

3 International bureaucracies’ competence creep into bioethics

The use of ethics experts as a
bureaucratic device

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This chapter examines the role that a new type of expert in ‘ethics’ or ‘bioethics’ has played in the expansion strategies of international bureaucracies in the field of bioethics. In doing so, it addresses an existing body of work that has drawn attention to the authority of international bureaucracies.¹ At the core of this research agenda is the assumption that international secretariats, as bureaucratic organizations deriving their authority from an apparent rational-legal process of administration, can act as autonomous and independent actors. International bureaucracies, in this light, are capable of strategic action to expand their missions. Vaubel,² examining the 1980s international debt crisis, argues that international bureaucracies can, in situations of high uncertainty, successfully redefine their tasks and responsibilities. Barnett and Finnemore also observed the tendency of international bureaucracies to expand over time, arguing that international secretariats tend to “define both problems and solutions in ways that favor or even require expanded actions for [International Organizations] IOs.”³ They see this tendency as a logical extension of the social constitution of international organizations as bureaucratic organizations. In their very attempt to assert their authority and expand their missions, international bureaucracies heavily rely on the use of expert knowledge.⁴ International bureaucrats relentlessly rehearse that their policies and programs are “evidence-based,” “rational,” and founded on neutral expertise. But how and to what purpose do international

bureaucrats mobilize expert knowledge? Although the use of expertise by international bureaucracies is ubiquitous, we lack understanding as to why it is so pervasive a feature of international decision-making and for what *specific uses* expert knowledge is mobilized by international bureaucrats.

Since Weber,⁵ many scholars have acknowledged the crucial role of expertise as an instrument of bureaucratic power and influence. Scholars working on the politics of expertise have pointed to the multifold ways in which expert knowledge can be mobilized in policy-making.⁶ In the literature on international organizations, the role of knowledge as a constitutive element of bureaucratic authority has also been captured.⁷ Little is said, however, about how and why international bureaucrats use expert knowledge. This chapter addresses this gap by examining the way *international secretariats strategically resort to the use of knowledge in order to promote their agendas and expand their missions into new issue areas.*

It does so by looking at the sector of bioethics, a particularly hard case of bureaucratic expansion. By contrast to risk areas, usually defined in scientific-technical terms, issues defined in ethical terms are prone to becoming the object of public debates. The societal implications of policy choices in these domains are indeed more evident than in areas debated in scientific/technical language. As a result, it is trickier for international bureaucracies, generally seen as sites of executive and technocratic governance protected from public and societal pressures,⁸ to expand their missions to such issues.

This chapter argues, however, that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)—and to a lesser extent the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—successfully expanded their mission to the governance of bioethical issues by resorting to the use of a transnational community of expert bioethicists. These organizations have mobilized existing advisory bioethics committees at the domestic level and integrated specialized expert groups within their own structure. By resorting to the use of a new type of “ethical” expertise, international bureaucrats were able to *build their capacity to act, give epistemic authority to their actions, depoliticize debates, and gather a constituency of support.* Expert bioethicists represented a crucial bureaucratic device for international administrations and allowed them to step into issues where international intervention seemed unlikely.⁹

Expertise as a tool of bureaucratic entrepreneurship

Until the late 1980s, scholars in international relations (IR) have conceived of IOs as dependent upon the interests and preferences of the states that created them. From a neo-realist perspective, IOs were not to be regarded as international actors in their own right but merely as a “reflection of the distribution of power in the world.”¹⁰ Neoliberal institutionalists, for their part, were more interested in the role and function of international organizations, since they perceived them as a vector of greater intergovernmental cooperation.¹¹ They did not, however, depart from an instrumentalist view of IOs; to them states were essentially interested in the creation of international institutions in order to reduce the obstacles to intergovernmental cooperation and perform specific tasks.

