How to win friends and influence the UN: Donor influence on the United Nations' bureaucracy

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Abstract

Are states able to influence the policy decisions of international institutions via their bureaucracies and, if so, under what conditions? Employing two distinct analyses of United Nations Programmes and Funds, this paper suggests an answer in the affirmative; that states are able to influence policy decisions of IOs by leveraging their bureaucracies, and describes a condition under which they are able to accomplish this. The paper demonstrates that major donors to UN agencies are disproportionately represented on the staffs of those agencies, and that this has distinct policy implications. In particular, the more staff that major donors have within the agencies, the more the agency's aid policy reflects those states' bilateral aid preferences. Furthermore, these results are not driven by the most powerful countries in the system, which suggests that this is an avenue of influence open to a considerable number of countries. These results indicate that the preferences of international bureaucrats are less independent than we have previously thought and that they may, indeed, be endogenous to the states that pushed for their hire to begin with. These findings speak to questions in the literature about when and how states are able to wield informal influence within IOs while also suggesting that more countries are able to use informal influence to their advantage than is usually thought.

Introduction

Research on why and how states delegate authority to international organizations (IOs) has suggested that there are many similarities between delegation at the national level, from a legislative body to an executive body, and at the international level, from member states to an international institution. In particular, principal-agent theories have provided fertile ground for furthering theoretical developments on why states choose to delegate authority to international organizations and when they choose to do so. They have also highlighted some of the problems states face in the delegation process which helps us understand IOs behavior (Abbott and Snidal, 1998; Hawkins et al., 2006a; Stone, 2011).

Early on, scholars studying traditional principal-agent (P-A) models of international organizations pointed out some of the inherent differences between the national and international levels, and suggested ways in which these models needed to be modified in order to better fit the international arena. A central contribution to this literature is the acknowledgement that the principal in these models is not a unitary actor (rather, scholars argued, one should talk about either multiple principals or a collective principal). This was argued to be of significance for understanding P-A models of international organizations as it affects the incentives of both the principal and the agent (cf. Lyne, Nielson and Tierney (2006)).

This paper argues that not only is the principal not a unitary actor, the agent isn't one either.[1] This is an especially important distinction to make because it brings up a number of questions regarding the ability of principals with varying policy preferences to influence the agent. The literature on international bureaucrats has heretofore largely assumed that bureaucrats' preferences are exogenous to state preferences and that they either seek good

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[1] Most of the principal-agent literature (implicitly, if not explicitly) assumes that the agent is a unitary actor. Graham (2014) provides a notable exception.

policy or self-advancement, or both. Allowing for state influence on the preferences of bureaucrats, however, calls into question the extent to which we can talk about the preferences of agencies and states as distinct. In addition, it adds a new dimension both for thinking about which states can influence IOs as well as the conditions under which they are able to do so.

There are likely several ways in which states are able to influence international bureaucrats. One such way might be for states to establish friendly relations with bureaucrats and use those relations to influence IOs. States with large delegations to IOs should find it easier to establish these relations, simply by virtue of their ability to devote more staff time to bureaucratic relations. Another way in which states may seek to develop "friendly" organizations is by influencing the agency's hiring decisions. If successful, states may be able to stack the agencies with bureaucrats who are like-minded and thus more likely to be receptive to implementing policies in a way that conforms with how particular states might implement them bilaterally.

This paper addresses the potential for states to influence international bureaucrats in the context of the United Nations (UN), the largest international bureaucracy. The UN provides fertile ground for exploration of these questions, not only due to the size of its bureaucracy, but because it includes several semi-independent agencies that nevertheless are part of the same organizational "family" and which, in many respects, have the same organizational structure. This similarity allows us to hold constant many of the sources of heterogeneity between IOs and compare more easily the pathways of influence that exist within them.

States' ability to influence the UN in the ways described above requires two things. First, that states are able to identify which bureaucrats are friendly and, second, that they are able to influence the hiring decisions of the agencies in question. I argue that a useful

heuristic for states in identifying friendly bureaucrats is their passport; namely, that states will seek to get their own nationals hired into the organization. There are several reasons why this is plausible. First, a number of UN staff members have formerly worked for their national governments, which has likely helped shape their views on UN-related policy issues, making them safer bets for states than a stranger. Second, even if states cannot be sure of the friendliness of particular individuals, having a strong presence of one's nationals may enhance a state's perceived stature within the organization which, in turn, may modify the behavior of both other states and other bureaucrats within the organization. There is considerable evidence that states care about how many of their nationals are hired into the UN, which lends credibility to this line of argument (G.A.O., 2010; Novosad and Werker, 2014).

There is likely considerable variation in the ability of individual states to influence the hiring decisions of the UN agencies. In this paper, I hypothesize that major donors to a particular UN agency find it easier to get their nationals hired than do other states. Interviews with UN bureaucrats have revealed that with major-donor status comes a considerably greater level of access to the organization, which can be leveraged both for the purpose of shaping the policy agenda as well as for more administrative purposes. Thus, it is plausible to think that if a major donor pushes for a particular hire, it is more likely to be successful than another state, which does not enjoy the same privileged relationship with the organization.

If it is, in fact, the case that major donors influence hiring decisions in international organizations, the question remains: to what end? Again, there are a number of different ends that states might be seeking. Their interest might be purely informational, in that they might care only to know more about what the agency is doing, how it is fulfilling its mandate, and whether agency funds are being spent prudently. They might also care to know how

other states are interacting with the agency and whether they are trying to influence policy. In addition, it might be the case that states want to influence policy themselves and that this is the end goal of their stacking the institutions with their nationals.

With these possibilities in mind, the question that this paper seeks to answer is: are states able to influence the policy decisions of international institutions via their bureaucracies and, if so, under what conditions? This is an important question to answer, if we are interested in the degree to which IOs can be considered independent actors in the international system, but also a difficult one to investigate empirically, because this type of influence is rarely immediately apparent.

