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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- Preface -- Contents -- About the Author -- Abbreviations -- List of Figures -- List of Tables -- Chapter 1: Introduction: The Problem of Independence -- 1.1 Neoliberal Statistics? -- 1.2 Independent Authorities -- 1.3 Epistemic Communities -- 1.4 Politics and Policies -- 1.5 Plan of the Book -- Chapter 2: The Legal Display of Independence -- 2.1 Models of Display: A General Overview -- 2.1.1 Locating Independence in a Subject -- 2.1.1.1 More than a Third of the OECD's NSOs (14 out of 36) Ascribe Independence or Autonomy to the

NSO as a Body or an Organi... -- 2.1.1.2 A Few Statistical Acts Locate Independence in the Person of the Chief Statistician, While Being Quite Explicit as to H... -- 2.1.1.3 Several Statistical Acts Are Written So That Not Only Is the NSO Endowed with Independence, But So Is the Chief Officer -- 2.1.2 Attaching Independence to Products and Processes -- 2.1.3 Independence De Facto? -- 2.2 Empowering and Protecting the Chief Statistician -- 2.2.1 Professional Authority -- 2.2.2 Designating the Chief Statistician -- 2.2.3 Tenure and Dismissal -- Chapter 3: The Organization of Institutional Independence -- 3.1 Locating the NSO -- 3.2 Coordination and Authority: The Statistical System -- 3.3 Advising, Governing, Monitoring: Statistical Councils -- 3.3.1 An Overview -- 3.3.2 A Closer Examination of Specific Cases -- 3.3.2.1 Belgium -- 3.3.2.2 Ireland -- 3.3.2.3 Portugal -- 3.3.2.4 France -- 3.3.2.5 Greece -- Chapter 4: The Instruments of Professional Independence -- 4.1 Government Commitments -- 4.2 Pre-release Policies and Dissemination Calendars -- 4.3 Codes of Practice -- 4.4 Quality Frameworks -- 4.5 Peer Reviews, Self-Assessments, and the Epistemic Community as Watchdog -- 4.5.1 The ESS Peer Reviews -- 4.5.2 The IMF Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes -- 4.5.3 The OECD Assessments and Self-assessments. 4.5.4 The Epistemic Community as Watchdog -- Chapter 5: Patterns, Paths, and Processes: The Dissemination of Independence -- 5.1 The Index of Independence -- 5.2 Clusters and Patterns -- 5.2.1 Functional Groups -- 5.2.2 Historical-Geographical Groups -- 5.2.3 The Logic of Protection and Capacity -- 5.2.4 Convergence Between Dimensions -- 5.3 Paths, Processes, and Limits of Diffusion -- 5.3.1 Coercion -- 5.3.2 Learning -- 5.3.3 Common Norms -- 5.3.4 Competitive and Cooperative Interdependence -- 5.3.5 Taken-for-Grantedness -- 5.3.6 Symbolic Imitation -- 5.3.7 The Limits of Diffusion -- Chapter 6: Conclusion: Expanding Independence? -- 6.1 Towards More Independence? -- 6.2 Independence Beyond the OECD -- 6.3 Coming Challenges -- References -- A. Legal, Official, and Semi-official Documents: International and Supranational Bodies -- 1. United Nations (UN) -- 2. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) -- 3. European Institutions -- 4. International Monetary Fund (IMF) -- 5. International Statistical Institute (ISI) -- 6. Other -- B. Legal, Official, and Semi-official Documents: OECD Countries -- Australia -- Austria -- Belgium -- Canada -- Chile -- Colombia -- Costa Rica -- Czech Republic -- Denmark -- Estonia -- Finland -- France -- Germany -- Greece -- Hungary -- Iceland -- Ireland -- Israel -- Italy -- Japan -- Korea -- Latvia -- Lithuania -- Luxemburg -- Mexico -- Netherlands -- New Zealand -- Norway -- Poland -- Portugal -- Slovak Republic -- Slovenia -- Spain -- Sweden -- Switzerland -- Turkey -- United Kingdom -- United States -- C. Articles and Books -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

This book explores the independence of official statistics and describes the various legal and professional norms, institutional arrangements, instruments and practices that statisticians have developed over recent decades to protect their work from political interference. It argues that this 'drive for independence', which saw the replication of these norms, arrangements, and instruments across countries, was largely led by the international epistemic community of statisticians, and it identifies some of the paths and processes that enabled this drive. The study conducts an overall, multi-dimensional, and detailed comparative examination of the thirty-eight OECD countries' norms, arrangements, and practices regarding the institutional and professional independence of official statistics. For that purpose, several dimensions have been surveyed and an index has been built that allows patterns and clusters

to be uncovered among the OECD countries, shedding light on the variations that can be observed from one subgroup of countries to another. The issue of the independence of official statistics has been at the heart of several recent statistical controversies, including that of Greece's debt, censuses in Canada and the United States, the Argentinian cost of living index, and some recent cases of resignation or dismissal of senior statisticians in various countries. Such independence has been a major topic of discussion in the epistemic community since the turn of the century, and concerns have also been addressed more widely, in the media. The subject of the book is particularly relevant as official statistics also play a significant role in monitoring the progress of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This book will appeal to anyone interested in the topic of official statistics and to students of government in general.
