From Power to Representation: the Changing Trade-off between Control and Representative Legitimacy in the Staffing of International Organizations

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Abstract

States seek to place their nationals in positions of influence within international secretariats. Yet, international organizations (IOs) and their administrative bodies also need to be seen as meritocratic, and, increasingly, representative if they are to be legitimated. In particular, in the staffing of IOs there is a trade-off between control by powerful states, on the one hand, and representative legitimacy, on the other. We theorize that IOs need to strike a balance between these two competing pressures, and that variation in the balances struck by different IOs can be explained by the public visibility of the IO that a secretariat serves. Using panel regression, we analyze a new dataset covering states' representation in the secretariats of 36 United Nations system bodies from 1996 to 2015. The results confirm the general relevance of functional considerations in IO staffing, but they also show a major trade-off between the influence of powerful states and the legitimacy afforded by representativeness. At the same time, IOs vary in where they strike the balance between these two pressures. In less societally visible IOs, power trumps representative legitimacy in explaining national staffing patterns. In highly visible IOs, often the most widely known ones, control by powerful states has been replaced by representative legitimacy as a key predictor of staffing.

Keywords: international administrations; secretariats; international organizations; United Nations; control; legitimacy; function; representation

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1. Introduction

A persistent issue in the study of international organizations (IOs) has been the extent to which they are independent of their most powerful member states. While functionalist accounts emphasize the joint gains states reap from international cooperation supported by IOs,[2] realists have emphasized the role of powerful states in shaping institutional outcomes.[3] IOs that ignore the wishes of their dominant members are seen as 'misaligned'[4] and ultimately risk their political relevance. A different picture emerges from a sociological institutionalist approach, which analyses IOs less as instruments of states and more as 'open systems' that are embedded in an influential normative environment with strong legitimacy pressures.[5]

While the influence of each of these factors—functional efficiency, material power, and broader legitimacy concerns—has been widely recognized in the design and activities of international institutions, in this paper we investigate their role in shaping the national composition of IO secretariats. That is, we look right at the agents who run the IOs from the inside.[6] Existing studies considering the compositions of IO secretariats see them either in power-driven terms, with states engaged in a struggle for informal influence within IO staffs,[7] or as largely reflecting the functional demands of fulfilling the IOs' tasks.[8] We agree that the recruitment of staff is likely driven by functional and power-political concerns. But we argue that this covers only part of the picture. In particular, IO officials and state members also have an interest in ensuring that international secretariats respond to broader, increasingly powerful societal legitimacy pressures.[9]

As emphasized by functionalist theory, IO officials and state members have a common interest in ensuring IO secretariats are able to perform their tasks competently, and as such have an interest in

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[2] Keohane 1984; Abbott and Snidal 1998; Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001.

[3] Krasner 1991; Mearsheimer 1994; Schweller and Priess 1997; Gilpin 2002.

[4] Krasner 1985; Lipscy 2017.

[5] Dimaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 1987; Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Christiano 2010; Grigorescu 2015, 72–75; Rapkin, Strand, and Trevathan 2016.

[6] For an empirical overview of delegation to IOs, see Hooghe and Marks 2015.

[7] Novosad and Werker 2018; Stone 2013.

[8] Eckhard and Steinebach 2018; Parízek 2017.

[9] Suchman 1995; Zürn 2014; Grigorescu 2015; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2017.

functional and meritocratic staff recruitment. Yet it would be surprising if politics played no role in IO secretariats. We identify an insurmountable trade-off between 'realist' control by powerful states, on the one hand, and broader institutional legitimacy, on the other.[10] In particular, we propose that to secure legitimacy as impartial administrators, IOs need to be seen not only as functional and meritocratic, but increasingly also as *representative* of the world population at large. The national composition of IO secretariats reflects a balance between these contending pressures. We theorize that not all IOs are likely to strike the same balance. Building on insights from public administration and management studies[11] and the literature on the politicization of IOs,[12] we propose that IOs that are *highly societally visible* are more likely to favor representative legitimacy over control by powerful states. By contrast, *less societally visible* IOs that do not face strong external scrutiny are likely to give more space to the interests of powerful states. The primary reason is that visibility increases the actual or anticipated reputation costs of failing to conform to widespread expectations of appropriate and desirable practices. It raises the odds of rule being exercised based on other principles than power and control alone.[13]

We test our theory using a new dataset covering the staffing of 36 United Nations system bodies over the years 1996-2015.[14] Quantitative research on state representation in the secretariats of major IOs is still in its infancy.[15] In fact, a systematic, long-term account of even basic staffing patterns across larger number of IOs is still missing. Our dataset helps fill this gap. The bodies we cover range from the United Nations Secretariat and a number of well-known bodies such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) or e.g. the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to a list of smaller organizations such as the Universal Postal Union or the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). We thus cover all the UN

[10] This assumption is very similar to the trade-off between 'competence' and 'control' emphasized by Abbott et al. 2018. Our study can be seen as an extension and empirical assessment of this "governor's dilemma" as it plays out in UN bodies. We differ, however, in seeing functional- and legitimacy-based demands as conceptually distinct, which would result in a "governors' trilemma" between control, legitimacy, and functionality.

[11] Chiu and Sharfman 2011; Meier 1975; Meier 2018.

[12] Ecker-Ehrhardt 2017.

[13] Hollyer, Rosendorff, and Vreeland 2018.

[14] Throughout the text, we refer both to IOs and 'bodies'. Some of the bodies of the UN system are of course not formally independent IOs, such as the United Nations Development Programme.

[15] Novosad and Werker 2018; Parízek 2017; Thorvaldsdottir 2016. These quantitative studies of the composition of IOs' secretariats only cover either a single IO over time, or a larger number of IOs, but in a cross-sectional design.

system bodies for which systematic data is available. The semi-manually created dataset amounts to around 60,000 observations, and is complemented with further newly collected data on IOs' staff and activity in close to 1500 individual duty stations across the world. We also draw on a series of elite interviews with Geneva-based diplomatic staff, representing states in the UN, as well as high-ranking IO officials.[16]

Descriptively, we find that states systematically and sizably differ in their representation in international secretariats, both in absolute and in per capita terms. Using panel regression analysis, we also find strong support for our propositions explaining these differences. First, the predictions based on all three of our lines of theoretical reasoning—concerns with functional requirements, material power, and representative legitimacy—find support in our data. Second, in line with our theory, we find that the public visibility of an IO influences where an IO strikes the balance between control and representation. IOs that are highly publicly visible are likely to have more representative staffing patterns. Moreover, the effect of visibility appears to have grown over time. Low-visibility IOs remain power-driven in their staffing, while highly visible IOs have grown increasingly representative of the global population. This is particularly striking because it is precisely these highly visible IOs that tend to be the most powerful ones, and where the demand for control by powerful states is likely to be strongest. In sum, IO staffing decreasingly fits a (realist) 'control by powerful states' perspective, and increasingly fits a sociological institutionalist 'representative legitimacy' perspective. In the game of IO staffing, we see neither the continuation of the inherited status quo, nor a shift along the changing distribution of power in world politics. Instead, we see a shift away from power, towards representation.

We proceed, first, by drawing on existing literature and interview evidence to outline a theory of the national composition of IOs' secretariats. Second, we present key descriptive insights about the patterns of IOs' staffing in the years 1996-2015. Third, we use panel regression to assess our hypotheses.

[16] Full (anonymized) list of the interviews is available in Figure A1 in the appendix.