In order to investigate this question, this paper includes two distinct empirical analyses that together suggest an answer in the affirmative. The former analysis addresses the question of whether major donors to UN agencies have more staff members from their country within those agencies than would be expected in the absence of any hiring bias. The latter evaluates the extent to which staff from major donor countries appear to be influencing the aid portfolios of the agencies in which they are employed. In addition, I show that these results are not driven purely by the most powerful countries in the system, which we would expect to be influential in their own right, but that they hold also when we eliminate them from the analysis.

The results show that major donors to UN agencies are not only disproportionately represented on the staffs of those agencies, but that this has distinct policy implications. In particular, the more staff that major donors have within the agencies, the more the agency's aid policy reflects those states' bilateral aid preferences. These findings combined lend support to a central contention of this paper, that preferences of international bureaucrats are less independent than has previously been thought and that they may, indeed, be endogenous

to the states that pushed for the bureaucrats hire to begin with. The paper also demonstrates that a larger number of countries than the literature generally focuses on is able to wield informal influence within IOs and that failing to address the influence that they have may lead us to miss an important dimension of how IOs operate.

This paper continues in four parts. The next part further positions this paper in the extant literature and elaborates on the proposed mechanism through which states are able to influence policy. Part three presents the data and the two-part empirical analysis. The last section situates these findings within the broader research question of this paper and points to avenues for further exploration.

Principals and agents at the United Nations

Scholars of international relations have long debated the importance of international organizations in international relations (Keohane, 1984; Keohane and Martin, 1995; Mearsheimer, 1994/1995). One facet of this debate has revolved around the reasons states delegate authority to international organizations (Abbott and Snidal, 1998; Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001; Nielson and Tierney, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2006a; Koremenos, 2008). Many of those who have sought to answer these questions employ a rationalist approach, arguing that delegation at the international level can be described in terms quite similar to delegation from legislatures to executives in domestic politics and have built on previous work within the American politics literature to further their theoretical arguments (Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001; Hawkins et al., 2006a).

Most of this literature views the organization as a unitary agent with states as its principals. This is, in essence, a common agency framework where the agent is unitary but the principal is not. In addition, a dinstinction is frequently made between multiple and

collective principals—where the agent has the ability to negotiate independently with each principal only in the case of multiple principals, but not in the case of a collective principal (Lyne, Nielson and Tierney, 2006; Copelovitch, 2010).

A salient feature of P-A relationships is the existence of slack, i.e., the ability of the agent to act independently from the principal, often in ways she finds undesirable (Hawkins et al., 2006b). Furthermore, when the principal is not a unitary actor, there is usually greater room for agency slack than with a single agent (Lyne, Nielson and Tierney, 2006; Pollack, 1997). However, in a common agency framework, the definition of slack becomes more complicated because, due to the frequent divergence of opinion between the different principals, what one principal may find undesirable action on part of the agent, another may find desirable. Not only, as McCubbins, Noll and Weingast (1989) note, does this often lead to a lack of coordination among principals, which implies less oversight over the agent and thus more room for shirking, it also means that principals may not see eye to eye on .

Some of the recent work on international organizations has focused on the role of the agent in the P-A relationship. Barnett and Finnemore (2004) argue that the objectives of international bureaucrats need not reflect those of their state principals. Johnson (2013) and Johnson and Urpelainen (2014) claim that international bureaucrats influence the development of new intergovernmental organizations to a significant degree, sometimes despite opposition from the constituent member states. Kleine (2013) argues that agencies can be "captured" by certain member states, often in exchange for letting other states exert dominant control in some other agency.[2]

In addition, Barnett and Coleman (2005) argue that the ultimate objectives of international bureaucrats are material security, legitimacy, and the advancement of policies they

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[2]This hypothesis lends itself particularly to international organizational "families," such as the United Nations and the European Union, where these trades can more easily be made.

deem fitting. The claim that bureaucrats care about material security is relevant for this analysis because it means that they are likely to respond to threats of defunding and to rewards of greater funding. This may make them more susceptible to complying with states' pressuring for hires or give greater weight to the views and emphases of major donors than of others. It may furthermore mean that bureaucrats who are hired into the UN system in part by virtue of their governments lobbying for them may feel a greater sense of responsibility to represent its country values within the organization.

It is quite possible, however, that increased agency slack may not only benefit the agent and, by fortuitous circumstance, one or more of the principals. Indeed, it may be the case that what is perceived as slack may not be slack at all but rather the agency responding to influence from only one or a handful of principals. This is conceptually distinct from McCubbins, Noll and Weingast (1989) in that it is not a side-effect that one of the principals benefits from shirking but that is occurs as part of a deliberate strategy by one or more principal. This suggests a central point about delegation to IOs: while states necessarily delegate with some level of discretion, this may not only serve the interests of the agent, but may also facilitate various principals influencing the agency when preferences diverge among the principals.

The above discussion assumes that the principals in these relationships have the ability to influence the agent in some way. While this ability varies among states, there are several ways in which they can at least attempt to influence IOs. One way in which states can do this is suggested by Stone (2011). He argues that states that have outside options (i.e., the ability to "go it alone," or work outside the organization if needed) end up with greater informal powers within international organization, as there is a tacit agreement between the various member states that when the state with outside options really wants something, the

others won't obstruct it. This has a corollary in the relationship between those states and the bureaucracy of the organization as well. Bureaucrats may be less likely to go against the wishes of a state that they know could functionally abandon the agency and "go it alone."

This, however, describes the relationship between the organization and only a handful of member states (and in many cases, only one). Others do not have a credible threat of abandoning the organization, so they must rely on other tools to influence the agent. One such tool might be threatening to withhold funding from the organization. Depending on how significant a donor a country is to the organization, coupled with their ability to work through alternative organizations (such as may often be the case with various UN agencies) or to simply decrease their activity in a particular policy domain for a while, this could well prove a credible threat.

States may also try to reduce agency slack is by decreasing the organization's policy discretion. Indeed, there is evidence that, in the last couple of decades, donor contributions to the UN development system have increasingly become earmarked for specific projects to the detriment of core agency funding, thus making multilateral development aid resemble bilateral aid to a greater extent than before (Graham, 2015; Mahn, 2012). Due to this, there are reasons to believe that international organizations have an incentive to be responsive, to some extent, to the preferences of their major donors.

