

WORKING FOR THE WORLD? NATIONAL REPRESENTATION  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS BUREAUCRACY

By

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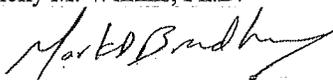
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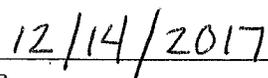
  
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This dissertation is dedicated to my incredibly patient and supportive wife Josie, who endured all of the many ups, downs, starts, and stops of this project right along with me. Thank you for lovingly but firmly urging me to carry this all the way up to and across the finish line. I couldn't have done it without you.

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ABSTRACT

International organizations (IOs) such as the World Bank and the World Health Organization play an important role in confronting transnational challenges such as climate change, economic crises, and disease outbreaks. Because these organizations have a great impact on peoples' lives all around the world, and because they are often funded indirectly by taxpayers, scholars and practitioners alike have debated how to hold IOs accountable to the people they serve. Among the variety of accountability mechanisms employed by IOs is representation, in particular national representation. Nevertheless, although a fair amount has been written about the explicitly representational bodies within IOs, such as the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, very little attention has been paid to national representation within another critical component of these organizations: their bureaucracies.

Thus, in order to help fill this gap in the literature on IOs, the present study applies the theoretical framework of representative bureaucracy to the case of national representation in the UN bureaucracy. This framework divides bureaucratic representation into two types: passive and active. Passive representation occurs when a bureaucrat shares a salient demographic trait, such as race, with the citizenry. Active representation occurs when a bureaucrat consciously seeks in the course of his or her work to deliver benefits to a particular societal group. This study utilizes these terms in its examination of the UN bureaucracy, employing a mixed methods approach to both identify the determinants of passive national representation and explore the potential for active national representation in the UN bureaucracy. The findings help to paint a

more complete picture of national representation in the UN than has previously been available, deepening our understanding of the UN's accountability and legitimacy.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The scholarly study of international, intergovernmental organizations (IOs), such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), which dates back to the early twentieth century, has taken place almost exclusively within the field of international relations (IR), a subfield of political science. A somewhat simplified view of IR would identify three primary paradigms: neo-realism (see Waltz, 1979), neo-liberalism (see Keohane, 1984), and constructivism (see Wendt, 1999), each of which offers a distinct view of IOs. First, a neo-realist perspective on IR takes the stance that international affairs consists of nation-states competing against each other in the pursuit of power and security within a relatively anarchic environment. Neo-realists are relatively dismissive of IOs, viewing them primarily as intersections of competing national interests and as non-autonomous actors. Second, the neoliberal paradigm stresses interdependence and multilateralism. It still views nation-states as the primary and most powerful actors in international affairs, but it asserts that nation-states sometimes must rely on each other and create alliances to advance their interests. In the neo-liberalist view, IOs serve an important function as locations where nation-states can engage in multilateralism. Third, in stark contrast to neo-realists, constructivists view the international environment as a society of both state and non-state actors whose behavior is constrained by various rules and norms, both formal and informal. Constructivists view IOs as important and potentially autonomous actors in international affairs that play a significant role in international agenda setting and norm definition. Table 1 summarizes the three paradigms and their respective views on IOs.

Table 1. IR Perspectives on IOs

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Emphasis</b>	<b>View on IOs</b>
Neo-realism	Competition amongst nations for power	Dismissive
Neo-liberalism	Interdependence and multilateralism	Important locations for nation-state interactions
Constructivism	International society structured by norms	Autonomous actors who set norms

Perhaps the most recent major milestone in IO studies occurred in 1999, when two constructivist IR scholars, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, published an article titled “The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations.” In this article, and in their widely cited follow-up book *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (2004), Barnett and Finnemore argue that while IO scholars have produced a variety of well-tested theories to explain the creation or *raison d’être* of IOs, they have not satisfactorily been able to explain the behavior of IOs after they are created. This behavior, they contend, often runs contrary to the intended purpose of IOs, and can be dysfunctional or even pathological in nature. Thus, in order to achieve an accurate understanding of what drives IO behavior, in the view of the authors, perhaps the most fruitful approach is to open up the “black box” of IOs and analyze them through the lens of bureaucratic theory. This approach has resonated greatly with IR scholars of IOs, who have applied it widely in the years since Barnett and Finnemore’s initial publication.

Moreover, the call to examine IOs from a bureaucratic perspective has resonated outside of the field of IR, as well. In particular, many public administration (PA) scholars based in Europe have taken notice. There are good reasons for this. First, the study of bureaucracy is

arguably the “bread and butter” of the field of PA, particularly bureaucracy in relation to governments. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that PA scholars would be drawn toward a surge in bureaucratic scholarship taking place within another field. Second, European PA scholars have long been interested in the administrative aspects of the EU and the increasing bureaucratization of that institution. Thus, an interest in bureaucracy within EU studies represents a kind of convergence of IR and PA. As Trondal puts it, the recent interest in bureaucratic theory within IO studies “opened up” the field of IO research for PA scholars (2010, p. 228).

### **The Public Administration Perspective on IOs**

It is important to point out, however, that the recent uptick in attention toward IOs among PA scholars does not represent the first time PA scholars have ever shown an interest in IOs. It is more appropriate, rather, to characterize the recent interest as a “reemergence” of PA scholarship regarding IOs. One might divide PA scholarship on IOs into two eras: the first era, during which scholars focused primarily on the subject of the international civil service, and the second era, which has witnessed scholarship that tends to proceed under the banner of “international bureaucracy” research, and examines a variety of topics within IOs.

#### **First era: the international civil service**

From the early 1940s<sup>1</sup> through today, a limited number of PA scholars have demonstrated an interest in the international civil service, the workforce of the UN system, though the level of

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<sup>1</sup> The first article in *Public Administration Review* to include the term “international civil service” in its title appeared in 1943: “Some Problems of an International Civil Service” by C. Wilfred Jenks.

interest has ebbed and flowed over time (Ege & Bauer, 2013). The “height” of this stream of literature arguably occurred in 1970, when a special issue of *Public Administration Review* was published entitled “Toward an International Civil Service” (e.g. Balk & Heaphey, 1970; Young, 1970; Macy, 1970). One of the articles in this special issue (Gould & Kelman, 1970), focuses on the state of research on the international civil service at the time. The authors organize this body of research into five categories:

1. Retired international civil servants’ reflections
2. Structural descriptions of international administrative institutions
3. Normative analyses of desirable futures
4. Empirical surveys on international civil servants’ backgrounds and attitudes
5. Theory building

Since that time, PA research on the international civil service has appeared less and less frequently.

### **Second era: international bureaucracies**

Since the publication of Barnett and Finnemore’s book in 2004, a limited, though noticeable uptick in attention to IOs has occurred within the field of PA, particularly among European PA scholars. As noted previously, this trend has taken place among European scholars in large part because of their interest in the EU, but there have been attempts to examine non-EU international bureaucracies as well, such as Trondal’s 2010 book, which examines the OECD and WTO secretariats. A key difference between this scholarship and the recent bureaucracy scholarship of IR researchers is that the PA variety examines the administrative bodies *within*

IOs, referring to them as “international bureaucracies,” whereas IR scholars do not tend to make this distinction, focusing rather on IOs as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Ege and Bauer (2013) divide the PA research on international bureaucracies into two categories: research on management reform and organizational change, and research regarding the influence of international bureaucracies on policy output. First, the international bureaucracy research on management reforms focuses largely on formal rule changes within international bureaucracies. Scholars studying this topic have examined various dimensions of it, such as the drivers of reform, consequences of reform, and international bureaucrat perspectives on reform. Second, scholars examining the impact of international bureaucracies on policy output have produced the intriguing finding that because of various factors such as their relatively high number of political principals and the volatility of their external environment, international bureaucracies may have more ability to act autonomously than domestic bureaucracies.

### **Representation in international bureaucracies**

As PA scholars have increasingly turned their attention toward international bureaucracies, they have sought to identify theories from PA research at the national and subnational levels that would prove especially helpful in enhancing our understanding of international bureaucracies. Among the theories that have been found to be useful is that of representative bureaucracy, which has been drawn upon to generate a substantial amount of research on national and subnational public administration. Specifically, a handful of scholars have found the representative bureaucracy framework to be a valuable tool in analyzing issues of bureaucratic representation in the European Commission (EC), the administrative body within

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<sup>2</sup> For example, in the case of the UN, a PA scholar would focus on the UN Secretariat as an international bureaucracy, whereas an IR scholar would examine the bureaucracy of the UN as a whole, including the Secretariat.

the EU (Gravier, 2008, 2013; Stevens, 2009; Murdoch et al., 2015). Stevens examines representation of women in the EC, while Gravier and Murdoch and her co-authors examine member state or national representation in the EC.

The issue of national representation is a particularly salient one for IOs. In order to understand why this is so, it is important to recognize that although IOs (especially the EU) resemble governments in a number of ways, they are ultimately not governments. More specifically, they are intergovernmental organizations, and as McLaren (2005) argues, it is useful to think of them as “membership organizations.” This is an important distinction to make, as it clarifies that IOs’ primary responsibility is not to everyday citizens as is the case for governments. Rather, an IO answers to its membership, which consists of national governments. As in any membership organization, effective representation of the members in organizational decision making is a critical objective. Hence, one of the central issues of concern for IOs is national representation – the representation of its members.

As McLaren explains, the basic organizational structure of most IOs is as follows:

At the highest level of the organization [is] the assembly, plenary, or conference...Subordinate to the plenary is the council, whose members are chosen by the plenary from the plenary. As a smaller but representative body, it can meet more easily and cheaply, and act more quickly. The hierarchical form of the organization is then completed by the international secretariat which receives directions from the council, and the plenary.

Given that the bulk of IO research over the years has been conducted by political scientists, it is not particularly surprising that IO researchers have devoted a considerable amount of attention to the plenary and the council levels of IOs (e.g. the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, respectively), but they have rarely ventured further down the hierarchy to investigate international secretariats. Rather, it has been scholars who identify with the field of PA who have produced the most insightful analysis regarding these administrative bodies. This

may explain at least in part why scholars are only now finding a useful theoretical framework, that of representative bureaucracy, to utilize in studying an issue that in practice has long vexed international secretariats: bureaucratic national representation.

As Gravier (2013) argues, representative bureaucracy theory not only serves as a valuable tool for analyzing the workings of IOs, but the application of this theory to the IO setting brings new cases into the scope of representative bureaucracy research, leading representative bureaucracy researchers to think about the phenomenon of bureaucratic representation in unprecedented ways. For example, as representative bureaucracy theory has almost exclusively been applied at the national and subnational levels of governance up until recently, researchers have tended to use it to analyze the representation of gender, race, ethnicity, and other identities salient in this context. However, studying representative bureaucracy at the international level leads us to consider representation of a heretofore unexamined identity, that of nationality or national background. In addition, as Gravier notes, researchers applying representative bureaucracy theory at the international level have to grapple with the fact that the theory was developed in order to analyze the representation of citizens within state entities, and it is now being applied to examine the representation of national governments within non-state entities, IOs. What are the implications of this new application for the theory itself?

Accordingly, the present study seeks to continue this relatively novel application of representative bureaucracy theory and extend its use to a non-EU international organization, the United Nations (UN). Specifically, it examines national representation in the UN bureaucracy, posing the following two research questions:

1. What are the determinants of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy?

2. To what degree does the potential exist for active national representation in the UN bureaucracy?

In order to pursue answers to these questions, the study utilizes a mixed methods approach, analyzing quantitative personnel data from the UN and also conducting interviews with current and former UN employees. The study is organized as follows.

In Chapter Two, an overview of representative bureaucracy theory is provided with a particular focus on the effects of bureaucratic representation, both active and passive. Next, Chapter Three provides background information on the UN in general and more specifically on passive and active national representation in the UN. Thereafter, Chapter Four contains a quantitative analysis that seeks to identify the determinants of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. Next, Chapter Five relies on interviews with UN employees to provide insights regarding the potential for active national representation in the UN bureaucracy. And finally, Chapter Six summarizes the findings and conclusions of the overall study, states its limitations, and offers suggestions for future research on the subject at hand.

## CHAPTER 2

### REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY THEORY: THE EFFECTS OF BUREAUCRATIC REPRESENTATION

#### **Introduction**

It is often said that the so-called “self-conscious” study of public administration began with Woodrow Wilson’s 1887 essay entitled “The Study of Administration.” In this essay, Wilson called for a clean break between politics and administration, a notion often referred to in the public administration literature as the “politics-administration dichotomy.” The fact that Wilson’s essay was not published until 1941, incidentally, does not mean that other scholars were not familiar with the idea of the politics-administration dichotomy during the first few decades of the twentieth century. On the contrary, it is evident that most of the early, prominent administrative scholars embraced the dichotomy (Goodnow, 1900; White, 1926; Gulick, 1937). Moreover, the idea of separating politics and administration resonated not only within the scholarly community, but also in the world of practice. For example, the desire to take politics out of public administration was a central tenet of the Progressive Reform Movement of the early 1900s.

However, during the 1940s the relative consensus within the scholarly community regarding the dichotomy began to break down. Perhaps the first major indicator of this splintering came in the form of the oft-cited exchange between Friedrich (1940) and Finer (1941). Friedrich, on the one hand, argued that modern democratic governance is sufficiently complex that elected officials cannot manage it all on their own. Instead, they must delegate a fair amount of discretion to administrative officials, meaning that administrators make decisions

not only regarding policy *implementation* but policy *definition*. Finer, in turn, strongly rejected this notion, arguing that it is critical in a democracy for elected officials to retain exclusive discretion over setting policy, and that administrators should have no role whatsoever in this activity.

Later in the decade, Appleby (1945) famously claimed in his book *Big Democracy* that “government is different” (pg. 1). Specifically, government is not business, and therefore private management practices cannot be seamlessly transferred to the public sector. Rather, government institutions are infused with democratic norms such as transparency, due process, and equal opportunity, a fact which helps government be accountable to the people it serves, but which also makes government operations appear inefficient in contrast to private management. Ultimately, by the time of the storied Waldo-Simon debate in the early 1950s, the orthodoxy period of public administration scholarship, which centered on the politics-administration dichotomy, had essentially ended, and it appeared that a new heterodoxy period allowing for the intermingling of politics and administration was being ushered in.

Accordingly, it was in this scholarly context that J. Donald Kingsley published his book entitled *Representative Bureaucracy: an Interpretation of the British Civil Service* (1944). In this work, Kingsley finds that members of the British civil service “are drawn overwhelmingly from the upper and middle classes of the population and that they have been educated according to the traditional pattern of the ruling class” (151). For Kingsley, this is a very thought-provoking and potentially concerning finding. He goes on to ask what this finding means “in terms of Civil Service mentality,” and what its effects are “upon the outlook and orientation of the Administrative Class” (151). Ultimately, he concludes that “in a democracy competence

alone is not enough. The public service must also be representative if the State is to liberate rather than to enslave” (185).

Kingsley’s book blends in with the previously described group of scholarly works asserting the interconnectedness of bureaucracy and democracy. However, the unique contribution of his work should not be understated. Specifically, while other scholars at this time had certainly allowed, at least implicitly, for the possibility that administrators might serve a representative function (e.g. Friedrich), Kingsley appears to have been the first to explicitly articulate the idea of bureaucrats serving as representatives. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a more direct rejection of the politics-administration dichotomy. The concept of representation in the context of democratic governance is an inherently political one, and Kingsley links it directly with the bureaucracy, a supposedly apolitical institution. This makes Kingsley’s book an important milestone in the history of the study of public administration.

Fortunately, the study of representative bureaucracy did not stop with Kingsley’s book. On the contrary, other scholars noted Kingsley’s contribution and sought to build on his work. For example, Levitan (1946) was the first to call for representative bureaucracy to be put into practice in the United States, and Long (1952) made the provocative argument that the U.S. federal bureaucracy is more representative than Congress, and that it therefore helps counter the democratic deficit seen in the Legislative Branch. Furthermore, and notably, Van Riper (1958) began to further articulate and elaborate on the idea of representative bureaucracy, saying that such a bureaucracy must “(1) consist of a reasonable cross-section of the body politic in terms of occupation, class, geography, and the like, and (2) must be in general tune with the ethos and the attitudes of the society in which it is part” (552). Finally, Subramaniam (1967) produced the most well-known early instance of empirical work on representative bureaucracy, comparing the

social backgrounds of civil servants across multiple countries. All of these studies served to establish and sustain representative bureaucracy as a subject worthy of scholarly inquiry. Nevertheless, although this group of studies certainly enhanced our understanding of representative bureaucracy, their impact on subsequent scholarship pales in comparison to that of Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service*, published in 1968. Mosher's book makes a number of contributions to representative bureaucracy scholarship and to the study of public administration more generally, but the most lasting contribution contained in the book is simply a terminological clarification that Mosher makes. Specifically, Mosher perceived that there seemed to be some inconsistency and confusion surrounding the way scholars defined "representativeness." Upon closer examination, he realized that scholars were actually referring to two distinct types of representativeness, which he termed "passive representativeness" and "active representativeness." First, he defined passive representativeness as follows: "The *passive* (or sociological) meaning of representativeness concerns the source of origin of individuals and the degree to which, collectively, they mirror the total society" (135, emphasis in the original). Next, he defined active representativeness as a situation "wherein an individual (or administrator) is expected to press for the interests and desires of those whom he is presumed to represent, whether they be the whole people or some segment of the people" (136). In the years since, scholars have embraced and relied heavily upon this terminological distinction.<sup>3</sup>

The early, largely theoretical works of Kingsley, Mosher, Krislov (1974), and others established the basic contours of a theory of representative bureaucracy and laid the groundwork for future empirical work that would test and further refine the theory.

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<sup>3</sup> In recent years, some scholars have explored the notion of "symbolic representation," which is one potential result of passive representation. It will be discussed later in this chapter. It should also be noted that scholars have used different definitions of active representation, an issue which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Empirically, scholars have examined various aspects of representative bureaucracy such as the degree to which real-world bureaucracies are representative (Subramaniam, 1967; Meier, 1975), the determinants of passive representation (Eisinger, 1982; Whitford et al., 2007), and attitude congruence between bureaucrats and the population (Thompson, 1978; Dolan, 2002). Although these diverse lines of inquiry have all shed light on and enhanced our understanding of the phenomenon of representative bureaucracy, one question has predominated over others and consumed the most scholarly energy: *what are the effects of representation?*

Accordingly, in an effort to capture the bulk of representative bureaucracy research, this chapter reviews the literature on the effects of bureaucratic representation. The chapter is organized into five parts. First, it discusses the various pathways by which passive representation might lead to an effect. Second, it reviews the literature regarding the most studied effect of passive representation, that of improved bureaucratic outcomes for a represented social group. Third, it reviews the literature on a less studied effect of passive representation, that of improved perceptions of the bureaucracy. Fourth, it reviews research on an effect of passive representation that has been the subject of very recent literature, that of an increased willingness in the population to coproduce with the bureaucracy. Finally, it discusses potential effects of active representation, a subject that has received very little attention among researchers.

### **Pathways to Effects**

How is it that passive representation might bring about some kind of effect? By what means or process exactly might this occur? For many years, particularly during the 1990s and early 2000s, scholars studying representative bureaucracy pointed almost exclusively to active

representation when answering these questions. That is to say, the pathway from passive representation to effects or outcomes was deemed to run through active representation. Thus, scholars during this time period devoted a great amount of time and energy to studying what they characterized as the link between passive and active representation.

However, it is important to point out that the working definition of active representation used by most of these scholars has distorted the conversation surrounding passive representation and its effects. Whereas, on the one hand, Mosher (1968) defined active representation as an intentional behavior on the part of an individual bureaucrat to advance the interests of his or her social group, scholars in the 1990s and early 2000s largely embraced Meier's (1993) definition of active representation, which follows: "...a *bureaucracy* is an active representative if it *produces policy outputs* that benefit the individuals who are passively represented" (emphasis added).

Meier's definition of active representation is substantially different from that of Mosher's. Specifically, it changes the definition of the term in two ways. First, it shifts the agency from the individual bureaucrat to the bureaucracy as a whole; the bureaucracy, not the bureaucrat, is the active representative. Second, it makes the existence of active representation contingent on the bureaucracy's producing beneficial outputs for the passively represented group. In contrast, Mosher's definition of active representation is only contingent on a bureaucrat's *attempt* to actively represent a group. As such, Meier's definition of active representation amounted essentially to a redefinition of the term. The result of this is that scholars accepting Meier's definition of active representation and claiming to study the association between passive and active representation have effectively been studying the

bureaucratic outputs associated with passive representation rather than studying the individual-level bureaucratic behavior that Mosher singled out.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, regardless of the definition of active representation, the fact remains that until the mid-2000s few scholars openly considered the possibility that the pathway from passive representation to effects might not always run through active representation. Accordingly, Lim's (2006) essay entitled "Representative Bureaucracy: Rethinking Substantive Effects and Active Representation" has received a great deal of attention among representative bureaucracy scholars because of its revelatory arguments on this point. In this essay, Lim makes a number of claims regarding existing work on passive and active representation, but the central thrust of his argument is this: representative bureaucracy scholars have largely neglected the fact that active representation is not the only means by which passive representation can lead to effects. On the contrary, he argues, there are a number of additional, unexplored pathways by which such effects might come into being.

Thus, Lim lays out what he calls the "direct and indirect sources" of passive representation's substantive effects, which are listed in Table 2 below. Direct sources, on the one hand, produce benefits directly as a result of a bureaucrat's behavior. Indirect sources, on the other hand, produce benefits through the behavior of someone else – either a non-focal bureaucrat or a client of the focal bureaucrat. There are three direct sources. The first direct source is partiality, which is Lim's term for active representation. When a bureaucrat engages in partiality, he or she pursues benefits for his or her social group that otherwise would have been benefits for another social group. The second direct source is shared values and beliefs. Lim argues that bureaucrats who belong to a particular social group will be more likely to share the

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the closest scholars have come to studying Mosher's conception of active representation is Selden and others' work on the representative role perception (Selden, 1998).

values and beliefs of that social group than a bureaucrat who is not part of that group. Thus, by simply engaging in one's normal behavior, one will help his or her social group receive benefits from the bureaucracy, whether intentionally or not, by virtue of those values and beliefs being embodied in that behavior. Finally, the third direct source of benefits is empathic understanding. In this case, even if a bureaucrat does not share the values and beliefs of his social group, he possesses a better and more natural understanding of that group's needs and wishes than a bureaucrat who does not belong to that group. Consequently, this empathic understanding will shape the bureaucrat's behavior and orient it toward benefiting that group.

Next, there are three indirect sources of substantive benefits that operate via non-focal bureaucrats. The first of these Lim calls "check." This, like partiality, is relatively overt, and it involves a bureaucrat openly intervening in another bureaucrat's behavior to prevent the second bureaucrat from disenfranchising the first bureaucrat's social group. The second indirect source is restraint. In this case, the non-focal bureaucrat restrains himself from acting in a prejudiced manner toward the focal bureaucrat's social group because of the presence of the focal bureaucrat. The third indirect source is resocialization. In this case, the focal bureaucrat, over time, effects a change in the non-focal bureaucrat's behavior that benefits the focal bureaucrat's social group.

Finally, there are two indirect sources of benefits that rely on bureaucratic clientele as their conduit.<sup>5</sup> First, there is demand inducement. Under demand inducement, the outwardly visible presence of a focal bureaucrat leads to a higher demand for bureaucratic services from that bureaucrat's social group. The second indirect source is coproduction inducement. In this

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<sup>5</sup> Demand inducement and coproduction inducement are forms of symbolic representation, a term introduced into the representative bureaucracy literature by Theobald and Haider-Markel (2008), which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

case, the presence of a focal bureaucrat encourages a client from the same social group to change his or her behavior in a way that leads to benefits for the individual and the relevant social group.