The state-centric ontology of IOs however came under challenge throughout the 1990s, when it became increasingly evident that international institutions did not always act in accordance with their legal-institutional mandates (see also Cox and Jacobson¹² for an early insight on this). From the 2000s on, a growing number of scholars have therefore started to analyze IOs as bureaucracies with identities, resources, authority and interests.¹³ Common to all these works is the assumption that international bureaucracies as organizations have the capacity to evince autonomy and, sometimes, agency. Such accounts go beyond traditional principal-agent explanations of IO autonomy and focus, rather, on the characteristic traits of bureaucracies in order to understand international organizations’ ability to act as independent actors. Barnett and Finnemore, in *Rules for the World*¹⁴ argue that international organizations are capable of exhibiting behavior through the processes of bureaucracy. Following Weber’s traditional definition, bureaucracies are a distinct organizational form, which has to be understood as the product of a rationalizing process of the exercise of power. IOs’ authority, in this light, derives from the perception of an apparent rational-legal process of administration. Following up on Weber’s account, Barnett and Finnemore explain that “rational-legal authority thus constitutes IOs in the sense that it gives them a specific form (bureaucracy) and empowers them to act in specific ways (general, impersonal rule-making).”¹⁵ The ability of IOs to present themselves as impersonal and neutral is, therefore, central to the assertion of their authority. Recent research has also revealed the way international bureaucrats can act purposefully by generously interpreting their mandates, buffering barriers to state monitoring, shielding themselves from external pressures by increasing their independent review base, or seeking out alliances with actors that support their agendas.¹⁶

Our argument, here, is that expert knowledge can act as a particularly efficient strategic tool in the hands of international bureaucrats who act in an entrepreneurial fashion. This is so because expertise can be used by international bureaucracies in order to fulfill four inter-related type of functions: 1) depoliticize political action, 2) build their capacity to act in new issue domains, 3) legitimize their actions through epistemic authority, and, 4) build an instrumental constituency of support on the ground.

First, the use of expert knowledge can be central to the ability of international bureaucracies to *depoliticize issues*. International bureaucracies, which can only rely on output, rather than input, legitimation mechanisms, tend to portray issues as technical and apolitical in nature, in order to assert their authority on them. Expertise plays a central role in creating the appearance of depoliticization; of course the use of quantified knowledge, such as benchmarks and indicators, facilitates these claims to impartiality, but other forms of expert knowledge can also reintroduce technicity into given debates. Thus, resorting to the use of expertise can be an efficient way of technicalizing policy issues and thus justifying the creep of technocratic decision-making over new domains.

Second, expertise can play an important role in *building international bureaucracies' capacity to act*. Nay has pointed out that international secretariats, by developing specific technical instruments and skills, can “increase their capacity to assist policy actors to establish agreements, design programmes and implement decisions.”¹⁷ The ownership of specialized knowledge can be an important tool in this respect, since it gives them the capacity to develop relevant policy instruments to deal with complex and often highly technical problems. Thus, if international secretariats succeed in recruiting relevant experts and mobilizing existing expert communities in a given sector, this will bolster their capacity to act and thus their ability to expand their mission.

Third, bureaucracies can use expertise as a way of *legitimizing their actions through epistemic authority*. Expert knowledge indeed plays an essential role as a legitimation mechanism for policy choices in the absence (or weak presence) of democratic sources of legitimacy.¹⁸ This is particularly relevant for IOs which, as sites of executive and technocratic governance protected from public and societal pressures,¹⁹ resort to output-based legitimation strategies. Thus, it is expected that international secretariats will be able to make their actions more legitimate if they invoke their hold on relevant expert knowledge. The mobilization of expert knowledge will be crucial in order to endow their choices with “epistemic authority.”²⁰

Fourth, the mobilization of a community of experts can provide international bureaucracies with a useful *constituency of support*. In his classic study of bureaucracies, Antony Downs assumes rational behavior on the part of bureaucrats, claiming that “they act in the most efficient manner possible given their limited capabilities and the cost of information.”²¹ Furthermore, Downs observes that “the generation of external support is particularly crucial for a new bureau.”²² Initially, bureaucracies’ external sources of support are “weak, scattered and not accustomed to relations with the bureau. The latter must therefore rapidly organize so that its services become very valuable to the users.”²³ International bureaucracy will therefore find it useful to establish relations with experts outside the organization, and particularly at the domestic level, since they can provide a potential constituency of support on the ground.