Another mechanism through which states may seek to influence the policy agenda of particular agencies, is trying to influence the staffing composition at these agencies. In particular, states may seek to promote the hiring of "friendly" bureaucrats, i.e., bureaucrats who are likely to implement policies in a way that behooves the state that pushed for their hire or, more simply, bureaucrats who is amenable to suggestion when desired. In order to be plausible, however, this mechanism relies on the bureaucrats in question being able to

influence policy to such an extent that states would find it worthwhile to push for their hire to begin with. That is, there must be some discernible impact on policy of those bureaucrats that states are seeking to influence.

Staffing in United Nations Programmes and Funds

The United Nations is composed of six main organs—the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council (now defunct), the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice—as well as a myriad subsidiary agencies. The Secretariat—headed by the Secretary-General of the UN—is the executive arm of the organization. Chapter XV of the UN Charter discusses the Secretariat and has the following to say about how it should be staffed:

> "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."
> (Article 101, UN Charter)

In order to meet this standard, the Secretariat runs a Young Professionals Program (YPP) for entry-level hires (formerly the National Competitive Recruitment Examinations (NCREs)). These are open only to young professionals from countries which are underrepresented on its staff. Before shifting to the YPP, the NCRE had been found to be effective in enhancing the geographical distribution of the staff and providing the Secretariat with high-quality staff members (Posta and Terzi, 2007). However, as it is only one avenue for entry into the Secretariat, it can only guarantee that the spirit of Article 101 is followed to a limited extent.

Although the Secretariat is generally considered important for policymaking and agenda setting within the UN, it is funded entirely through assessed contributions from member states of the organization, which are then allocated to various UN departments via the 5th Committee of the General Assembly (Novosad and Werker, 2014)[3]. Thus, while Secretariat staffing is undoubtedly of great interest to scholars seeking to evaluate member state influence on the UN bureaucracy, it is hard to make the case that states are able to use their donations as leverage for Secretariat hires.

However, the UN comprises a great deal more entities than only the six main organs listed above. The UN system includes over 30 affiliated organizations that have varying levels of autonomy from the main organs. Part of these are the UN Programmes and Funds, a group of 13 agencies[4] that, for three main reasons, lend themselves well to examining whether states who are major donors to a particular agency have a disproportionate number of staff members at that agency and whether this stacking of staff appears to influence agency policy. First, they are almost entirely funded through voluntary contributions, a significant amount of which comes from member state donations. Second, their hiring policies follow those of the UN Charter, meaning that they are also striving for geographic balance in their hiring. Third, a number of these agencies are primarily focused on various aspects of development aid, which means that they are multilateral donor agencies. Due to this, we have data on

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[3]Assessed contributions are the mandatory contributions that states make to the UN as part of their membership obligations. Not every UN entity is funded through the assessed contributions, so a large number of agencies rely on additional voluntary contributions for their operations.

[4]These agencies are the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UN-AIDS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women (UN Women), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the World Food Programme (WFP). Out of these, I was able to get data for about half, or the UN-AIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNRWA, WFP.

their operations and can examine empirically whether their policies appear to be influenced by donors.

Data

The empirical analysis in this paper proceeds in two parts. First, to examine the question of whether major donors try to influence hires into the UN agencies described above, the number of staff members are regressed on major-donor status to see whether a statistically significant relationship can be discerned. For this analysis, I compiled a dataset which includes information on the nationalities of staff members in the seven of the 13 UN Programmes and Funds where data were available as well as who the major donors to those agencies were.

The dependent variable in these regressions is a count of the number of professional staff from country i in year t in agency a funded through voluntary contributions by member states. The analysis includes only those staff members who are funded through voluntary contributions, as those are the ones that member states may be able to influence more than those funded through assessed contributions. In addition, it includes only those staff members in P or D staff categories, i.e., those staff who work directly on policy issues, and not technical or administrative staff (G category). These data were compiled from reports from the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (UNSCEB), which has issued reports entitled "UN System HR Statistics Report" since 1991. As of 1996, these reports include the nationalities of staff members in the various UN agencies, so my dataset spans the time period 1996-2011.[5]

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[5]As each agency does not have staff members from every member state in every year, there is a concentration of zeroes in the dataset. Figure 5 in the appendix shows the distribution of this variable across agencies. The distribution looks much like one would expect, with a large number of zeroes and most ob-

Figure 1 shows the total number of staff per agency in each year. We can see that all of these agencies experience growth in staff over time, with the exception of UNRWA which remained fairly steady after a significant decline in 2000. This growth mirrors an increase in donations to these agencies over time, as seen in Figure 2.
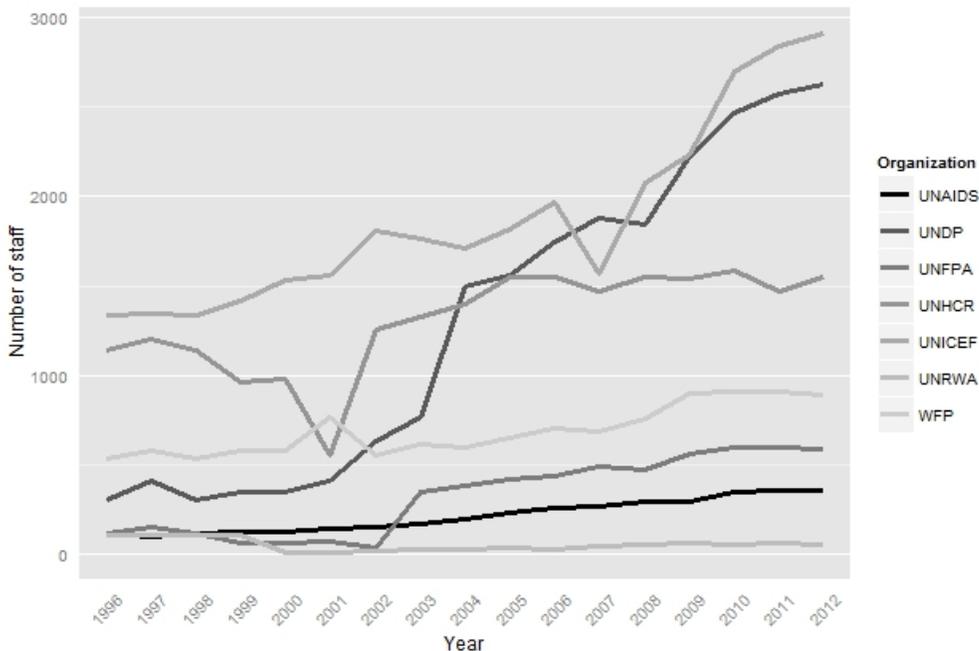