Table 2. Sources of Passive Representation's Effects

<b>Direct sources</b>	<b>Indirect sources</b>
Partiality	Check
Shared values and beliefs	Restraint
Empathic understanding	Resocialization
	Demand inducement
	Coproduction inducement

Source: Lim, 2006

While Lim's taxonomy of different sources of passive representation's effects is not necessarily exhaustive of all the potential sources, its distinctive contribution is to move the conversation beyond active representation and encourage scholars to challenge path dependency in existing research. Certainly, Lim makes a plausible case that passive representation might bring about effects in a variety of ways.

### **Improved Outcomes for Represented Groups**

As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, a substantial amount of scholarly attention in representative bureaucracy research has been devoted to examining the potential association between passive representation and improved outcomes for represented groups. The vast majority of this work has characterized itself as examining the link between passive and active representation, and it has produced a fair amount of empirical evidence supporting cases

in which passive representation has been positively associated with improved outcomes for represented groups. Within this body of work, the emphasis has shifted over time from finding evidence of such a link, on the one hand, to gaining an understanding of the variables that mediate the potential connection between representation and effects, on the other. Specifically, research has identified the following six variables as key moderators: discretion, organizational context, hierarchy, critical mass, stratification, and professionalization (Keiser, 2010). The following paragraphs address each of these in turn.

### **Discretion**

First, in order to engage in active representation, bureaucrats must have some amount of discretion (Dolan & Rosenbloom, 2003; Meier, 1993a; Thompson, 1976). While discretion is necessary for active representation, however, it is not sufficient to ensure it (Meier & Bohte, 2001). Rather, a bureaucrat's individual discretion must manifest in the issue areas or activities that are salient to the bureaucrat's identity (Keiser et al., 2002; Meier, 1993a; Thompson, 1976). A number of scholars have demonstrated the importance of discretion to the link between passive and active representation. For example, using data from the Farmer's Home Administration, Sowa and Selden (2003) find that bureaucrats perceiving themselves as having more discretion have a greater tendency to bring about policy outcomes that favor minorities. In other cases, the extent to which discretion leads to active representation depends on the location of a bureaucrat within the organizational hierarchy. For instance, in a study of child support-enforcement bureaucracies, Wilkins and Keiser (2006) find meaningful discretion at the mid-management level, while Smith and Fernandez (2009) find that the presence of minorities in upper level leadership positions leads to higher levels of federal contracts with small, minority-owned firms.

## **Organizational context**

Second, the extent to which passive representation translates to active representation may depend on the organization in question. In particular, the organization's mission and socialization processes may be impactful. If an organization's mission is to advocate for a certain group, as in the case of the Veterans Administration (VA), then active representation is likely to occur. Furthermore, the process of organizational socialization may affect the link between passive and active representation. On the one hand, the institution of organizational values may crowd out any inclination toward active representation that may have resulted from a bureaucrat's identity. For instance, there is evidence of ethnic identities being displaced in police forces due to organizational socialization (Wilkins & Williams, 2008, 2009). On the other hand, an organization may encourage advocacy roles for its employees, thereby facilitating a climate for active representation.

## **Hierarchy**

Third, some scholars have identified hierarchy as an important moderating variable when considering the link between passive and active representation. Hierarchy can be used by organizations as a structural mechanism to limit discretion, thereby limiting the potential for active representation. A handful of studies have found that within organizations, the extent of hierarchy and centralization is negatively correlated with the level of active representation (Meier & Bohte, 2001; Keiser et al., 2002; Sowa & Selden, 2003). For example, in a study of 600 Texas school districts, Meier and Bohte (2001) find that more decentralized organizational

structures led to improved representational results by allowing for greater discretion for minority teachers.

### **Critical mass**

Fourth, some scholars have explored the possibility of a “critical mass” of passive representation within an organization leading to active representation. In other words, a threshold level of passive representation is needed to activate active representation, a notion first posited by Kanter (1977). While Kanter hypothesized this level to be fifteen percent, other studies have found that different levels of passive representation constitute a critical mass (Hindera & Young, 1998; Keiser et al., 2002; Thompson, 1976; Meier 1993a). In general, the findings are mixed, with some studies indicating that the level of the organization in which the critical mass takes place is most important. For example, research on US schools has demonstrated that critical mass is required at the managerial level in order to achieve active representation, yet it is not required at the teacher level (Meier & Kapers, 2012).

### **Stratification**

Fifth, stratification concerns the location of the bureaucrats of interest within the organizational hierarchy. While some theorists argue that, all else equal, bureaucrats located at the top of the hierarchy will have more ability to influence active representation (Selden, 2006), others, most notably Lipsky (1980), have argued that it is front-line workers who have more influence on implementation and the conferral of benefits to a target group. The empirical evidence regarding these arguments is mixed: while some studies have supported the former

assertion (Brudney et al., 2000; Dolan, 2000; Saidel & Loscocco, 2005), others have supported the latter claim (Keiser et al., 2002; Meier & O'Toole, 2006).

### **Professionalization**

Sixth, in a manner similar to organizational socialization, professionalization can either strengthen or weaken the link between passive representation and active representation. On the one hand, professional values may encourage neutrality and discourage active representation. On the other hand, for instance, some client-serving professions such as social work and law embrace values that facilitate a mentality of active representation (Guy et al., 2008).

Finally, over the past decade a number of studies have simply begun to examine the association between passive representation and improved bureaucratic outcomes without an emphasis on active representation, regardless of its definition (e.g. Meier & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Atkins & Wilkins, 2013; Atkins et al., 2014). For example, Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) examine the association between female representation and improved outcomes for women, finding a positive relationship between the percentage of women police officers and both the number of reports of sexual assaults and the number of arrests for sexual assault. Atkins and Wilkins (2013), on the other hand, look at the potential effects of African-American representation among teachers, finding that as the percentage of African-American teachers reaches a certain threshold – 20 percent – there is a significant reduction in the African-American teen pregnancy rate.

This recent group of studies is associated – sometimes via self-identification and sometimes not – with the term “symbolic representation,” which was introduced into the

representative bureaucracy literature by Theobald and Haider-Markel (2008). According to Theobald and Haider-Markel, symbolic representation “works cognitively on the audience of those who belong to a group that is to be represented. With symbolic representation, then, attitudes and outcomes can change without any purposeful actions taken by the representatives other than holding a government office or position.”

Astutely, Theobald and Haider-Markel point out that symbolic representation may actually be the explanation for some of the findings in the “passive-active link” literature:

Because of the aggregate nature of the data and the focus on outcomes, it is unclear whether relationships between descriptive representation and policy outcomes are a function of active representation, actions of nonminority bureaucrats, or responses by citizens of represented groups (as in the case of symbolic representation).<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, regardless of whether symbolic or active representation is at work in these instances, the objective of this section of the chapter has been to provide an overview of representative bureaucracy literature that identifies an association between passive representation and improved outcomes for represented groups.

Incidentally, not all research focused on the effects of passive representation has examined improved outcomes for represented groups. In particular, within the past decade two streams of literature often associated with the symbolic representation line of inquiry have emerged within representative bureaucracy research that examine the benefits that passive representation may have for the bureaucracy itself rather than for represented groups: one small body of work examines the potential association between passive representation and improved perceptions of the bureaucracy, and another group of studies investigates the relationship

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<sup>6</sup> Clearly the authors embrace Mosher’s definition of active representation as an individual bureaucrat behavior.

between passive representation and citizens' willingness to "coproduce" – that is, essentially, to work together – with the bureaucracy in order to bring about certain policy and program outcomes. The following two sections examine each of these lines of inquiry, respectively.

### **Improved Perceptions of the Bureaucracy**

While the potential link between passive representation and improved perceptions of the bureaucracy received little to no significant attention from scholars during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, it was actually one of the central concerns of the early representative bureaucracy theorists. In particular, the most prominent early work to consider this relationship is that of Krislov (Dolan & Rosenbloom, 2003), who argues that the pathway from passive representation to bureaucratic outcomes runs through perceived bureaucratic legitimacy. Specifically, Krislov argues that the public bureaucracy needs perceived legitimacy in order to successfully implement policies, and that passive representation aids in bringing such perceptions about:

...[T]he public sector has explicit need for extrinsic validation. A major task of governance is to gain support for policies. No matter how brilliantly conceived, no matter how artfully contrived, government action usually also requires societal support. And one of the oldest methods of securing such support is to draw a wide segment of society into the government to convey and to merchandise a policy... (1974, 4 – 5)

Despite the compelling nature of Krislov's argument, as mentioned previously, scholars do not appear to have empirically tested the relationship between passive representation and perceived administrative legitimacy until recently. Specifically, two studies examine this relationship empirically. First, Theobald and Haider-Markel (2008) investigate this association in the context of interactions between law enforcement officers and citizens. Using data from the *Police-Public Contact Survey, 1999*, the authors find that black citizens are more likely to

perceive police actions as legitimate if there are black officers present, and that white citizens are more likely to perceive police actions as legitimate if the actions were conducted by white officers. Second, in a more recent study, Riccucci and her co-authors (2014) also examine the same relationship in the context of law enforcement. In contrast to Theobald and Haider-Markel, however, they examine gender representation rather than racial representation. Specifically, they examine whether the gender representativeness of a police department's domestic violence unit influence citizens' perceptions of the department's job performance, trustworthiness, and fairness, all traits closely associated with legitimacy. The results of the study confirm a positive association.

Other recent research has studied the association between passive representation and improved satisfaction with bureaucratic services. For instance, Gade and Wilkins (2013) investigate this relationship in reference to veterans receiving vocational rehabilitation assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Using survey data, the authors find that veterans who believe that their counselors are also veterans have a higher probability of reporting a satisfactory experience with their counselors.

### **Increased Willingness to Coproduce**

Furthermore, some recent studies have considered a third potential effect of passive representation: an increased willingness on the part of citizens to coproduce policy and program outcomes with bureaucrats. As in the case of improved perceptions of the bureaucracy, it is assumed that an increased willingness to coproduce is brought about by symbolic representation rather than any behavior on the part of the bureaucrat. That is to say, simply the presence of a bureaucrat will lead a citizen sharing a salient demographic trait with that bureaucrat to feel inclined to work with that bureaucrat toward a shared goal.

To date, the body of work examining this subject appears to be quite small, and the results are mixed. For example, Riccucci et al. (2016) investigate the potential link between passive representation and coproduction using a survey experiment methodology. Specifically, the authors manipulate the listed first names of officials working at local recycling departments to examine whether a greater prevalence of female-sounding names affects citizens' willingness to participate in recycling and composting programs. Indeed, the authors find an increased willingness among female citizens to coproduce when the representation of female names is greater. Moreover, the effect is stronger for the more difficult task of composting food waste.

However, Van Ryzin et al. (2016) find a negative result when testing the same relationship in a different context. In this study, Van Ryzin and his co-authors use a conceptual replication methodology to examine the effect of gender representation on citizens' willingness to coproduce in the realm of emergency preparedness. In contrast to the Riccucci et al. (2016) study, this study does not find a significant association between passive representation and citizens' willingness to coproduce, leading the authors to speculate that this relationship may vary by bureaucratic function or policy domain.

### **Effects of Active Representation**

Thus far, this chapter has reviewed the effects of passive representation for which there is empirical evidence. To be clear, some of these effects may also result from a bureaucrat's engaging in active representation, given that active representation is one of the means by which passive representation might lead to various effects or outcomes. For example, a passive representative may engage in active representation (i.e. consciously pursue the interests of his or her demographic group), thereby increasing the benefits to his or her demographic group that

stem from a particular program or policy. Alternatively, such benefits might reach the group in question via one or more of the other pathways that Lim set forth, such as via a non-focal bureaucrat.

However, it does not appear that any researcher has decoupled active representation from passive representation, and attempted to examine the potential effects of active representation in and of itself. In other words, any examinations of active representation's effects are always conducted in the context of looking at the effects of passive representation. This is perhaps understandable given that most researchers in recent decades embraced Meier's definition of active representation as consisting of benefits stemming from passive representation, as explained early in this chapter. However, as the following paragraphs discuss, there may be important phenomena that stem directly from the act of active representation that deserve researchers' attention. Specifically, it is important to consider how engaging in active representation might be perceived by others.

First, just as Lim laid out the various ways that the presence of a focal bureaucrat (i.e. passive representation) might affect the behavior of non-focal bureaucrats, it is also important to consider how a focal bureaucrat's engaging in active representation might affect other bureaucrats. On the one hand, when a bureaucrat engages in active representation on behalf of a particular group, such behavior, if apparent and noticeable to other bureaucrats, might cause the other bureaucrats to rethink their own views and potential biases toward the group in question. This is very similar to what Lim describes as far as passive representation influencing the behavior of non-focal bureaucrats via check, restraint, and resocialization. On the other hand, if active representation is witnessed by a bureaucrat who embraces the view that bureaucrats should be neutral implementers of policy, then such behavior might be viewed in a negative light

and perhaps might lead to reduced morale or other negative outcomes for bureaucrats not engaging in active representation. Granted, there are many contextual variables that might influence the impact of active representation on non-focal bureaucrats, such as the mission and culture of the organization in question, but suffice it to say that generally speaking active representation could impact non-focal bureaucrats in multiple meaningful ways.

Second, in another parallel to Lim's analysis of the effects of passive representation, it is also important to consider how engaging in active representation might affect non-bureaucrats' perceptions of the bureaucracy. As with active representation's effects on non-focal bureaucrats, non-bureaucrats' witnessing or learning of active representation could lead to either positive or negative results. On the one hand, if a non-bureaucrat witnesses or learns of a bureaucrat's engaging in active representation, this non-bureaucrat might view such behavior favorably, and he or she might feel more inclined to either seek out the bureaucracy's services or work in tandem with the bureaucracy to produce outcomes (i.e. Lim's "demand inducement" and "coproduction inducement"). On the other hand, if the non-bureaucrat in question perceived active representation as inappropriate bias toward a particular social group, this individual's perception of the bureaucracy might become more negative, thereby undermining the bureaucracy's perceived legitimacy and perhaps ultimately hindering its effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the effects bureaucratic representation. Specifically, it (1) discusses the various pathways by which passive representation might lead to effects; (2) reviews the three different potential effects of passive representation for which researchers have found

empirical evidence; and (3) discusses the potential effects of active representation, which have largely gone unstudied.

The next chapter takes the representative bureaucracy theoretical framework and applies it to the case of national representation in the UN bureaucracy. In particular, it provides a thorough overview of the UN's treatment of both passive and active national representation. Thereafter, it lays out examples of the potential effects of passive and active national representation in the UN bureaucracy, thereby establishing the importance of national representation in the UN bureaucracy and setting the stage for the original empirical studies contained in Chapters Four and Five.

## CHAPTER 3

### NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE UN BUREAUCRACY: WHAT IS KNOWN

#### **The United Nations**

When discussing the founding of the UN, it is difficult to separate this historic initiative from another major event occurring at the time: the winding down of World War II. Indeed, it may not be inappropriate to describe the UN as a “child” of the second World War, a direct result and product of the conflict. The term “United Nations” was coined by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and first used formally in the Declaration by United Nations in January of 1942, when the representatives of 26 countries including and aligned with the Allied Powers proclaimed their governments’ collective commitment to keep fighting against the Axis Powers. Gradually, over the next three years as the War drew toward a close, the Allied Powers’ vision for a post-WWII world came to include the existence of a formal, global organization dedicated toward preserving peace – a more effective successor to the pre-war League of Nations. Following the surrender of Japan in September of 1945, the United Nations officially came into being the very next month, when its original 50 member states ratified the UN Charter.

The nature of the UN’s founding reveals some noteworthy details about the organization. First, it was born in response to a military conflict, with the preservation of peace among nations as its primary *raison d’être*. Second, its founding was orchestrated primarily by the “great powers” of the time, who went on to become the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council, known as the “P-5”: the United States, the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, China, and France. Third, it was decided that its headquarters would be located in

the United States. In short, the UN as an organization reflected the postwar, primarily Western-oriented power structure within international relations. As we will see subsequently, this dominance by powerful nations, particularly Western ones, extended to the composition of the UN bureaucracy at its outset.

In some ways the UN has changed significantly since its early years. For example, although the organization emerged originally with a focus on peace and security, it is now involved in several different areas of international affairs. Officially, its mission is five-fold: maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development, and uphold international law. In addition, the UN has grown substantially. Moreover, upon its founding, the UN had 51 member states, but now it has 193. Whereas it began with fewer than 5,000 staff members, the Secretariat now employs roughly 40,000. In 2017 dollars, the regular budget in 1948 was about \$218 million, whereas now it is about \$5.4 billion. In short, the UN has undergone a fairly sizable expansion.

On the other hand, some fundamental aspects of the UN have not changed. Although, as mentioned previously, its portfolio of issues has broadened greatly, its work on security, the original focus of the UN, still receives the most attention, as evidenced by the position of the UN Security Council as the most powerful body within the UN. In addition, perhaps the most noteworthy constant throughout the UN's many decades is the membership of the Security Council. The U.S., the U.K., France, China, and Russia remain the only permanent members of the Security Council, and the only members with veto power. Finally, the headquarters of the UN remains in New York, signifying the status of the United States as arguably the world's only superpower, and as a country that wields substantial influence over the UN.

When discussing the organizational structure of the UN, it is important to make a distinction between two interrelated entities: the UN itself and the UN system. The UN itself consists of five principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, and the International Court of Justice. On the other hand, the UN system of organizations consists not only of the UN itself but of five other groups of organizations: the regional commissions<sup>7</sup>, the programmes and funds, the specialized agencies, the related organizations, and other entities. Tables 3 – 8 below list the most prominent organizations within each of these categories.

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<sup>7</sup> The staff of the regional commissions are considered to be part of the UN Secretariat.

Table 3. Main organs

General Assembly
Security Council
Economic and Social Council
Secretariat
International Court of Justice

Table 4. Regional commissions

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Table 5. Programmes and funds

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
World Food Programme (WFP)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Table 6. Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
International Maritime Organization (IMO)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Universal Postal Union (UPU)
World Health Organization (WHO)
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
World Bank Group

Table 7. Related organizations

World Trade Organization (WTO)
Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
International Criminal Court (ICC)
International Seabed Authority (ISA)
International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)
United Nations University (UNU)
International Trade Centre (ITC)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Table 8. Other entities

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

## **The UN**

First, the General Assembly is the primary decision making entity in the UN, the only one to provide for the representation of all member states. All member states are represented equally in the General Assembly, with one vote apiece. Major decisions require a two-thirds majority. For several decades, the largest voting bloc in the General Assembly has been the so-called “G-77,<sup>8</sup>” a group of about 130 developing country member states, which exists effectively to counterbalance the power of the developed countries, who contribute the bulk of the UN’s funds. Second, the Security Council, mentioned above, consists of the P-5 and 10 non-permanent, rotating member states, and holds primary responsibility within the UN for matters of international peace and security. Third, the Secretariat is the UN’s primary administrative apparatus, headed by the Secretary-General. The Secretariat employs tens of thousands of staff around the world, and it is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the UN and the implementation of policies established by other principal UN organs. Fourth, the Economic and Social Council consists of 54 members, and is the central policy body in the UN for economic, social, and environmental issues. Fifth, and finally, the International Court of Justice is the primary judicial body within the UN, with the responsibility to resolve legal disputes among member states and to provide advisory opinions on international legal matters.

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<sup>8</sup> Although consisting of about 130 members now, the G-77 was founded by 77 member states, and has kept the same label ever since its beginning.

## **The UN system**

The remainder of the UN system outside of the core UN itself consists of the funds, programmes, related organizations, specialized agencies, and other entities. The funds and programmes are most closely aligned with the core UN out of all these groups of organizations, but in contrast to the core UN they are funded by voluntary contributions rather than contributions assessed against member states. The fifteen specialized agencies, on the other hand, are fully autonomous from the UN, although they do coordinate with the organization in a variety of ways.

While comprehensive data regarding the workforce of the entire UN system do not appear to be readily available, the Secretary-General annually provides a report to the General Assembly entitled “The Composition of the Secretariat,” which provides a demographic analysis primarily of the Secretariat staff, but that also includes some data on the staff of related entities. The related entities in this case are UN system organizations whose staff are governed by the same rules and regulations as the staff of the Secretariat. These entities are primarily UN funds and programmes, and the group does not include any of the aforementioned organizations that the UN refers to as “specialized agencies” or “related organizations.” As of December 31, 2016, the most recent date for which numbers are available, the Secretariat workforce totaled 39,651 individuals, whereas the staff of the related entities totaled 36,583.

In terms of the staff classifications or grades, first, the professional and higher category consists of staff recruited on an international basis and possessing specialized skills. Most staff in this category have advanced degrees, although a bachelor’s or equivalent degree coupled with the desired amount of relevant work experience may sometimes suffice. In addition, professional and higher level staffers must have an excellent command of either English or French. The work conducted by individuals within this category is divided into eight job

networks: management and operations support; economic and social development; political, peace and security; information systems and communication technology; legal; public information and external relations; conference management; and safety and security. Finally, this category includes directors, who run UN offices, and senior appointments – the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretaries-General, and Assistant-Secretaries-General.

The General Service and related staff serve primarily in administrative support, clerical, and certain technical roles. They are recruited locally rather than internationally, but still have the same language requirement as professional and higher staff – an excellent command of English or French. This category of staff is required to possess a high school diploma and a sufficient amount of relevant work experience. In addition, they may have to pass an examination administered by the UN, such as the Global General Service Test or the Security Officer test. These individuals work within the same eight job networks as professional and higher staff.

The Secretariat is divided roughly in half between personnel working in field operations (19,754) and those in a non-field capacity (19,897). In terms of grade, the staff can be broken down into three categories: professional and higher (12,849), General Service and related (22,908), and Field Service (3,894). Furthermore, not all UN staff are permanent employees of the organization. They may also serve in fixed-term or temporary appointments. There are 10,072 permanent staff, 26,658 fixed-term staff, and 2,921 temporary staff. Table 9 below summarizes these numbers.

Table 9. Secretariat staff by grade and appointment

<b>Grade</b>		<b>Appointment type</b>	
Professional and higher	12,849	Permanent/continuing	10,072
General Service and related	22,908	Fixed-term	26,658
Field Service	3,894	Temporary	2,921

### **Passive National Representation in the UN Workforce**

The subject of passive national representation in the UN workforce has been one of great interest to UN management and UN member governments throughout the history of the Organization. To begin with, although the UN Charter, the Organization’s founding document, stops short of requiring that the staff be internationally representative, and indeed it does not use the term “representation,” it states that geographical background should be considered when it comes to recruiting. Chapter 15, which covers UN staff, contains the following provision: “The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. *Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.*” (Emphasis added.) In other words, the founders expressed a desire for the UN workforce to not only be highly qualified from a merit standpoint, but also to be geographically diverse in its origins.

Interestingly, the initial staffing of the Secretariat in 1946 appears to have resulted in a workforce that was anything but geographically diverse. According to Ameri (PAGE, 1996), this initial round of staffing occurred within a period of only a few weeks and in an atmosphere of great urgency given the pressing needs of the immediately post-war period. As a result, UN

management hired primarily from Western countries due to these countries' relative abundance of qualified personnel, and because of these individuals' proximity to UN headquarters in New York. The numbers confirm Ameri's claim. In October of 1946, merely two of the most powerful western nations contributed a majority of the staff: UK nationals constituted just under 14 percent of the professional level staff at headquarters, and American nationals constituted an eye-catching 43 percent. Thus, correcting this imbalance and increasing the geographical diversity of the UN staff became one of the first major human resources reform issues for the Organization in its early years.