International bureaucracies and bioethics

Issues of global governance have never been “value-free” and scholars of global justice and democracy, in particular, have been discussing the ethical implications of various aspects of global governance for some time already. What is new, however, is the *explicitness* with which the ethical dimension of several global debates is now discussed by international policy-makers themselves and the *institutionalization* of ethics and bioethics within international bureaucrats’ governance structure.

The General Secretariat of the UNESCO has acted as a first mover in promoting the adoption of a global normative framework on bioethical issues. From the late 1980s onwards it began, in an instance of expansive mandate interpretation, to expand its remit to bioethics. The Constitution of the UNESCO defines the fundamental mandate of the organization in relation to the promotion of democracy and human rights, stating that its purpose:

is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.²⁴

In order to assert its remit in the field of bioethics, the General Secretariat of the UNESCO therefore made a conscious effort aimed at framing bioethical issues as a human rights concern. Rhetorically,

UNESCO officials made the link between bioethics and human rights by asserting that the ethical dimensions of the medical and life sciences play a central role in ensuring respect for human dignity and the protection of human rights and freedoms.²⁵ Lenoir explained that the text “will show, in particular, to what extent the Human Genome Declaration has similarly contributed to shaping common thinking worldwide by linking ethics and basic human rights.”²⁶ Bioethics was framed as a human rights issue, and quite successfully so. Given the UNESCO’s mandate to promote such principles, this was a safe way of asserting the remit of the organization in the field of bioethics.

Frederico Mayor, Director-General of the UNESCO in the 1980s and himself a biochemist, played a central role in putting bioethics on the agenda of the organization. His efforts took place in the context of ongoing developments in genomics in the US and attempts that were made to establish a patent for the human genome. These efforts triggered his interest, as he became concerned that the human genome could become an object of commercialization.²⁷ Thus, the Director-General endeavored to endow the UNESCO with the capacity to prepare a normative international instrument on the subject. As argued above, entrepreneurs do not only have innovative ideas, but they must also develop the capacity to introduce and implement their agendas into organizations.²⁸ Therefore in 1993, the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), composed of 36 experts in bioethics, was set up for that specific purpose and given the task of examining how an international instrument on the protection of the human genome could be drafted.²⁹ After five years of preparatory work and negotiations, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights was adopted in 1997.³⁰ The text was the first universal, rather than regional, instrument to establish an ethical framework for activities in this area and as such played a landmark role in establishing the UNESCO’s remit in bioethics.³¹ The tying up of the Human Genome Declaration to the theme of human rights is clearly laid out in the words of Noëlle Lenoir, Chair of the IBC between 1993–1998, who explained that the text “aims to convey a truly universal message” and that “this ambition is linked to the implications of genetics for the destiny of the entire human species ... it will show, in particular, to what extent the Human Genome Declaration has similarly contributed to shaping common thinking worldwide by linking ethics and basic human rights.”³²

Testifying to the UNESCO’s remit expansion in the field, bioethics became further institutionalized in the governance structure of the organization. The General Secretariat created the Program “Ethics of

Science and Technology” in 1992, managed by the new Bioethics Unit—which then became the Division of Ethics of Science and Technology in 1999. In 1998, the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), composed of member states representatives, was set up. Thus, UNESCO bureaucrats have progressively equipped themselves with a powerful bureaucratic structure to deal with bioethics. In 2003, Koichiro Matsuura, who became UNESCO Director-General in 1999, made the ethics of science and technology one of the five programmatic priorities of the UNESCO.³³ In 2003, the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data was adopted, soon followed by the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights in 2005. The UNESCO General Secretariat has clearly identified its main task as that of setting international standards in bioethics, pointing to “the necessity of setting universal ethical guidelines covering all issues raised in the field of bioethics and the need to promote the emergence of shared values.”³⁴ Although these standard-setting instruments are non-binding in nature, they establish a set of global guiding principles for sensitive, contested, issues of bioethics.