Figure 1: Total number of staff per organization over time

Donor data was obtained from the Global Policy Forum, which collected it either from the agencies themselves or from various reports from the agencies to the UN General Assembly (often via the Economic and Social Council). The Global Policy Forum compiled data on

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servations below 50. Furthermore, the data suggest that the mean of this variable is much lower than its variance, indicating overdispersion which makes a negative binomial model preferable to a Poisson model. A likelihood ratio test comparing the negative binomial and the Poisson confirms this. Given the distribution of the data, a zero-inflated model might seem like a reasonable choice. However, there is little to suggest that the underlying data-generating process includes two distinct processes (one that generates only zeroes and one that generates both zero values as well as all the other values in the dataset), which is when a zero-inflated model would be called for. Despite this, I run a zero-inflated Poisson regression as a robustness check and it has very little influence on my coefficient size and none on the significance level. Due to this, I present the negative-binomial regression results in my main models.
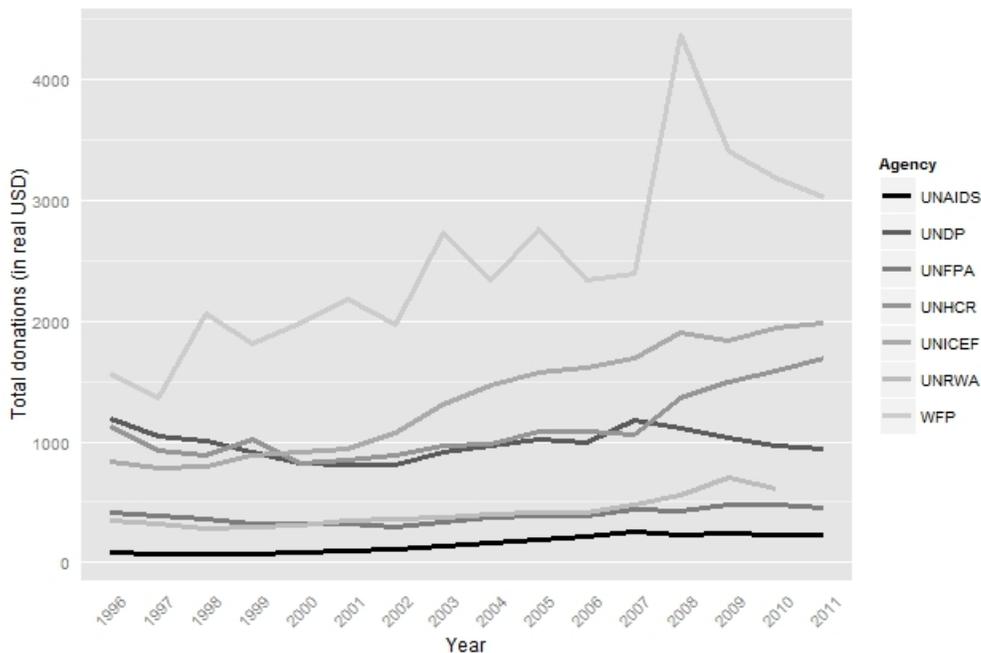
Figure 2: Total revenue from member states

the top ten member state donors for a number of agencies in the UN system for the period 1974-2011 (or from date of inception, for agencies that have not existed since 1974), as well as total member state donations to the organization per year. The top ten donors to each agency collectively donate approximately 70-90 percent of all of the agency's revenue from member states in a given year. A total of 21 countries count as major donors for any agency in any year.[6]

These donors provide from 1.25 percent to 67.8 percent of the total member state donations to a given organization in particular year, with a mean of 8.74 percent.[7] From these data, the main independent variable of interest, *"Major Donor,"* was created. It is a dichotomous variable, which takes the value 1 when a state is one of the top ten donors for a

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[6]A list of these countries, as well as descriptions of the agencies used in this analysis, can be found in the Appendix.

[7]The standard deviations is 8.7 and the median is 6.25.

particular agency in a particular year, and 0 otherwise.[8]

As these agencies all have to be staffed with people who herald from *some* nation, each member state likely has a representation of staffers within each agency that might be termed "natural." This would be the number of staff from each member state in the absence of any sort of bias in hiring. Thinking of this purely in terms of labor demand and supply, we can hypothesize that the size and education levels of each country's labor force would be central determinants of the supply of qualified staff members. In order to control for these in my analysis, I add to the regression equation the population size over age 15 in each country and, as a proxy for education levels, the per capita GDP for each country in each year. Both of these variables were obtained from the World Bank Databank. I control for growth over time by adding a linear term for the year. To control for agency capture by a particular state, I add a dummy variable for the nationality of the director of each agency. This variable was coded manually.[9] In addition, I include specifications with combinations of fixed effects for agency, country, and time. Descriptive statistics for these variables can be found in Table 1.

The second portion of the analysis evaluates whether staff from major donor states influence the portfolio similarity between the donor state and the agency. We know that bilateral development aid represents not only the objective needs of the recipients, but also the donor's preferences over who gets aid and how much, whatever the underlying reason for that may be (Alesina and Dollar, 2000; Kuziemko and Werker, 2006; Dreher, Sturm and Vreeland, 2009*a*,*b*; Carter and Stone, 2015). Whatever the rationale that states employ to

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[8]As robustness checks, various definitions of the Major Donor variable have been used, including top five donors, donors who contributed more than five percent of the agency's operating budget in a given year, and donors who contributed more than ten percent of the agency's operating budget in a given year. The results are robust to all these permutations of the Major Donor variable. Coefficient sizes change only slightly and traditional levels of statistical significance are maintained.

[9]In those years where there was a switch in the agency director, I coded as head the country which held the position for more than six months.