The notion that the high proportion of Western staff was excessive does not appear to have been disputed. The much thornier questions were these: first, what is the appropriate amount of representation for each country? And second, what can be done to achieve these amounts? In other words, what exact mechanism can be used to achieve this goal? In a resolution passed in November of 1947, the General Assembly asked the Secretary-General to come up with such a mechanism. Subsequently, in 1948, the Secretary-General issued a report in which he outlined his proposal and the reasoning behind it. He began by sharing his philosophy on geographical distribution and generally how to achieve a desirable distribution:

Rightly understood, the cardinal principle of geographical distribution is not that nationals of a particular nation should have a specified number of posts at a particular grade or grades...but that, in the first place, the administration should be satisfied that the Secretariat is enriched by the experience and culture which each Member nation can furnish...Any rigid mathematical formula to whatever yardstick it may be related...would restrict in an impracticable fashion the flexibility on which the success of any good administration must depend, and is therefore unacceptable.

He then explained why he thought member state contributions to the UN budget could reasonably be the basis of the “flexible system” he had in mind: “[T]he conclusion was reached that no single criterion would by itself be valid but that as financial contribution to the United Nations budget had been fixed in relation to a combination of pertinent criteria,<sup>9</sup> it would be reasonable to take them as a basis for the flexible system.”

Finally, the Secretary-General specified how the mechanism would be flexible:

It was finally decided to allow, as reasonable, any upward or downward variation within 25 per cent of the budgetary contribution...but not admitting an upward deviation in the number of nationals from countries contributing more than 10 per cent, it recognizes the undesirability of any nation or nations, by reason of prevailing economic conditions, having an undue proportion of staff in the Secretariat.

In addition, the system would be limited to internationally recruited staff (as opposed to locally recruited staff) in the professional and higher categories, and it would exclude posts with special language requirements. Thus, a so-called “desirable range” was calculated for each member state, and the system overall came to be known as the “system of desirable ranges.”

Of course, it is one thing to say that the Organization should strive to employ a certain number of nationals, and entirely another matter to specify exactly *how* the Organization might go about achieving those numbers. After all, as discussed previously, the UN Charter made it clear that the primary consideration in recruiting new staff members would be to seek out individuals possessing competence, efficiency, and integrity, and that any geographical considerations should be secondary. The Secretary-General provided guidance on this point of implementation, as well: “No appointments from over-represented countries shall be made unless the Department of Administrative and Financial Services is satisfied after consultation

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<sup>9</sup> Financial contributions were based on a member state’s “capacity to pay,” which derived from three sources: relative national income; temporary dislocation of national economies and increases in capacity to pay arising out of the war; and relative per capita national income. Capacity to pay is still the basis for budgetary contributions to this day.

with the Department concerned that no suitably qualified candidates from under-represented countries are available.” In other words, given a scenario in which a sufficiently qualified candidate from an underrepresented country has applied, that candidate should be hired.

Notably, the system of desirable ranges has survived throughout the history of the UN, and it is still in use today at the Organization. The most significant reform to the system took place in 1962, when the General Assembly made two changes. First, it added what it called the “membership factor” to the set of factors that determined a country’s desirable range. The membership factor essentially ensures that every member state receive a certain amount of “credit” toward its desirable range simply by virtue of being a UN member state, whereas previously, the ranges were based solely on budgetary contribution, disadvantaging very poor countries. To operationalize this membership principle, the General Assembly decided that no member state would have a desirable range with a minimum lower than five nationals (in other words, each member state should ideally have at least five nationals employed at the UN). Second, the General Assembly added member state population as another factor in the calculation of the ranges, though budgetary contribution still remained the most heavily weighted factor. In addition, in the 1980s the relative weights of the population, budgetary contribution, and membership factors were adjusted such that budgetary contribution remained the most influential at 55 percent, population at only 5 percent, and “membership” at 40 percent. These weightings are still in effect today. Thus, while budgetary contribution still technically has the greatest influence on the target employment numbers, membership is a close second, considerably reducing the influence of budgetary contribution from its original status. Table 10 below lists each factor and its weight in computing the desirable ranges.

Table 10. SDR factors, weights

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Membership	40 percent
Population	5 percent
Budgetary contribution	55 percent

One of the important things to understand about the system of desirable ranges is that, as mentioned above, it does not apply to all UN staff. Rather, it applies to a subset of positions at the UN, which are often referred to as “geographic posts” or “geographic staff.” The geographic posts are filled through international recruitment (as opposed to local recruitment), only at the professional and higher grades (i.e. professional level, director level, under-secretary and assistant secretary-levels), and they do not include posts with special language requirements. Therefore, from a strictly numerical perspective, the applicability of the system is quite limited. For example, as of December 31, 2016, there were 3,005 geographic posts in the Secretariat, which amounted to only about 7.6 percent of the total Secretariat staff. Thus, when the UN states that a member state is overrepresented, for example, it is only referring to that member state’s number of nationals in the context of the 3,005 total geographic posts. See Table 11 below regarding the number of geographic posts over time.

Table 11. Number of geographic positions, years 2000 – 2017

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of geographic positions</b>	<b>Total Secretariat staff</b>	<b>Percent geographic</b>
2000	2,389	33,049	7.23
2001	2,445	35,441	6.90
2002	2,492	36,898	6.75
2003	2,491	37,705	6.61
2004	2,515	37,598	6.69
2005	2,581	40,074	6.44
2006	2,634	30,548	8.62
2007	2,730	36,579	7.46
2008	2,797	39,503	7.08
2009	2,809	39,978	7.03
2010	2,886	44,134	6.54
2011	2,049	43,747	4.68
2012	2,245	42,887	5.23
2013	2,907	41,273	7.04
2014	2,901	41,426	7.00
2015	3,001	41,081	7.31
2016	2,982	40,131	7.43
2017	3,005	39,651	7.58
<b>Average</b>	<b>2,658.83</b>	<b>38,983.50</b>	<b>6.87</b>

Nevertheless, despite the quantitatively narrow scope of the system’s applicability, national governments are still keenly interested in their respective statuses vis-à-vis the ranges. For instance, as recently as 2010 and 2014, the UN conducted comprehensive reviews of the system of desirable ranges as requested by member state representatives in the General Assembly. Moreover, some member state governments themselves keep close tabs on their degree of representation. For example, the United States Congress has periodically requested that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the number of U.S. nationals working for the UN, and that the GAO make recommendations for increasing that number. Furthermore, several governments have units within their Foreign Offices (the equivalent of the

U.S. State Department) that focus solely on helping their nationals secure placement in UN positions (Jordan, 1991). It is helpful to remember that this subset of geographic positions includes the vast majority of senior management posts (i.e. directors, assistant secretaries general, and under secretaries general), which wield substantial influence over UN policy and management. Thus, although the geographic positions are somewhat small in number relative to the total UN workforce, they loom large in terms of their responsibilities and visibility within the organization.

According to the most recent data, the average member state had 16 nationals serving in geographic posts, whereas the median amount of representation was only six nationals, indicating the presence of at least one member state with an unusually high number of nationals among the geographic staff. On the one hand, at the low end of the representation range, 18 out of the 193 member states had no nationals at all serving among the geographic staff. On the other hand, at the high end, one member state, the United States, had 357 geographic staff, while the second highest number belonged to Germany at 143.

It is also informative to see how the member states are distributed across the different representation categories based on the desirable ranges (i.e. underrepresented, within range, overrepresented). A slight majority of member states, 102, fall within their desirable ranges, while 18 are completely unrepresented, 44 are underrepresented, and 29 are overrepresented. Notably, these numbers have been quite similar over the years, with a plurality and sometimes a majority of member states tending to fall within their desirable ranges, but always with a substantial number of member states falling outside of their ranges, whether over- or underrepresented. As seen below, the unrepresented member states tend to be much smaller in terms of population than the other categories of states, with a median population of about

157,000. At the other end of the spectrum, the overrepresented countries tend to be larger, with a median population of about 18 million.<sup>10</sup> Table 12 below displays these numbers.

Table 12. Basic characteristics by representation status

	Number of member states	Percent of total	Median population	Number of developed	Number of developing
Unrepresented	18	9.33	157,153	4	14
Underrepresented	44	22.80	7,421,672	6	38
Within range	102	52.85	8,641,026	17	85
Overrepresented	29	15.03	17,909,754	15	14

It is also instructive to view representation in terms of two other groupings of nations: by region and by development status. First, as seen in Table 13 below, Africa provides 14 percent of geographic staff, Asia and the Pacific about 16 percent, Eastern Europe about eight percent, Latin America and the Caribbean about 11 percent, the Middle East about three percent, and finally Western Europe about 48 percent.<sup>11</sup> When contrasting these numbers against population, two notable contrasts emerge.<sup>12</sup> First, while the Asia and Pacific region provides only 16 percent of the geographic staff, it constitutes about 56 percent of the world’s population. In contrast, while the Western Europe region contributes 48 percent of geographic staff, the nations in this region only account for about 11 percent of the world’s population. In addition, in terms of the desirable ranges, 50 percent of the Western Europe member states fall into the overrepresented category, far more than is the case for any other region.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 4 explores much more thoroughly the relationships between various salient country traits such as population, on the one hand, and representation, on the other.

<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, the politically and culturally similar countries of the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are all included in the Western European region.

<sup>12</sup> Chapter 4 also explores the UN’s stance that representativeness not be measured solely against population, a notion that arguably is quite reasonable when applied to the case of a non-state, non-public institution like the UN.

Table 13. Representation by region

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of non-geographic nationals</b>	<b>Percent of all non-geographic nationals</b>	<b>Number of geographic nationals</b>	<b>Percent of all geographic nationals</b>	<b>Total number of nationals</b>	<b>Percent of all nationals</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percent of total population</b>
Africa	16,137	40.87	420	14.00	16,557	38.97	1,224,280,762	16.54
Asia & Pacific	5,364	13.59	465	15.50	5,829	13.72	4,152,454,060	56.11
Eastern Europe	2,310	5.85	231	7.70	2,541	5.98	337,940,949	4.57
Latin America & Caribbean	3,117	7.89	338	11.27	3,455	8.13	633,687,131	8.56
Middle East	2,597	6.58	94	3.13	2,691	6.33	241,926,979	3.27
Western Europe	9,959	25.22	1452	48.40	11,411	26.86	809,712,933	10.94

Furthermore, a similar pattern emerges when viewing representation in terms of countries' development status. While developing nations contribute about 43 percent of geographic staff, they make up 85 percent of the world's population. In contrast, while developed countries contribute about 57 percent of geographic staff, they only account for 15 percent of the world's population. See Table 14 below.

Table 14. Representation by development status

Country	Number of geo reps	% of geo reps	Population	Percent of total population
Developing	1,296	43.2	6,343,415,047	85.72
Developed	1,704	56.8	1,056,587,767	14.28

Now having achieved a basic understanding of the state of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy, the following section draws on the lessons from representative bureaucracy research in order to posit potential effects of passive national representation in the UN.

### **Effects of passive national representation**

As discussed in the previous chapter, representative bureaucracy research has identified multiple types of impacts that passive representation may have, and they can be grouped in three areas: outcomes affecting the passively represented group; perceptions of the bureau and willingness to coproduce with the bureaucracy. This section of Chapter 3 discusses how these three categories might apply to the case of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy.

Before moving to the effects of representation themselves, it is important to lay out some of the fundamental conditions that structure passive national representation and its potential effects in the UN bureaucracy. There are three conditions to consider: whether the representation in question is that of individual member states or that of groups of member states; where in the UN bureaucracy the representation is taking place; and whom exactly is being represented. Each of these conditions will now be discussed in turn.

First, the effects of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy depend on whether one is considering passive representation of individual member states or groups of member states. In the former case, the nationals of a single member state are passively representing that state, and any effects of this representation would apply to this particular member state. In other words, one might conceive of this relationship as a dyad between a member state's nationals at the UN and the member state itself. In the latter case, the nationals of a group of member states are passively representing that group of states, and any effects of this representation would apply to the group of states. Perhaps the most salient way to group member states in the context of the UN is by development status, typically developed, on the one hand, and developing, on the other. Thus, the presence of developing country nationals within the UN bureaucracy may have an effect in some way on developing countries themselves. Another way to group nations in the UN context is by region, but this does not tend to be as salient as grouping by development status.

Second, one has to consider where within the UN bureaucracy the passive national representation is taking place. As described earlier in this chapter, the UN system of organizations is fairly extensive, consisting of dozens of organizations that vary by mission, function, policy area, and more. This variation in organizational characteristics also impacts the

potential effects of passive national representation within each organization. For example, a UN organization like the Office of Legal Affairs within the Secretariat may not afford many opportunities for member states to engage in coproduction. Thus, representation's impact on willingness to coproduce is not a consideration in this case. Or, for instance, the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) efforts clearly target developing nations, so the representation of developing nations among UNDP's staff is especially meaningful. In sum, when studying passive national representation in the UN environment, one has to take into account the characteristics of the particular UN organization being analyzed.

Third, one must consider whether the UN organization in question primarily directs its activities toward ordinary citizens, on the one hand, or toward member state government officials, on the other. Gravier (2013) discusses this issue in her study of representative bureaucracy in the European Union bureaucracy:

...it is likely that bureaucratic representation is not very visible to EU citizens due to the absence of EU street-level bureaucrats. However, it is visible to the member states. Therefore, bureaucratic representation probably cannot operate as a legitimacy enhancer vis-à-vis citizens even though it potentially does vis-à-vis member states. In other words, the theory's main focus shifts from analyzing relations between a central administration and its citizens (or clients) toward analyzing relations between two levels of governance.

This is also the case in the UN. For example, the Secretariat, which is the core bureaucracy of the UN, has very few, if any street-level employees. Rather, its employees interface frequently with member state government officials. In contrast, UN peacekeepers and field workers are interacting on a regular basis with everyday citizens of countries around the world.

There do not appear to be any empirical studies that try to identify any effects of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. Thus, there is no concrete evidence per se that such effects exist. Nevertheless, there are several indicators that the issue matters. In particular,

it matters to member state governments. First, as discussed previously, passive national representation is enshrined in the UN Charter as an organizational priority, and the system of desirable ranges establishes passive national representation as an internal policy consideration. Second, member state representatives in the General Assembly frequently call on the Secretary-General to take measures in order to make the geographical distribution within the Secretariat more equitable. In other words, passive national representation was not only a concern upon the founding of the UN, when the Charter and system of desirable ranges came into being, but it has continued to be a concern throughout the history of the organization. Third, some countries actively seek to assist their own nationals in obtaining jobs at the UN. For example, the U.S. State Department hosts a website for jobseekers interested in international organizations. The website explains the effort as follows:

As the largest financial contributor to the United Nations and most other international organizations, and because these organizations execute multilateral development and assistance programs important to U.S. policy, *the U.S. government has a vested interest in the composition of their staffs. [This site] exists...to promote American representation in these organizations* (CITE) (emphasis added).

Thus, while the lack of empirical evidence linking passive national representation in the UN to any effects of such representation should not be dismissed, it should also not be interpreted to mean that such effects do not exist or that passive national representation does not matter. Clearly this issue is quite important to governments of the world, and it has been for some time, and this would not be the case if passive national representation did not have some kind of meaningful substantive or symbolic effects (or both).

To further understand the effects that passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy might have, it is helpful to illustrate some hypothetical examples of the three types of effects from Chapter 2: effects on outcomes for the represented population; effects on perceptions of the bureaucracy; and effects on willingness to coproduce with the bureaucracy. First, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) recently announced that it would be involved in an initiative to distribute a new antiretroviral medication to South Africa, Kenya, and many other low-income countries. The logistics of such efforts in developing countries can be quite daunting not only because of poor infrastructure but also because of the need to navigate cultural norms. Thus, it might be prudent of UNAIDS to employ nationals either of the particular countries in which they are operating, or nationals of developing countries generally speaking, as these individuals would likely have a better understanding than developed country nationals of how to successfully implement a program in these countries. Greater representation of developing country nationals at UNAIDS could lead to increased benefits for the target population of UNAIDS programs.

Second, passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy may impact individuals' perceptions of the UN bureaucracy and the UN in general. Perceived legitimacy is important to bureaucracies, as a lack thereof can undermine the bureaucracy's ability to successfully carry out an initiative (Krislov, 1976). For example, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) plans to issue a major report on pollution at the end of 2017, and the report will include recommendations on how governments can address pollution. The target audience of this report will primarily be government officials in developing countries, and these officials may be more likely to take the report seriously and act on it if at least some of the authors of the report are from developing countries. Furthermore, as a more general example, if external actors such as

member state governments and international NGOs see that particular countries, types of countries (e.g. developed), or regions are substantially overrepresented or underrepresented in the UN bureaucracy, which implements UN policy and programs, then these actors may question the legitimacy, fairness, and motivations of UN actions.

Third, passive national representation may increase the willingness of represented individuals to coproduce with the UN bureaucracy. For instance, as discussed previously, a large proportion of UN staff work on the ground outside of UN facilities, primarily as field workers or peacekeepers. These are, in essence, the street-level bureaucrats of the UN. In the course of these operations, it is critical to have buy-in and cooperation from not only national officials but local officials and everyday citizens. Thus, when operating in a given country, it may be useful to utilize UN staff who are either nationals of that country or nationals of culturally similar countries in order to help establish rapport with local officials and the population, thereby enlisting these local actors in efforts to implement UN policies and programs effectively.

In sum, while there are no empirical studies demonstrating an association between passive national representation and its various possible effects, it is nonetheless quite reasonable, based on our knowledge of passive representation generally and on our awareness of member state investment in passive national representation at the UN, to suspect that passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy might have a meaningful impact on the outcomes achieved by UN programs, on the external perceptions of the UN bureaucracy, and on non-bureaucrats' willingness to coproduce with the UN bureaucracy.

The next section of this chapter describes the UN's approach to active national representation in its bureaucracy, and it discusses some of the potential effects of this type of representation in this setting.

## Active National Representation in the UN Bureaucracy

In contrast to its open and direct approach to passive national representation within its bureaucracy, the UN does not make any explicit pronouncements on the subject of active national representation *per se*.<sup>13</sup> However, the UN does arguably *implicitly* attempt to discourage its employees from engaging in active representation of their countrymen or home governments. This stance is most clearly manifested in the oath of office that all UN employees must swear upon their assumption of duty:

I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and to regulate my conduct *with the interests of the United Nations only in view*, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organization. (Emphasis added.)

One way to interpret this oath is that if UN employees swear to pursue only UN interests (not the interests of their countrymen), and to not accept instructions from national governments, who presumably pursue the interests of their citizens, then active representation of one's countrymen is not allowed or encouraged.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, while Article 100 also does not explicitly prohibit active national representation, such behavior would arguably violate the spirit of the Article, which emphasizes a separation between staff and national governments:

1. In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.

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<sup>13</sup> To reiterate, active national representation would involve an individual UN bureaucrat pursuing the interests of his or her fellow nationals in the course of UN work.

<sup>14</sup> See discussion in Chapter 5 regarding the nuances of active national representation, such as whether one represents one's countrymen or one's government, and how the two may conflict.

2. Each member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities. (UN)

Of course, one does not have to be a cynic in order to acknowledge that oaths are not necessarily effective at preventing the behavior against which they are intended to guard. Indeed, the fact that the UN founders instituted such an oath in the first place suggests that they believed UN employees might have difficulty separating themselves from the interests of their home countries. Indeed, the founders' concerns appear to have been warranted, given the well-documented tendencies of member state governments to become involved in the UN staffing process to promote their own nationals, for example (Weiss, 1982; Reymond & Mailick, 1986; Ameri, 1996). Although this involvement does not violate the letter of the Charter in that it is not an instance of national governments giving instructions to UN employees, it certainly indicates a potential closeness between national governments and their nationals employed in the UN, which would seem to violate the spirit of the Charter.

Thus, while it does not seem likely that the open, explicit pursuit of national interests by UN employees would be a common occurrence, it also is not reasonable to assume that active national representation does not occur in a more subtle form. In other words, from the outside of the UN looking in, it appears as if there is at least the potential for active national representation by UN employees.

### **Effects of active national representation**

As discussed at the end of Chapter Two, passive representation is not the only type of bureaucratic representation that may bring about meaningful effects. Rather, active representation might also have a noteworthy impact on administrative behavior and outcomes. First and foremost, active representation may serve as the conduit by which passive

representation translates into improved benefits for a target population. Moreover, the ways in which both bureaucrats and non-bureaucrats perceive active representation may have important implications for administrative legitimacy and effectiveness. How might this play out in the UN setting?

First, consider how a UN employee's engaging in active national representation might be perceived by his or her colleagues. If these colleagues embraced the ideal of the international civil servant as a neutral, independent actor, then it might be off-putting for them to work alongside someone engaging in active national representation. This experience might negatively impact the colleague's morale, thereby likely lowering their productivity. On the other hand, active national representation might not be perceived negatively by a colleague. Rather, witnessing a bureaucrat engaging in advocacy for his or her country could help a colleague to become more sensitive to and understanding of a particular country's culture, norms, and other less obvious characteristics.

Second, to some degree, the UN depends on its perceived neutrality in order to effectively intervene in international disputes and other challenging transnational situations. If external actors witnessed or learned of UN employees engaging in active national representation, it might undermine their view of the UN as a neutral institution, thereby potentially hindering the UN's perceived legitimacy and effectiveness. On the other hand, exposure of an external actor to a UN employee engaging in active national representation could lead the external actor to engage with UN, particularly if the actor shares the same nationality as the active representative. Thus, one can imagine active national representation in this case leading to demand inducement for UN services or a greater willingness to coproduce with the UN.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has accomplished three tasks. First, it provides a brief overview of the UN's history and its organizational structure. Second, it describes the UN's approaches to passive and active national representation, respectively. And third, it discusses the various ways in which both passive and active national representation might have an impact in the context of the UN bureaucracy and the work that it does, thereby illustrating the importance of studying these phenomena in order to enhance our understanding of them.

Accordingly, the next two chapters each take a closer, empirical look at passive and active national representation, respectively, in the UN bureaucracy. More specifically, Chapter Four utilizes a quantitative methodology to try to identify the determinants of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. Thereafter, the study in Chapter Five is an exploratory effort that relies on semi-structured interviews with current and former UN employees to try to gauge the potential for and extent of active national representation in the UN bureaucracy.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DETERMINANTS OF PASSIVE NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE UN WORKFORCE

#### **Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter Three, there are two primary reasons to examine passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. First, there is a sizable body of literature, both empirical and theoretical, regarding the actual and potential effects of passive representation. Specifically, passive representation has been found or theorized to have effects in three areas: bureaucratic outcomes (i.e. implementation of policies and programs); perceptions of the bureaucracy; and clients' willingness to coproduce with the bureaucracy. Chapter Three set forth some specific examples of how these effects might manifest themselves in the case of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. Second, there is ample evidence that both the UN organization and its member state governments are keenly interested in passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. For example, the creation and persistence of the system of desirable ranges demonstrates the UN's continuing interest in the matter, while each member state's effort to increase its own nationals' presence within the ranks of the UN bureaucracy strongly suggests that member state governments see something real to gain in maximizing their passive representation.

