

EXTENDING AUTONOMY

The Immunity of International Organizations

Research Question

- ▶ What are the tradeoffs in granting international organizations legal protections? Do legal protections, like other forms of delegation and autonomy, help IOs do their jobs, or do they merely insulate IOs from accountability?

Puzzle

- ▶ What explains wide variation in the legal immunities granted to international organizations? IOs claim legal immunity is essential for their functioning, but governments grant it unevenly across member IOs.

Argument

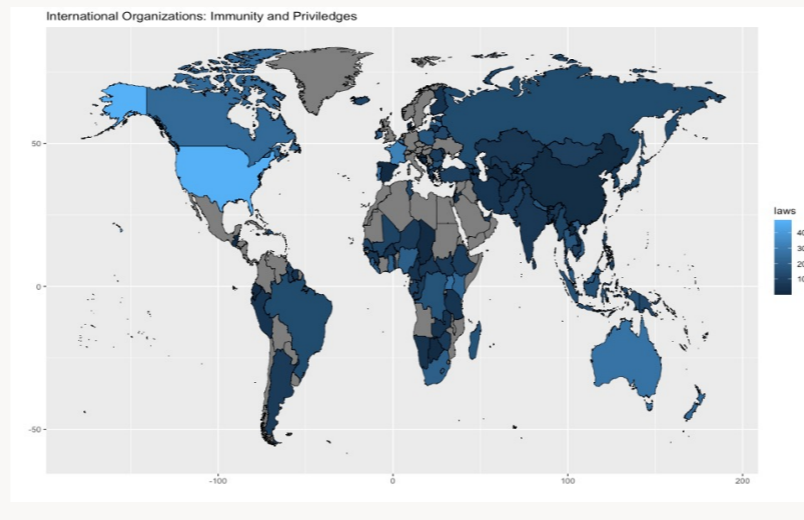
- ▶ The vast literature on principal agent dynamics suggest a tension between the intentions of the principal (member state) and the agency (IO).
- ▶ We argue that IOs overcome the concerns of sovereignty costs to operate horizontally across their member states without concessions to vertical autonomy, a bargain that states find more palatable.

Implications

- ▶ The role of legal immunity in IO governance is underexplored in political science despite being a big component of conventional wisdom about how IOs work.
- ▶ We suggest that IO immunities might actually improve IO legitimacy, first by providing a clear pathway through which IOs can, in fact, open themselves up to litigation, and also by ensuring the legal protections for IOs to operate within the countries over which their governance extends.

Introducing a New Dataset

- ▶ IO-State Agreements



Hypotheses

- ▶ IOs with a lesser degree of vertical delegated autonomy will achieve greater horizontal autonomy in the form of separate member-country agreements.
- ▶ IOs with a greater degree of outsourcing will be less motivated to achieve horizontal autonomy, securing fewer member-country agreements.

A New Perspective of IO Autonomy

IOs with a lower degree of vertical delegated autonomy like ASEAN, ISA, and ITU receive higher horizontal autonomy in the form of separate member-country agreements