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determine their development aid portfolios, they would presumably prefer that the UN follow the same principals in its own aid distribution. Thus, greater similarity between the two might indicate that the state in question has some ability to influence the aid portfolio of the agency.

Data on multilateral and bilateral aid were obtained from AidData, using aid commitment values, in line with Schneider and Tobin (2013) and the vast majority of the aid literature. Of the seven UN Programmes and Funds, only four have sufficient data to be used in the regression analysis, so the second portion of the analysis is done using data from UN-AIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA.[10]

In order to calculate the portfolio similarity, I rely on a measure developed by Schneider and Tobin (2013). This measures calculates the percentage of donor country i's total bilateral aid in year t that went to recipient country k as well as the percentage of agency a's total multilateral aid in year t that went to recipient country k. It then takes the absolute value of the difference between these two numbers, and averages it across all aid recipients. The resulting number is multipled by negative one in order to make higher values indicate greater similarity.

The Major Donor variable used in the first analysis continues to be a central explanatory variable. The staff variable, that constitutes the dependent variable in the former regression, is now also a main independent variable, however.[11] In order to control for the effect of size and economic power Population and per capita GDP are included in the regression, in addition to country, agency, and year fixed effects. These variables are intended to control for any effect that states may be able to exert over the agency purely by virtue of their

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[10] As a robustness check, I also run the former regression of staff on major donor using only this same subset of data and find that my results are robust to the exclusion of the other three agencies.

[11] In order to normalize the distribution of this variable, which is quite right-skewed, it is logged. Zero values are dealt with by adding 1 to each observation before logging.

relative status in the international system, without necessarily having sought to influence the agency in the manner described in this paper.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Mean	Median	Max	St.Dev.
Number of personnel	0.00	6.62	2.00	457.00	16.30
GDP per capita (2011 US dollars)	53.10	9736.93	2458.30	125965.83	15172.36
Major donor	0.00	0.08	0.00	1.00	0.28
Size of labor force (in millions)	0.05	32.33	6.97	1102.00	108.97
Portfolio similarity	-0.013	-0.0079	-0.0075	0	0.003

Method and Analysis

As was noted above, the dependent variable in the first portion of the analysis is a count of the number of P- and D-category staff members from a given country funded through voluntary contributions in a particular agency and year. The mean number of staff members is considerably lower than the variance, which suggests overdispersion in the data.[12] Due to this, I use a negative binomial regression model for my analysis.

The first main regression model is thus:

$$P_{ait} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MD_{ait} + \beta_2 \ln Y_{it} + \beta_3 \ln LF_{it} + \beta_4 Director_{ait} + Year + FE + \epsilon_{ait}, \quad (1)$$

where P is number of personnel from country i in agency a in year t, MD is a dummy for whether a country is a Major Donor to a particular agency, Y is per capita GDP, LF is the size of the labor force, $Director$ is a dummy for the nationality of the director of each agency in each year, and FE are the fixed effects used in the various models.

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[12] This overdispersion in the data is confirmed with a likelihood-ratio test comparing the negative binomial model with the Poisson (where the dispersion parameter is held constant).

In the second part of the analysis, the dependent variable is a measure of the portfolio similarity between donor countries and the UN Programmes and Funds. The estimation uses ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with robust standard errors. In order to capture the effect that staff from major donor states may have on the portfolio similarity between those states and the agencies in question, I include an interaction between the Major Donor variable and the number of staff.

The second main regression model is thus:

$$PS_{ait} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MD_{ait} + \beta_2 \ln P_{ait} + \beta_3 MD_{ait} \times ln P_{ait} + \beta_4 \ln Y_{it} + \beta_5 \ln Pop_{it} + FE + \epsilon_{ait}, \ (2)$$

where PS is the portfolio similarity between agency a and country i in year t and other variables are the same as in Equation 1.

Table 2 displays the results of the negative biniomal regression analysis of number of staff on major donor. The first model is my baseline model, including my main variable of interest, *Major Donor*, as well as my main controls. I add a linear time effect in Model 2, to account for overall growth over time in the agencies. Model 3 adds agency fixed effects, in order to account for the varying sizes of these agencies, in addition to other sources of agency heterogeneity. Models 4 and 5 then add country and time fixed effects.

The first thing to notice is that major-donor status is highly significant throughout all the specifications, as is per capita GDP, which is being used as a proxy for level of education. The size of the labor force is significant only in the first three models; once country and time fixed effects are added, that variable loses significance. Interestingly, the variable for the nationality of the head of each agency is insignificant until fixed effects are added, and then is of an order of magnitude similar to that of the major donor variable. The significance of these variables supports the contention that there is some hiring bias within UN agencies,

Table 2: Negative binomial regression results

| | Dependent variable: Number of personnel | | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Major Donor	1.167***	1.238***	1.281***	0.197***	0.209***
	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.045)
log(GDPpc)	0.069***	0.066***	0.093***	0.268***	0.221***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.058)	(0.058)
log(Labor Force)	0.404***	0.395***	0.386***	−0.011	0.008
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Director	0.163	0.188	0.278***	0.268***	0.274***
	(0.124)	(0.121)	(0.106)	(0.070)	(0.070)
Year		0.060***	0.069***	0.075***	0.060***
		(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Fixed effects			*Agency*	*Agency* *Country*	*Agency* *Country* *Time*
Observations	12,903	12,903	12,903	12,903	12,903
Log Likelihood	−33,713.89	−33,443.01	−31,839.56	−27,546.28	−27,410.53
θ	0.646***	0.681***	0.962***	3.140***	3.248***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.077)	(0.080)
AIC	67,437.78	66,898.03	63,703.11	55,462.55	55,219.05

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

and that this bias is related to the nationality of the staff.