Furthermore, as discussed previously, there is great variation across member states in terms of passive national representation among geographic staff in the Secretariat. For example, as of the end of 2016, representation ranged from zero nationals from 18 different member states, on the one hand, to 357 from the United States, on the other. In addition, not only is the range of

representation quite large, but a closer look at countries' status under the system of desirable ranges reveals some noteworthy details. Specifically, while one might expect developed nations to dominate the overrepresented category because of the likelihood that they can produce more qualified applicants for UN jobs, the overrepresented category in 2016 included countries like Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Kenya, while the underrepresented category included none other than the U.S. In other words, at first glance, it is not entirely clear what is going on behind these representation numbers. This raises two important questions. First, what explains this variation? And second, how might the distribution of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy bear on the potential effects of such representation? If passive national representation affects the way the benefits of UN programs are distributed amongst the world population; if it affects outside perceptions of the UN's legitimacy, while the UN depends on outsiders for support; and if it affects the UN's ability to coproduce with national and subnational partners, then it is important that we understand the distribution of passive national representation.

Accordingly, the analysis in this chapter pursues an answer to the following research questions: what are the factors that influence passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy, and what is the extent of their influence? The chapter begins with a review of existing studies on the determinants of passive representation, followed thereafter by an exploration of the factors that might influence passive representation in the particular context of the UN. This review informs articulated testable hypotheses. The chapter continues with a description of the data set used in this analysis, offering descriptive statistics for the key dependent and independent variables, followed by a brief overview of the methods used to estimate two different models of the relationship between passive national representation and its determinants. Thereafter, the results of the analysis are reported and discussed, and the chapter

concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the analysis, conclusions that may be drawn, and possible next steps to continue our attempts to understand this topic.

### **The Determinants of Passive Representation**

As mentioned in Chapter Two, identifying the determinants of passive representation has been one of the more studied topics among scholars studying bureaucratic representation, particularly in the 1980s.<sup>15</sup> According to Selden (1997b, p. 51), at the time of her writing scholars had examined more than 50 potential determinants, which she grouped into four categories: demographic, political, organizational, and economic. In addition, she noted that most studies had focused on the determinants of female and minority representation in U.S. municipal governments, but that a non-trivial number of studies had also examined the same subjects in the U.S. federal government. Selden highlights the following determinants as those more commonly found to have an impact on representation: minority group population (municipal level), minority political power (municipal level), agency size (federal level), and distribution of occupational categories (federal level) (175-179). Later, in 2012, Meier and Capers also undertook a review of the determinants of passive representation, singling out two of the same determinants as Selden: political power and population. However, they also highlighted three additional factors influencing passive representation that Selden had not

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<sup>15</sup> Although the findings of U.S.-based research regarding the determinants of passive representation are not automatically transferable to the case of passive representation in the UN, they are nonetheless worth considering as the relationship they convey between a determinant and passive representation may still be logically plausible in the UN context.

featured: education, the presence of quotas or similar policies, and upper (or lower) level representation within the bureaucracy.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to note that only the determinants above that are characteristics of a population can be used in the present study, as opposed to determinants that are characteristics of the bureaucracies themselves. This is because in the present study the bureaucracy does not vary. Rather, it is a case study of a single bureaucracy, that of the UN. Thus, it is impossible to study the effects of agency size, distribution of occupational categories, or presence of quotas, because these are characteristics that vary across bureaucracies in the studies that identified them as determinants of passive representation. The present study is looking instead at the effects of characteristics that vary across countries, which is analogous to examining the effects of the determinants identified in the municipal-level studies that vary across population subgroups, of which there are four: population, political representation, education, and upper level representation.

Therefore, the following pages discuss each of these four determinants in turn, providing examples of studies that have identified them, considering the extent to which each is transferable to the case of interest in this study, and stating hypotheses about the variable's relationship with passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy.

## **Population**

The first determinant is population, which enjoys a substantial amount of empirical support in the representative bureaucracy literature as a frequently significant driver of passive

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<sup>16</sup> Meier and Capers do not distinguish between municipal and federal level studies, though they do note that some research focuses on the K-12 public education setting.

representation. Indeed, the logic underpinning the theoretical relationship between population and passive representation in the bureaucracy is fairly intuitive: the larger a demographic group is, the more applicants for bureaucratic jobs it is likely to produce, and therefore, the group is likely to have more passive representatives in the bureaucracy. Not only is this logic intuitive, but the amount of empirical representative bureaucracy literature verifying this logic is noteworthy. Selden calls the evidence linking population and passive representation “overwhelming” (178).

More specifically, the evidence base that Selden cites consists primarily of studies from the 1980s and early 1990s that examine the determinants of minority and female employment in municipal governments. For example, in a study of black employment at the municipal level, Eisinger (1982) analyzes data from 43 U.S. cities, and he finds that variations in employment are “mainly a function of the size of the black population and the presence of a black mayor.” In another example, Mladenka (1989) examines data from 1,200 U.S. cities, finding that “minority job success is a function of the size of the minority population” and other factors. In addition, Selden cites several studies that examine the determinants of Latino and female municipal employment.

Needless to say, although the evidence appears to be relatively substantial that population is a significant determinant of minority and female employment at the municipal level in the United States, the question remains as to whether these empirical findings can aid in our understanding of national representation at the international level, given the substantial differences between the two contexts. However, the underlying logic of the relationship between population and passive representation that operates at the municipal level seems to be transferable to the international level. Specifically, it certainly seems plausible that countries

with larger populations might have larger presences in the UN workforce because of their ability to produce more applicants for UN vacancies. Therefore, the following hypothesis is offered:

H<sub>1</sub>: Member state population is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

### **Political representation**

Both Selden and Meier and Capers note that political representation – representation by elected officials – of women and minorities is positively related to bureaucratic representation of the same groups. For example, Eisinger (1982) not only finds that African-American representation in municipal bureaucracies is positively related to African-American population, but it is also positively related to the presence of a black mayor. .

Unlike in the case of population as determinant, however, the underlying causal mechanism connecting political representation to bureaucratic representation is not immediately apparent.<sup>17</sup> Does having members of a group in positions of political power lead to more bureaucratic representation for that group because the elected officials actively recruit fellow group members to serve in bureaucratic positions? Or, alternatively, does the effect occur through symbolism, in that a visible, influential political leader might serve as a sort of “magnet” to draw other members of his or her social group to join the bureaucracy? Of course, both of these mechanisms could be working simultaneously.<sup>18</sup> Regardless, there does seem to be a positive relationship between political and bureaucratic representation.

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<sup>17</sup> In fact, some scholars have found evidence that the effect may work in the opposite direction as well, i.e. that bureaucratic representation affects political representation (Meier & Smith, 1994; Meier & O’Toole, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> These are also possible mechanisms underlying the relationship between upper level bureaucratic representation and passive representation in the middle and lower tiers of the bureaucracy.

Translating this notion to the UN setting, however, is not straightforward. Specifically, this is because of the fact that political representation manifests itself quite differently at the UN. A municipality, on the one hand, has popularly elected officials like a mayor and a city council who are clearly the political representatives of the people. The UN, on the other hand, does not have an exact equivalent. This is primarily a function of the fact that the UN is not a government; the people of the world do not elect the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. Rather, the UN is an intergovernmental membership organization, with national governments as its members, and each government appoints its representatives at the UN (e.g. the U.S. Mission to the UN, led by the U.S. Ambassador to the UN).

Therefore, given the lack of a clear parallel (i.e. elected officials) to the municipal setting, a political representation hypothesis will not be tested.<sup>19</sup>

### **Upper level representation**

Yet another potential determinant of passive representation – specifically lower and middle level representation – in the UN bureaucracy may be upper level representation within the same bureaucracy, meaning a country's passive representation in the topmost layers of the bureaucracy. According to Meier and Capers (2012), studies show that upper level representation is generally the strongest determinant of representation in the lower levels of the bureaucracy. For example, in a study of Latino representation among Texas school district employees, Meier et al. (2004) find that the presence of Latino administrators is positively associated with the presence of Latino teachers. Furthermore, Goode and Baldwin (2005) find a positive relationship between African-American municipal administrators and African-American

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<sup>19</sup> Notably, this is not the case in the EU, where citizens directly elect the European Parliament.

employees in the sub-administrator levels of municipal agencies. In another example, Whitford et al. (2007) in their cross-national study of female representation find that increases in female representation at the ministerial level of government are positively associated with increases in female representation at the sub-ministerial levels. It is noteworthy that each of these three studies examines a fundamentally different administrative setting – national governments, municipal governments, and school districts – and each study uncovers evidence of the influence of upper level representation.

As with the case of political representation as a determinant, it is not immediately clear what the causal mechanism is that connects upper level representation to lower and middle level representation. Nevertheless, one might put forth the same explanations, as in the case of political representation: that the presence of a social group's representatives in the upper levels of the bureaucracy simply serves as a sort of magnet that draws more members of that group to apply for lower level positions; or that these upper level representatives actively recruit other members of their group and somehow assist in their hiring. Furthermore, it may be possible that the upper level representatives are promoted from the lower levels. All of these seem plausible, and they may be operating simultaneously.

In contrast to the effect of political representation, the effect of upper level bureaucratic representation in the UN should be testable as the UN bureaucracy is fairly hierarchical and grades are well-defined. Thus, this study states the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: Member state representation in the upper echelons of the UN bureaucracy is positively related to passive representation of member states in the middle and lower levels of the UN bureaucracy.

## **Education**

Finally, although there does not appear to be much, if any research linking education to passive representation empirically, education would certainly seem to be one of the more central factors in the study of what affects representation. Indeed, Meier and Capers (2012) call education “...the most important barrier to representative bureaucracies. Although bureaucracies are never a microcosm of the population, they approach equality as the population becomes better educated.” Certainly the logic behind this relationship is intuitive, that the more educated the members of a group are, on average, the more passive representation they are likely to have in the bureaucracy.

This logic also seems to make sense in the context of staffing the UN bureaucracy. One cannot become an employee of the UN without meeting certain educational requirements. Specifically, positions in the “professional and higher” category, on which this study focuses, require an advanced degree.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, it is common knowledge that the attainment of advanced degrees is not equally distributed across nations. Education is a key component of what we conceive to be “development,” and certainly countries vary greatly in the extent to which they are developed. Although individuals may leave their countries in order to obtain an advanced education, this is a privilege that tends to be available only to a wealthy minority of individuals rather than an opportunity that the typical individual enjoys.

Thus, it stands to reason that UN member states with a higher number of individuals with tertiary education may produce a greater number of individuals who are eligible for UN positions by virtue of their higher rates of educational attainment.

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<sup>20</sup> It is also an accepted practice, though less preferred, in the absence of an advanced degree to find sufficient the combination of a bachelor’s degree and a non-trivial amount of relevant work experience.

Therefore, this study offers the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: Member state educational attainment is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

### **The Determinants of Passive National Representation in the UN**

To date, a relatively small body of literature exists regarding passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy, the bulk of it having been produced by the UN itself in the form of special reports and using the UN's favored terminology for this issue, "geographical distribution." For example, since the year 2000, the UN Secretary-General has published four reports on geographical distribution, all of them aimed primarily at assessing the system of desirable ranges and making proposals for reform of this system. In addition, the UN's Joint Inspection Unit, the organization's independent oversight entity, produced in 2012 a report on UN recruitment which focuses in great part on recruitment for the purpose of achieving equitable geographical representation. None of these reports make any attempt to identify the determinants of the geographical distribution in the UN bureaucracy. Rather, they provide an update on the state of the distribution itself, and they offer various proposals for adjusting the formula that generates the desirable ranges or expanding the applicability and scope of the system.

It appears that only one scholarly study of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy has been published, that of Reymond (1983). In his article, Reymond dedicates himself primarily to describing the distribution of passive national representation over time, and to chronicling the evolution of the system of desirable ranges. However, he does put forth one theory regarding the determinants of the distribution. Specifically, he notes that authoritarian

countries maintain closer control of the UN recruitment process within their countries, and that they prefer that their nationals serve relatively short tenures in the UN before returning to national service. This leads to a higher rate of turnover, which, he asserts "...is bound to multiply the time, cost and work needed for recruitment, delay replacements and, thus, adversely affect the nationality balance." Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H<sub>4</sub>: Member state authoritarianism is negatively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

Although Reymond's study appears to be the only one directly analyzing passive national representation, some scholars, including Reymond, have analyzed the clearly interrelated issue of UN staffing (Finger & Mugno, 1975; Weiss, 1982; Reymond, 1983; Jordan, 1991; Ameri, 1996). Within this small body of work there is relative consensus on one point that sheds light on the forces shaping geographical distribution: UN staffing is excessively politicized, and this politicization primarily manifests itself in the form of member state government interference in the staffing process. Finger and Mugno identify two types of interventions: cronyism and "politics." Cronyism, on the one hand, exists when "A foreign minister, UN ambassador or other government official may have a relative, friend or acquaintance...who relishes the idea of living and working in New York City..." Cronyism can usually be resisted by UN officials unless the source of it is a highly influential individual. Politics, on the other hand, is much harder to resist. Finger and Mugno describe "politics" as "...political pressure [being] exerted to achieve government goals. A member state, or group of states, may make it a foreign policy goal to have a certain number of nationals serving in what it considers key posts of the Secretariat..."

It is difficult to say what the effect of political pressure may be on geographical distribution. First, simply because political pressure is applied does not mean it will be effective.

Second, it is unlikely that all member states are equally likely to engage in the application of political pressure in the staffing arena. Third, not all member states engaging in political pressure will be equally effective at achieving their goals. Nevertheless, to the extent that member states attempt to apply such pressure, it seems likely that the more successful efforts would come from the member states with more political power in the first place, as these states would be the most difficult to resist. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H<sub>5</sub>: Member state political power is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, although the following two factors do not derive from scholarly literature, they are practical realities of staffing the UN bureaucracy that have to be considered: UN language requirements and UN facility location. First, as mentioned in Chapter Three in the overview of the hiring process, UN staff must be proficient in either English or French. Because countries with English or French as their official language are likely to produce a higher number of proficient English and French speakers than countries whose official languages are not English or French, the following hypothesis is offered:

H<sub>6</sub>: A member state having English or French as its official language is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

Second, the professional grade positions within the UN that this analysis will consider are located in a limited number of prominent UN facilities around the world. Although the UN recruits for these positions on an international basis, and applicants for these positions tend to be internationally oriented individuals willing to relocate far away from their home nations, it still

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<sup>21</sup> Note that this analysis incorporates two of the factors that underlie the desirable ranges – member state population and member state budgetary contribution – while excluding the “membership” factor. Given that every member state is a member of the UN, there is no way to test the impact of being a member state on passive national representation, whereas the potential impacts of population and budgetary contribution may be tested given that they vary across countries.

stands to reason that proximity to a UN facility may matter in terms of willingness to relocate there. Thus, the following hypothesis is stated:

H<sub>7</sub>: A member state hosting a major UN facility is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

The subsequent section regarding the data set used for this analysis will identify the specific measures used to operationalize the determinants stated in the hypotheses above.

### **Data**

In order to test the above hypotheses, this study utilizes a set of panel data pertaining to all UN member states that was assembled by the author, covering the years 1995 – 2012. The panel is unbalanced as the membership of the UN was not constant during this time period; a handful of countries either became members or ceased to be members. The choice of years reflects the acknowledgement that the process of UN staffing does not take place in a vacuum. Rather, it takes place in the context of international politics and the pursuit of often narrowly defined national interests. Thus, it is important to note that no international political phenomenon since the founding of the UN has shaped global affairs more so than the Cold War. In an effort to hold the international political environment constant, to the extent that that is possible, the decision was made to only analyze data from the years following the Cold War.

The following paragraphs describe this data set according to each variable of interest. First, the two alternative measures of the dependent variable, passive national representation, are discussed. Second, the continuous independent variables are described – population, authoritarianism, and political power. Third, the categorical independent variables are described

– upper level representation, official language, and UN facility location. And finally, the special case of education data is discussed.

### **Passive national representation**

The dependent variable in this analysis is that of passive national representation. Fortunately, data on passive national representation in the UN workforce are readily available. Specifically, these data may be found in a report issued annually by the Secretary General’s office entitled “The Composition of the Secretariat.” This report is available for free in the UN’s online document repository: the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISNET). The report provides a demographic breakdown of the Secretariat workforce according to a number of characteristics, such as gender, nationality, and age. For the purposes of the present study, however, the report is critical in that it includes a table listing the number of personnel by grade level from each member state, the key data necessary to construct a measure of passive national representation.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the core UN staff are divided into two types when it comes to passive national representation: geographic staff and non-geographic staff. Geographic staff are subject to the system of desirable ranges, and non-geographic staff are not. In other words, when the UN assesses geographic distribution and the extent to which each member state is appropriately represented, it bases its assessment on the nationality distribution among the geographic staff. The geographic staff are internationally recruited personnel in the professional and higher grades, excluding only language specialists. Thus General Service (i.e. administrative), junior, and field staff are not included among the geographic staff.

This study uses only geographic staff data for its measures of passive national representation. Although, as discussed in Chapter Two, representative bureaucracy research has

revealed the often substantial impact of representation among street-level, non-management bureaucrats, the present study chooses to focus on geographic staff because of their political and policy relevance.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, this analysis will consider two different measures of passive national representation. First, it will estimate the determinants of a member state's amount, quantitatively speaking, of passive representation. In other words, what determines the size of a member state's presence – in terms of its nationals – among the geographic staff? This will be measured simply as the number of geographic staff from each member state,<sup>23</sup> and it will be referred to as “representation.” Second, this analysis estimates the determinants of what will be called “representativeness,” which typically takes the form of “underrepresented,” “appropriately represented,” or “overrepresented.” Whereas representation measures the size of a member state's presence among the staff, representativeness adds another dimension and compares the size of a member state's presence against a chosen benchmark, such as population or budgetary contribution, for example. Typically, in the context of government bureaucracies, that benchmark is population. For instance, the U.S. federal government has made efforts to bring the presence of Latinos within the Senior Executive Service in line with the presence of Latinos in the general population. Interestingly, however, as discussed in Chapter Three, population is only one of the benchmarks used by the UN to generate the desirable representation ranges. In fact, population is weighted at only five percent, whereas UN membership is weighted at 40 percent, and budgetary contribution at 55 percent.

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<sup>22</sup> A study on passive national representation among street-level UN bureaucrats would be a valuable next step in this area of research.

<sup>23</sup> Technically the geographic staff includes Assistant- and Undersecretaries-General, but because we want to test the effect of upper level representation (i.e. representation among Assistant- and Undersecretaries-General), the representation measure excludes these senior staff members.

Why does the UN not simply use population as its benchmark? First, it is important to remember that the UN is not a governmental entity, and thus does not necessarily embrace the representational norms of a typical government agency. Rather, the UN is an intergovernmental entity that serves as a membership organization (McLaren, 2005) for national governments. Second, the approximate compromise between UN membership and budgetary contribution as the dominant benchmarks is a product of UN politics. As Ameri (235) explains, the wealthier member states, who contribute more to the UN budget, have always favored desirable ranges based primarily on budgetary contribution because it favors their own nationals. Less wealthy member states, on the other hand, have argued that passive national representation should be more equally distributed amongst member states, since this method dilutes the perceived influence of the wealthier states and gives developing nations more opportunities for UN employment. Accordingly, this study measures representativeness as a binary variable, with a value of 1 indicating that a member state is either within its desirable range or overrepresented, and a value of 0 indicating that a member state is underrepresented relative to its desirable range.

To fully understand the difference between representation and representativeness, a description of the data for these variables is illuminating. First, within the data set, representation has quite a large range, from zero nationals to 376 nationals. On the low end, there are 348 instances across the years covered of countries having no passive representatives at all, attributable to 52 different countries, and the vast majority of them appear to be small and relatively poor, as Reymond noted in his analysis. At the other end of the spectrum is the U.S., the only country in the data set to have more than 200 nationals in the UN bureaucracy, let alone 300. The lowest value for the U.S. was 235 in 2011, and the highest was 378 in 1996. After the U.S., the rest of the top five countries in terms of representation are also some of the most

influential countries on the world stage: Germany, France, Russia, and Italy. The mean representation value for all observations is about 13, but the median is only about 5, illustrating just how extreme of an outlier the U.S. is.<sup>24</sup>

Representativeness, on the other hand, as explained previously, is a binary variable in this analysis. Within the data set, 705 observations (about 21 percent) are underrepresented, while 2,690 observations (about 79 percent) are appropriately or overrepresented. Interestingly, however, whereas the distribution of representation roughly appeared to reflect the distribution of development and power across countries (i.e. poor countries have fewer passive representatives, and wealthy, powerful countries have more), the picture is quite different for representativeness. Specifically, both the underrepresented and overrepresented categories contain a mixture of developed and developing countries. For example, while the underrepresented category does include many poor developing nations, as might be expected, it also includes some prominent developed nations, such as Australia in 2011 and even the United States in 2009 – 2012. In contrast, several developing countries, such as Kenya and Cameroon, fall within the overrepresented category. Thus, based on these numbers, one might reasonably expect the determinants of representation to differ from the determinants of representativeness, a possibility that the models in this analysis will put to the test.

## **Population**

Population data were downloaded from the World Bank DataBank. They are measured in millions for ease of interpretation. The range of values is very large, understandably, as the data set includes nearly all the countries in the world. At the bottom of the range is the tiny

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<sup>24</sup> When the U.S. is removed from the data set, the mean becomes about 11 and the median remains 5.

island nation of Nauru in 2010 at about .009 million (about 9,000 people), and at the top is China in 2012 at about 1.3 billion. The countries with the five smallest values are Nauru, Tuvalu, Palau, San Marino, and Liechtenstein. On the other hand, the countries with the five largest values are China, India, the U.S., Indonesia, and Brazil.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the population data, however, is the extreme skew of the distribution. Specifically, the distribution is dominated by smaller countries, skewing the distribution to the right. While the mean value is just over 33 million, the median is only about 6.5 million. While the bottom half of the distribution ranges from about .01 million to about 6.5 million, the top half ranges from 6.5 million to 1.3 billion. In particular, China and India stand out as substantial outliers. The distribution is relatively continuous up through the U.S., whose population within the data set ranges from about 266 million to about 313 million. Thereafter, however, the distribution jumps to India, which hovers around 1.1 billion, and then China at around 1.3 billion.

### **Authoritarianism**

Authoritarianism is by definition the opposite of democracy; the rule of one as opposed to the rule of many. Most governments in the world lie somewhere on the spectrum between totally autocratic on one end and totally democratic on the other. Therefore, this analysis uses a measure of democracy called “voice and accountability,” available from the World Bank, to measure extent of authoritarianism. This measure “captures perceptions of the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media” (World Bank, 2017). It is operationalized as a percentile rank that indicates a nation’s rank relative to the other countries.

At the bottom of the range, three countries sit at the zero percentile for certain years: North Korea, Myanmar, and Somalia. The first quartile of the rankings is dominated by developing nations from Africa and the Middle East, with Cuba, Iran, China, and Russia standing out as more high profile examples of autocratic states. The second quartile introduces more South American and Eastern European nations. It is not until the 60s percentiles that some of the more well known democracies in the world start to show up, such as South Korea, South Africa, and Israel. Then, in the 70s some of the wealthier countries in the world emerge, such as Italy and Japan, and the U.S. first appears at the 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile for its measurement in 2011. Finally, the 90s are dominated by Western European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

### **Political power**

Perhaps one of the best approximations of member states' respective amounts of political power in the UN is their respective contributions to the UN budget. One of the fundamental realities facing the UN organization is that its existence depends on its member states. This is an inescapable fact that to a great extent structures the relationship between the two parties. While this dependency is largely a political dependency, it is also simply a financial one: without the member states' financial contributions, the UN organization could not operate. Thus, this dynamic grants a substantial amount of authority over the UN to the member states, and one might reasonably assume that this dynamic permeates and influences much of the interaction between member states and the UN, including those interactions concerning member state representation in the UN workforce.

