public servants are expected to act as independent judges of the public good ... to some significant extent' and 'possess a domain of autonomy in which they exercise discretion in a way that is not subject to commands or control from elected politicians' (Hood and Lodge 2006: 25). Public servants serve the 'general interest' rather than the interests of the politicians in power. Trustee bargains can be of two kinds: 'tutelary' bargains, in which public servants provide particular expert knowledge (e.g., economic expertise) or moral standing in exchange for status and discretionary power, and 'representational' bargains, in which public servants are regarded as representatives of society, in terms of e.g., geographical background, gender, language or race. In representational bargains, societal groups are given a share of administrative power in exchange for loyalty to the political regime, such as when administrative posts are distributed among ethnic groups in divided societies.

The public service bargains framework has a powerful generic quality. It approaches the relationship between politics and bureaucracy as something that varies 'across time, across countries, across levels of government, and across different parts of the public sector' (Hood and Lodge 2006: 24). It allows for studying multiple types of bargains at various levels of governance (sub-national, national, international) struck in different venues within the administrative system (e.g., different ministries and agencies). It also emphasizes how these relationships are forged, break down and are re-constituted over time. All this makes it a highly relevant frame for examining the consequences of internationalization. Yet, so far, this framework has not been applied to international organizations.

We propose to see internationalization as a development that has upset existing national bargains between politicians and bureaucrats and set off a search for new political-administrative bargains. What kinds of public service bargains underpin international public administrations? To explore this question, we propose three specific avenues for research, which focus on types and configurations of bargains that can be seen as particularly relevant to IPAs: expertise-based bargains, representational bargains and multi-level bargains.

Expertise-based bargains in IPAs

Building on the idea that public service bargains vary across levels of government, internationalization can be seen as conducive to particular types of bargains, namely bargains of the trustee type rather than of the agency type. International administrative bodies face multiple political masters, which makes it difficult to establish direct principal-agent relationships (Ellinas and Suleiman 2012). International organizations also base their legitimacy on being neutral and objective, that is, not favoring the interests of particular member states (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). This fits the trustee notion of public servants as independent guardians of the general interest.² For instance, the EU Staff Regulations specify that officials shall carry out their duties ‘solely with the interests of the Union in mind’ and shall not take instructions from national governments.

Within the trustee category, we firstly expect public service bargains based on different forms of expertise to be important at the international level. Global governance issues are often complex, uncertain and regulatory in character, which requires specialized expertise (Haas 1992; Majone 1996). Think for instance of climate change. Moreover, international organizations lack the democratic legitimacy and ability to make binding decisions of national governments, which may lead them to instead rely on expert knowledge to gain legitimacy and power (Littoz-Monnet 2017). Although literature on international bureaucracies frequently highlights expertise as a source of influence, it rarely goes beyond the general argument that international administrations possess or control expertise, which gives them authority in policy-making (e.g., Barnett and Finnemore 1999). More specific questions about the role of expert knowledge in international bureaucracies are not addressed. While scholars have started to examine questions concerning knowledge production and utilization in IPAs (Littoz-Monnet 2017), other issues have received little attention.

First, bureaucrats may bring various types of competences – i.e., skills, knowledge and abilities – to public service bargains (Hood and Lodge 2006: chap. 5). Yet, exactly what kinds of competences do international bureaucracies require? While most research focuses on specialized technical knowledge (e.g., expertise in macro-economics or toxicology), it has also been shown that international administrations such as the European Commission strongly emphasize generalist competences applicable to any policy area (e.g., abstract reasoning and problem-solving skills) (Christensen 2015). Speaking to the fundamental distinction between specialist and generalist civil servants (Weber 1978: 423-26), this raises interesting questions. Future studies could map the variation in the specialist and generalist competences in different IPAs, drawing on survey data, administrative data on recruitment or biographical data on civil servants.