2. Theory: International Secretariats and the Control-Representation Trade-off

It is often observed that IOs play an increasingly important role in international politics.[17] For a long time much of the attention focused on issues of institutional creation, design, and effectiveness.[18] Despite an earlier foundational literature,[19] the secretariats and administrators of IOs have largely remained outside the focus of institutionalist research in International Relations.[20] Today there is growing recognition of the influence of IOs' professional staffs—referred to in the literature as international secretariats, international bureaucracies, or international administrations (we treat these terms interchangeably).[21] They have been found to be central to political outcomes, such as formulating and disseminating international rules and norms,[22] influencing concrete policies,[23] the outcomes of negotiations,[24] or monitoring and influencing compliance rates.[25] Conversely, the *absence* of effective international administration may represent a major impediment to IO performance.[26] Secretariats are increasingly recognized as a matter of importance in the study of IOs.

One reason for this has been the sheer growth and proliferation of international secretariats. Today, the UN bodies have over 34,000 professional staff members and another close to 45,000 general services staff members. Between 2012 and 2015, these staff members spent approximately four billion US dollars on air travel alone.[27] By one estimate from 2011, the total number of international civil servants active was between 150,000 and 200,000,[28] constituting a large and often influential body of

[17] Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Hooghe and Marks 2015; Hooghe et al. 2017; Hurd 1999; Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2004; Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996; Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001.

[18] Keohane 1984; Keohane and Martin 1995; Abbott and Snidal 1998; Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001; Hooghe and Marks 2015.

[19] Cox 1969; Haas 1964, 97–103.

[20] Xu and Weller 2008; Ege and Bauer 2013, 135.

[21] Biermann and Siebenhüner note that international bureaucracies can be but are not always part of IOs (2013, 150.)

[22] Barnett and Finnemore 2004.

[23] Eckhard and Ege 2016.

[24] Xu and Weller 2008.

[25] Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009.

[26] Elsig 2010.

[27] Afifi 2017, iv.

[28] Schermers and Blokker 2011, 355.

international administrators. In short, when we talk about the growth of IOs, we are also talking about the growth of a global bureaucracy.[29] But as we show below, states are represented extremely unevenly in international secretariats. In what follows, we build a theoretical model to account for this variation.

Control

In the contemporary study of IOs, the role of international secretariats is most frequently addressed using the principal-agent (PA) framework. In this perspective, the secretariats of IOs are agents created by principals, primary among which are the most powerful states.[30] Principals wish to control the agent and prevent agency slack. Yet states differ in how much control they are able to exercise.[31] Due to their greater resources and bargaining strength, powerful states succeed in packing the secretariats with fellow nationals to ensure informal, indirect control over the output of the organization.[32] In this vein, a recent study by Novosad and Werker treats state representation in IO secretariats as "a zero-sum dimension of power, the power to control international institutions".[33] These generally intuitive findings are in line with our interview evidence. Diplomatic representatives at UN organizations in Geneva reported several reasons for which states seek to be strongly represented on IO secretariats. At the very least, it facilitates access to information[34] and it provides additional informal lines of communication between state representatives and IO staff.[35] More ambitiously from the states' perspective, it can serve as a source of influence over IO policies,[36] funding decisions,[37] and more broadly the overall administrative culture.[38] States, especially the larger ones, substantially care about being well represented on IO staff.

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[29] Knill and Bauer 2016; Heldt and Schmidtke 2017.

[30] Keohane 2003; Hawkins et al. 2006.

[31] Dijkstra 2015.

[32] Nielson and Tierney 2003; Stone 2011, chap. 4; Urpelainen 2012; Manulak 2017; Thorvaldsdottir 2016.

[33] Novosad and Werker 2018, 2.

[34] In total twelve interviewees mentioned this phenomenon: interviews, #2-12, 16.

[35] Interviews #2 and #7.

[36] Interviews #3,7,and 13.

[37] Interviews #6,7,13, and 16. In addition, on the individual level private benefits and nepotism appear to play an important role in motivating individuals to seek jobs in the IO secretariats (interviews #3,4,7,9,10).

[38] Interviews #2, 11, 12 and 13.

The observable implication of this approach is that the national composition of international secretariats should primarily reflect the desire for control of these bodies by especially the most powerful member states.[39] Secretariats will be staffed largely by nationals of the states that provide the IOs with the highest portions of their budgets and that had the strongest say in their institutional design.[40] Of course, we know that international civil servants are bound to serve their organization and not to take instructions from member states. To take a prominent example, Article 100 of the UN Charter requires staff to be impartial and not to "seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization." They are also expected to undergo socialization processes through which they replace their national loyalties with loyalties to the mission of the organization.[41] Yet, clearly, states do not believe that international civil servants will be as impartial as one might hope, and the powerful ones want to ensure that they have the strongest possible position in the secretariats. Until 1962, the United Nations calculated "desirable ranges" of representation for member states on the UN Secretariat solely on the basis of members' financial contributions.[42] Even today, this factor of economic contributions retains more than 50 percent of the weight in the calculations.[43] Many IOs outside of the UN proper are also required to recruit staff from the states that provide the most funds to the organization.[44] Almost universally, these financial contributions are based on formulas where the size of country economy (e.g. GDP or GNI) plays a decisive role.[45] This directly links staffing with members' material resources. Based on this reasoning, we develop the first hypothesis regarding national patterns of IOs' staffing.

> *H1: IOs' staffing patterns are likely to reflect the distribution of economic power across countries.*

[39] Stone 2013; Manulak 2017; Novosad and Werker 2018.

[40] Dijkstra 2015; Grigorescu 2010; Stone 2011; Manulak 2017.

[41] Murdoch et al. 2018.

[42] See Ziring, Riggs, and Plano 2005, 141.

[43] United Nations Joint Inspection Unit 2012.

[44] International Monetary Fund 2003.

[45] See Figure A4 and Table A5 in the appendix.

Meritocratic functional legitimacy

While control by powerful states may constitute a 'default' hypothesis, control also comes with costs.[46] If IO staffing patterns violate widely-held norms of appropriateness, they risk losing institutional legitimacy. Legitimacy refers to the degree to which the institutions' features and behavior are seen as desirable, correct or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.[47] From a *strategic legitimation* perspective,[48] state representatives and IO managers have a common interest in maintaining organizational legitimacy in order to preserve their ability to confer legitimacy on policy outcomes.[49] Stacking international secretariats with the nationals of powerful states could easily erode a secretariat's organizational legitimacy. To the extent that states profit from an organization's ability to legitimate preferred policies,[50] it would also not serve the interests of the most powerful states either. From a (sociological) *institutionalist* perspective, IOs can themselves be understood as emanations of their cultural environments, in which legitimation is an end in itself.[51] Regardless of whether legitimacy operates strategically or via deeply held convictions, both perspectives have the same observable implications: IO staffing patterns should reflect practices that ensure conformity with established social and cultural norms. We identify three standards that are today widely perceived to be appropriate and desirable for recruitment in IO secretariats. The first two, discussed in this subsection, concern meritocratic legitimacy. The last, concerned with representative legitimacy, is discussed below.

The first meritocratic standard is that of general staff competency. Bureaucracies are supposed to recruit staff according to impartially applied rules that reward talent and effective performance. From a rational institutionalist perspective, IOs are created by states to perform functional tasks.[52] For IOs to survive and attract resources, they need first and foremost to deliver on these tasks.[53] These functional

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[46] Abbott et al. 2018.

[47] Franck 1990, 24; Hurd 1999, 381; Reus-Smit 2007, 159; Suchman 1995, 574; Zaum 2013, 9; Stephen 2018, 99.

[48] Suchman 1995.

[49] Hurd 1999; Claude 1966.

[50] Claude 1966; Abbott and Snidal 1998.

[51] Suchman 1995, 576; see also Scott 1987; Dimaggio and Powell 1983.

[52] Reinalda and Verbeek 1998; Abbott and Snidal 1998; Heldt and Schmidtke 2017.