In order to further understand the importance of budgetary contributions, it is helpful to first understand the basic mechanics of UN funding. Funding for the Secretariat, the UN entity

on which this study primarily focuses, and for related core UN bodies comes from the UN ‘regular’ budget, which is financed entirely by mandatory member state contributions (Fasulo, 2009, 246).<sup>25</sup> The exact amount of a member state’s contribution is based on its “capacity to pay”, another way of saying that wealthier states are required to contribute more. Specifically, the General Assembly (GA) determines the exact scale of assessments (i.e. a member state’s share of total member state contributions) by taking a number of factors into account. For instance, in 2016 the GA decided that the scale of assessments for the 2016-18 budget should be based primarily on gross national income, per capita income, and debt burden. Furthermore, the GA established a set of rules to govern the scale of assessments: a minimum assessment rate of 0.001 percent for each country; a maximum assessment rate for the least developed countries of 0.01 percent; and a maximum assessment rate of 22 percent (assigned to the U.S. only).

In this study, the budgetary contribution data come from an annual report issued by the UN Secretariat regarding member states’ contributions to the UN regular budget. These reports were downloaded from the UN Bibliographic Information System.

In this analysis, budgetary contribution is expressed as the percentage of all member state contributions that a member state contributes. For example, in 2012 Sierra Leone contributed .001 percent of all contributions. In the data set this measure ranges from .001 percent, the minimum required contribution, to 25 percent (the U.S. in several different years). The mean contribution percentage is .53 percent, and the median is .01 percent, illustrating once again the extent to which the U.S. is an extreme outlier. Similar to both the representation and population variables, the distribution of this variable is right-skewed. The top five contributors are the U.S.,

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<sup>25</sup> Peacekeeping has its own separate budget, also funded through mandatory member state contributions. Some UN organizations, such as UNICEF and the World Food Programme, are funded on a voluntary basis.

Japan, Germany, the UK, and France, while a substantial number of states contribute the minimum required amount of .001 percent.

### **Upper level representation**

The upper level representation data come from the same report as the proportional representation data, the Secretary-General's Composition of the Secretariat report. The present study defines upper level representatives as Assistant- and Under-Secretaries General. The number of upper level representatives ranges from zero (many countries in many years) to five (the U.S. in several different years). More specifically, about 83 percent of the observations have no upper level representatives, about 13 percent have one upper level representative, about 3 percent have two upper level representatives, .6 percent have 3, and so forth. In other words, the vast majority of countries in most years in the data set do not have any upper level representatives. Because of the small amount of variation in the number of upper level representatives (i.e. no more than 5), this variable is coded as a 0 for countries with no upper level representatives and a 1 for countries with such representatives.

### **Official language**

This variable is coded dichotomously in the data set. Countries with French or English as an official language receive a value of 1, and countries not meeting that condition receive a 0.<sup>26</sup> There are 1,206 observations, about 36 percent of the total, with English or French as an official

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<sup>26</sup> Although English is not the official language of the U.S., the U.S. is coded as a country with English or French as an official language since English is the typical language spoken by Americans.

language. Of the six regions into which this study divides the member states – Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Western Europe<sup>27</sup> -- only Eastern Europe and the Middle East contain no countries with these official languages, while Africa contains the most at 664 observations (55 percent of all observations with French or English as official language). The remaining observations are fairly evenly distributed among Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe.

### **Location**

Similarly, the location variable is coded as either a 1 or a 0. A country receives a 1 if it hosts a major UN facility, and a 0 if not. These facilities include the four headquarters offices and the five regional economic and/or social commission facilities. The four headquarters offices are located in New York City, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. The five regional economic and/or social commissions are located in Geneva (for Europe), Beirut (for Western Asia), Santiago (for Latin America and the Caribbean), Bangkok (for Asia and the Pacific), and Addis Ababa (for Africa).

### **Education**

Of all the cross-country data sought out for this analysis, education measures have by far the most sparse coverage both across countries and over time. The education measures with the most coverage tend to be measures of enrollment, which arguably serve as a poor proxy for

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<sup>27</sup> For the purposes of this study Western Europe includes countries culturally similar to Western European countries: the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

actual ability or competence relative to measures such as test scores, which are only available from a limited number of countries in a limited number of years. Thus, rather than having to drop hundreds of observations or impute substantial amounts of data, this analysis omits education as an independent variable. Given that education is arguably important from a theoretical standpoint for this analysis, the implications of not including it in the models will be further discussed in the limitations section of this chapter. Tables 15 and 16 below describe these independent variables.

Table 15. Summary of continuous independent variables

Variable	Measure	Obs	Mean	SD	Quantiles					
					Min	0.25	Median	0.75	Max	
<b>Population</b>	Population in millions	3395	33.52	127.48	0.01	1.52	6.52	22.21	1350.69	
<b>Political power</b>	Percentage of total budgetary contributions	3389	0.53	2.31	0	0	0.01	0.12	25	
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	Extent democratic - percentile rank	3395	48.35	29.35	0	23.08	46.45	74.52	100	

Table 16. Summary of categorical independent variables

		Freq.	Percent
<b>Upper level representation</b>	Yes	574	16.91
	No	2821	83.09
	Total	3395	100
<b>French/Eng official language</b>	Yes	1206	35.52
	No	2189	64.48
	Total	3395	100
<b>Host of UN facility</b>	Yes	135	3.98
	No	3260	96.02
	Total	3395	100

In addition to analyzing the independent variables individually, it is also informative to describe the degree to which each of them appears to interact with the two dependent variables. For instance, how do the independent variables appear to relate to representation, the number of representatives from each member state? Tables 17 – 21 display the numbers below.

Table 17. Summary stats for observations with *greater than median* representation

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Population</b>	Population in millions	1697	60.35	0.04	1350.7
<b>Political power</b>	Percentage of total budgetary contributions	1696	1.03	0	25
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	Extent democratic - percentile rank	1697	51.01	0	100

Table 18. Summary stats for observations with *median or lower* representation

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Population</b>	Population in millions	1698	6.7	0.01	213.4
<b>Political power</b>	Percentage of total budgetary contributions	1693	0.03	0	0.83
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	Extent democratic - percentile rank	1698	45.64	0	98.56

Table 19. Crosstab of representation and upper level representation

		<b>Upper level representatives?</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Greater than median representation?</b>	<b>No</b>	1633	65	1698
	<b>Yes</b>	1188	509	1697
	<b>Total</b>	2821	574	3395

Table 20. Crosstab of representation and official language

		<b>Official language English/French?</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Greater than median representation?</b>	<b>No</b>	1096	602	1698
	<b>Yes</b>	1093	604	1697
	<b>Total</b>	2189	1206	3395

Table 21. Crosstab of representation and location

		<b>Host major UN facility?</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Greater than median representation?</b>	<b>No</b>	1698	0	1698
	<b>Yes</b>	1562	135	1697
	<b>Total</b>	3260	135	3395

First, in terms of population, member states with more nationals than the median number of nationals are noticeably larger than member states with the median or lower amount of representation. Specifically, the average population for the higher representation group is 60.35 million, and the average population for the lower representation group is 6.7 million.<sup>28</sup> Second, the higher representation group also contributes more to the UN budget than the lower

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<sup>28</sup> Even when dropping China and India from the dataset, the two extreme population outliers, the difference between the two groups in terms of population is substantial.

representation group. The average contribution percentage for the higher group is 1.03, and the average for the lower group is .03. Third, the higher representation group also appears to be more democratic than the lower representation group, with an average percentile rank of 51.01 compared to the lower group's average rank of 45.64. Fourth, the higher representation group also has more upper level representation than the lower representation group. Specifically, the higher representation group has 509 observations with upper level representation, whereas the lower group only has 65 such observations. Fifth, unlike the cases of the other variables, the higher and lower representation groups are virtually identical when it comes to the official language variable. The lower representation group has 602 observations with English or French as the official language, and the higher representation group has 604 such observations. Finally, in what is perhaps the most stark contrast between the two groups, the higher representation group has 135 observations in which the country hosts a major UN facility, whereas the lower representation group has no such observations at all. In other words, all of the countries that host major UN facilities are part of the higher representation group. Next, the same comparison is conducted with the representativeness dependent variable (see Tables 22 – 26 below).

Table 22. Summary stats for within range or overrepresented observations

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Population</b>	Population in millions	2690	34.4	0.01	1337.71
<b>Political power</b>	Percentage of total budgetary contributions	2686	0.42	0.001	25
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	Extent democratic - percentile rank	2690	47.65	0	100

Table 23. Summary stats for underrepresented observations

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Population</b>	Population in millions	705	30.17	0.01	1350.7
<b>Political power</b>	Percentage of total budgetary contributions	703	0.94	0	22
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	Extent democratic - percentile rank	705	51	0	100

Table 24. Crosstab of representativeness and upper level representation

		<b>Upper level representatives?</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Within range or overrepresented?</b>	<b>No</b>	629	76	705
	<b>Yes</b>	2192	498	2690
	<b>Total</b>	2821	574	3395

Table 25. Crosstab of representativeness and official language

		<b>Official language English/French?</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Within range or overrepresented?</b>	<b>No</b>	591	114	705
	<b>Yes</b>	1598	1092	2690
	<b>Total</b>	2189	1206	3395

Table 26. Crosstab of representativeness and location

		Host major UN facility?		
		No	Yes	Total
Within range or overrepresented?	No	694	11	705
	Yes	2566	124	2690
	Total	3260	135	3395

In terms of representativeness, the differences between the two groups are generally smaller numerically, but for some independent variables the relationship is reversed from what it was in terms of representation. First, the higher representation group is still larger on average than the lower representation group, but not by a substantial margin. Member states that are within range or overrepresented have an average population of 34.4 million, whereas underrepresented states average 30.17 million. Second, in terms of political power (i.e. budgetary contribution), the relationship is flipped. Whereas the well-represented group of member states averages a contribution percentage of .42, the underrepresented group averages a higher amount at .94. Third, the relationship is also reversed for extent democratic. The well-represented group's average percentile rank is 47.65 whereas the underrepresented group averages 51. Fourth, as in the case of representation, the well represented group of member states has substantially more upper level representation than the underrepresented group. The well represented group has 498 observations with upper level representation while the underrepresented group only has 76. Fifth, whereas the higher and lower representation groups did not differ substantially in terms of official language, the well represented and underrepresented groups exhibit a major difference on this variable. There are 1,092 observations on which the well represented group has French or English as the official language, and only 114 such observations for the underrepresented group. Finally, the difference is also

substantial when it comes to hosting a UN facility. The well represented group has 124 observations on which a major UN facility is hosted, whereas the underrepresented group only has 11.

To review, the independent variables whose relationship with passive national representation changes direction depending on the way in which passive representation is measured are as follows: political power, extent democratic, and official language. On the other hand, the variables whose relationship with passive national representation runs in the same direction across both measures are population, upper level representation, and location. The fact that an independent variable's association with passive representation may change depending on how the latter is measured suggests again that the determinants of representation may differ from the determinants of representativeness.

## **Methods**

This analysis estimates two models: one modeling the effects of potential determinants on representation (i.e. number of representatives by country) and one modeling the effects of potential determinants on representativeness (i.e. whether a country is well represented according to its desirable range designated by the UN). The first model is estimated using OLS regression with random effects and clustered standard errors. The second model is estimated using logistic regression with random effects and clustered standard errors. Given that these data are panel data, it is necessary to cluster the standard errors in order to make the estimation robust to serial correlation. Both fixed effects and random effects models were estimated, and the results were fairly similar. Thus, random effects was chosen in order to be able to estimate coefficients for the time-invariant variables in the model (i.e. official language, location, and region). In

addition, the first model was estimated both with and without the U.S. included in the data set in order to test for sensitivity of the results to the presence of the U.S. as an extreme outlier. The presence of the U.S. did substantially affect the results, which will be described in the next section.<sup>29</sup>

Table 27. Final hypotheses

H <sub>1</sub>	Member state population is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.
H <sub>2</sub>	Member state representation in the upper echelons of the UN bureaucracy is positively related to passive representation of member states in the core of the UN bureaucracy.
H <sub>3</sub>	Member state authoritarianism is negatively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.
H <sub>4</sub>	Member state political power is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.
H <sub>5</sub>	A member state having English or French as its official language is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.
H <sub>6</sub>	A member state hosting a major UN facility is positively related to passive representation of member states in the UN bureaucracy.

### Control variables

This analysis includes two control variables: country unemployment rate and country region. First, unemployment rate is included in order to try to account for any effects of the state

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<sup>29</sup> One iteration of this analysis included the Human Development Index as an independent variable, but it was found to be excessively collinear with the measure of democracy, and was removed from the model moving forward.

of a country's job market. It is plausible that the conditions in a domestic job market may influence the number of individuals applying for UN jobs from a given country, although it is not clear what exact form or direction this influence would take. For example, in a country with a relatively healthy job market, there should be ample job opportunities at home, which might discourage nationals from seeking jobs abroad and at IOs like the UN. Alternatively, it is also plausible that the countries with healthy job markets are also the countries with education systems and economies more likely to produce individuals who are well-qualified for and interested in UN jobs. Either way, the inclusion of unemployment rate as a control variable may help to account for these kinds of economic considerations in the calculus of a prospective UN applicant.

Second, the models in this analysis also include region as a control variable. Specifically, the countries are divided up into six regions: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East. Although countries may exhibit great variation in terms of the extent to which they seek passive representation in the UN bureaucracy, countries in a shared region may exhibit certain commonalities that influence their representation at the UN. For example, countries in Eastern Europe may share the former Soviet Union's skepticism of the UN, and therefore the governments of these countries may behave similarly with one another when it comes to promoting candidates for UN jobs, restrictions on nationals in the UN, and other related matters.

## Findings

### Representation model

For the first model, when estimated based on the data set including the U.S., four variables have both a statistically significant<sup>30</sup> and a practically significant impact on the number of representatives from a given state: political power, upper level representation, hosting a UN facility, and being part of the Asia-Pacific region. Of these four, only being part of the Asia-Pacific region has a negative impact on representation. First, the effect of upper level representation on representation is marginal though not worth dismissing. If a member state has any upper level representatives, its representation increases by 1.5 representatives. Second, the effect of political power (i.e. budgetary contribution) on representation is certainly more noteworthy. As a member state's share of all member state contributions to the UN budget increases by one percentage point, its amount of representation increases by 8.6 representatives. Third, the effect of location (i.e. hosting a major UN facility in one's country) is very prominent. Hosting a major UN facility results in an increase of 19.2 representatives for a member state. And finally, being a member of the Asia-Pacific region results in a decrease of 5.3 representatives.

As mentioned previously, removing the U.S. from the data set and estimating the same model yields noticeably different results for some variables. When excluding the U.S., being a part of the Asia-Pacific region ceases to be significant, but the effects of political power, upper level representation, and hosting a UN facility remain significant. While the coefficients for upper level representation and political power change only marginally, the coefficient for hosting a UN facility changes more noticeably. Specifically, the coefficient for this variable is reduced

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<sup>30</sup> At the  $p < 0.1$  level.

to 7.2, a decrease of about 12 representatives. Table 28 below displays the results for both of these estimations.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The percent of variation explained (R-squared within) for the first model is .11 and it is .08 for the second model. (The third model does not have a goodness-of-fit measure as Stata does not produce such a measure for random-effects logit models.) It would be inappropriate to compare these values between the first two models because each model is based on a different data set, one with the U.S. and one without.

Table 28. Determinants of representation and representativeness

		<b>Representation (with U.S.)</b>	<b>Representation (without U.S.)</b>	<b>Representativeness</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>
<b>Population</b>	In millions	**0.04	**0.04	1
<b>Political power</b>	Percent of all budgetary contributions	**8.55	**6.24	** .69
<b>Upper level representation</b>	Whether any Under- or Assistant-Secretaries General	**1.48	**1.61	**2.82
<b>Extent democratic</b>	Percentile rank	*0.05	*0.05	0.99
<b>Official language</b>	Whether English/French official language	1.95	0.29	**4.65
<b>Host country</b>	Whether host a UN facility	**19.24	**7.24	**24.0
<b>Africa</b>		-1.8	-1.31	0.77
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>		*-5.26	-4.22	** .09
<b>Eastern Europe</b>		0	0	0
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>		-2.94	-2.01	3.03
<b>Middle East</b>		-3.54	-2.92	** .08
<b>Western Europe</b>		4.57	8.01	*.3
<b>Unemployment rate</b>		-0.04	-0.02	** .96
* = p<.1 **=p<.05				
<b>R-squared within</b>		0.11	0.08	N/A

## Representativeness model

The second model, on the other hand, estimates the effects of these same variables on “representativeness,” or whether a country is (1) overrepresented or within its desirable range or (2) underrepresented relative to its desirable range.<sup>32</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, the first category will be referred to as “well represented.” In addition, the results for this model will be stated in terms of odds ratios rather than coefficients or average partial effects.<sup>33</sup>

For this model, an increase in three variables is found to increase the odds of being well represented, and an increase in four other variables is found to *decrease* the odds of being well represented. Specifically, having upper level representation, hosting a UN facility, or having French or English as an official language are associated with an increase in the odds of being well represented. The odds of being well represented for a country with upper level representation are 2.8 times those of a country without upper level representation. The odds of being well represented for a country with French or English as its official language are 4.7 times larger than those of a country without these languages as its official language. But most notably, and in parallel to the OLS models, hosting a major UN facility means having 24 times greater odds of being well represented.

On the other hand, an increase in one’s budgetary contribution, being a member of the Asia-Pacific or Middle East regions, or an increase in one’s unemployment rate leads to a *decrease* in the odds of being well represented. An increase in a country’s budgetary contribution of one percentage point results in having about 30 percent lower odds of being well represented. Being a part of the Asia-Pacific region results in having about 90 percent lower

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<sup>32</sup> This model is not estimated both with and without the U.S. because the U.S. is not an outlier in terms of representativeness.

<sup>33</sup> When interpreting odds ratios, a value greater than 1 means odds of the “positive” outcome are higher, whereas a value less than 1 means odds are lower.

odds of being well represented. Being a member of the Middle East region results in a slightly greater than 90 percent reduction in the odds of being well represented. And finally, a one percentage point increase in one's unemployment rate leads to reduction in the odds of being well represented of about 5 percent.

Table 28 above also displays the results from this model.

## **Discussion**

### **Representation model**

This discussion will focus on the second iteration of the representation model, which estimated the determinants of representation using data that excluded the U.S. As mentioned previously, the U.S. is an extreme outlier when it comes to representation, having substantially more representation than any other member state. Although removing the U.S. from the data does change the model's results in a nontrivial way, the changes are primarily in terms of the magnitude of the coefficients rather than in terms of which variables are significant. Thus, given that the goal of this study is not to examine the specific effect of the U.S., but rather to look generally at the determinants of representation, this discussion only considers the coefficients from the model that excludes U.S. data.

First, the fact that a member state's population does not make a meaningful difference in its amount of representation is noteworthy and arguably surprising. As discussed previously, prior studies of the determinants of passive representation have frequently found population to have a substantial positive impact on representation. In addition, analysis of the data set earlier in this chapter showed that states with more representation than the median amount have, on

average, a substantially larger population than those states with the median amount or less representation. However, it is important to remember that prior studies are based on a fundamentally different setting – specifically, the U.S. municipal setting. In that context, the bureaucracy in question is located physically amongst the population it is serving. In other words, it is the “local” bureaucracy. Thus, the fact that the demographic composition of a local bureaucracy is influenced by the demographic composition of the local population is reasonable. In the UN setting, however, the relationship between population and passive representation may work differently. As mentioned previously, the limited number of prominent UN facilities are scattered across the world. Thus, while the populations of countries that host UN facilities may be relatively aware of and possibly interested in the UN, populations in countries without UN facilities may be less aware of the UN and simply more disconnected from it. This will be explored further shortly when discussing the large impact of the location variable.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising to think that sheer supply of applicants would not be a factor in staffing these positions. However, a country’s general population may not be an effective proxy for the proportion of its nationals that would apply for UN jobs.<sup>34</sup> It may be the case that UN jobs, particularly the professional level ones that are the focus of this analysis, are so specialized in terms of subject matter knowledge that only a very narrow set of nationals from any given country would be interested in or aware of such jobs.

Second, the modest positive effect of upper level representation seems appropriate if upper level representation is taken to be an indicator of any sort of cronyism or patronage. Perhaps a country’s having a national in a position of power in the UN, such as an Assistant Secretary role, would allow that individual to assist a limited number of nationals from his or her

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<sup>34</sup> The effect of working-age population would not be meaningfully different from that of general population. Working-age population was included in the original data set for this analysis, and it was found to be approximately 98 percent correlated with general population.

country in securing UN positions. But it is unlikely that such behavior would be tolerated within the organization on a wider scale. In addition, this finding is consistent with upper level representation's positive impact in national and subnational studies, and unlike in the case of population just discussed, there is not a reason to think that cronyism or patronage would work any differently at the international level.

Third, the positive and fairly sizable effect of budgetary contribution (i.e. political power) bolsters the notion that politics does play a role in UN staffing. The impact of budgetary contribution on passive representation may reflect, in a sense, the overarching power structure of the UN. As discussed previously, given that the UN is dependent on member states for much of its financing, the states contributing at higher levels naturally wield a great amount of influence over the organization. Thus, when faced with two similarly qualified applicants, one from a high-contributing country and one from a lower contribution nation, the UN may feel pressured to hire the national of the first country, particularly if the government of that country has gotten involved in supporting the individual applicant's efforts to secure a UN job.

Furthermore, the influence of budgetary contribution highlights one of the fundamental differences between the case being analyzed in this study and the typical case in a representative bureaucracy study: in this case, the groups seeking representation are also the groups that directly fund the organization. Thus, money plays a potentially outsized role in the representation equation, so to speak. In contrast, the typical representative bureaucracy study examines minority or female representation in municipal government, a case in which funding of the organization occurs through the tax system and is not tied to the identities in question (i.e. minority or female). Thus, this finding would be impossible to replicate on the national or subnational level.

Another thing to consider regarding the effect of budgetary contribution is that it is arguably a rough proxy for the extent to which a country is developed, and given that developed countries are more likely to produce qualified applicants, it is not surprising that the UN is hiring more people from higher-contributing countries. But this argument rests on the assumption that country wealth is an effective proxy for human development, an indicator of capable individuals, an assumption that has been largely debunked. Recent decades have seen an effort by scholars to differentiate between economic development, on the one hand, and human development, on the other. One product of these efforts is the Human Development Index (HDI) put forth by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). According to the UNDP's website, "The HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone" (UNDP, 2017). Thus, the HDI incorporates not only measures of economic well-being but also measures of physical health as well as educational attainment. An earlier iteration of this analysis included the HDI in its data set, and HDI was not found to be highly correlated with budgetary contribution. However, it was found to be highly correlated with the democracy variable, to such a great extent that HDI had to be removed from the analysis because of excessive collinearity. Thus, to the extent that there is a proxy in this analysis for "qualified or capable applicants," it is the democracy measure, which does not have a significant effect on representation.