As for the magnitude of the effect, as this is a negative binomial regression, the coefficients cannot be directly interpreted. However, what we can examine with relative ease are the incident rate ratios, which we can obtain by exponentiating the coefficients. These are reported in Table 3. The incidence rate ratio should be interpreted such that, e.g., in model 4, the incidence rate for Major donor = 1 is 1.23 more than when Major donor = 0. Thus, being a major donor increases the staff member count by 23 percent.[13]

Table 3: Exponentiated coefficients from negative binomial regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Intercept	1.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Major Donor	3.21	3.45	3.66	1.23	1.24
log(GDPpc)	1.07	1.07	1.09	1.31	1.24
log(Labor Force)	1.50	1.48	1.47	0.99	1.01
Director	0.87	0.87	1.39	1.36	1.38
Year		1.06	1.07	1.08	1.06

The Aikake Information Criterion (AIC) suggests improved model fit as more controls and fixed effects are added. Indeed, given the varying sizes of the agencies in the dataset, having different intercepts for each agency seems imperative. Country fixed effects help account for differences between countries not captured by the control variables, which may make them more or less likely to have staff members within a particular agency. Year fixed effects were also added in model 5 and, as can be seen from the log-likelihoods, they do improve the model fit somewhat. However, the theoretical underpinnings of their inclusion is much more tenuous, although one might argue that exogenous events in a given year could impact the number of staff hired from a particular country without there being an underlying motivation from that state to influence policy. Their inclusion, however, has only marginal

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[13]The coefficient is transformed to a percentage change through the following formula: $(e^b - 1)100$.

impact on the magnitude of the coefficients.

Model 4 suggests that major donors have around 22 percent more staff members than non-major donors, whereas model 5 puts that number at 23 percent. All other model coefficients are similar between the two models (with the exception of the statistically insignificant labor force variable, which changes sign). Notably, the variable for the agency director, which is intended to control for agency capture by a particular state, becomes significant only once the fixed effects are added. The significance of this variable lends support to the notion that not only the nationality of the directors of agencies matters, but also that of bureaucrats.

While these combined results do not provide proof that member states are seeking to directly influence bureaucrats in UN agencies, they are suggestive of major donors' desired involvement with the agency in question on multiple levels. They would hardly be likely to do this if there were no gain to them from this involvement. This paper contends that states may be purchasing some level of influence over the policy agenda of particular UN agencies—or at least insurance against agency capture by, or disproportionate influence of, other states which may have different policy objectives.

The second empirical analysis in the paper is intended to explore, in greater detail, one avenue in which member states may be able to influence the policy of those agencies where they are major donors and provide evidence that this influence is driven, at least in part, by bureaucratic staff. Table 4 provides OLS estimates of the influence of staff and donors on the portfolio similarity between the multilateral aid given by the UN agencies in question and bilateral aid by donor states. The first model provides a baseline regression of portfolio similarity on major donor status and number of staff and the second model adds an interaction term between the two. The third model includes separate interactions for G-5 and non-G-5 major donors in order to explore the impact that smaller donor states have

vis-a-vis the very large ones.[14]

In the baseline model, we see that being a major donor has a positive and statistically significant effect on portfolio similarity, albeit at the 10 percent level, while the number of staff appears to have no independent impact on the dependent variable. This result implies that simply having a large number of staff members within an agency is not sufficient to be influential on the agency's aid portfolio. This is unsurprising because it matters where the staff are from. In this case, the effect of being a staff member from a major donor country should be different from the effect of a staff member from a non-major donor state. To account for this empirically, model 2 interacts major donor status with number of staff. The results change considerably. Now, both the major donor variable and the staff variable are both highly significant. Both are negative, but this is quickly offset by the positive and significant coefficient on the interaction term. In fact, once a major donor state has approximately eight staff members, the overall effect of being a major donor is positive.[15]

The third model splits the interaction between major donors from G-5 countries and those from non-G-5 countries. If it were the case that the findings in this paper were driven solely by the most powerful countries in the system having a significant amount of informal influence over the agencies, we should see a significant effect of being a well-represented G-5 major donor, while the coefficient on the interaction of staff and non-G-5 major donors should be rendered insignificant. This, however, is decidedly not the case, as the coefficients on both interaction terms remain statistically significant.

To further explore the substantive implications of the models, Figure 3 plots the overall

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[14]The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan constitute the G-5 countries. These are countries that are generally considered influential in the international system due to their size and affluence and might need to rely less on building friendly bureaucracies than do states from smaller, less powerful countries. China and Russia are not in my dataset, as reliable aid data is not available for them for the period used in my dataset, nor are they ever major donors in this period.

[15]In my dataset, there are 123 observations where a major donor has fewer than seven staff members.