In what has often been a turf struggle for the control of the governance of bioethical issues, the WHO General Secretariat has also played a leading role in expanding the remit of global policy-making to bioethical issues. It has, first, followed a similar path as the UNESCO administration in integrating ethics and bioethics into its institutional structure. In 2002, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, then General Director of the WHO, created its Ethics and Health Department “to provide a focal point for the examination of the ethical issues raised by activities throughout the organization.”³⁵ The Department’s functions include a global calendar of bioethics events, resources on research ethics and support for the annual Global Summit of Bioethics Commissions. The Unit has been concerned with several issues defined as “global bioethics topics” such as organ and tissue transplantation, developments in genomics, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, research with human beings and fair access to health services. So far, the work of the WHO in these fields has consisted in issuing guidelines or “frameworks of action” on specific, technical, issue matters, such as human cell, tissue, and organ transplantation or tuberculosis care and control.³⁶ The frameworks of action issued by the WHO have been accompanied by training programs in all regions. Thus, while UNESCO action has been more transversal and inspired by its mission to promote human rights and freedoms, the WHO has limited itself to a more “technical” role of guidelines promoter on specific health issues. The FAO has also followed the line and has, for its part, been concerned with the setting up

of a common ethical framework for food and agriculture. Current proposals include principles for improving human well-being through, for instance, the alleviation of hunger, equity considerations and the need for food security.³⁷ Stressing that “ethical considerations are inherent in the Organization’s programmes”, the FAO underlines its duty “to facilitate debate and dialogue concerning ethics and human rights in fields related to its sphere of work,” listing genetic resources, biotechnology applications, and biosecurity issues as examples of salient areas.³⁸

In an instance of institutional isomorphism, the FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Property Organization (WIPO) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights have recently included an “ethics office” into their structure and made ethical considerations an integral part of their policy discourse. The FAO created its own expert panel in bioethics in 1999. Regional organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the EU, have also integrated institutional units dealing with bioethics within their structure throughout the 1990s. In 2004, the Director-General of the UNESCO set up the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics (UNIACB), which has, since then, served as a central inter-agency mechanism for sharing information between and among intergovernmental organizations dealing with issues related to bioethics.

The making of a transnational community of expert bioethicists

The General Secretariats of the UNESCO, the WHO and to some lesser extent the FAO have, from the mid-1990s onwards, fostered the creation of a transnational network of expert bioethicists. International bureaucrats have resorted to a three-step strategy; they have created new groups of experts in ethics/bioethics within their own organizational structure, mobilized existing national bioethics committees and fostered the creation of partnerships amongst domestic and international expert bioethicists.

UNESCO: Bringing expert bioethicists in house

The UNESCO Secretariat was a pioneer in establishing its own “in-house” expert group in bioethics, the IBC, in the early 1990s. As mentioned above, the group was created in order to help the UNESCO address new legal issues arising in the context of progress made in the field of genomics.³⁹ Since then, the IBC has become further institutionalized, and has acted

as an integral part of the organization's bureaucratic structure. Formally, the IBC's role is purely advisory. It has issued guidelines of actions and policy recommendations on a number of questions that have arisen in relation to new developments in the fields of genetics, genomics, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, neuroscience, and biotechnologies. For all three international declarations on bioethical issues prepared by the UNESCO, the IBC was entrusted with the task of drafting the texts, and also led consultations with relevant actors. The IBC acted as a crucial tool in the hands of UNESCO bureaucrats. Its experts work in symbiosis with the Secretariat of the UNESCO Bioethics Programme. According to Dafna Feinholz, current Chief of the UNESCO Bioethics Programme, "the UNESCO Programme in bioethics and the IBC are very closely connected ... we use all materials produced by the IBC."⁴⁰ The Director-General of the UNESCO moreover maintains close control over the IBC; the agenda for the sessions of the committee are prepared by the Director-General in consultation with the Bureau of the IBC.⁴¹ He also keeps a close eye on its composition; IBC members are selected by the Director-General of the organization, after being nominated by member states, usually in collaboration with the Bioethics Programme Secretariat of the UNESCO. Thus, the expert group acts as an integral part of the UNESCO's bureaucratic structure. It has given the UNESCO Secretariat the *capacity to act in a field in which the organization did not formerly hold the necessary expertise*.⁴²