Fourth, the fact that the effect of a country's being democratic is not statistically significant is noteworthy, given that this is also a proxy, as just discussed, for supply of capable applicants given its association with human development. In terms of the relationship between representation and democracy, as discussed previously, the idea that the two are associated stems from Reymond's observation that authoritarian governments tended to keep their nationals on a

“shorter leash,” so to speak, thereby increasing their rate of turnover and generally depressing these countries’ levels of representation. However, notably, Reymond’s observations were made in the early 1980s during the Cold War, and they were specifically in reference to Eastern European countries generally in the orbit of the Soviet Union. Thus, this may be an example of a phenomenon that has diminished over time, particularly in the post-Cold War era.

Furthermore, the lack of a significant effect for this variable as a proxy for capable applicants is also worth exploring. On the one hand, this finding taken in combination with the positive impact of budgetary contribution, a proxy for political influence in the UN context, suggests that the staffing process at the UN is fairly politicized, in line with the concerns of Weiss (1978, 2013), Reymond (1982), Jordan (1991), and others. On the other hand, the explanation may be similar to one offered for the lack of an effect for the population variable. Specifically, simply because a country is more democratic than other countries, and therefore more likely to have a larger proportion of capable applicants for UN jobs, does not mean that it has an equally high number of nationals *interested* in working for the UN.

Fifth, and finally, the substantial impact of the location variable stands out. As mentioned when discussing the impact of the population variable, when a population has a bureaucracy physically located in its midst, the population may be more aware of and potentially interested in this bureaucracy than if it were located elsewhere. Thus, the UN may receive more applications from nationals of host countries than from non-host countries, making this an applicant supply phenomenon. In addition, the more cynical explanation is that some kind of cronyism or corruption contributes to this phenomenon. In exchange for hosting a UN facility, do a country’s nationals receive favorable treatment during the UN staffing process?

## **Representativeness model**

In contrast, the model of the determinants of representativeness paints a somewhat different picture from the first model. While two of the same independent variables have a positive impact, upper level representation and location, the remaining ones that made an impact in the first model either no longer make a difference or actually have the opposite effect. In other words, it appears, at least in the case of national representation in the UN, that the forces influencing amount of representation are actually quite different from the forces influencing degree of representativeness (i.e. underrepresented or well-represented).

If this seems counterintuitive or implausible at first, it may be helpful to consider how different a country's situation can be across these two measures. For example, in 2016 the U.S., a large, developed country, had 357 total geographic staff, the highest total among all the member states by far. Yet, at the same time, it was underrepresented relative to its desirable range (373 – 504). In contrast, a relatively small, developing country like Ghana, for instance, only had 16 representatives, yet it was overrepresented relative to its desirable range (3 – 14). This pair of examples highlights a key difference between the two measures: when it comes to “raw” or “absolute” representation, a smaller developing country likely cannot hope to compete meaningfully with a larger developed nation; but in terms of representativeness or what might be called “relative” representation, a smaller developing country can receive some recognition. The ensuing discussion will focus on the non-control variables whose effects differed between the two models: budgetary contribution and official language.

First, budgetary contribution (a proxy for political power in the UN) was the only variable to positively impact representation but negatively impact representativeness. Why might contributing more to the UN budget relative to other countries decrease a country's odds of being well-represented? One possible explanation could be that higher contributing countries

like the U.S. already have so much absolute representation that they are not as invested in how they measure up against their desirable ranges. In other words, already having well over 300 passive representatives, perhaps the U.S. would not see a need to devote the additional recruiting resources necessary to bring its total up to its desirable range. In contrast, a lower contributing developing nation might be much more invested in reaching or exceeding its desirable range. In addition, this finding may reflect an effort by the UN to correct the historical imbalance in geographical representation between developed and developing nations. As discussed previously, the early decades of the UN saw the staff dominated by nationals from the world powers, especially the U.S., the U.K., and France. After an influx of newly independent post-colonial nations in the mid-twentieth century, pressure mounted to increase the representation of developing nations and to lessen the dominance of developed nations. Perhaps efforts to correct this perceived imbalance resulted in a situation in which enough developing country nationals were hired that they began to become overrepresented.

Second, while having French or English as an official language did not have an impact on representation, it does appear to have a positive impact on the odds of being well-represented. This difference may be explained in terms of official language's effect on applicant supply. In theory, member states with more English- and French-speaking nationals may have a greater number of nationals who would qualify for UN jobs relative to member states with fewer speakers of these languages. But perhaps the effect is only strong enough to "move the needle" on representativeness but not on representation. For example, a country's having French as an official language may mean that the country manages to have enough people hired at the UN to meet its desirable range, but at the same time it still may have far fewer nationals at the UN (i.e. raw representation) than a country without English or French as an official language.

To conclude the discussion, it is important to remember that representation and representativeness speak to different aspects of passive representation, respectively. While representation describes the size of a group's presence in a bureaucracy, representativeness does the same but with the addition of a reference point (in this case the reference point is the desirable range), telling us whether the group is underrepresented in the bureaucracy. But how does each of these measures connect to the potential impacts of passive representation described in Chapters 2 and 3?

First, as summarized in Chapter Two, a substantial number of representative bureaucracy studies have empirically identified a positive association between passive representation and beneficial bureaucratic outcomes for the passively represented group. In addition, member state governments actively try to increase their own passive representation within the UN bureaucracy, signaling that they see benefits deriving from increased representation. The present study finds that budgetary contribution, hosting a UN facility, and having upper level representation are positively associated with representation. Therefore, member states who contribute more to the UN budget, those hosting a UN facility, and those having upper level representation may see increased returns, in whatever form they may take, from their higher levels of passive representation in the UN.

Second, prior representative bureaucracy research does not appear to have examined representativeness measures as frequently as it has measured representation measures (i.e. number or percent of representatives). Thus, the effects of being well represented or underrepresented, respectively, are not as well understood or readily apparent as the effects of simply having a higher quantity of representatives. Nevertheless, we can still speculate in an informed way about the effects of representativeness.

In terms of representativeness, one may consider it either at the individual country level or at the bureaucracy-wide level. That is to say, we can look at which particular countries are underrepresented and overrepresented, but we can also look at the fact that substantial numbers of countries every year are underrepresented and overrepresented, making the UN bureaucracy a decidedly unrepresentative bureaucracy. The fact that the UN bureaucracy has not achieved the equitable geographical distribution that it continually purports to seek likely calls into question the actions of the bureaucracy in the eyes of the UN's membership. Furthermore, the bureaucracy may be perceived as being oriented toward the interests of the countries who manage to be well represented.

At the individual country level, however, the results of this analysis are more difficult to interpret. Specifically, the present study finds that the odds of being well represented increase significantly if a country hosts a UN facility, has English or French as an official language, or has upper level representation. While the implications for individual countries with these characteristics are not entirely clear, these findings do provide potentially useful information to the UN as it continues to seek to achieve equitable geographical distribution. For example, the fact that having French or English as an official language or hosting a major UN facility increase a country's odds of being well represented may signal to the UN that it needs to target its recruitment efforts at countries that do not possess these traits. Alternatively, the organization might consider relaxing its language requirements and including a third widely spoken language such as Arabic or Spanish in order to reduce the advantage of countries with many English and French speakers.

## Limitations

This chapter's study has two main limitations, both related to the data set used for analysis. First, as explained previously, the ultimate analysis does not include a measure for education due to the fact that the coverage of education measures across countries and across years is relatively sparse. The inability to include a measure of education in the analysis is unfortunate because such a measure would serve as a more precise and perhaps more accurate proxy than "extent democratic" for the degree to which UN job applicants from a given country are qualified individuals. In addition, education is arguably important from a theoretical perspective when examining the determinants of passive representation, as emphasized by Meier and Capers (2012). Not including education in this analysis means that the study cannot contribute to theoretical development regarding the impact of education on passive representation.

Second, another limitation regarding the data used in this analysis is the fact that individual-level data on UN job applicants are not utilized.<sup>35</sup> To be precise, this analysis examines the determinants of passive national representation, but more specifically it examines *the effects of country-level characteristics* on country representation. While identifying such effects certainly is important and has plenty of value, the reality is that passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy is influenced to some extent by the dynamics of UN staffing, which in turn is a process that is driven in great part by the number and characteristics of individual UN job applicants. This was alluded to in the discussion of the findings of this analysis. For example, while we might be able to estimate based on education and human development measures the supply of individuals capable of competing for UN jobs, we cannot reliably infer from these measures the number of individuals who would actually be interested in

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<sup>35</sup> Indeed, such data are not available to the public.

applying for a UN job or the number who would actually pursue a UN job. In other words, we might be able to estimate the number of capable individuals, but not the number of “UN-oriented” individuals. The lack of such individual level data ultimately makes the findings and conclusions of this analysis less precise and more uncertain.

### **Conclusion**

First, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there are no published studies that attempt to explain the underlying distribution of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy. However, because past research has showed us that passive representation can have meaningful effects, and because member state governments are keenly interested in passive national representation at the UN, it is valuable to understand what drives the “allocation” of passive national representation. This study represents a first pass at identifying the factors that shape this distribution. While the findings are by no means definitive, they suggest that the distribution of passive national representation may be influenced by budgetary contribution, upper level representation, and the locations of UN facilities, three factors whose respective impacts on passive national representation all might be explained by political forces. In contrast, a member state’s supply of capable individuals does not appear to influence the distribution. If this is indeed the case, it would serve as an empirical confirmation of the aforementioned anecdotal evidence presented by Weiss and others. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the UN Charter specifies that the top priority in staffing should be merit-based hiring, and that nationality should be a secondary consideration. These findings suggest that the UN is going against the Charter in this respect. Furthermore, the results of the representation model suggest that countries with higher budgetary contributions, hosting a UN facility, and having upper level representation are able to secure more benefits for themselves and their populations than other

countries. In addition, the results of the representativeness model suggest ways in which the UN can improve its recruitment efforts in order to achieve what it considers to be an equitable geographical distribution.

Finally, this study makes contributions to the development of representative bureaucracy theory in two areas. First, the vast majority of studies that examine the determinants of passive representation use raw representation (count of representatives) or percentage representation (one group's percentage of all potential representation) as their dependent variables. While this study does use raw representation as the dependent variable in one of its models, it adds another model with the "representativeness" measure as the dependent variable (i.e. whether a country is underrepresented). As discussed previously, the representativeness measure communicates something quite different from raw or percentage representation. Indeed, some scholars have argued that representativeness is more important than raw or percentage representation. For example, Meier and Capers (2012) state the following:

The US empirical research with different studies examining local, state, and national bureaucracies generally finds that the strongest determinant of minority representation in a bureaucracy is the minority population in the jurisdiction. This is essentially a trivial finding since population can be the strongest predictor whether bureaucracies are highly representative or not representative at all; what matters in these cases is the magnitude of the regression coefficient: i.e., whether the group gets 90 percent of the representation needed for equity or only 10 percent.

To be clear, the present study does not dismiss raw representation as unimportant, but rather as another dimension of passive representation that is meaningful in a different way from representativeness. The fact that this analysis finds the determinants of raw representation to be

different from the determinants of representativeness further reinforces the argument that these are not simply two different ways of measuring the same phenomenon.

Furthermore, this study explores the idea that non-governmental bureaucracies such as the UN bureaucracy may not adhere to the same representational norms as governmental bureaucracies that are typically studied by representative bureaucracy scholars. More specifically, whereas the passive representativeness of governmental bureaucracies is typically assessed by comparing their demographic breakdown to that of the relevant population, this may not be appropriate for a non-governmental bureaucracy that does not directly serve the population of citizens. For instance, in the case of the UN, the bureaucracy serves the national governments rather than their citizens, and it bases its definition of passive representativeness not only on population but also on other factors such as budgetary contribution. This appears to be a novel argument in the representative bureaucracy literature, which is understandable, given that prior representative bureaucracy studies have almost exclusively focused on governmental bureaucracies. Nevertheless, applying representative bureaucracy theory outside of the governmental setting forces us to reexamine the assumptions underlying our typical use of the theory, an exercise that has value.

Second, this study contributes to the small but growing group of studies that apply representative bureaucracy theory at the international level. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the theory has heretofore only been applied at the international level to the European Commission, the EU's bureaucracy. Though these studies have been informative as far as examining how representative bureaucracy might differ from the national and subnational levels, most of them have not been empirical, and none of them have specifically examined the determinants of passive representation. Furthermore, in addition to simply examining a question

that the EU studies have not, this study finds that population, the dominant determinant of passive representation among prior studies at the subnational level, does not have a practical impact in this particular case, perhaps indicating that the dynamics of bureaucratic representation are indeed quite different at the international level.

### **Future research**

The present study provides an initial perspective on the country-level factors that may influence passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy, and in doing so serves as a valuable step toward enhancing our understanding of bureaucratic representation in the UN, one of the world's most visible institutions. Accordingly, there is further work to be done in order to more clearly and thoroughly understand passive representation in the UN and what drives it.

First, although the present study has identified associations between various factors and representation, any causal mechanisms that connect these factors to representation are still not entirely clear. A helpful step toward identifying such mechanisms might be a study that utilizes a survey or perhaps interviews to collect information from the people directly involved in UN staffing: UN personnel, national government officials, and job applicants themselves.

Second, as discussed in Chapter Two, the bulk of representative bureaucracy research has focused on empirically identifying effects of bureaucratic representation, and it would be very informative to undertake such a study in regard to representation in the UN. Given past research on passive representation's effects, and given member states' interest in passive national representation in the UN, it certainly seems plausible that representation has a tangible impact in this setting, but no study has yet set out to confirm this empirically.

Finally, the UN has also made a deliberate effort in recent decades to increase the representation of women within its workforce, and it makes data on its employment of women

available in the same report that discloses data on workforce nationality used for this study. It would be worthwhile to conduct the same kind of analysis as this study but instead focusing on representation of women. Not only is female representation an important subject in and of itself, but it would be informative to compare the findings of such a study to the findings of the present study. For example, how might the determinants of passive representation of women in the UN bureaucracy differ from the determinants of national representation, and what would the implications be of such differences?

## CHAPTER 5

### THE POTENTIAL FOR ACTIVE NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE UN WORKFORCE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

As discussed in Chapter Three, the UN, at least on paper, officially embraces the ethic of bureaucratic neutrality for its employees, and it warns them against coordinating with the governments of their home countries in any fashion. In order to make this policy clear, this preference is embodied in the UN Charter, the UN employee oath of office, and the UN staff regulations. Viewed through the lens of representative bureaucracy theory, this organizational preference for bureaucratic neutrality implies that active national representation among UN employees would not be something that the organization would allow. Nevertheless, despite the UN's official pronouncements, there are still several compelling reasons to wonder about the degree to which UN employees really adhere to the UN's directives and eschew engaging in active national representation during the course of their work activities.

First, national governments often play an instrumental role in assisting their nationals in securing a UN job, thereby establishing a personal connection between the job applicant and the government in question, and potentially creating some indebtedness to the government on behalf of the individual. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three, some governments consider it in their interest to make sure they are "well represented" within the UN bureaucracy, and they closely monitor the number of their nationals who work there. It is not unreasonable to wonder how exactly the presence of a country's nationals within the UN bureaucracy serves a country's interests, and what kind of spoken or unspoken expectations a government has of its citizens employed by the UN. And finally, there may simply be some truth to the statement made by the former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who famously claimed that while there are neutral

countries, there are no neutral men. In other words, UN employees do not give up their passports when they become employees of the UN. They retain their citizenship, and they have been shaped indelibly by their national backgrounds. In light of these facts, it is not unreasonable to suspect that active national representation may occur in the UN workforce. If it does indeed occur, it is not without meaningful consequence, and thus deserves researchers' attention.

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, active representation may have a meaningful impact both within and outside of the bureaucracy in question. For instance, an employee's engaging in active representation may help to secure more benefits for the group he or she is representing than the group would have received without such active representation taking place. Furthermore, active representation may catch the attention of parties external to the bureaucracy and help induce them to seek out the bureaucracy's services as well as work with the bureaucracy to produce certain outcomes (i.e. coproduction). On the other hand, active representation has the potential to lead to an adverse impact. For instance, if it is viewed as excessively biased or inappropriate behavior by other bureaucrats, it could harm their morale or lead to less cohesiveness and cooperation within the workforce. In addition, external actors may perceive active representation as inappropriate partiality, thereby coloring their perceptions of the bureaucracy and perhaps leading them to question the bureaucracy's fairness and legitimacy. Thus, given the meaningful effects that active representation may generate, it is important to determine whether and to what degree it might be occurring within a bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, despite the important implications of active national representation in the UN workforce, there do not appear to be any studies that have examined the subject. While various commentators have bemoaned what they see as excessive member state government intervention into UN hiring processes (Weiss, 1982; Reymond, 1982; Ameri, 1996; Jordan,

1991), no readily available empirical studies have sought to examine UN employee behavior and whether such associations with member state governments may continue beyond the point of being hired. Thus, the present study seeks to begin filling this gap in UN studies by conducting an exploratory inquiry. According to Stebbins (2011), “In general, exploration is the preferred methodological approach...when a group, process, activity, or situation has received little or no systematic empirical scrutiny.” The present study employs such an approach, and its specific methodological characteristics will be described in sufficient detail later in the chapter.

As discussed in Chapter Two, there is relatively little representative bureaucracy research that examines active representation directly because of the previously described “redefinition” of active representation that occurred in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, there are a number of studies that examine what some researchers see as the precursors for or antecedents of active representation, and these studies tend to be referred to as examining “the potential for active representation” (e.g. Meier & Nigro, 1976; Bradbury & Kellough, 2007; Murdoch et al., 2015). Although not as prominent as the effects of representation body of work, the subject of the potential for active representation is well-established in the representative bureaucracy literature, dating back to the 1970s. The present study draws on these prior works to inform its design, and it poses the following research question: to what extent does the potential exist for passive national representation to become active national representation in the UN bureaucracy?

First, the chapter reviews existing literature on the potential for active representation. Second, the methodological approach is explained, specifically discussing the method of data collection; the sample selection; and the method of data analysis. This is followed by a reporting of the many themes that arise from the study’s content analysis, as well as a summary that organizes the themes into coherent categories. Thereafter, the possible implications of the

analysis are discussed, and finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of the study, the conclusions that may be drawn from it, and way in which the study can serve as a solid foundation for future research.

### **The Potential for Active Representation**

The literature regarding the potential for active representation primarily identifies two phenomena as the main precursors for active representation: attitude congruence and the representative role perception. Attitude congruence, on the one hand, refers to a case in which a bureaucrat shares the attitudes and beliefs – particularly those that are policy-relevant – of the social group that he or she is presumed to represent (e.g. African-Americans, women, Nigerians, etc.). Lim (2006) refers to this same phenomenon as “shared values and beliefs.” The representative role perception, on the other hand, introduced by Selden (1997b), refers to a bureaucrat’s perception of his or her role being that of a representative of his or her social group as opposed to adhering to an ethic of bureaucratic neutrality. Although embracing the representative role perception does not amount to actually engaging in active representation, it is likely a necessary precondition of active representation and thus may serve as an effective proxy for it.

In addition, there is a third, rarely discussed phenomenon that may be an antecedent of active representation: salient identification with one’s demographic group. Although there do not appear to be any studies that focus overtly or explicitly on this concept, Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh (1977), in their study on the potential link between passive and active representation, make the following statement: “...it has sometimes been assumed that as social group identification becomes more salient to an individual bureaucrat, the more likely that person will be to represent actively his or her group.” It is unclear what prior works the authors

are referring to, but the concept is sufficiently compelling to not be dismissed, despite its scarcity in the literature.

The following sections examine more closely and review the literature regarding attitude congruence and the representative role perception, respectively.

### **Attitude congruence**

Interest in attitude congruence among representative bureaucracy researchers appears to have been highest in the 1970s, the decade in which representative bureaucracy research transitioned from being primarily non-empirical to primarily empirical. Subsequently, in the 1980s and 1990s, scholarly interest in the subject almost entirely disappeared as researchers focused on the determinants of passive representation and the passive-active link. However, since 2000, a handful of works examining attitude congruence have appeared (Dolan, 2002; Bradbury & Kellough, 2007; Murdoch et al., 2015), perhaps indicating a resurgence of scholarly interest in the subject. Across all of these studies, the findings are mixed regarding the degree to which bureaucrats share the policy-relevant attitudes and beliefs of their social groups.

On the one hand, several studies find an association between civil servants' backgrounds and their policy preferences (e.g. Rosenbloom & Kinnard, 1977; Dolan, 2002; Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh, 1977; Bradbury & Kellough, 2007). For example, Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh (1977), in a study using data from the late 1960s on federal employees' views on political participation, find that differences in such views are associated with the race of the employee. Furthermore, they find that duration of bureaucratic employment has *not* eroded the salience of social group membership for employee attitudes. In a more recent example, Bradbury and Kellough (2007) study the attitudes of local administrators and citizens in Athens, Georgia, finding that African-American administrators and citizens are significantly more likely

than white administrators and citizens to support government actions that benefit the African-American community. Finally, Dolan (2002) studies women in the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the U.S. Federal Government to determine the extent to which their policy stances conform with those of women in the general population. Specifically, she examines attitudes regarding federal spending across a range of policy issues, finding that on almost every issue the gender gap in public opinion is reflected in the opinions of the members of the SES.

In contrast, some studies examining attitude congruence have found that policy stances differ between the public and their demographic counterparts in the bureaucracy (e.g. Garnham, 1975; Meier & Nigro, 1976; Thompson, 1978; Murdoch et al., 2015). For instance, in an early example, Garnham (1975) examines the attitudes and beliefs of foreign service officers, finding that their views show little association with the views of individuals who share their most prominent background characteristics. Similarly, Thompson (1978) examines civil servant attitudes on minority hiring initiatives, and his study reveals no significant connection between civil servant race and views on minority hiring. In a third example, and one closer in substance to the present study, Murdoch et al. examine the policy attitudes of seconded national experts (SNEs)<sup>36</sup> in the European Commission (the administrative body of the EU), finding that the SNEs are generally not representative of the EU population in terms of attitudes toward the EU.

Although this group of studies on attitude congruence have yielded valuable insights into the representativeness of bureaucrats' policy views, additional studies on this subject are needed. The bulk of these studies are outdated, and they may no longer reflect reality in terms of individuals' views on salient policy issues.

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<sup>36</sup> A seconded employee is one who is essentially on loan from his or her home government.

## **Role perception**

As mentioned previously, identification of the representative role perception is perhaps the closest scholars have come to observing behavior that constitutes active representation, making it a very important concept in the literature. Unfortunately, however, it appears that relatively few studies utilize the concept. In Selden's study of the Farmer's Home Administration (FHA), in which she introduces the concept of the representative role perception, she finds that FHA offices with higher rates of minority representative role perception tend to be associated with improved outcomes for minority clients. In closely related work, Selden et al. (1998) once again find the embrace of the minority representative role perception to be associated with beneficial outcomes for minorities. In a more recent study, Bradbury and Kellough (2007) treat adoption of the minority representative role perception as a dependent variable, finding that attitude congruence between administrators and the African-American community is a significant predictor of the representative role perception. Finally, Murdoch et al. (2015) find that SNEs who are nationals of countries more skeptical of the EU are more likely than others to adhere to a representative role perception, increasing the potential that they will serve as active representatives of their home countries when working at the European Commission.<sup>37</sup>

In an attempt to build on this relatively small but valuable body of work, the present study utilizes the concepts of attitude congruence, representative role perception, and salience of identification to explore the potential for active national representation in the bureaucracy of the UN. The following section explains the methodological approach taken in this study.

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<sup>37</sup> It is arguably not terribly surprising that SNEs would regard themselves as country representatives given that they are still employed by their home country governments during their affiliation with the EU.