Table 4: Ordinary least squares regression results

|	Dependent variable: Portfolio similarity		
	Pooled	*Pooled*	*G5 vs non-G5*
Major Donor	0.0003*	−0.001***	
	(0.0001)	(0.0003)	
G5 Major Donor			−0.0016***
			(0.0002)
Non-G5 Major Donor			−0.0008***
			(0.0090)
log(Number of staff)		−0.0003**	−0.0004***
		(0.012)	(0.0044)
Major Donor × log(Number of staff)		0.0005***	0.0004***
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)
G5 Major Donor × log(Number of staff)			0.0007***
			(0.0001)
Non-G5 Major Donor × log(Number of staff)			0.0005***
			(0.0001)
log(GDP pc)	−0.009***	−0.009***	−0.009***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
log(Population)	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0009)	(0.0009)	(0.0004)
Fixed effects	*Agency* *Country* *Time*	*Agency* *Country* *Time*	*Agency* *Country* *Time*
Observations	1,501	1,501	1,501
R²	0.471	0.477	0.496
Adjusted R²	0.450	0.455	0.473
χ²	957.056*** (df = 59)	973.220*** (df = 60)	864.032*** (df = 55)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
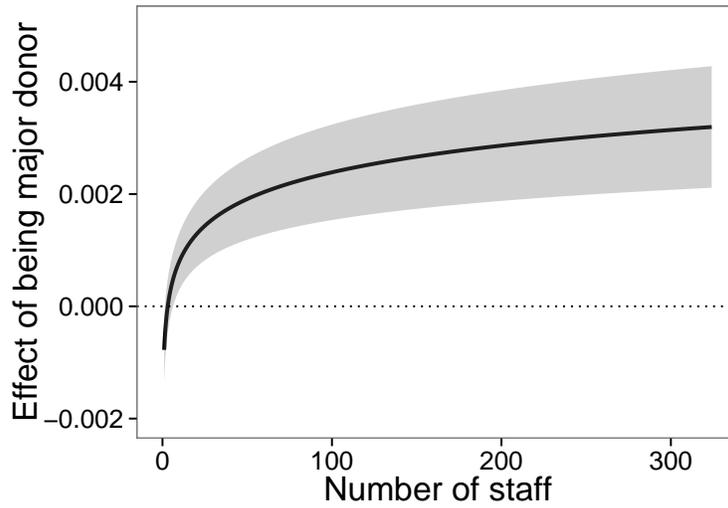
Figure 3: Effect of being a major donor on portfolio similarity for G5 countries
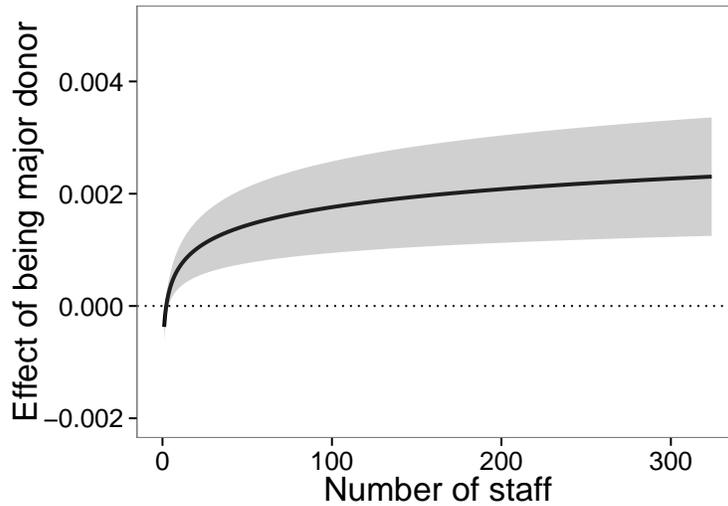

Figure 4: Effect of being a major donor on portfolio similarity for non-G5 countries

effect of being a G-5 major donor on the portfolio similarity in model 3, while Figure 4 plots the same for non-G-5 major donors. The x-axis shows the number of staff and the y-axis shows the overall effect of major donor status on portfolio similarity. In both models, overall effect of being a major donor is significant for most of the range of the staff variable.

The interaction term becomes significant for G-5 donors once they have about seven staff members within an agency. The same is true for non-G-5 donors once they have about four staff members within an agency. To give context to this number, it is worth noting that G-5 major donors have, on average, 58 staff members in each of these agencies per year while non-G5 major donors have 27. Thus, for the average number of major donor staff in both groups, the overall coefficient on staff both positive and significant.

Although the two graphs display similar trends in the data, figures 3 and 4 indicate that the effect size is somewhat larger for G-5 major donors. This is not surprising, as we know that the major powers in the international system have a great deal of influence within international organizations in a number of different ways, and there is no reason to assume that they wouldn't also seek to take advantage of the avenue for influence that staff provide. More interesting is the fact that the smaller major donors are able to approximate the influence that the major powers have in significant ways through their national representation within these agencies. This finding highlights a central contention of this paper, which is that many states are able to wield informal influence within international organizations—not only the most powerful ones.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that major donor states to UN agencies get a disproportionate number of their nationals hired as staff members of those agencies. This is due to a hiring bias within these agencies, which is the result of major donors pushing for their nationals to be hired into the organization. One observable implication of this bias is that the aid portfolios of the agencies in question are more similar to the portfolios of their major donors. These results are robust to the inclusion of several control variables as well as a host of fixed effects to

account for unobserved heterogeneity within both agencies and member states as well as across time. More than anything, these results have broader implications for how we think about state interaction with international organizations that warrants further research.

To date, most of the principal-agent literature on international organizations has treated the agent as a unitary actor. Recent work has begun to unpack the nature of the agent and what varying agent preferences means for how we think about international organizations and how they affect world politics. This paper pushes this research agenda forward by identifying another avenue that states can use to exert influence within IOs, out of the public eye and oftentimes even out of the eye of other member states. The results do indeed suggest that international bureaucrats' preferences are potentially endogenous. In particular, they suggest that major donors to UN agencies are able to wield influence that may usually go unnoticed. As a result, what we may see as "agency preferences" may not be the sincere preferences of the bureaucrats in question, but rather of the states that sought their hire in the first place.

Additionally, this paper demonstrates that it is not the case that only major powers are able to use this method to wield influence. Indeed, this may be a particularly fruitful avenue for smaller states which are interested in increasing their influence in international affairs. One of the central ways in which politics happens within the UN is through personal ties and relationships, which means that having friendly staff within agencies can be a very effective tool for states to draw on in advancing their national interest.

This paper has suggested one way in which states influence international organizations through their bureaucracies. Undoubtedly, there are others. For instance, even though major donors are better able to push for their nationals to be hired into agencies in order to wield influence, but that does not mean that other states do not try to establish ties with

bureaucrats. Additionally, states with large delegations may be able to exert a lot of time and effort into building professional and social networks and ties with agency bureaucrats and, in that way, approximate the influence that major donors are able to have with their purse strings.

Another avenue to explore for how states influence IOs pertains to the flow of voluntary funding to international organizations. Because these agencies are part of the same organizational family, while largely separately funded, it is easier for member states to funnel donations into (or away from) particular agencies as behooves them. They may direct their funding to those agencies who are most responsive to their suggestions, away from those who appear to be "captured" by other states with dissimilar preferences, or as rewards or punishment for particular agency behavior. Combined, these analyses would provide significant evidence that at least some states seek to take advantage of potential pathways of influence within international organizations in ways that have not previously been identified. This may particularly be true for smaller states who are not able to wield quite as big a stick as their larger counterparts but still wish to remain important players in world affairs.