The group, which the UNESCO Secretariat describes as "the only global forum for reflection in bioethics,"⁴³ also benefits from a high intellectual prestige. According to the IBC's statutes, member states, when proposing their candidates for the IBC, "shall endeavor to include eminent persons who are specialists in the life sciences and in the social and human sciences, including law, human rights, philosophy, education and communication."⁴⁴ Since its creation, the group has indeed been composed of highly qualified and recognized scientific figures in genetics, biochemistry, neurology, immunology, or molecular biology. In addition, several prominent lawyers and (a few) bioethicists were appointed. According to a UNESCO official, the group was "composed of the most authoritative experts on the subject in the world, including several Nobel Prize winners."⁴⁵ Three members of the group, Prof. Jean Dousset, Prof. Christian De Duve and Prof. Rita Levi-Montalini, indeed were all winners of the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine, and Prof. Sidney Altman won, for his part, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. This gave the IBC an "*undisputable intellectual authority*," which made the drafting of a general instrument on

bioethics possible despite the lack of interest for international standards in the field from the part of member states.⁴⁶ The perception that the group possessed reliable, relevant and detailed knowledge endowed UNESCO's actions with "epistemic authority"⁴⁷ and created confidence that its proposals were well founded.

When looking at the composition of the IBC since its creation, it also appears that most of its members are scientists in a traditional sense (biologists, neurologists, and medical doctors), a smaller proportion of members are lawyers and a tiny minority is composed of "ethicists."⁴⁸ Members appointed as "ethicists" are usually specialists in an applied ethics domain, such as medical ethics. Thus, the composition of the group signals an expansion of the boundaries of scientific authority over a new, and contested, ontological domain, i.e. the domain of ethics and bioethics. By delegating the preparatory work of the three UNESCO declarations to experts, international bureaucrats *ensured that political discussions were avoided*. Referring to the example of the 2005 Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, Michèle Jean explained that "delegating the work of preparing the text to experts gave an independent, depoliticized reading of the issue."⁴⁹ Making ethics a matter of expert judgment resulted in presenting certain ethical positions as apolitical "truths" that did not need to be submitted to contested, democratic decision-making. It is through this "expertization" of ethics that bureaucratic expansion to the field was made possible.⁵⁰

The UNESCO Secretariat has also fostered the creation of a constituency of support at domestic level. In 2005, it set in place the "Assisting Bioethics Committees" program, which made the promotion of national expert bioethicists a core axis of its strategy. The program aims to foster the establishment of National Bioethics Committees in member states and, once they are established, enhance their functioning. For Henk ten Have, "bioethics committees are an ideal platform from which to implement the various standard-setting instruments that have been adopted by UNESCO."⁵¹ To date, 14 national ethics committees have already been created as a result of UNESCO action. As expected, the generation of external support was particularly crucial for bureaucrats.⁵² In fact, international bureaucrats perceive national ethics committees as one of the most important intermediary bodies for the implementation of the UNESCO normative instruments.⁵³ This testifies to the propensity of bureaucracies to create or sustain constituencies of support. If the UNESCO Secretariat is not a "new bureau,"⁵⁴ its activities in the field of bioethics are new and ethics committees acted as the *clientele* of the UNESCO Secretariat.

WHO: Setting up a transnational network of bioethicists

Although the UNESCO and the FAO expert groups are, to date, the only ethics/bioethics expert bodies which are internal to IOs bureaucratic structure, the WHO has also, from the late 1990s onwards, followed up on this move by fostering the creation of a transnational network of expert bioethicists. Instead of creating its own expert group within its institutional structure, the WHO has *mobilized existing national bioethics committees* and *fostered the creation of partnerships amongst domestic and international expert bioethicists*. The Global Health Ethics Unit of the WHO has, in this respect, played a pivotal role. The Unit provides, first, the permanent secretariat for the Global Summit of National Bioethics Advisory Bodies. The Summit was launched for the first time in 1996, at the initiative of the US National Bioethics Advisory Commission and the French *Comité Consultatif National d’Ethique pour les Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé*, in order to provide “a platform for exchange of information about on-going work of the national ethics committees.”⁵⁵ Marie-Charlotte Bouësseau, former head of the Global Health Ethics Unit explains that the Global Summits “offer a critical forum for identifying pertinent issues of global importance, and in respect of which international agreements and cooperation are needed.”⁵⁶ Debates during recent summits have focused on issues such as the protection of human participants in health research, stem cell research, and end of life choices.⁵⁷ Thus, national bioethics committees represent, in this respect, an essential tool in the hands of the WHO. Through the Global Summits, the WHO can develop partnerships and collaborations with national ethics committees, which then act as a key *constituency of support* for the dissemination of its policies.