Second, it has been argued that the policy influence of expert communities depends on the extent to which they occupy strategic positions within administrative bodies (Haas 1992: 4). Yet, we know little about what determines the position of different epistemic communities within IPAs. How is the bureaucratic position of experts conditioned by administrative structures, political sponsorship and features of the expert communities themselves? Chwiero's study of how organizational features shaped the rise of economic expertise within the IMF may serve as an example (Chwiero 2009). Future research could examine this issue in a comparative-historical perspective, tracing the rise of specific types of expert knowledge within e.g., the EU and UN bureaucracies.

Finally, how does the expert knowledge of IPAs shape their bureaucratic reputation and autonomy? Whether an organization is recognized as possessing analytical skills and capacity is a key dimension of bureaucratic reputation (Carpenter 2001). The technical capacities of an IPA thus affect how the organization is perceived by different stakeholders, which in turn conditions its ability to operate autonomously (Rimkutė 2018). Future studies could trace the scientific reputation of IPAs and the consequences for autonomy based on press coverage, surveys or interviews with stakeholders, focusing e.g., on IPAs in the economic/financial field.

Research on expertise-based public service bargains can improve the existing understanding of the sources of IPA autonomy and influence. For instance, a focus on scientific reputation may help explain discrepancies between the formal and actual autonomy of IPAs, and the evolution of organizational autonomy over time. Moreover, research on the conditions for the emergence of expert knowledge within IPAs can generate more specific and contingent arguments about what determines the influence of international administrations.

Representational bargains in IPAs

Internationalization may also be conducive to trustee-type public service bargains based on a representative bureaucracy. In international organizations, the representation of different nationalities among the administrative staff is a particularly important issue (Gravier 2013). International organizations serve a diverse polity, made up of member state governments, citizens and clients around the world. Ensuring that this broad set of interests is fairly represented – not only politically but also administratively – is a key concern. Furthermore, international organizations' lack of direct democratic legitimacy may lead to an emphasis on administrative representation as an alternative source of legitimacy (Gravier 2013; Murdoch et al. 2018). Having a representative administrative staff may enhance the legitimacy of an international organization by strengthening the loyalty of national elites to the

organization, by allowing citizens equal access to administrative jobs, and by improving the relationship with clients (Christensen et al. 2017). For instance, during the 2004 EU enlargement the inclusion of nationals from the new member states in the European Commission bureaucracy was important to bolster the EU's legitimacy in the new member states.

Only a handful of studies have examined the issue of representative bureaucracy in international organizations, primarily within the EU institutions (Gravier 2013). Several questions deserve closer attention: First, how do different IPAs address geographical representation, and how do they reconcile representation with other organizational concerns, e.g., about the competences of staff? The potential tension between representation and specialist competences has been shown in research on recruitment to the European Commission (Christensen et al. 2017). Second, how is the organization's approach to representation conditioned by pressures from the environment (e.g., member state demands, enlargements or reform trends) and features of the organization (e.g., staffing system or degree of centralization)? Finally, how does geographical representation impact the reputation and autonomy of IPAs? Future studies could investigate comparatively how IPAs have dealt with geographical representation and what explains the different approaches, relying on policy documents, staff numbers and interviews with organizational elites.

Research on representational bargains can contribute to existing literature on IPAs i.a. by shedding light on questions of organizational autonomy and legitimacy. Administrative representation raises a dilemma for IPAs: a more representative staff may bolster the organization's legitimacy but may simultaneously curtail its autonomy from member states and other stakeholders. How IPAs resolve this dilemma has implications for their ability to operate autonomously and authoritatively in the international arena.

Multi-level public service bargains

We have so far discussed the consequences of internationalization for the *content* of public service bargains. Yet, internationalization has also affected the *configuration* of bargains across governance levels. The creation of administrative structures beyond national borders has undermined existing national-level bargains between politicians and bureaucrats. For instance, the formation of European regulatory networks has weakened the ties between national agencies and their parent ministries (Egeberg and Trondal 2016). The embedding of national administrative units in international networks has extended the chain of delegation from politicians to bureaucrats and the chain of accountability running in the opposite direction, making it increasingly difficult for national executives to manage and steer the administration. Moreover, a new type of bureaucratic politics is emerging in these

post-national administrative spaces (Bach et al. 2016). The outcomes of policy-making processes within the networks are more affected by endogenous and quite autonomous network dynamics than by the interventions of national politicians in agency decisions.