Appendix

List of top donors to any agency in the period 1996-2011

Australia

Belgium

Brazil

Canada

Denmark

Finland

France

Germany

Ireland

Italy

Japan

Kuwait

Netherlands

Norway

Saudi Arabia

South Sudan

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

United Kingdom

United States of America

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UN-AIDS)

UN-AIDS is the most recent agency in the dataset, having been established in 1996. The role of UN-AIDS is to coordinate a global response to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support. In 2012, 98 percent of its funding came from voluntary contributions, 93 percent of which was from government donors. It had 681 staff members in 86 countries. The major donors to UN-AIDS during the period of interest were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. There have been two Executive Directors, from Belgium and Mali.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The office, as we know it today, came into being in 1951. Its central role is to seek international protection for refugees and other persons of concern. In 2012, 99 percent of its funding was through voluntary contributions, and 80 percent from government donors. Its 5,785 staff members worked in 126 countries across the world. Major donors to UNHCR during the period of interest were Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. High Commissioners during the same period were from Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF has been in existence since 1946, charged with addressing the needs of children in developing countries. In 2012, 98 percent of its funding was through voluntary contributions, 51 percent of which was from government donors. In the same year, it had 8,028 staff members in duty stations in 141 countries. Major donors to UNICEF during the period of interest were Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands,

Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Throughout the period of interest (and, indeed, throughout the entire history of the agency), the Executive Director of UNICEF was an American.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP began operations in 1966. In addition to its overarching mandate of development assistance, the UNDP has also served as the coordinator of global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals. In 2012, 93 percent of its funding came from voluntary contributions, 61 percent of which was from government donors. Its 6,474 staff members in 2012 worked in 154 countries. Major donors to UNDP during the period of interest were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. During the same period, the Administrators of the UNDP held passports from the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and New Zealand.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The UNFPA began operations in 1967. Its core areas of work are activities relating to reproductive health issues, gender equality, and population and development strategies. It also supports data collection activities on various population issues. In 2012, 99 percent of its funding came through voluntary contributions, 56 percent of which was from government donors. Its 1,691 staff members were distributed across 126 countries. Major donors to UNFPA during the period of interest were Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Throughout the period of interest the Executive Directors of UNFPA have been from

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

UNRWA was established in 1949, following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, and began operations a year later. As the name suggests, it provides services to Palestinian refugees both in the Palestinian territories and neighboring countries. In 2012, 95 percent of its operating expenses came through voluntary contributions, 68 percent of which was from government donors. Its staff of 200 (in 2012) worked in 7 countries. Major donors to UNRWA during the period of interest were Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and its Commissioners-General were nationals of Denmark, the United States, and Italy.

The World Food Programme (WFP)

Lastly, the WFP—the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger—dates back to 1961. In 2012, 96 percent of its funding was through voluntary contributions, 81 percent of which was from government donors. Its 4,170 staff members were spread across 225 duty stations in 100 countries. During the period of interest, major donors were Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Executive Directors of the WFP during this period have all been from the United States, but unlike UNICEF there has previously been considerable variation in the national origin of the head of the agency.

Figure 5: Distribution of staff variable, by organization
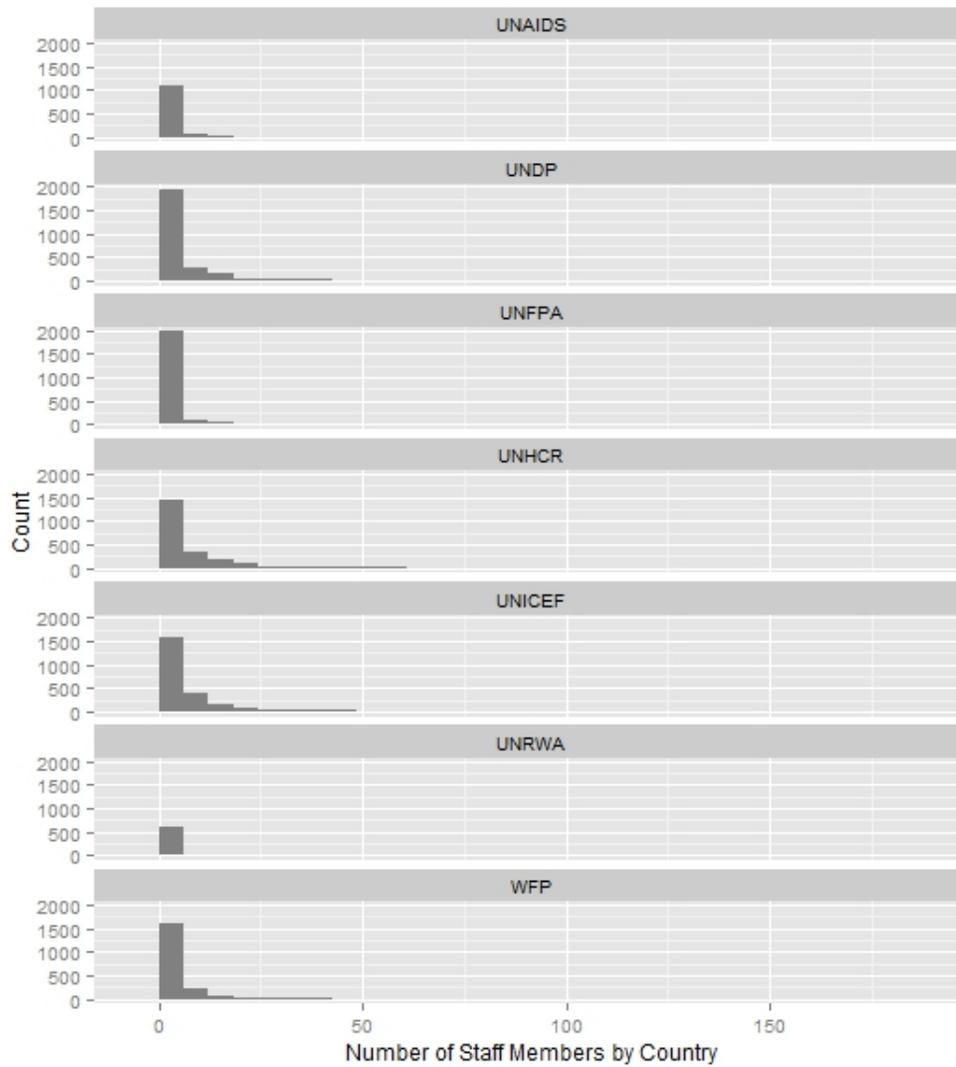
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