

Representative bureaucracy, international organizations and public service bargains

Johan Christensen 

Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University, The Hague, The Netherlands

Correspondence

Johan Christensen, Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University, Turfmarkt 99, The Hague, 2511 DP, The Netherlands.
Email: j.christensen@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Abstract

Academic interest in the administrative aspects of international organizations is on the rise. Yet, an issue that has received little attention is bureaucratic representation—the extent to which international bureaucracies are representative of the polity that they serve. The article theorizes the rationales for and forms of representative bureaucracy in international organizations by combining insights from the representative bureaucracy literature with the ‘public service bargains’ framework. It argues that bureaucratic representation is highly relevant in international organizations, given the diverse polity these organizations serve and their precarious legitimacy. It distinguishes three types of representational ‘bargains’ between international organizations and those they serve, centred on power, equal opportunities and diversity, and discusses under which conditions each type of bargain is likely to be struck. The argument contributes to discussions about representative bureaucracy in international organizations and to broader theoretical debates about international public administration.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Academic interest in the administrative aspects of international organizations is on the rise. A growing literature on ‘international public administrations’ and ‘international bureaucracies’ applies perspectives from public administration to the study of international organizations, examining issues such as the autonomy, behaviour and influence of administrative bodies and civil servants at the international level (e.g., Trondal et al. 2010; Knill and Bauer 2016). Despite this interest in international organizations as bureaucracies, an issue that has received little attention is

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bureaucratic representation—that is, the extent to which a public administration reflects the polity that it serves. Some recent studies have highlighted that concerns about geographical representation play a significant role in the administration of the European Union (EU) (Gravier 2008, 2013; Christensen et al. 2017; Murdoch et al. 2018) and the United Nations (UN) organizations (Mele et al. 2015; Parizek 2017; Eckhard 2018). Yet, a broader theoretical consideration of the rationales for and character of representative bureaucracy in international organizations is missing.

This article aims to theorize the various roles and forms of representative bureaucracy in international organizations by combining insights from the representative bureaucracy literature with the ‘public service bargains’ framework. The core idea of the public service bargains framework (Hood and Lodge 2006) is that public administrations rest on explicit or implicit agreements or understandings between public servants and those they serve, that is, politicians, citizens and clients. These agreements or ‘bargains’ can be based on different qualities of bureaucrats, such as their political loyalty, particular skills/competences, or ability to represent groups in society. In other words, bargains based on a representative bureaucracy—‘representational bargains’—are one main form of public service bargains.

The article argues that concerns about a representative bureaucracy can be highly relevant in the public service bargains struck within international organizations. First, international organizations serve a diverse polity—made up of multiple member state governments, citizens from different countries and a diverse client population (Gravier 2013)—and therefore need to represent a broad range of interests. Second, the legitimacy of international organizations is precarious. International organizations lack the direct democratic legitimacy of national governments (input legitimacy), and their ability to deliver effective solutions (output legitimacy) may also be contested (Zürn 2004; Tallberg and Zürn 2019). Administrative representation may be an important additional source of legitimacy for international organizations (Murdoch et al. 2018).

The article distinguishes three types of representational bargains within the administrations of international organizations, which build on three different conceptions of representative bureaucracy (Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2010). These bargains are ‘representation as power’, that is, giving (powerful) member states a share of administrative power in exchange for political and financial support; ‘representation as equal opportunities’, that is, giving citizens fair and equal access to administrative jobs in exchange for input legitimacy with citizens; and ‘representation as diversity’, that is, giving client communities the chance to shape policy implementation in exchange for local knowledge that can increase performance and output legitimacy.

Furthermore, the article puts forward a set of propositions about the conditions under which each type of representational bargain is likely to transpire. International organizations differ from each other in many regards—function, geographical reach, exposure to public attention, political environment, etc.—and these differences are bound to affect the type of representational bargain struck in these organizations. While testing these propositions empirically is beyond the scope of the article, the propositions provide directions for future empirical research.

The article makes two theoretical contributions: first, going beyond existing research in public administration and international relations, it proposes a theoretical argument that captures the various rationales for representative bureaucracy and the various bureaucratic representation relationships in international organizations. This argument blends representative bureaucracy theory with the public service bargains framework, which is a theoretical novelty. The public service bargains framework allows us to think about representative bureaucracy as one of several possible bargains on which public organizations may rest. Also, its wide notion of whom bureaucrats serve—not only politicians, but also citizens, clients, etc.—allows us to cover the range of representativeness relationships that matter at the international level.

Second, the article contributes to the broader debate about how to conceptualize and theorize international public administrations (Knill and Bauer 2016). Building further on the argument that a theoretical understanding of these bodies should focus on the relationship between international bureaucrats and their political and societal environment (Christensen and Yesilkagit 2019), the article develops some specific models for describing this relationship. It also theorizes how the peculiar features of international organizations matter for this relationship: not only how

features of international organizations in general may be conducive to representative bureaucracy, but also how differences between these organizations condition the type of representational bargain.

The article proceeds as follows: it first describes the notion of representative bureaucracy and reviews existing research on representative bureaucracy in international organizations. It then introduces the public service bargains framework. It subsequently theorizes the different types of representational bargains in international organizations, before discussing when these types of bargains are likely to arise. The conclusion reflects on the contributions, implications and limitations of the theoretical argument.