How are political-administrative relationships re-constituted within this multi-level governance system? First, we may see a move towards bargains that encompass relationships in multiple venues – national, international and sectoral. This reflects the fact that national ministers have obtained seats at various public service ‘bargaining’ tables: A minister is no longer only part of the national cabinet and responsible for steering and controlling national ministerial departments; she is also a member of international executive bodies – e.g., Council of Ministers, G20 – that are responsible for managing and overseeing international and transgovernmental administrative bodies.

Second, internationalization has altered the playing field of political-administrative relationships. Studies show that the membership of international networks has increased the autonomy of national administrative organizations vis-à-vis national politicians (Danielsen and Yesilkagit 2014). For national agencies, network membership offers access to the expertise and experience of other national agencies. National civil servants have also become part of transgovernmental networks where the allegiance to their counterparts from other countries can override their allegiance to their home base. Next to traditional national state-based bargains, we expect to see more international administration and network-driven bargains. This opens up interesting research questions, e.g., about the design and effects of new reward and loyalty structures of civil servants with ‘double-hatted’ identities (Egeberg and Trondal 2009).

Research on multi-level bargains can contribute to our understanding of the administrative behavior and autonomy of IPAs. First, the embedding of national agencies in international networks can affect the behavioral logics of civil servants, e.g., by favoring transnational expert roles over Weberian and intergovernmental roles, and their administrative styles, e.g., by weakening ‘servant’ styles. Second, network membership can bolster agency autonomy vis-à-vis national politicians, at the same time as new international political structures generate novel and more indirect possibilities for control. These dynamics are not well captured by existing conceptualizations of IPA autonomy.

Conclusion

Given that humankind’s most pressing problems are wicked, transboundary and multi-level, analyzing international governance arrangements is a crucial task for scholars. The aim of the essay has been to reflect on how

the growing class of international administrative bodies can be understood from a public administration perspective. The essay has made two contributions. First, it has taken stock of existing work on IPAs and critically examined the theoretical concepts and arguments offered. Second, as a response to weaknesses in this literature, it has proposed the public service bargains model as an alternative theoretical framework for understanding IPAs.

Compared to existing frameworks, the public service bargains perspective offers several advantages. Its generic quality makes it applicable to national and international public administrations alike and makes it possible to theorize the specific features of international administrations within a common public administration frame. Furthermore, the model takes the political side of public administration seriously by focusing squarely on the political-administrative relationship. The model also improves on existing work on IPAs by providing a theoretical foundation for discussions about IPA autonomy, behavior and influence. Certainly, the perspective has its limits. In practice, pure bargains of one type or the other are rare; mixed bargains involving elements from different categories are common. The framework has also received limited empirical testing. The essay has tried to address this by offering concrete suggestions for empirical research. Finally, the essay has not addressed the more normative issues of public service bargains, concerning the legitimacy, impartiality and accountability of IPAs.

Nevertheless, current changes in world politics have given increased urgency to the study of international public service bargains. The Trump presidency, Brexit, anti-globalist populism and the rise of China are putting intense pressure on the existing bargains and principles underpinning international organizations. Research that takes both politics *and* administration into account can help us understand the consequences of these changes for the institutions of global governance.

Notes

1. We adopt a broad understanding of 'international public administrations', using the term to refer to all public administrative bodies beyond the boundaries of nation states. This includes the secretariats of international governmental organizations established by treaty (e.g. the United Nations Secretariat), administrative bodies established by supranational law such as EU agencies (e.g. the European Food Safety Authority), and transgovernmental regulatory networks (e.g. the Council of European Energy Regulators).
2. This is not to say that agency bargains are absent at the international level. Member states exercise control and influence over international administrations in various ways. However, given the mentioned trustee elements of IPAs, we focus on trustee bargains. We also do not claim that trustee bargains exist only at the international level - bargains based on e.g. specialized expertise are common in national systems, too.

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