[53] E.g. Gutner and Thompson 2010.

requirements suggest an interest in the selection of the *most qualified candidates*. In the UN context, Article 101 of the Charter stipulates that "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."[54] Also in our interviews, diplomatic staff report that general competence and educational qualifications are critical to hiring decisions in what they perceive as a basically meritocratic UN hiring system.[55] In this perspective, IOs can be expected to recruit staff perceived as competent. We cannot measure the supply of competent candidates directly. However, meritocratic staffing patterns should favor countries with larger pools of personnel considered qualified for the job.[56]

> *H2a: IOs' staffing patterns are likely to reflect the distribution of generally competent, highly educated applicants across countries.*

Meritocratic, functional legitimation also implies, secondly, that IOs should recruit staff with knowledge pertinent to their work. Many IOs carry out work related to issues such as global health, access to food, and economic development, which overwhelmingly involve field operations in low-income countries. The success of IOs' fieldwork is seen as requiring local expertise and understanding of the conditions in the affected countries.[57] Consequently, the suitability of candidates may be shaped not only by general qualifications, but also by further epistemic factors such as *local knowledge* of countries where IOs are active. A number of our interviewees highlighted this as an important factor in IO staffing.[58] One summarized this point rather clearly: "you need to understand the country you serve in".[59] If

[54] According to a recent review of staff recruitment processes across the United Nations system, "A person's eligibility to compete for a post is determined primarily by the extent to which his/her educational qualifications, work experience, language proficiency and competencies meet the requirements of the post as set out in the vacancy announcement" (United Nations Joint Inspection Unit 2012:7).

[55] Interviews #1, 6, 9, 12.

[56] Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Laiz and Schlichte 2016; Steffek 2016; Eckhard and Steinebach 2018. A recent study by Eckhard and Steinebach (Ibid.) adds to this general competence also the possession of relevant professional experience as a factor.

[57] Tallberg et al. 2014; Parízek 2017; Eckhard and Fernández i Marín 2018.

[58] Interviews #7, 8, 11, 21.

[59] Interview #7.

recruitment reflected local knowledge of the places where IOs are operating, we would expect staff to be acquired from countries that host local operational activities.

> *H2b: IOs' staffing patterns are likely to reflect the distribution of local operational activity conducted by IOs across countries.*

Representative legitimacy

While the technocratic, meritocratic legitimacy outlined above has traditionally been central for bureaucracies of all types, over the last decades it has gradually been joined by new legitimacy requirements based on notions of representativeness. Nowadays, most IO staff are recruited "through a combination of merit and geography".[60] Article 101 of the UN Charter also stipulates: "Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible." The perceived intrusiveness of IOs has generated new demands for their legitimation in participatory and representative terms.[61] As summarized by Michael Zürn, "Instrumental questions about problem-solving and effectiveness have become infused with procedural issues and normative aspects such as legitimacy, fairness, and equality." [62]

Likewise, organizational sociologists and public administration scholars have examined the rise of new norms of 'representative bureaucracy'.[63] These norms require administrative bodies to reflect, in their composition, the underlying population – what is referred to as *passive* or *descriptive* representation.[64] Closely related to this are new norms of workplace diversity and affirmative action programs.[65] In the international context of IOs, a primary notion of representativeness is linked to staff nationality. Indeed, a number of our interviewees reported a strong and increasing need for the UN organs to be seen as

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[60] Xu and Weller 2008, 39.

[61] Zürn 2000; Zürn 2004; Woods and Lombardi 2006; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015; Grigorescu 2015; Stephen 2015; Stephen 2018; Rapkin, Strand, and Trevathan 2016.

[62] Zürn 2014, 59.

[63] Meier 1975; Meier 2018; Meier and Wrinkle 1999; cf. Dolan and Rosenbloom 2016.

[64] Meier 1975, 527–528; cf. Rapkin, Strand, and Trevathan 2016. Whether passive representation translates also into active representation depends on a number of factors, including the organizational context and individual attitudes - see Sowa and Selden 2003; Dolan and Rosenbloom 2016, chap. 1.

[65] Kelly and Dobbin 1998.

representative, with regard to the nationalities and regions of origin.[66] As one UN representative explained vividly, "during the Cold war, the UN was seen as ... these *occidental guys, everyone white and with a tie, et cetera*. Now there is diversification of *the face of the UN*... or the face that the UN has to have... Or is ideal to have, *to be really representing* its members".[67]

These representation and diversity requirements are often also linked to powerful new expectations about gender equality. These are prominent not only in IOs but in virtually all modern organizations, where gender balance is increasingly important to institutional legitimacy.[68] Our interviewees have repeatedly and strongly tied gender balance closely together with national representation issues in IOs, as two faces of a broader diversification and representation trend.[69] In contrast to the technocratic, "color-blind" ideal type of Weberian bureaucracy, these perspectives argue that it is necessary for bureaucracies to draw from the full range of social groups they administer in order to function appropriately.

Turning back to national composition as our core concern, there are two dimensions of national representativeness in relation to IOs: representation based on the sovereign equality principle and representation proportional to members' population.[70] The sovereign equality principle suggests that each state should have at least some baseline representation in the UN bodies' staff. While of course especially the largest UN bodies do seek to ensure that all members are at least somewhat represented,[71] given that states range in their population sizes by up to five orders of magnitude, this notion of representation is less pertinent to our interest in the exploration of the composition of the secretariats. Conceptually, representativeness implies a rough proportionality between the make-up of an organization's staff and the population it is supposed to administer. It corresponds to the ideal in which *a priori* a citizen from any country has the same chance as others of becoming a member of the staff. We thus pursue this logic of proportionality in our third hypothesis of representative legitimacy:

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[66] Interviews #1, 11, 12.

[67] Interview #6, emphasis added.

[68] Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2018.

[69] Interviews #1, 6, 7, 16, 17, 21.

[70] United Nations Joint Inspection Unit 2012.

[71] Interview # 15. For UN Secretariat, see e.g. report A/71/360, Table 19.

H3: IOs' staffing patterns are likely to reflect the distribution of population across countries.

Of course, empirically, meritocratic legitimacy (H2a, H2b) and representative legitimacy (H3) are likely to be mutually supportive. When, for example, the distribution of generally qualified applicants grows more even, globally, this should encourage also increased representativeness of the staff. Nevertheless, conceptually it is meaningful to keep these legitimation sources separate, and we also model them separately in our empirical analysis.

Visibility

To be sure, IOs are likely to be resistant to representative legitimacy-based recruitment to the extent that they experience political pressure from powerful members. This is in line with realist expectations,[72] with common intuitions of our interviewed diplomats,[73] as well as with the several existing quantitative studies of IO staff composition.[74] Historically, the pressures for representative legitimation of IO staff may have been weak, especially if the IOs' secretariats conformed to meritocratic functional criteria, as another source of legitimation. As long as they delivered the desired outputs, IOs may have hoped not to be challenged over the national representativeness of their secretariats.

However, this is unlikely to be the case with respect to the IOs that are today under significant political and societal scrutiny. Large IOs are highly societally visible, they are operationally present in numerous countries, actively engaging in media activities, and cultivate social media accounts. They increasingly take advantage of legitimation opportunities in the eyes of as many audiences as possible, both state and non-state.[75] As indicated by the institutionalization of public communication policies in many IOs, senior management and regular staff know they need to carefully attend to their public image.[76] They

[72] Stone 2011.

[73] E.g. interviews #9, 12.

[74] Novosad and Werker 2018; Parízek 2017.

[75] Ecker-Ehrhardt 2017; cf. Schmidtke 2018.

[76] Ecker-Ehrhardt 2017; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2018.

need to care not only for their performance, but also for their broader reputations.[77] We propose that these IOs with *high societal visibility* will lean towards representative legitimacy rather than control by powerful states.