In 2011, the Global Health Ethics Unit of the World Trade Organization (WTO) also launched the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics, which are crucial in building the *WHO Secretariat’s capacity to act*. The Collaborating Centres are top national research centers on bioethical issues which, according to the WTO, “represent a valuable resource as an extended and integral arm of WHO’s capacity to implement its ethics mandate.”⁵⁸ In order to be chosen as a WHO Collaborating Centre, academic units must have a track record of having worked closely with the WHO and share its policy agenda. They must have collaborated with the WHO for at least two years, either as experts, facilitators at workshops, providers of support for developing teaching material, or organizing sessions at conferences. At the time when they are chosen, the Centres must also have developed a work plan that is consistent with the WHO’s

priorities. The Centres therefore have a clear institutional link with the WHO Secretariat. Andreas Reis from the WHO Ethics and Health Unit explains that the Collaborating Centres “do a lot of the capacity building locally.”⁵⁹ Given the limited size of the Ethics and Health Unit, the Collaborating Centres are seen as a “mechanism of the organization” and an “extension of the WHO’s work”⁶⁰ that help the WHO deliver some of its outputs. The centers indeed organize seminars, workshops, often in conjunction with the WHO, which play an important role in terms of producing the expertise needed by the Ethics and Health Unit. Prof. Biller-Andorno, head of the Institute for Biomedical Ethics in Zurich, WHO Collaborating Centre since 2009, explains that “the WHO would not be able to function without the specialized knowledge of the Collaborating Centers.”⁶¹

The use of an international network of bioethics also contributes to *giving epistemic authority* and, at the same time, *depoliticizing* WHO actions. In the terms of reference of the Network, the WHO indeed states that “the scientific validity of WHO’s work on ethics is enhanced by ongoing collaboration and dialogue with academic centers.”⁶² By mobilizing specialized knowledge, the WHO Secretariat is able to portray its work on ethics as more “scientific” and “neutral.” Abha Saxena explains that the writing process of WHO recommendation is a lengthy one, informed by several rounds of expert consultation, but, that as a result the recommendations are “evidence based, factual, inclusive, neutral.”⁶³ To her, the WHO needs “guidance that is evidence based, guided by independent groups of experts.... That’s why WHO guidance means a lot in member states. Lots of trust is put into expertise.” Thus, by setting in place these two mechanisms of expert mobilization, the WHO Secretariat is better able to step into the field of bioethics. The work plans of the WHO Network of Collaborating Centres mention new collaborations in areas such as bio-banking, organ transplantation, e-health, priority setting, ethics and dementia, end-of-life care, and conflicts of interest. The range of issue areas tackled as “global bioethics topics” has therefore expanded into novel territories, including more sensitive and controversial bioethical issues. Thus, several international bureaucracies have expanded their grip into bioethics, integrated an ethics or bioethics unit within their own governance structure and resorted to the use of expert bioethicists in order to fulfill their new tasks.

Conclusion

The UNESCO and the WHO extensively resorted to the use of expert bioethicists in their attempt to expand their missions to bioethics. The

bioethics case is particularly puzzling since it shows the ability of international secretariats to expand their missions in sectors in which they would not be expected to succeed. Bioethical issues have typically been controversial, contested, issues. When normative views become more explicit and are publicly debated, democratic modes of conflict settlement also seem justified. By contrast, the expansion of technocratic modes of governance to such areas seems improbable.