## **Methodological Approach**

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, it is often beneficial to conduct an exploratory study when the topic of interest has not been studied before in a rigorous manner, which is indeed the case with active national representation in the UN bureaucracy. As Stebbins (2011) notes, “Researchers explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering” (6). Furthermore, Stebbins claims that exploratory research is seldom undertaken in the social sciences, and when it is, it is frequently evaluated incorrectly, using the standards of its counterpart, confirmatory research: “[Evaluators] fret over matters of design – notably, sampling, validity, and generalizability – and over the literature review and, in doing this, tend to minimize the importance of the original ideas that have just been brought to light” (pages). Exploratory research differs from confirmatory research in terms of its objectives and its procedures. First, exploratory research aims to generate new ideas and to create awareness and understanding of a new empirical setting, while confirmatory research aims to test existing ideas. Second, in terms of research procedures, exploratory research requires flexibility and open-mindedness, allowing for adjustments along the way, whereas it is critical in confirmatory research to maintain control and consistency throughout a research project (Stebbins, 9). Accordingly, exploratory research tends to be more inductively oriented, whereas confirmatory research is almost always deductive in its approach.

Accordingly, the present study was designed with the above characteristics of exploratory research in mind. Rather than seeking to produce an estimate of the prevalence of active national representation within the UN bureaucracy, it instead relies on relatively unstructured conversations with a non-generalizable sample of current and former UN employees surrounding the subjects of personal identity, national identity, professional identity, salience of nationality,

professional role perception, and other related subjects to simply gain a sense of what potential there might be for active national representation within the UN workforce.<sup>38</sup> The study attempts to answer basic questions such as the following that will help to narrow the scope of subsequent research: is active national representation widely in existence throughout the UN workforce? Alternatively, is it extremely scarce or even inconceivable? Why or why not? If it occurs at all, under what individual and organizational conditions is it most likely to occur? In other words, the study does not attempt to offer any conclusive results but rather to help researchers become oriented to a heretofore unexamined area.

It is hoped that this attempt to “get the lay of the land” is a valuable initial effort that generates unanticipated insights and sets out the foundation for future, more systematic empirical inquiry regarding the subject at hand. The following sections describe the specific methodological steps taken in this study.

### **Data collection**

The vast majority of studies on the potential for active representation focus on the concept of attitude congruence between bureaucrats and citizens, and the most common data collection device among these studies is the survey. When testing hypotheses based on existing research, surveys are quite useful because the researcher wields a great amount of control over the way in which questions are asked and responded to. However, if the researcher seeks to take a more inductive, less structured and more flexible approach, surveys are not a good fit. Thus, the present study instead utilizes semi-structured interviews in order to allow for the further probing of responses and to enable each conversation to move in unanticipated directions. This

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<sup>38</sup> Because of the non-generalizable nature of this sample, the relative prevalence of an active national representative mindset among the interviewees should not be taken to indicate anything about the prevalence of this mindset among the broader population of UN employees.

method also allows the nature of the questioning to evolve over the course of the interviews as the researcher gains a better sense of the population being studied, the environment in which this population operates, and the nuances of the topic of interest.

Nevertheless, although the interviews were not rigidly structured in terms of question wording or order, they were largely consistent with each other in terms of the way in which each conversation progressed. Specifically, each interview covered the following topics, and the conversation usually dealt with the topics in the order in which they are listed here:

1. The way the individual conceives of his or her *personal* identity
2. The extent to which the individual's national background is salient to him or her
3. The individual's relationship with his or her home country
4. The way the individual conceives of his or her *professional* identity
5. What it means to the individual to be an international civil servant
6. The degree to which the individual thinks of him or herself as a national representative
7. How widespread such a mentality seems to be in the UN workforce, and what conditions seem to be most associated with this mentality

After arranging the details of the interviews via email, twenty one-on-one interviews were conducted, eight of which took place in person in Washington, DC, and twelve of which took place via video conference due to the interviewees' international locations. All interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality and non-attribution of their comments due to the sensitivity of the interview topic. Eighteen of the interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder, and they were subsequently professionally transcribed. During the remaining two

interviews, the author took notes by hand. Interviews tended to last approximately forty-five minutes to an hour, and all of them took place between August, 2014, and February, 2015.

### **Sampling method**

The study employed the chain referral method of sampling, commonly referred to as “snowball sampling,” to construct a sample of interview respondents. This method was selected for three primary reasons: first, it is particularly well-suited for sampling difficult-to-access populations, such as the global UN workforce; second, it works well when examining sensitive topics, such as active national representation, which is officially discouraged in the UN; and third, the goal of the study was not to generalize any findings from its sample to the wider population, thus this sampling method produced a non-generalizable sample. Because it is not common to encounter UN personnel in most personal and professional networks, and because they are located throughout the world, it can be challenging to find an introductory contact person within the organization. Furthermore, the subject of national representation in the UN workforce may be construed as politically sensitive by UN employees, which might discourage them from participating in the study. As discussed in a previous chapter, when individuals begin employment with the UN, they sign an oath to serve the UN organization only and to not take any directions from national governments. Therefore, the notion of “representing” one’s country in anything other than a passive sense might be interpreted as unethical. The snowball sampling method was useful in this situation because it allows UN employees who were comfortable talking about national representation to refer the interviewer to other employees who were like-minded in this respect.

## Sample characteristics

The sample of interviewees utilized for this study varies across a number of characteristics, including UN agency of employment, nationality, function within organization, level within organizational hierarchy, and location of organization. More specifically, interviewees worked at UN agencies focused on development, refugee assistance, gender issues, and public information; came from several different countries within both the developed and the developing world; served in various domains within their organizations, including research, training, administration, and public outreach; and worked within the middle of the hierarchy and also at the supervisory level. As such, although the sample is not representative of the UN workforce as a whole, it does demonstrate a fair amount of heterogeneity and therefore represents a variety of viewpoints within the UN system of organizations, which is valuable for the purposes of an exploratory study. Table 29 below summarizes some of the key interviewee characteristics, but it excludes some details in order to maintain interviewee confidentiality.

Table 29. Key interviewee characteristics

Countries of origin	Canada, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Italy, India, Lebanon, Pakistan, Phillipines, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay
UN agencies	UNHCR, UNRISD, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNDP, ECLAC, UNIC, UNITAR, ILO
Locations	Washington, DC, Geneva, Beirut, Santiago
Sectors	Refugee Affairs, Humanitarian Assistance, International Development, UN Administration
Functions	Outreach, Research, Advocacy, Logistics, Training

## **Analytical method**

The twenty interviews generated eighteen transcriptions derived from the audio recordings, and two sets of notes taken by the author. These data were subjected to a content analysis in the software program NVivo. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define qualitative content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” Furthermore, Hsieh and Shannon divide content analysis into three distinct approaches: conventional, directed, and summative. The conventional approach involves allowing categories and themes to derive directly from the text. The directed approach involves looking for categories or themes from “existing theory or prior research” within the text. The summative approach involves counting keywords or themes, comparing the sums against each other, and then interpreting the underlying context. The present analysis utilizes a combination of the conventional and directed approaches, both allowing new concepts to arise naturally from the text but also noting when familiar concepts appear.

## **Data**

The analysis of the transcripts and notes revealed the existence of more than 25 distinct themes across the interviews, which the author grouped into four categories: intervening variables, national identity, non-nationality identity, and active representation. They are displayed in Tables 30 – 33 below.

Table 30. Intervening variables

	People	Developed Country	Developing Country	References
Organizational funding source	1	1	0	1
Individual country of origin	1	1	0	1
Organizational mission	3	2	1	7
Level within organization	3	2	1	3
Size of national presence	2	2	0	2
Individual tenure	1	1	0	1
Total	11	9	2	15

Table 31. National identity

	People	Developed Country	Developing Country	References
Nationality salient	1	1	0	2
National representation occurs naturally	1	1	0	1
Subconscious national identity	1	1	0	1
National loyalty	2	2	0	2
National pride	2	2	0	2
Total	7	7	0	8

Table 32. Non-nationality identities

	People	Developed Country	Developing Country	References
Upper class	6	5	1	7
Subnational region	1	1	0	1
International identity	4	2	2	5
Cultural identity	1	1	0	1
Professional	1	0	1	1
Total	13	9	4	15

Table 33. Active representation

	People	Developed Country	Developing Country	References
Active representation occurs	2	2	0	3
No active representation	4	2	2	4
Active representation plausible	1	0	1	1
No representative role perception	4	3	1	4
Representative role perception	2	1	1	3
Total	13	8	5	15

In looking at the tables above it is important to remember that one should be very conservative in making any inferences based on the numbers presented. First, the sample of interviewees is not representative of the UN workforce as a whole, thus any outcomes of the

interview analysis should not be generalized to the UN workforce. Second, the frequencies are not necessarily correlated with importance. For example, the fact that the national identity category has the least number of references does not mean that it is any less important than any other category of themes. Frequencies may be driven in part by the particular experiences and philosophies of the interviewees, for instance, or by the particular way in which a conversation evolved. Moreover, the numbers cannot convey meaningful nuances that only the interviewer can ascertain, such as body language, tone of voice, or other forms of emphasis. The most important function of the numbers is to provide transparency regarding the data collection and analysis.

Rather, what is more important given the exploratory nature of this study is the number and variety of themes that arise from the data, and the way the themes might relate to and interact with each other. It is the identification of relevant variables that makes this type of study so valuable in setting up future confirmatory research. Although some of the themes, such as national loyalty, international identity, and the importance of organizational mission are not particularly surprising to see, others were not anticipated and are intriguing, such as the idea that national representation could occur subconsciously or naturally, or the notion that someone might want to represent the subnational region from which he or she hails.

### **Summary**

This section of the chapter summarizes the themes by each of the four following categories, using quotations from the interviews as illustrative examples: the salience of nationality; the importance of intersectionality; the national representative role perception and

active national representation; and the intervening individual and organizational level variables that may affect whether someone engages in active national representation.

### **Salience of nationality**

These interview data suggest that nationality can have a relatively salient presence in the UN work environment. The interviewees described this salience as manifesting itself in three different ways: externally in the work environment; within the individual employee in a conscious way; and within the individual employee in a subconscious way.

First, some interviewees discussed the overt, explicit salience of nationality within the UN workspace (i.e., externally in the work environment), and some of their statements were memorable for their frankness. In particular, one interviewee spoke extensively about this topic, stating flatly that “Nationality is always a topic...it’s a constant, constant topic” (R1739). She continued, saying that managers “use your nationality,” as in the case where her unit had an impending project in her home country, and thus she was asked “Oh, what’s your opinion on that?”

Second, nationality also appears to be fairly salient within individual UN employees in a very conscious way. This salience might take the form of national loyalty or national pride, for instance. Along these lines, one interviewee, who had spent most of his career in the UN, expressed the view that nationality is ever present, but in the form of national pride: “My experience is that people take a personal pride in the country that they come from” (R8). Providing an individual example of this, one interviewee noted that her work in the UN had exposed her to many different countries, and that this had led her to value her home country even

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<sup>39</sup> This denotation refers to the individual interviewee, in this case ‘Respondent 17.’

more than previously: “I’m in a situation where I’ve been traveling, and I’ve known other countries, and I also know and really appreciate [my home country], our government, and our kind of values” (R14). Similar statements by other interviewees evoked a sense of national loyalty. For instance, one man explained “We don’t give up our passport when we become UN staff members. We take the oath, we say that we’re not going to, you know, take orders from national governments. But we don’t give up our passports. We’re still citizens of whatever country we’re citizens of” (R1). Another individual asserted that even though a UN employee swears an oath to serve the international community as a whole, “. . .you still want to take care of your own population” (R2).

Third, some interviewees produced the insight that the salience of nationality within the individual UN employee may be more or less inevitable, or subconscious. For example, one interviewee put it plainly, saying that even if you were not attempting to do so, you might “unintentionally go towards your own nation and your own people” (R2). Building on this point, another interviewee pointed out that national background and the norms associated with a particular national context are often simply ingrained in our behavior: “I mean, you normalize all of these things when you grow up in one context. And it’s very difficult to un-normalize these and un-package all of these things, and look at really carefully. And I think, I think no one is immune from. . .those kinds of assumptions that you don’t realize you have” (R18).

### **Intersectionality**

Nevertheless, although nationality appears to be salient within the UN workplace in a variety of ways, many of the interviewees were fairly quick to point out the other sources of identity that were equally, if not more salient for them than nationality. Among the identities

mentioned were socioeconomic class, subnational regional background, internationalism or cosmopolitanism, cultural background, and professional background.

First, socioeconomic class seemed to be an especially prominent source of identity among the interviewees, relative to other sources. For instance, one interviewee put it simply: “I mean much more than nationality, I found class values are huge” (R7). In particular, interviewees often mentioned class identity in reference to UN employees who come from developing countries. For example, one interviewee asserted: “These people who are from developing countries are coming from very wealthy backgrounds” (R2). Indeed, this point was echoed by several interviewees in various ways. For instance, another person recalled “Just recently I was in a conversation with some former colleagues where that topic of the elite working for the UN specifically coming from impoverished nations came up” (R16). In another example, an interviewee stated “I can tell you the majority of the people coming from the [global] south are all well-off” (R9). He added his belief that there is “a global class system” that is reflected in the UN workforce. However, although many noted the perceived prevalence of upper class individuals, one interviewee noted “I come from a poor family” (R7) and explained that she thought that shaped her much more than her national background.

Perhaps the second most prominent source of identity after class was that of internationalism or globalism. In other words, several interviewees felt that they and many other UN employees, if not the vast majority of them, identified more so with the world or the international community than they did with their own nationalities. For example, one interviewee stated: “I think it's more important [that] my broader identity is that of a human being...because I don't really care about externally imposed identities” (R13). Another interviewee believed that most UN employees were of this orientation: “You're going to find

most of the people are internationalists. Internationalist as in globalist” (R1). Furthermore, one former UN employee shared an idea about what motivates many UN employees: “There are those of us who are seeking to be a part of something and advocate for something that isn’t solely based on our country’s interest” (R16). Finally, one interviewee stated his view that working in the UN naturally distances one from one’s national background: “I mean, frankly, you take globalization now, and people are able to study abroad, work abroad, and that just means that your ability to be circumscribed to a single nationality obviously gets sort of worn down” (R6).

### **Representative role perception or active representation**

Furthermore, the findings regarding the topic of national representative role perception were relatively mixed. On the one hand, some respondents offered that they and others did think of themselves as representatives of their home countries in one way or another. For instance, one individual stated the following, in response to being asked whether he perceived himself to be a representative of his home country:

Yes, and even sometimes consciously so, because I would always want to, given that, you know, especially that there’s a lot of negative goodwill that tags along with being from that country. So in some cases I’ve also made conscious efforts to project my real self, to provide, you know, kind of change the perceptions that people have about where I come from. (R13)

In another instance, a respondent said in reference to a colleague “I think she feels quite strongly that she’s a representative of where she’s from” (R18). Furthermore, the same respondent noted “I’ve had interactions with people who are not technically representatives of their countries, but feel that they are in a lot of ways.” Moreover, as mentioned previously, one

interviewee noted that “you still want to take care of your own population” (R2), suggesting an inclination toward active national representation if given the opportunity to engage in it.

On the other hand, however, some interviewees distanced themselves from the idea of being a representative of their home countries. For example, one individual stated “You don’t represent anybody. You do the best job. You know, I do, a public service for my country is the same as public service internationally. You represent the people you’re mandated to represent. So no, I never felt like a representative [of a certain country], necessarily” (R7). Furthermore, one interviewee claimed to have never witnessed a representative mentality among her colleagues: “I don’t think any UN member saw himself or herself as a representative” (R5). Moreover, one interviewee, when asked whether he thought the country representative role perception, on the one hand, or the international civil servant role perception, on the other hand, was more prevalent, responded that “The international civil servant is by far more prevalent” (R1).

In terms of actual active national representation, a small number of interviewees either described having witnessed it or expressed the view that it likely takes place and is reasonable. For example, one interviewee referred to a colleague’s behavior, saying that “She mentioned that she was writing an article to promote her region” (R14).<sup>40</sup> Another interviewee related that she knew of individuals who “have joined the UN because they want to better represent their country, and because they want better outcomes for their country” (R18). Furthermore, another interviewee argued “If I was running [my country] I would want my countrymen to be [in the UN], not just as a national prestige, but also because it will get me my things done” (R5).

In contrast, some interviewees had never witnessed active national representation, and they expressed skepticism that a UN employee could ever engage in such behavior. For

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<sup>40</sup> Note that this is the sole example of active national representation identified by interviewees.

example, one interviewee stated “I’ve never seen anyone promoting their country” (R2).

Similarly, another interviewee simply stated in response to the same question “No. I haven’t” (R4). Another interviewee remarked that that he “would find it would be very difficult” to engage in active national representation (R1).

### **Intervening variables**

Notably, when asked about the extent to which UN employees perceive themselves as national representatives, interviewees suggested that the tendency to develop this kind of perception is likely dependent on a number of other variables. They discussed two organizational level variables: organizational context (i.e. mission, funding source) and the number of nationals from a given country working within an organization. The interviewees also identified three individual level variables: the particular country that an individual is from, the level at which an individual works within an organization, and the amount of time an individual has served in the UN.

First, some interviewees referred to the fact that there are many different organizations within the UN system, and the probability of active national representation occurring within any given UN organization may depend on the particular type of organization and its funding source. For example, one interviewee, an experienced UN manager, stated the following:

You probably have to split it up by types of UN agency. And one way to do that might be whether they’re based on assessed contributions or not,<sup>41</sup> whether they’re in development or humanitarian relief, whether they’re technical like the International Atomic Energy Agency or

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<sup>41</sup> I.e. funded by mandatory member state contributions, or funded voluntarily by member states and other entities.

the International Maritime Organization. The Secretariat is probably more towards the, you know, influencing opinions, and so on. (R8)

Another interviewee asserted “But once you’re looking at things like the UNEP,<sup>42</sup> or things which are more program-oriented, I don’t think you really have that much of a leverage to articulate your own interests” (R13). Moreover, the same individual gave the example of research-oriented organizations and roles as places in which one would be unlikely to witness active national representation. Specifically, he explained that “In something like research roles, for example, we never really saw anyone coming out or even insinuating some kind of country-specific agenda of one sort or the other.” Another individual who worked within a research organization noted that “this organization, I think it attracts people who work there based on a set of values and research interests rather than, I think, national allegiances” (R18).

Another organizational variable that emerged during these conversations concerned the makeup in terms of nationality of an organization’s staff. Specifically, one interviewee pointed out that her lack of a representative orientation was at least partially dependent on how many nationals from her country were already working in the UN: “I mean, the UN’s filled with people from my country anyways. I don’t have to represent anybody” (R7). Another interviewee, speculating about the motives of member state governments in their desire to increase their passive representation in the UN workforce, stated that “Maybe if I have more people in there, they’re going to move the organization, or they’re going to move the thinking in a certain direction” (R1).

As mentioned previously, interviewees also specified three influential individual level variables that might help predict the adoption of a national representative role perception. First, the government culture of one’s country of origin may be important. More specifically, whether

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<sup>42</sup> United Nations Environmental Programme

the government culture is more patronage-oriented or merit-oriented may have implications for nationals' behavior in the UN bureaucracy, with patronage-based cultures engendering more of a representative mindset among bureaucrats. For example, one interviewee discussed the potential impact of a country's government culture, saying that "It might depend a lot on domestic politics and foreign policy. It might also depend on the sort of culture of the government in the country. So like, meritocracy in Canada versus nepotism in Italy" (R7).

Second, other interviewees pointed out that one's adoption of a national representative role likely depends on one's location within the UN hierarchy. More specifically, some argued that individuals located higher up in the UN's organizational structure are more likely to adopt such a role. For example, one interviewee stated that whether someone adopts such a representative role "depends on what level" within the organization one is located in (R8). Moreover, another interviewee asserted that "it becomes more and more interesting the higher you go" (R1). Reinforcing this point, one interviewee stated that "from an upper level kind of management, it's more of a problem" (R10).

Finally, the adoption of a national representative role may also depend on one's length of time spent working in the UN. For example, one individual shared her view that "I think people, once they've been working for the UN [for a long time] they are true international people" (R17), implying that these individuals are fairly unlikely to pursue the interests of a particular member state.

The following section discusses the information summarized above.

## **Discussion**

These interviews have allowed us to answer some of the basic questions laid out at the beginning of the chapter. First and foremost, although it cannot say anything conclusively, this

study does suggest that there is potential for active national representation to occur in the UN bureaucracy; it is not inconceivable. This is based on the fact that a number of interviewees had either witnessed active national representation, expressed openness to it as an acceptable behavior, or observed UN employees adhering to the national representative role perception. That is to say, despite the oath that UN employees swear to only serve the UN's interests and not those of member state governments, and despite the UN Charter's efforts to insulate the UN bureaucracy from national interests, it appears to be possible for UN employees to engage in active national representation in some form. Furthermore, the fact that active national representative behavior was either familiar to or not objectionable to multiple individuals in this relatively small sample suggests that the behavior could be relatively widespread within the UN workforce. This was not apparent before conducting these interviews.

However, the study indicates that answers to the questions of how widespread active national representation might be within the UN workforce and where exactly it is most likely to occur are not so simple, and they are likely tied up in a number of factors. Thus, the following pages discuss these factors in two sets: those internal to the individual UN bureaucrat and those external to the bureaucrat. In addition, some observations are offered on the nature of active national representation and active representation in general that should be taken into consideration in future research on these subjects.

### **Internal factors: salience and intersectionality**

Taken in isolation, the fact that nationality is relatively salient to UN employees would seem to indicate a higher potential for active national representation among these individuals. This would be consistent, at least, with the logic referred to by Rosenbloom and

Featherstonhaugh (1977) that the more salient an identity is to an individual, the more likely that individual is to actively represent that identity.

However, both common sense and existing research on the link between passive and active representation tell us that such a relationship should not be considered in isolation. Rather, the context in which it occurs must be taken into account. In fact, there are two contexts that must be considered: the context internal to the individual, and the context external to the individual. The ensuing paragraphs discuss the former, while the subsequent section on external factors covers the latter.

The fundamental logic of the theory of representative bureaucracy is as follows: a bureaucrat shares key values and beliefs with the social group from which the bureaucrat hails, and the bureaucrat will act in the interests of that group because of this shared belief system. One facet of this logic that has only begun to be discussed within representative bureaucracy scholarship in recent years is the fact that a single bureaucrat hails from multiple social groups simultaneously. The existence of multiple identities, or sources of identity, within an individual is known as ‘intersectionality.’

Intersectionality raises some fundamental issues that have significant implications for bureaucratic behavior, such as the extent to which identities interact with each other (e.g. race and gender in the case of a black female), and the extent to which one identity obscures or prevails over another. As mentioned previously, however, representative bureaucracy research has hardly scratched the surface so far when it comes to intersectionality. As Keiser argues, intersectionality must be dealt with both theoretically and empirically: “Research on representative bureaucracy has yet to create research designs – or theory for that matter – that allow us to effectively sort out the influence of multiple identities” (2010).

Nevertheless, it is relatively clear that one of the identities more salient to the interviewees, that of the internationalist, is at least potentially in conflict with the nationality-based identity. First, the identities conflict with each other in a conceptual sense. That is to say, the extent to which one views oneself as a “global citizen” or an internationalist almost certainly tempers the extent to which one thinks of oneself as an American or an Iranian, for instance. Second, some of the comments suggest that the internationalist identity also is more salient to the interviewees than the national identity. This would not be terribly surprising, given that one aspect of the mission of the international civil service is to transcend national interests, and as such this role likely attracts individuals who wish to distance themselves somewhat from the national level. Therefore, this might suggest a reduction in the potential for active national representation.