The reasons are theoretically straightforward. International organizations that are in the public eye are more likely to be affected by pressures for broader societal legitimation than organizations of which the public is unaware. Consequently, because societal visibility is highly uneven, institutions should vary in the extent to which their staffs are representative. The logic of our argument is analogous to the effect of public visibility on company behavior. Studies of large companies have linked organizational visibility to varying levels of corporate social performance.[78] The reasons are both instrumental and normative.[79] Instrumentally, those responsible for employee recruitment—in our case the management of secretariats—are attentive (either implicitly or explicitly) to the amount of legitimacy pressure created by societal visibility and make hiring decisions in order to palliate these legitimacy concerns. Normatively, representative legitimacy standards can inform staff recruiters' values, leading to increased behavioral conformity in order to reduce cognitive dissonance.[80] This effect may also be intensified by greater societal visibility, as the 'watching eyes' phenomenon encourages pro-social behavior even in anonymous settings lacking reputation effects.[81] The national composition and diversity of staff are likely to be one key dimension in which representative legitimacy standards become visible, especially in the light of the highly publicized criticism that challenged IOs precisely along these lines in the last two decades.[82] In line with this reasoning, we expect that visibility will alter the relative balance of control versus representative legitimacy. Hence we formulate our fourth hypothesis, conditioning the applicability of H1 and H3:

> *H4: The degree to which IOs strike a balance in favor of representative legitimacy, relatively to control, is likely to be higher in IOs that are more societally visible and hence more subject to (potential) politicization pressures.*

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[77] Cf. Carpenter and Krause 2012.

[78] Chiu and Sharfman 2011; Dowling and Pfeffer 1975.

[79] Aguilera et al. 2007.

[80] Dutton and Dukerich 1991.

[81] Haley and Fessler 2005.

[82] Stiglitz 2002; Woods 2006, chap. Introduction.

We should note that while our representative legitimacy hypothesis H3 goes directly against the observable implications of our realist hypothesis H1, the conditioning effect theorized here in hypothesis H4 exacerbates the differences still further. Publicly visible IOs are typically the large, well-resourced ones, with significant pooled or delegated authority.[83] Powerful states should have the strongest stakes in the control of these IOs. Our hypotheses H3 and H4 presuppose that the combination of visibility and broader representative legitimation pressures will be able to trump these considerations of powerful states. This would provide strong support for the representative legitimacy-based explanation of staff recruitment.

3. Empirical Examination: Descriptive Analysis of the Staffing of UN System Bodies, 1996-2015

To test our theoretical model, we study the staff composition of the bodies of the entire United Nations system. The biggest of the bodies is the United Nations Secretariat, now totaling more than 11,000 professional staff members. The next biggest are the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with around 3,600 professional staff members, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Health Organization (WHO). A full list of bodies covered can be found in Table A2 in the appendix. Our selection is driven by the availability of a uniquely comprehensive data source for these bodies over a period of 20 years at a level of detail necessary for the systematic testing of our hypotheses. The data comes from the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Personnel Statistics reports for years 1996-2015. In each report, Table 12, spreading typically across some 90-100 pages, contains information on the representation of each UN member's citizens in the staff of each of the 36 UN bodies it covers. Each of the tables with data on staffing has been semi-manually translated from the pdf format into calculable form. This amounts to more than 60,000 data points capturing the number of staff members, measured at country-year-IO level.

The UN system, as defined by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, includes all bodies generally known to be parts of the UN family, but it also formally includes the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

[83] Hooghe and Marks 2015.

the World Bank Group (both formally UN specialized agencies), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).[84] These three bodies are not covered in our data source, but we at least provide all the relevant descriptive evidence we were able to collect for the IMF and the WTO, as we explain below. In spite of our best efforts, we were unable to identify a source of data on the staffing patterns of the World Bank. While of course the UN system does not reflect the entire universe of IOs, our dataset covers many of the most powerful and widely known ones.[85]

Our data distinguishes, for each country-year-IO, the professional and general services staff. For clarity: our core interest in this article is country representation *on international professional staff only*, i.e. staff rotating across duty stations and regions of the world. This is the staff that may be subject to geographical distribution rules and constitutes the core of the 'secretariat', 'administration' or 'bureaucracy' as understood in the theoretical literature.[86] In contrast, *general services staff* includes locally hired workforce, such as administrative staff, translators, technicians, and in general support. Our data source also contains information on the number of general services staff working in field offices, the almost 1500 individual cities and towns in which the various UN bodies have their offices, worldwide. Based on this, we created another dataset of local 'boots-on-the-ground' activity of all the individual bodies, also across the 20 years.

One limitation of the source is that the data does not code for staff seniority. To address this, we were able to identify and collect additional partial data on graded positions in the UN Secretariat and the WHO, the two largest IOs in our dataset, with data available for a more limited period of time from 2006 and from 1999, respectively. As we show in the appendix to this article (Figure A.3, Table A.4), the

[84] For a definition of the UN system, see http://www.unsystem.org/content/un-system [accessed 15.12.2018].

[85] It could be objected that IOs in the United Nations system will be particularly exposed to normative pressures (Tallberg et al. 2014:743). Yet our data shows significant variation amongst UN bodies, suggesting they cannot all be treated alike. Moreover, our findings below show that visibility can be an important catalyst for legitimation pressures.

[86] Recently, research on the general services staff and also national professional staff has also emerged, however (Eckhard and Fernández i Marín 2018). Our professional staff category we focus on only includes *international*, not *national* profession staff, appointed for one year or more, and it excludes all persons 'employed under special contractual arrangements' (e.g. CEB/2015/HLCM/HR/19, p. vii, a).

simple unweighted count of professional staff we use in our core analysis is strongly correlated (r>0.95***) with grade- or seniority-weighted positions.[87]

Our data reveal several interesting descriptive observations. First, we observe a prominent trend towards increased numbers of professional staff overall, supporting previous findings of a rise in the number of international staff over time.[88] Between 1996 and 2015, the number of professional staff working in the UN bodies rose from around 17,000 to approximately 34,000. We also observe an increase in general services staff, from around 30,000 in the mid-1990s to around 50,000 in the mid-2010s.

Second, states differ enormously with regard to their representation in UN administrations, both in absolute terms and in relation to their populations. For example, between 1996 and 2015 the United States accounted on average for around 2,400 positions at the UN, while China accounted for only 420, about the same as Belgium. Representation was also highly unequal in *per capita* terms. Australia, the Republic of the Congo, Italy and Senegal, for example, all had around 20 staff members per million citizens. Denmark or The Netherlands around 60. In contrast, Russia, Egypt, and Ethiopia achieved only around 3 staff members per million citizens, across the period. States systematically and sizably differ in their representation in the global bureaucracy. Figure A2 and Table A3 in the appendix give a full visual and numerical description of these differences.

Third, the data show a dominance of citizens from the economically advanced countries.[89] In 1996, the then members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) accounted for 54 percent of all professional staff in the UN system. By 2015, this share declined somewhat to 51 percent. In fact, 9 out of the 10 biggest losers of relative representation, over the twenty years, have been OECD members. However, by far the biggest loser over the two decades has been Russia, losing around 40 percent of its share on the professional staff between 1996 and 2015. Moreover, while a

[87] This also corresponds to the results reported earlier by Parízek who identified no systematic difference in staffing patterns across hierarchy levels, in terms of the staff national compositions (Parízek 2017). Of course, another limitation of our data source is that it does not offer any individual level characteristics of the staff. It would be very interesting, for example, to know the educational background of the staff – their fields of study and countries in which they received their university education. Yet, to our best knowledge, no such information is systematically available.

[88] E.g. Vaubel, Dreher, and Soylu 2007.