The argument, here, is that a new type of experts in “ethics” or “bioethics”, helped international bureaucracies expand their missions in unexpected territories. Expert bioethicists acted as an efficient bureaucratic device, in that they allowed the international secretariats of the UNESCO and of the WHO to technicalize bioethical issues, give epistemic authority to their actions, and boost their capacity to act. Moreover, expert bioethicists acted as a constituency of support, which was crucial in disseminating the policies of the international secretariats on the ground. Thus, the use of a new type of expertise, aimed at guiding policy on the “right” ethical path, rather than advising specific policy choices on grounds of scientific rationality, made the expansion of technocratic decision-making to bioethics possible. In asserting their grip into the field of bioethics, bureaucrats have in turn been able to take on a new role—that of shapers of moral standards in issues brought about by scientific innovation.

This clearly speaks to the need to better study how expertise is mobilized by international bureaucracies. If it allowed international secretariats to expand their missions in sectors in which they would not be expected to succeed, it calls for our attention as a tool of international bureaucratic authority and expansion more generally. We would indeed expect it to be trickier for international bureaucracies, generally seen as sites of executive and technocratic governance protected from public and societal pressures, to get their foot into ethical questions. The case examined here however testifies to the ability of bureaucrats and experts to remove issues from the influence of politics, even when values and ethics are *explicitly* debated.

Notes

- 1 Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek eds, *Autonomous Policy Making by International Organizations* (London: Routledge, 1998); Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Jutta Joachim, Bob Reinalda, and Bertjan Verbeek eds, *International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities?* (London: Routledge, 2007); Jarle Trondal, Martin Marcussen, Torbjorn Larsson, and Frode

- Veggeland, *Unpacking International Organisations: The Dynamics of Compound Bureaucracies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
- 2 Roland Vaubel, "The political economy of centralization and the European Community," *Public Choice* 81, no. 1 (1994): 151–190.
 - 3 Barnett and Finnemore eds, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics*, 43.
 - 4 Expert knowledge refers to the specialized knowledge that individuals may have, as a result of their technical practices, training, and experience.
 - 5 Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978).
 - 6 Carol Weiss, "The Many Meanings of Research Utilization," *Public Administration Review* 39, no. 5 (1979): 426–431; Claudio M. Radaelli, "The public policy of the European Union: whither politics of expertise?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, no. 5 (1999): 757–774; Christina Boswell, *The Political Uses of Expert Knowledge. Immigration Policy and Social Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
 - 7 Barnett and Finnemore eds, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics*; Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek, "International Relations Theory and Autonomy of International Organizations," in *International organizations in international law*, eds. Richard Collins and Nigel White (London: Routledge, 2011), 86–103; Sikina Jinnah, *Post-treaty Politics: Secretariat Influence in Global Environmental Governance* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2014).
 - 8 Michael Zürn, Martin Binder, and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt, "International Authority and its Politicization," *International Theory* 4, no. 1 (2012): 69–106.
 - 9 See also: Littoz-Monnet, Annabelle, "Expert Knowledge as a Strategic Resource: International Bureaucrats and the Shaping of Bioethical Standards," *International Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming.
 - 10 John. J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, 19, no. 3 (1994/95): 5–49.
 - 11 Robert. O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).
 - 12 Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson eds, *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973).
 - 13 Reinalda and Verbeek eds, *Autonomous Policy Making by International Organizations*; Barnett and Finnemore eds, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics*; Jutta, Reinalda, and Verbeek eds, *International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities?*; Trondal, Marcussen, Larsson, and Veggeland, *Unpacking International Organisations: The Dynamics of Compound Bureaucracies*.
 - 14 Barnett and Finnemore eds, *Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics*.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, 21.
 - 16 Darren G. Hawkins and Wade Jacoby, "How agents matter," in *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, eds. Darren G. Hawkins, David A. Lake, Daniel L. Nielson, and Michael J. Tierney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 199–228; Michael Barnett and Liv

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- 17 Olivier Nay, "What Drives Reforms in International Organizations? External Pressure and Bureaucratic Entrepreneurs in the UN Response to AIDS," *Journal of Public Policy* 32, no. 1 (2012): 53–76.
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