### **External factors: organizational conditions**

The sentiment among interviewees that the adoption of the national representative role varies according to different organizational conditions bears a strong resemblance to the central thrust of the existing literature on the link between passive and active representation, discussed in Chapter Two. Moreover, some of the specific factors identified by the interviewees have also been identified in representative bureaucracy scholarship as frequent moderators of the passive-active link: organizational context, critical mass, location within the hierarchy, and employee tenure. The other primary factors discussed, government culture of one’s home country and agency funding source, have not come up in representative bureaucracy literature for the simple reason that they are not relevant to the national and subnational contexts on which such literature typically focuses.

First, interviewees' statements on organizational context help give a sense of the locations within the UN system where active national representation may be more likely to occur. In particular, their comments point toward the Secretariat as the body within the UN where there is perhaps the greatest potential for active national representation. On the one hand, this indication is explicit, as one interviewee specifically calls out the Secretariat as the UN entity in which one is more likely to see "the influencing of opinions." On the other, the suggestion is implicit, as in the case of the interviewee who states that UN agencies focusing on program implementation or research, which covers most UN agencies except for the Secretariat, are not likely to allow for the opportunity to actively represent a country. Furthermore, the Secretariat is funded by assessed contributions rather than voluntary ones, meaning that its funding is constantly subject to highly politicized negotiations amongst member state governments. The importance of organizational context also highlights the fact that active national representation may look quite different depending on where within the UN system it takes place. For instance, as mentioned by an interviewee, one individual employed at a research organization engaged in active national representation by writing something promoting her home country. In contrast, active national representation within the office in the Secretariat responsible for peacekeeping might look very different, with a national pushing, perhaps covertly, to have peacekeeping resources diverted to his or her home country.

Second, one interviewee's comment regarding the number of her fellow nationals within her UN agency suggests that the "critical mass" concept discussed in Chapter Two as a moderator of the passive-active link may be at work within the UN. Applied in the case of the UN, the critical mass logic would suggest that a certain minimum number of nationals from a given country would be required in order for those nationals to engage in active national

representation. However, the interviewee's comment suggests that there is a limit, or perhaps a point of diminishing returns, for critical mass. In other words, rather than a linear relationship in which an increase in nationals from a given country always leads to an increase in active national representation, at a certain point additional nationals from that country no longer feel compelled to engage in active national representation.

Third, the potential for active national representation is likely higher toward the top of the UN hierarchy. This seems quite plausible given that, as discussed in Chapter Four, the Assistant- and Under-Secretaries General, who represent the top two layers of the UN hierarchy, are essentially political appointees rather than normal staff, given the heavy member state involvement when these positions are filled. In light of the fact that these individuals have such strong ties to their home country governments, it is not surprising that they might be perceived as having a much greater potential for engaging in active national representation.

Fourth, the potential for active national representation may have an inverse relationship with employee tenure. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is typically thought to be the result of organizational socialization and professionalization that occur over time as an employee adapts to an organization. Yet, in contrast to prior representative bureaucracy research, this case presents the scenario of an identity – nationality – that is in direct opposition to the foundational norm of the organization – internationalism. In other words, whereas prior studies have examined how organizational socialization might distance an individual from his or her personal identity in general, rarely have studies examined cases in which the ideals of the organization stand in such stark tension with the identity in question. Thus, the distancing effects of organizational socialization and professionalization may be even more pronounced in this case.

Fifth, there may be a greater potential for active national representation among individuals hailing from countries with patronage-oriented bureaucracies. As Meier and Capers (2012) point out, representative bureaucracy researchers have focused almost exclusively on Weberian, Western-style bureaucracies, and have essentially ignored bureaucracies in countries with a culture of patronage in government. Thus, existing representative bureaucracy scholarship has little to say about approaches to active representation in these contexts. Nevertheless, it is clearly intuitive to make the connection between patronage and active representation, and thus the idea of an association between UN employees with patronage backgrounds and active national representation is quite plausible.

### **The nature of active representation**

Finally, this study brings to light an important nuance of active national representation and that may not have been previously apparent or that was perhaps understated: active national representation may have multiple meanings. More specifically, it may not necessarily indicate representation of one's home government or of the policy stances of one's home government. Rather, it might refer to UN employees seeking to represent the interests of their *countrymen*, which may or may not be consistent with the interests of the national government in question. This insight stems from the statements of some interviewees that they want to take care of their own population or of their own people. For example, a UN employee might work for a UN humanitarian assistance organization that is considering assisting his or her home country. The government of that country, which may very well be perpetuating the humanitarian crisis itself, may oppose the UN's involvement in the situation. Thus, if the UN employee takes actions to enable the UN to become involved in the situation, the employee would be pursuing the interests

of his or her countrymen but going against the stance of his or her home government. Thus, studies of active national representation should be very clear about what is meant by the term.<sup>43</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The occurrence of active national representation within the UN workforce would likely have meaningful implications for both the UN itself and for the populations it serves. As explained previously, active national representation could have a substantial impact on the way the benefits of the UN's programs and policies are distributed; on UN workforce cohesion and morale; and on external perceptions of the UN. Thus, it is important to understand the degree to which active national representation occurs in the UN, and where specifically it is most likely to occur. Nevertheless, the subject has not been studied directly to date. The present study, therefore, has sought to begin filling this gap in the UN literature.

The primary goals of this study were twofold: first, to try to answer some basic questions about the potential for and prevalence of active national representation within the UN workforce, and second, to identify the related variables and concepts that would need to be taken into account in a future empirical study on the same subject. The findings of the interview analysis discussed above indicate that the study has achieved its objectives on these two fronts, thereby helping to establish a more solid foundation for future research in this line of inquiry.

A valuable next step, therefore, would be to conduct a study on active national representation in the UN bureaucracy that utilizes a more structured approach to data collection, drawing on the insights presented in this study. For instance, a subsequent study might administer a survey of UN employees in two groups: one group of employees from the

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<sup>43</sup> This echoes one of the takeaways from the previous chapter, that it matters how passive representation is defined and measured in a study, because different definitions may refer to very different phenomena.

Secretariat, where it is hypothesized that active national representation is likely to be more prevalent, and one group of employees from a non-Secretariat agency. In addition, the study designer could intentionally structure the sample of respondents to obtain a mixture of locations within the hierarchy, a variety of organizational tenures, and a variety of national backgrounds, especially making sure to include respondents from countries with varying government cultures. Furthermore, the survey could ask a series of questions designed to separate out the various identities to which an individual employee subscribes, in an effort to better understand both the relationships among different identities and the relationship between intersectionality and the probability of engaging in active representation.

Finally, this study contributes to the development of representative bureaucracy theory in a few different ways. First, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, existing research puts forth three different indicators of the potential for active representation: attitude congruence, the representative role perception, and salient identification with a particular identity. However, while there are multiple studies that examine the first two concepts, it is difficult to locate any studies focusing on salient identification. This study explores the degree to which national background is salient for UN employees, thereby reintroducing the concept of salient identification into the representative bureaucracy literature. Second, while most studies on the potential for active representation use surveys as their data collection method, this study relies on semi-structured interviews. This allowed employees to not just answer whether they subscribed to a representative role perception, for example, as they would in a survey, but to offer thoughts of their own about such a mentality. Third, this study presents what may be a unique case in the representative bureaucracy literature: a situation in which active representation of the identity in question, nationality, is effectively prohibited. Despite this prohibition, the study finds that some

employees engage in active national representation or embrace the national representative role perception. Fourth, the study identifies an unusual manifestation of intersectionality, in which two identities within an individual – nationality and internationalist – stand in almost direct opposition to each other. Finally, the study also lends support to Lim's (2006) notion of shared values, the idea that a social group can receive increased benefits simply because a bureaucrat shares their values. In other words, no active representation is required. This manifests itself in the present study when several interviewees express the belief that national representation can occur subconsciously or naturally simply because an individual has been so indelibly shaped by his or her national background.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The United Nations was founded at the end of World War II with lofty expectations, that it would bring about the end of war and help usher in a future free from interstate violence. Unfortunately, such a future has not come to pass, and such expectations were obviously unrealistic in the first place. Furthermore, nations have at times defied the UN, dealing substantial blows to the organization's legitimacy. For example, the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 without the UN Security Council's permission, which violates the terms of the UN Charter that have been agreed to by all nations. For this reason and others, some commentators question the value and effectiveness of the UN, and various politicians threaten to suspend their nations' financial and manpower contributions to the organization.

Despite the persistent criticism -- some of it certainly justified -- of the UN, the organization continues to be quite relevant in the arena of world affairs. The bulk of its influence falls under the category of "soft power," meaning that the organization primarily traffics in norms, perceptions, and preferences, rather than utilizing the hard power of weaponry or economic sanctions more often wielded by nation-states. The ability of its soft power to be impactful, however, depends on the UN maintaining a reputation for neutrality and credibility. For instance, when the UN issues a report on casualty counts in Syria or on the state of global warming, interested parties pay attention and tend to take the contents of the reports seriously because of the UN's generally independent status vis-à-vis national governments. Nevertheless, this perceived independence is never guaranteed, and the organization and its supporters have to constantly fend off efforts by member states to unduly influence the UN and its employees. Because the League of Nations experienced similar pressures, the founders of the UN made sure

to enshrine the importance of independence from nation-states into the UN Charter, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Thus, it is apparent that national representation in the UN bureaucracy, the body that produces such influential and valuable reports as well as other contributions, is a critical issue for the UN. Can member states be represented within the UN bureaucracy without compromising the independence of the institution? Because member states fund the UN, provide its employees, and host UN facilities, the UN must accommodate the desire of member states that their representational interests be realized somehow in the UN workforce. It is simply a political and practical necessity. Yet at the same time, the UN must ensure that such accommodation does not proceed to the point of undermining its credibility and legitimacy. Clearly, national representation in the UN bureaucracy is central to the UN's ability to succeed, and it deserves serious scholarly attention.

Thus, as discussed in Chapter Three, although scholars have certainly identified and explored national representation in the UN workforce as a critical issue, they have neither (1) studied the issue in a rigorous empirical way nor (2) applied a theoretical framework to the subject that facilitates clear understanding and orderly accumulation of insights into a larger, coherent body of work. Therefore, the present study has attempted to remedy both of these shortcomings by conducting an empirical analysis of bureaucratic national representation in the UN that is guided by the theoretical framework of representative bureaucracy. The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of the outcomes of this study; its contributions to knowledge about the UN and about representative bureaucracy theory; its limitations; and of the future research that can build on this study's foundation.

## Analytical Outcomes

First, Chapter Four examines the following research question: what are the determinants of passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy? As described in Chapter Two, existing representative bureaucracy research has produced a fair amount of empirical evidence that passive representation can have important effects. These effects fall primarily into three categories: effects on bureaucratic outcomes for represented populations; effects on perceptions of the bureaucracy; and effects on non-bureaucrats' willingness to coproduce with the bureaucracy. Furthermore, Chapter Three describes the high level of interest that national governments maintain in their respective levels of passive representation within the UN bureaucracy, demonstrating in numerous ways that these governments see passive national representation as a vehicle for advancing their national interests. Thus, in light of the above, it is important to discern what shapes the distribution of passive national representation within the UN bureaucracy, and to consider what the implications are in terms of passive national representation's potential effects.

The study in Chapter Four estimates two models of the relationship between passive national representation and its determinants. Specifically, one model estimates the determinants of representation – the count of representatives by nation – and the second model estimates the determinants of representativeness – whether a country is underrepresented or “well-represented” (i.e. within its desirable range or overrepresented). For the first model, the identified determinants of passive national representation are the level of a country's contribution to the UN budget; whether the country hosts a major UN facility; and whether the country has upper level representation in the UN bureaucracy (i.e. any Assistant- or Under-Secretaries General). The second model, on the other hand, indicates that upper level representation; hosting a major

UN facility; and having English or French as an official language increase a country's odds of being well-represented.

As mentioned previously, the positive association between passive representation and improved outcomes for represented populations is relatively well-established in the literature. Thus, the representation model indicates that higher contributions to the UN budget, hosting a major UN facility, and having upper level representation all result in improved outcomes for the member states that exhibit these characteristics. Therefore, this suggests to member state governments that they can perhaps increase their "return on investment" from the UN by contributing more financially to the organization, hosting a UN facility, and securing positions for their nationals among the uppermost ranks of the Secretariat. While this is potentially valuable information for member state governments, it may not reflect well on the UN, as it implies, for instance, that a government can essentially "buy" more representation for itself or somehow procure it by expanding its presence among the UN's senior executives. This does not exactly reflect a situation in which merit-based considerations appear to hold much sway.

In contrast, the results of the representativeness model may service as a source of practical guidance for personnel management in the UN, particularly in the realm of recruitment. Specifically, the fact that hosting a UN facility and having English or French as an official language increases a country's odds of being well-represented suggests that the UN may want to target its recruitment efforts toward non-host nations and those without as many native English or French speakers in order to bring the distribution of passive national representation more in line with what the UN envisions to be "equitable geographical distribution." In other words, the results of this model suggest that nationals from countries hosting UN facilities or having more French and English speakers have natural advantages when it comes to competing for UN jobs,

and that the UN must therefore compensate for these advantages by recruiting more aggressively in countries that do not possess these traits.

Second, the study in Chapter Five is an exploratory study that examines the potential for active national representation in the UN bureaucracy. Although the study, because of its exploratory design, cannot offer any definitive estimates of the prevalence of active national representation in the UN workforce, its findings do suggest that such representation does take place, or at a minimum that a non-trivial number of UN employees adhere to the national representative role perception. Furthermore, the analysis of the interviews indicates that there are two types of factors that likely influence the potential for active national representation to occur within any given employee and within the different locations across the UN organization. The first type of factor is internal to the individual employee. Specifically, the interviews made it very clear that UN employees experience intersectionality – the possession of multiple internal identities. While this is not particularly surprising, given that almost any individual has multiple sources of identity, what makes the UN employee especially interesting is that he or she likely possesses to some degree the internationalist identity, which stands in tension with any affinity he or she may have for a national background. This internal struggle between national loyalty and internationalist inclinations likely has important implications for an individual's propensity to engage in active national representation.

The other type of factor that likely influences the potential for active national representation in the UN is external. Specifically, analysis of the interviews revealed five external factors: organizational context (especially organizational mission and funding source); an employee's number of fellow nationals working in their organization; an individual's location within the hierarchy; the length of an individual's tenure at the UN; and the culture of one's

home country government (i.e. on the spectrum from patronage-oriented to merit-oriented). Conversations surrounding these factors suggested that the potential for active national representation would be higher in UN agencies with more political and less program-oriented missions, such as the Secretariat; in situations where an employee does not have many fellow nationals working nearby; toward the top of the UN hierarchy among senior executives; among employees with shorter tenures at the UN; and among employees who hail from countries with more patronage-oriented governments cultures.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

In addition to enhancing our understanding of national representation in the UN bureaucracy, which has important practical implications, this study also contributes to the further development of representative bureaucracy theory. First, the study described in Chapter Four contributes to knowledge regarding the determinants of passive representation. To begin with, the study derives some of its hypotheses from existing studies on the determinants of passive representation that almost exclusively focus on the municipal setting in the U.S. As discussed in Chapter Four, perhaps the most prominent determinant of passive representation identified across this body of work is population. However, population does not have a practically significant impact in either the representation or the representativeness model in this study, suggesting that the nature of its relationship with passive representation may be different at the international level, or at a minimum within the UN context. One possible explanation for this is the fact that at the municipal or even the national level, bureaucracies are located physically amongst the populations they are serving, whereas the UN bureaucracy is spread across the world and often quite physically removed from the populations who may benefit from its programs.

In addition, as discussed in Chapter Four, there is a strong argument to be made that the UN is justified in not using population as the basis for its representativeness goals given the fact that the UN is not a government, and its primary responsibility is not to the population of everyday citizens but rather to member state governments. This may also play a role in population's lack of influence on passive national representation.

Second, the vast majority of studies that examine the determinants of passive representation measure passive representation in terms of the number or percent of representatives, and they do not consider a representativeness measure. The present study, however, finds that the determinants of passive representation differ from the determinants of passive representativeness. This finding indicates that measurement matters when it comes to passive representation and its determinants. To reiterate, representation and representativeness are certainly related but also distinct, and neither measure is more important than the other. Rather, they measure different phenomena. Existing research on passive representation could potentially benefit from exploring representativeness and other alternative means of measuring passive representation in order to tease out all of the various dimensions of the concept and the implications of measuring it in different ways.

Moreover, Chapter Five's study on the potential for active representation also offers contributions to representative bureaucracy theory. First, it revives the notion of salience of identification as an indicator of the potential for active representation, which was mentioned in some of the earliest studies of representative bureaucracy but does not appear to have been investigated in the proceeding decades. Second, it raises the issue of intersectionality as an influential factor when considering the potential for active representation. As Keiser (2010) notes, representative bureaucracy researchers have not sufficiently explored intersectionality and

its implications for representative bureaucracy research thus far. The present study suggests that it is critical to consider all of an individual's sources of identity when assessing that individual's potential for active representation. As discussed in Chapter Five, although an individual's national background may be quite salient to him or her, that salience alone is not sufficient to indicate a higher probability of engaging in active national representation. Rather, further examination may reveal that a UN employee also identifies strongly with the internationalist orientation, which may counteract any potential for active national representation. Thus, it is important to consider whether an individual bureaucrat may find any sources of identity salient that would directly conflict with or mitigate the potential for active representation.

### **Limitations**

Although this study produces valuable insights for better understanding the UN, and it also offers contributions to representative bureaucracy theory, it nevertheless does have several notable limitations. First of all, this is a case study. While the analysis in this study enhances our knowledge of the representational dynamics within the UN, its findings should not be generalized to other international organizations (IOs). Thus, it does not contribute knowledge to the broader theory of IOs, per se. As a result, it may be of greater use in the narrower field of UN studies or to UN practitioners rather than to the field of IO studies.

Moreover, the quantitative study described in Chapter Four has two important limitations. First, because of data constraints, it does not include a measure of education. This is unfortunate, because education is cited as one of the most important determinants of passive representation in the existing representative bureaucracy literature, and as such it is fairly important from a theoretical standpoint; educational attainment may be the best proxy for the quality of the UN job applicant pool within a given country. In an effort to compensate for the lack of an education

measure, therefore, the study speaks to the effect of applicant quality on passive national representation by utilizing the democracy indicator's association with the Human Development Index. Nevertheless, this is a much more indirect measure of competence, and a specific education measure would be preferable. Therefore, the models may suffer from omitted variable bias, and the study is not able to contribute to the theory surrounding education as a determinant of passive representation.

Second, the meaningfulness of the estimates produced in Chapter Four is limited by the fact that the analysis does not rely on individual level data. Rather, all of the independent variables are country level variables. This is significant because it further limits the ability of the study to offer an accurate estimate of the size and quality of a given country's UN job applicant pool. Thus, even if the study were able to utilize country-level data on educational attainment, which would be an improvement over its current measure of applicant competence, this would still only be a very rough proxy for (a) the number of individuals interested in UN jobs, and (b) the degree to which such individuals are qualified for UN jobs. Thus, because of the reliance on country level data, the study is further limited in its ability to say anything about the effect of qualified applicant supply on country representation.

Furthermore, the study reported in Chapter Five also suffers from two significant limitations. First, although its exploratory nature enables it to offer valuable insights that can be utilized to design more effective studies in the future, this design also has its drawbacks. For instance, the analysis does not test relationships between variables. Rather, it can only offer suggestions for relationships that should be considered in future research. Moreover, the results of the study are not generalizable to all UN employees because of the nature of the snowball

sampling method that was utilized. These are some of the very reasons that many researchers have been dismissive of exploratory research, according to Stebbins (2011).

Second, the study in Chapter Five suffers from one of the limitations that all studies of active representation to date have exhibited: it relies on individuals' assertions about the degree to which active representation is occurring as well as on statements about the representative role perception, as opposed to providing direct observations of active representation as it occurs. In other words, although adherence to the representative role perception is likely a fairly accurate proxy for the actual occurrence of active representation, it is still inferior to a study in which a researcher actually observes active representation taking place and can therefore confirm its existence beyond a doubt. With this study, we can only come away with *suggestions* about active representation's occurrence, not confirmations.

### **Future Research**

The beginning of this concluding chapter argues that national representation in the UN bureaucracy is a critical issue affecting the UN's perceived legitimacy and therefore its ability to effectively exercise its soft power in global affairs. Thus, the present study constitutes a valuable initial attempt to explore this important issue, helping researchers gain a basic sense of the dynamics surrounding bureaucratic national representation in this setting. Nevertheless, our understanding of the subject at hand would be substantially incomplete without further studies that could build on the foundation that this study establishes. What follows are four suggestions for future research that can leverage this study's findings.

First, as discussed in the preceding limitations section, the study in Chapter Four on the determinants of passive representation suffers from data-related constraints. Specifically, the lack of an education measure and the use of country-level data for its "competence" variable.

Our understanding of passive national representation's determinants would be greatly enhanced if these hurdles could be overcome. Perhaps one way to do this would be to conduct a case study of one country or a comparative case study of a small number of countries in order to look much more closely at the individuals within each country who seek out jobs at the UN. In particular, as mentioned previously, the Foreign Offices of many countries include units whose responsibility it is to assist their nationals in obtaining UN jobs. It may be the case that these offices possess data on the number and characteristics of applicants from their countries, which would be extremely valuable in learning more about what kind of person succeeds in securing a job at the UN.

Second, while the current study is effective at identifying associations between various country level variables and passive national representation – associations that may be causal – it can only offer speculation about what the causal *mechanisms* might be that underlie these relationships. Thus, the present study arguably tells us *what* the determinants of passive national representation are, but not *why* these are the determinants. Therefore, a subsequent study might be able to shed light on these mechanisms by collecting data directly from some of the individuals most closely involved with UN staffing, such as UN officials, job applicants themselves, and employees of national Foreign Offices. Information from these sources would serve as a very helpful complement to the present analysis.

Third, as explained in Chapters Two and Three, there is ample evidence to *suggest* that passive national representation in the UN bureaucracy likely brings about substantive effects and has a meaningful impact. Nevertheless, there are no studies that offer direct empirical evidence of this. As Chapter Two relates, there is a sizable body of research at the national and subnational levels that has produced empirical evidence of the association between passive

representation and substantive as well as symbolic effects. Such a study could certainly be undertaken at the level of the UN, as well, and its results would be particularly illuminating for member state governments who track passive national representation so closely.

Finally, as explained in Chapter Five, the qualitative study is designed specifically to lay the groundwork for future research. It conducts data collection in a relatively unstructured manner in order to allow for the identification of as many relevant variables as possible, and to surface theories about the relationships between these variables. Thus, one possibility for a future study would be to take the information from this study and use it to create a more structured data collection tool such as a survey. This survey could, for instance, include a battery of questions on the subject of intersectionality that seeks to tease out the various sources of identity for UN employees, the relative salience of each identity, and the relationships between the identities. It might also include questions about adherence to the representative role perception in order to probe the relationship between intersectionality dynamics and the tendency to adopt such a role perception. For example, it might allow us to ascertain the degree to which internationalist sentiment is negatively related to the adoption of a national representative role perception. Moreover, the study could specifically sample from two agencies – the Secretariat and a more program-oriented agency like the UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) to test whether individuals in the Secretariat really are more likely to see themselves as national representatives, as the present study suggests. With a large enough sample, the study could also examine the other theories regarding location in the hierarchy, employee tenure, and others, and their association with the representative role perception.

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