[89] Novosad and Werker 2018; Parízek 2017.

power-oriented perspective might expect that the major gainers would be rising powers, in fact the most staff representation has been gained by low-income countries, such as Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, while several other OECD countries (especially Spain and Italy) have also done well. India has also risen strongly in its position. Yet, perhaps most surprisingly, China has not increased its share in the global UN bureaucracy at all.[90]

Fourth, in line with our hypothesis about IO visibility (H4), the patterns of states' representation are also not uniform across IOs. The left chart in Figure 1 depicts descriptively the share of IO staff from OECD countries, but separately for IOs with high and low levels of visibility.[91] A linear trend is plotted through the individual IO observations, over time. While both groups of IOs start at a very similar level, there is a clear decreasing trend in the highly visible IOs (full line). By contrast, the share of OECD countries has been stable amongst the less visible IOs (dashed line).

As we indicated, to explore at least partly the generalizability of our observations, we collected additional, if partial data on the staff of the IMF and the WTO.[92] We are unable to include these institutions in our explanatory analysis due to lack of fully comparable data, in terms of temporal coverage and the level of data detail. Yet the partial descriptive evidence suggests that the trends identified above are also present in the IMF and the WTO. The right chart of Figure 1 shows the share of OECD members on the professional staff of these two bodies. The trend in the IMF (bottom, dashed line) seems to correspond very closely to the overall observed pattern in the highly visible IOs of the UN system in the left chart. The WTO (top, full line) also shows a strongly declining trend, but from an extreme height of OECD staff close to 80%. We refrain from making strong claims on the basis of this partial and only descriptive evidence, but it appears that the model of staffing we are about to test in the following section could also apply outside of the UN system IOs. The cases of the IMF and the WTO also show that the decline of OECD members occurs also in IOs with very high demands on technical expertise of their staff (e.g. legal or economic analysis).

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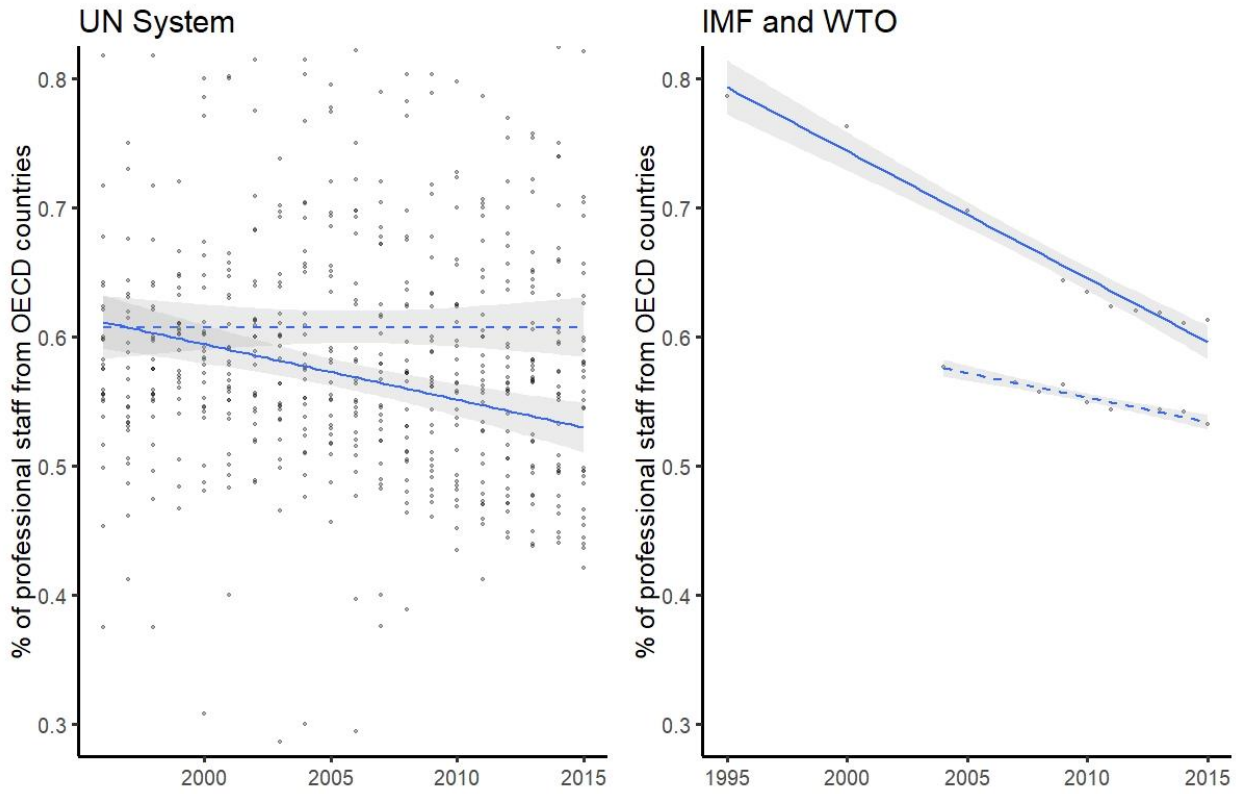
[90] We test for the possible influence of this surprising finding on our explanatory results in robustness test.

[91] More specifically, it shows the share of staff from the set of countries that were members of OECD at the end of 1994, before the start of our observation period.

[92] The data for the WTO come from the WTO Diversity reports, published from 2009 yearly and until 2009 in five-year intervals (e.g. WTO document WT/BFA/W/387). For IMF, the data have been extracted from the Diversity Annual Reports, published yearly from 2000 (with a gap in 2005 and 2006).

Figure 1: The development of UN system (left) and IMF and WTO (right) staff distribution, 1996-2015



Note: The left chart shows the share of OECD countries (1994 OECD members) on the UN professional staff, separately for highly visible bodies (downward sloping full line) and lowly visible bodies (flat dashed line). The right chart gives the share of OECD countries on the professional staff of the IMF (bottom, dashed line) and the WTO (top, full line).

4. Empirical Examination: Explaining the Staffing Patterns

To assess systematically our model of IO staffing, we now turn to a series of panel regression models. The dependent variable in the models is defined as the sum of professional staff from each individual country, separately across the subsets of all highly visible bodies and across all lowly visible bodies in a given year.[93] The reason for the aggregation from the level of individual country-year-IO observations is

[93] Thus, the number of observations in our analysis is reduced typically to around 3000 country-years, for all the UN members over the period of 20 years, subject to data availability.

that many of the bodies in our dataset have very small secretariats in which no sense of proportionality to countries' characteristics could be achieved, for purely numerical reasons, if they were analyzed separately. In fact, 15 out of the 36 bodies in our dataset have professional staff of less than 200, and as many as 26 bodies (72 percent) have staff of less than 500. Especially to model the patterns of staffing in these smaller bodies, aggregating data from a larger number of bodies is necessary.

Operationalization of staffing predictors

According to hypothesis H1, states' representation will be determined primarily by their economic power. We measure this conventionally with countries' *Gross National Income* (GNI).[94] GNI is also strongly correlated with regular as well as voluntary budget contributions, as we show in Figure A4 and Table A5 in the appendix.[95]

According to hypothesis H2a, staff will be recruited based on merit, and in particular general competence. At the aggregate level at which we work, we approximate this with the supply of university-educated candidates, as captured in tertiary education enrolment statistics, that is, with the *share of a state's population with university education*.[96] The second functionalist hypothesis (H2b) expects staffing to reflect the amount of local operational activity performed by the IO bodies in individual states. As indicated previously, we measure IOs' local activity as the number of their *general services* staff working in individual countries.[97]As mentioned earlier, the data for this variable come also from the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination reports, although form their different parts.[98]

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[94] Data are from World Bank 2017.

[95] Thus, we believe that GNI is the best measure of power in the inside of IOs, which we study here, even if in other contexts other measures may be more appropriate (Beckley 2018). Our data source on budget contributions only covers the period 2002-2015.

[96] The data we use are from World Bank 2017. We have been unable to identify a variable that would capture IO-suitable talents supply, with data available across all countries and over a 20 years period, or at least remotely close to this coverage.

[97] We stress that this variable for local IO activity in states captures the size of the *locally hired* general services staff, such as drivers and secretaries. In contrast, our dependent variable deals with the professional staff, hired globally and assigned to duty stations across the world.

[98] Tables 18 in each of the reports referred to earlier (e.g. CEB/2015/HLCM/HR/19).

Our third hypothesis reflects our theoretical argument about the increasing normative pressures to make IO secretariats more representative of the global population (H3). The observable implication in terms of staffing outcomes is that representation will be based increasingly on the size of *member states' populations.*[99]

Finally, to test hypothesis H4, conditioning the applicability of H1 and H3, we distinguish the bodies by their degree of public visibility. The most obvious way to approach this concept is to consider the overall general attention the organization receives in media, in any given year. To assess this, we count the number of 'hits' that a particular organization's name (full official name in English) receives in two different sources.[100] The first source we use is the global media database Factiva, covering newspapers, magazines, blogs, and podcasts from around 32,000 sources from 200 countries.[101] We use data from this source in our core models. Secondly, in robustness tests, we substitute Factiva with simple Google search. Our procedure for visibility measurement then divides the bodies into two equally sized groups, along the yearly median values of visibility: one for the more visible bodies, and one for the less visible ones.[102] In the models, this is captured with the dummy variable *Visible*. Table A2 in the appendix gives the visibility scores for all the IOs.

Controls

In the analysis, we also control for several possibly influential factors that lie outside of our theoretical framework. One is the political regime of the countries. Democracies tend to show more positive attitudes towards IOs than other regime types,[103] and this tendency may be projected also into their

[99] Data are from World Bank 2017.

[100] The two exceptions to this procedure were UNESCO and UNICEF, for which the official full names are not generally used. For the UN Secretariat, 'United Nations' was used as the search term.

[101] The description of the source is available at https://www.proquest.com/products-services/factiva.html (Accessed 20. 12. 2018).

[102] See the appendix for more details and for robustness tests. Alternative search procedures on Factiva and Google, based on abbreviations were tested, with the full organizations names giving clearly superior results, filtering out possible ambiguities with organizations' abbreviations such as the WHO. For Google search, the search procedure was replicated in different browsers, on different IP addresses, at different times, providing highly consistent results (with correlation r>0.95***).

[103] Boehmer and Nordstrom 2008.

citizens' chances of being hired by the institutions' secretariats.[104] We operationalize regime type using the polity score of the Polity IV dataset.[105] Second, our interview evidence indicates that English language competency is an empirically relevant factor in recruitment for almost all IO professional positions.[106] Consequently, we also include in our analysis a dummy variable for countries where English is an official language.[107] In addition, we control for country institutional power position within the UN, by introducing a dummy variable for the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Method

Our choice of a modelling technique is driven by the predominance of cross-state variation, rather than variation over time, in our core explanatory factors of interest. Especially in the case of both economic and population size, the differences between the largest and smallest states are enormous, up to five orders of magnitude (a factor of 100 000). In contrast, only rarely do states experience internal developments that would change their individual scores radically over a relatively short time-span of twenty years.[108] As we are primarily interested in modelling this cross-state variation, we opt for a random effects design rather than fixed effects approach. The reason is that a fixed effects approach effectively erases most of the meaningful variation in our data. However, as it turns out, the between-component of the variation in our data is so prominent (accounting for between 80% and 90% of variation) that a standard random effects design approximates a fixed effects specification anyway, due to the very high lambda (λ) coefficient of partial de-meaning in the random effects equation.[109] This

[104] See also Novosad and Werker 2018.

[105] Polity IV Project 2017.

[106] E.g. Interviews # 1, 2, 6, 11.

[107] The description of the dataset on language is available at http://opendata.rug.nl/datasets/5c6ec52c374249a781aede5802994c95_0?uiTab=table (Accessed 20. 12. 2018).

[108] There are exceptions. The economic size of China and some other countries has grown tenfold over last decades, but changes of such magnitude within states are rare. Even such dramatic developments are incomparable in magnitude with the stable differences across states.

[109] Wooldridge 2006, 490.

means that a standard random effect approach would also, like the fixed effects design, imply that most of our variation we seek to model would be lost.[110]

To compensate for this, we adopt a modified 'within-between' random effects design developed by Bell and Jones,[111] based on the older Mundlak's formulation.[112] In recent years, this approach has been receiving increasing application in political science and international relations literature.[113] It solves a core analytical problem where we seek to retain information about developments over time but where there are principal persistent differences across states with regards to a number of key variables of potential interest, such as country size or material resources.[114] The elegance of this approach lies in that it explicitly models both the between-component and the within-component of variation in the panel data. This is achieved by running a random effects model in which each predictor is included in the equation in two variants. The first variant is the country mean, across the entire period, as is familiar from cross-sectional (or 'between') models. The second variant uses the de-meaned values, that is, the individual yearly deviations from country means, as in a fixed effects model. The country means are then used to estimate explicitly the between-effect (variation across countries), while the de-meaned scores provide the estimate of the within effects (variation within countries, over time).[115] In the robustness tests reported in the appendix, we also provide results from regular pooled models as well as from a series of cross-sectional OLS regressions, showing the staffing patterns at different time points. No matter the specific modelling techniques chosen, our results are substantively very similar.

Findings

In Table 2, we present a total of seven random effects panel regression models. In each model, we report standardized beta coefficients, so it is possible to directly compare the relative size of the effects

[110] For example, in the main Models 2, 4, and 5 in Table 2, the lambda (λ) coefficients are always around 0.88 or 0.89, extremely closely approximating the fixed effects formulation (where λ=1). Note that in R, in which the analysis was performed, the coefficient of partial de-meaning is denoted with theta (θ).

[111] Bell and Jones 2015.

[112] Mundlak 1978.

[113] E.g. Ward and Dorussen 2016; Grossman and Lewis 2014.

[114] Bell and Jones 2015, 149.

[115] Bell and Jones 2015.

of the individual predictors on staffing.[116] Recall that we are interested not only in the overall relevance of the four predictors; we also expect systematic differences across IOs based on their level of public visibility. To account for this, we start by presenting models that map separately the staffing patterns in the less visible bodies (Models 1 and 2) and in the more highly visible bodies (Models 3 and 4). The comparison of the results from these models will be very informative. Models 1 and 3 only include the four predictors of interest: economic size (*GNI*), *Population*, *University enrolment*, and *Local IO activity*. Each of these is represented in the equation by both its cross-sectional ('between') and its de-meaned (over-time, 'within') component. Models 2 and 4 then add to these also our control variables, providing a more complete picture. As the substantive results do not change with the inclusion of the controls, we will comment on these models together.

The models show strong support for each of the hypotheses developed earlier. To start with, all the Models 1-4 show a systematic cross-sectional ('between') effect of education levels (*University enrolment*) and of *Local IO activity* in countries. These correspond to the intuitive view that secretariats need to reflect the functional needs of the IOs (H2a, H2b). All the four models also show a positive effect of country economic growth on the growth of representation on the staff (variable *GNI (log) (within)*).

Where the models differ, however, is in the cross-sectional effects of economic power and population size. Consistent with our hypothesis about the effect of IO visibility (H4), highly and lowly visible IOs show very different patterns of staffing. In lowly visible IOs (Models 1 and 2), cross-country differences in economic size (*GNI (log) (between)*) are a very strong predictor of staffing, with a standardized coefficient of around 0.4. This is highlighted in bold in Table 2 in Models 1 and 2. In contrast, when it comes to *Population* sizes, as reflecting the representative legitimation needs (H3), no significant effect on staffing is present.

When we move to the highly visible IOs, in Models 3 and 4, the exact opposite is true. There the cross-state ('between') variation in *Population* sizes is by far the strongest predictor of staffing, with a standardized beta coefficient of between 0.4 and 0.5. Once again, this is highlighted in bold in Models 3 and 4. Economic size (*GNI (log) (between)*) shows no effect at all on staffing here, again in contrast to

[116] The models show heteroskedastic (Breusch-Pagan test) serially correlated (Breusch-Godfrey test) errors, and in the Table we thus report robust standard errors clustered by country. In Model 5, robust errors are clustered by country-IO visibility, as there each country-year is present twice, once for lowly and once for highly visible IOs. The Dickey-Fuller test shows the data series are stationary.

lowly visible IOs. Quite clearly, there is a principle difference in how lowly and highly visible IOs are staffed. The former prioritize as an important criterion economic power of their members, while the latter prioritize representative legitimacy considerations.

Table 2: Panel regression ('within-between' random effects) results

	Dependent variable: Staff number(log)						
	Lowly visible IOs	Lowly visible IOs	Highly visible IOs	Highly visible IOs	All IOs	Lowly visible IOs	Highly visible IOs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
GNI(log) (within)	0.076**	0.071**	0.155***	0.144***	0.113***	-0.004	0.061*
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.026)
GNI(log) (between)	**0.428*** **	**0.394*** **	0.101	0.049	**0.333*** **	**0.432*** **	0.151
	(0.088)	**(0.075)**	(0.118)	(0.097)	**(0.074)**	**(0.101)**	(0.103)
Population(log) (within)	0.026	0.023	-0.001	-0.001	0.009	-0.039	-0.069***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.032)	(0.019)
Population(log) (between)	0.020	0.132'	**0.427*** **	**0.496*** **	**0.237****	0.136	**0.390*** **
	(0.086)	(0.073)	**(0.100)**	**(0.092)**	**(0.073)**	(0.113)	**(0.100)**
University enrolment (within)	0.028*	0.030*	0.004	0.007	0.017	-0.004	-0.030*
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.014)
University enrolment (between)	0.158**	0.105'	0.241**	0.194**	**0.142****	0.110'	0.195**
	(0.056)	(0.060)	(0.074)	(0.069)	**(0.047)**	(0.063)	(0.071)
Local IO activity(log) (within)	0.049***	0.044***	0.033	0.044*	0.045***	0.048***	0.031'
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Local IO activity(log) (between)	0.501***	0.426***	0.286***	0.296***	**0.362*** **	0.443***	0.294***
	(0.061)	(0.057)	(0.075)	(0.077)	**(0.048)**	(0.059)	(0.077)
Polity (within)		0.005		0.013**	0.009*	0.002	0.007'
		(0.005)		(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Polity (between)		0.027***		0.031***	0.030***	0.028***	0.032***
		(0.007)		(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)
UN SC permanent seat		0.261		0.430**	0.411**	0.320	0.465*
		(0.176)		(0.156)	(0.134)	(0.202)	(0.190)
English official lang.		0.254**		0.376***	0.320***	0.265**	0.383***
		(0.085)		(0.081)	(0.058)	(0.085)	(0.080)
Visible					0.833***		
					(0.082)		
GNI(log) (between)* Visible					**-0.185***		
					(0.087)		
Population(log) (between)* Visible					**0.173**'		
					(0.101)		
Yearcount (Yrc)						0.028***	0.032***
						(0.007)	(0.005)
GNI(log) (between)* Yrc						-0.003	**-0.009*** **
						(0.004)	**(0.003)**
Population(log) (between)* Yrc						0.002	**0.010****
						(0.006)	**(0.004)**
GNI(log) (between)* Population(log) (between)					-0.045	-0.017	0.030
					(0.055)	(0.073)	(0.058)
GNI(log) (between)* Population(log)					0.026		
					(0.067)		

(between)* Visible							
GNI(log) (between)* Population(log) (between)* Yrc						-0.002 (0.003)	-0.005* (0.002)
Constant	-0.535*** (0.042)	-0.754*** (0.058)	0.273*** (0.058)	0.043 (0.071)	-0.808*** (0.050)	-1.047*** (0.096)	-0.298** (0.091)
Observations	2,789	2,488	3,280	2,800	5,288	2,488	2,800
R^2	0.280	0.294	0.383	0.427	0.391	0.330	0.493
Adjusted R^2	0.278	0.291	0.382	0.425	0.389	0.325	0.490

Note: 'p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; country-clustered (Models 1-4, 6-7) or country-IO visibility-clustered (Model 5) robust standard errors in brackets

Model 5 brings the two groups of IOs together. It integrates both sets of highly and lowly visible IOs into a single analysis, where the differences across them are modelled as interaction terms between the dummy variable *Visible* and the two core predictors where we expect a difference, economic power (*GNI(log)(between)*) and population size (*Population(log)(between)*). To allow for the modelling of such interactions, each country-year is included in the models twice, once for lowly visible bodies and once for highly visible bodies, as explained previously.[117] Our theoretical framework (H4) would expect the interaction to be positive for *Population* and negative for *GNI*: in highly visible bodies population size should be more important than in lowly visible ones, and the reverse should hold for economic power.

The results support our theorizing. All of the predictors (in their cross-country, 'between' variants) show the expected overall effects on staffing: countries have more nationals on the professional staff of IOs when they have, on average, a more educated population, when they host more of the IO's operational activity, when they are more economically powerful, and when they have larger populations. All these are highlighted in bold in Model 5. The strongest predictor of staffing across all IOs, by a small margin, is their local operational activity, where a one standard deviation (SD) increase in activity of an IO in a country is associated with a 0.36-SD increase in its representation on staff. Education levels show a weaker overall effect of around 0.14.

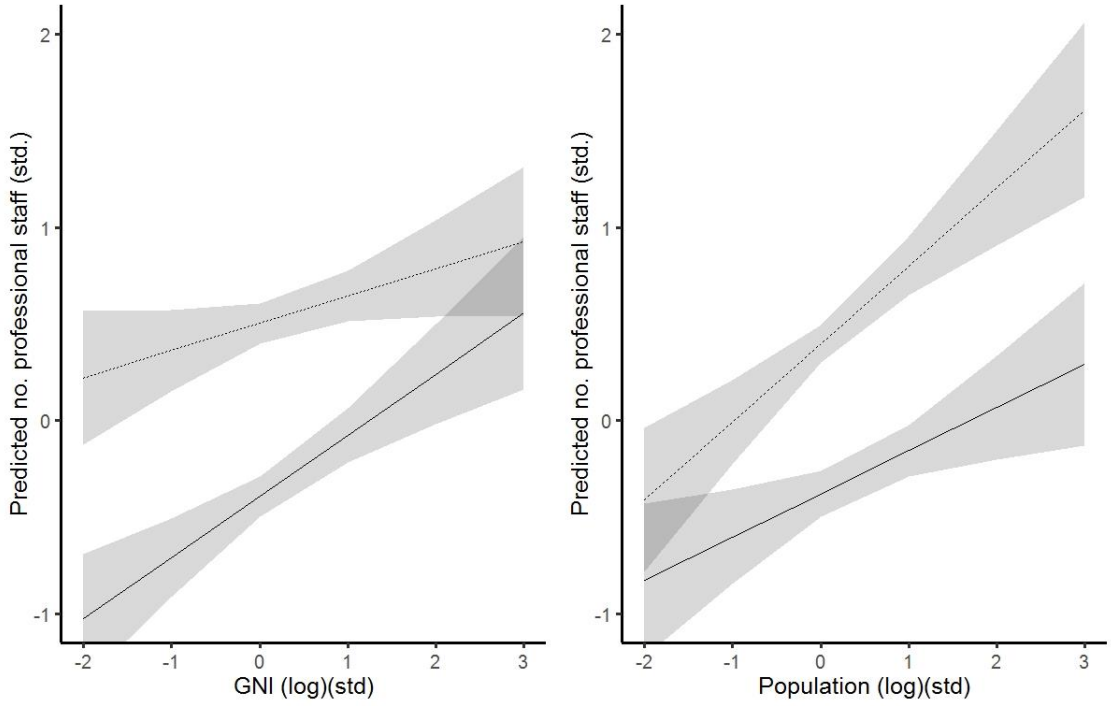
Importantly for our theoretical argument, there are systematic differences across high- and low-visibility IOs. In low-visibility IOs (variable *Visible* equal to 0), economic power is a strong predictor (coefficient size of 0.33) of staffing. When we move to highly visible IOs this effect decreases, as indicated by the

[117] This is also why the number of observations in this model is close to double than that in Models 1-4.

negative coefficient on the interaction term (*GNI(log)(between)*Visible*). For population, the reverse is true. The size of the effect of population grows as we move from lowly to highly visible IOs, again as indicated by the positive coefficient on the interaction term (*Population(log)(between)*Visible*). The difference between the types of IOs which was visible in the results from Models 1-4 is also supported by this integrated, comprehensive Model 5.

The substantive significance of these differences is visualized in Figure 2, showing the marginal effects of the interaction terms from Model 5. The left chart shows the predicted standardized values of staff number as given by country economic size. Highly visible IOs are marked with the flatter dotted line, while lowly visible IOs are marked with the steeper solid line. In lowly visible IOs, economic power has a stronger (steeper) effect on staffing. The right chart in Figure 2 performs the same analysis for population size, again based on results extracted from Model 5. Population size is here a stronger predictor of staffing in highly visible IOs (steeper dotted line) than in lowly visible IOs (flatter solid line). The visual representation confirms the numerical results presented earlier: the effects of control and representative legitimation concerns vary across IOs, as expected by our model.

Figure 2: Marginal effects of economic power and population size in highly visible (dotted) and lowly visible IOs (solid lines)



Note: Based on results extracted from Model 5. Highly visible IOs are marked with dotted line, lowly visible IOs with full line.

In Models 6-7 we continue with the same setup from Models 2 and 4, but we introduce into the analysis explicitly the temporal dimension. We test whether the effects of power and population change over time. Using two interaction terms of a yearcount (*Yrc*) variable, we explicitly model the expected declining relevance of material power (*GNI (log) (between) * Yrc*) and a corresponding increasing relevance of representative legitimation needs (*Population (log) (between) * Yrc*).

As expected by our theory, in highly visible IOs in Model 7 we see a change over time, as both the interaction terms show a significant effect. Economic power grows less relevant for staffing patterns over time, with a negative sign on the interaction term. Representative legitimacy, as reflected in the effect of country population, grows more relevant, with a positive sign on the interaction term. In low-visibility IOs in Model 6, no such change over time is visible. These results provide further support for

our theory, and they are also in line with the descriptive evidence presented earlier in Figure 1. All the other substantive results reported earlier remain unchanged. The control variables also show the expected effects. In both lowly and highly visible IOs, countries enjoy more representation when they are more democratic (*Polity (between)*) and when *English* is their official language. In highly visible IOs, furthermore, holding a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, as a manifestation of institutional power, is associated with significantly higher representation on staff.[118] All these results for the controls also hold across the previous models.

In the appendix to this article, we present relevant descriptive findings from our data and the results of a long series of further tests. These pertain, broadly speaking, to three areas: measurement validity, alternative explanations to differences across IOs, and the specific choice of a modelling technique and in general the robustness of our results. As for the measurement validity, for example, we provide tests incorporating seniority- or grade-weighted staff counts, based on data for the UN Secretariat and the WHO.

We have also considered possible alternatives to societal visibility as the factor distinguishing the patterns of staffing across types of IOs. Of course, visibility is likely to be correlated with the *size* of IOs, and we indeed show in the appendix that systematic differences can be observed across IOs depending on their sizes of budget and staff. However, if IO size rather than visibility was the key factor influencing the IO staffing patterns, it should do so in the opposite direction than we observe. This would be in line with realist reasoning, whereby larger IOs should be more important for powerful states to control. Yet, the empirical evidence shows the opposite effect, in line with our model and reasoning.

Finally, we have tested the robustness of our results under different analytical techniques. We replace the 'within-between' panel regression with a regular pooled OLS model.[119] We also provide a series of cross-sectional OLS analyses. We also run tests excluding possibly influential observations (India and China with extremely large populations, the US with extremely large GNI) and substituting the number of staff members from each country with their per cent share as the dependent variable. All these

[118] Note that this is not the factor that would drive the insignificance of GNI as a predictor of staffing. This is best visible in the comparison of Models 3 and 4, where Model 3 does not include the UN SC permanent membership as a predictor but the effect of economic power on staffing is also absent.

[119] For problems of this approach, see Wooldridge 2006, 13.

additional and robustness tests provide convincing support to our main findings, which we summarize in the concluding section.

5. Implications and Conclusions

In this article, we sought to map and explain the patterns of staffing of IOs. We have shown that the national origins of IO staff cannot be explained simply as an epiphenomenon of great power influence, nor can it be attributed to the need to conform to functional demands only. Both *control* and *meritocratic legitimacy* play a role. Yet, these traditional concerns are joined by new representative legitimacy demands, whereby IOs increasingly seek to resemble, in their staff composition, the distribution of their members' populations at large. Power and function have been joined by representativeness as a key determinant of IO staffing. Importantly, though, different IOs strike a different balance between control and legitimacy. Those under the radar of public scrutiny are more likely to favor the selection of staff from economically powerful countries. The secretariats of highly visible IOs, in contrast, particularly favor representative legitimation pressures over control. These findings seem to be in line with the intuitions of the research on the legitimation needs of IOs.[120] They go directly against expectations based on realism's emphasis on the decisiveness of powerful states, at least where staff is concerned. While the most powerful states are still dominant, in highly visible IOs they seem to be losing, at least partly, control over staffing outcomes.

Furthermore, these differences also appear to have become more prominent over time. The secretariats of highly visible IOs have become increasingly representative of the global population at large, and less reflective of the distribution of power in the international system. Those who attribute a great role to legitimacy demands in explaining international organizational behavior, as well as believers in apparently meritocratic and representative administration, can take heart from these findings.

Two theoretical points emerge from our findings. First, our approach lends support to the sociological institutionalist approach of analyzing IO secretariats not just as agents created by principals (states) but as organizations embedded in a global cultural and normative context. Secondly, our findings are compatible with other studies that identify a strong conditioning effect of public visibility on the

[120] Tallberg, Bäckstrand, and Scholte 2018; Zürn 2018.

sensitivity of organizations to legitimacy pressures.[121] Power, efficiency, and representation are all at play in the staffing of international secretariats. Yet, the balance between these factors is shaped also by the public visibility of the organization to which a secretariat is attached.

In the contemporary setting, the core institutions of the global order find themselves increasingly under fire from their most powerful members. Both established powers, especially the United States, and the rising powers often seek to challenge the institutional status quo. In our analysis, neither of these sides is winning the zero-sum game of representation on staff.[122] Instead of witnessing the continuation of the status quo, or a shift along with the changing global distribution of power, we find a shift away from power, towards broader representation.

6. References

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[121] Chiu and Sharfman 2011.

[122] Novosad and Werker 2018.

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