2 | REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

2.1 | Representative bureaucracy theory

Representation is a central concept in discussions of politics and democracy. Representation can generally be understood as an actor speaking for, acting for or standing for others (Pitkin 1967). It involves a relationship between someone who is representing (the representative), someone who is being represented (the represented), and something that is being represented in this relationship (e.g., interests, values) (Dovi 2018). Political scientists have mainly been preoccupied with the link between citizens and their representatives within elected bodies, which is crucial to the idea of representative democracy.

The work on representative bureaucracy argues that while political representation within elected bodies is essential in a democracy, it is not sufficient to ensure that public policy-making reflects the interests and values of societal groups. Given that unelected officials often have considerable influence over public policies, a bureaucracy that is representative of the polity it serves is also an important element of legitimate rule. Representative bureaucracy scholars are therefore concerned with the degree to which bureaucratic institutions reflect society in terms of gender, race, nationality, language, class or other characteristics.

Theoretical arguments about representative bureaucracy take different forms. Groeneveld and Van de Walle (2010) distinguish between three different conceptions of representative bureaucracy. One is the initial interest in representative bureaucracy as power, that is, administrative representation as a tool for ensuring the authority and legitimacy of the state (Kingsley 1944). In this conception, a bureaucracy needs to reflect existing political power balances in society; if not, it will be powerless and irrelevant (Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2010, p. 241). Hence, a bureaucracy is representative when it is composed of people belonging to the dominant groups within a polity. One expression of this is a civil service that is representative of the dominant classes in society. Another expression is the inclusion of competing territorial or ethnic elites in the central state apparatus to ensure their allegiance to the state.

This initial notion of representative bureaucracy later gave way to a second and very different conception, in which a representative bureaucracy is understood as an administration that reflects the interests and values of all groups in society—not only the advantaged ones. In this view, representative bureaucracy is about ensuring equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups (Meier 2019, pp. 41–42). Hence, a bureaucracy is representative when it is reflective of the whole population, on dimensions of race, gender, class, etc. This agenda was motivated by the observation that bureaucrats often have considerable discretion when making decisions (Lipsky 1980), and that these choices are conditioned by the socio-demographic background of officials. It follows that if a bureaucracy is representative of the entire population, it will produce decisions that reflect the values and interests of the public. Representation thus gives disadvantaged groups the opportunity to have their voice heard. An important distinction in this regard is between passive and active representation (Mosher 1968).¹ Passive representation refers to the extent to which the socio-demographic background of officials mirrors the population. Passive representation turns

¹Passive representation' corresponds to the notion of descriptive representation in the literature on political representation, whereas 'active representation' has similarities with the idea of substantive representation. The notion of symbolic representation is also shared (see Pitkin 1967; Rapkin et al. 2016).

into active representation when bureaucrats take on a representative role and push for the interests of their socio-demographic group. However, equal opportunity also has a more material side, namely that disadvantaged groups get access to public sector jobs that provide economic benefits and social mobility (Ricucci and Van Ryzin 2017, p. 22). In both regards, ensuring equal opportunity is crucial for the legitimacy and credibility of the public service with citizens.

Recent work has highlighted a third conception of representative bureaucracy, centred on how a diverse workforce can enhance the performance of public organizations. Diversity means much the same as representativeness: an organization is diverse when it includes individuals of different race, social background, etc. (Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2010, p. 247). Yet, the diversity approach differs from the two other conceptions in its rationale for diversity/representation: rather than seeing representation primarily as a means to ensure equality, this work argues that a diverse workforce also has other benefits for the organization. It puts forward 'a business case for diversity through focusing on the benefits of diversity for the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organizations' (p. 247, original emphasis). Diversity lets the organization tap into a broader range of experiences and perspectives, which can improve the quality of policies. A diverse workforce also allows the organization to better serve its clients, who are more likely to trust and cooperate with street-level bureaucrats that are more like themselves (symbolic representation) (Ricucci and Van Ryzin 2017, pp. 25–26).

2.2 | Representative bureaucracy in international organizations

So far, the literature on representative bureaucracy has focused on national and sub-national bureaucracies and paid little attention to international bureaucracies. Only recently have scholars started to explore this territory. A handful of contributions in public administration and EU studies have applied representative bureaucracy theory to the European Union administration (Gravier 2008, 2013; Murdoch et al. 2016, 2018; Christensen et al. 2017). These studies argue that the issue of administrative representation—especially geographical representation—is highly relevant in the EU's multi-national bureaucracy. They point to legitimacy as an important rationale for representative bureaucracy in the EU. Bureaucratic representation is 'a possible instrument of legitimacy in heterogeneous or multi-national polities such as the European Union' (Gravier 2008, p. 1028). More specifically, the EU's 'democratic deficit' may lead it to embrace administrative representation as an additional source of legitimacy (Murdoch et al. 2018).

Moreover, Gravier proposes a novel concept of representation—linkage representation—for understanding the specific nature of bureaucratic representation in the EU. She argues that while representative bureaucracy theory deals with the relation between public administrators and citizens or clients, this relationship is less relevant in the EU since the organization lacks street-level bureaucrats (Gravier 2013, pp. 832–833). Instead, the relation between the EU administration and member states is central. Gravier argues that representation in this relationship is not captured by the concepts of passive and active representation but involves what she labels 'linkage representation'. This concept refers to the function of officials as bridges between different levels of governance, for example, how European Commission administrators may serve as links between the EU and their country of origin. This linkage may contribute to better governance. According to Gravier, the concept of linkage representation is particularly suited to the analysis of bureaucratic representation in multi-tier political systems such as international organizations.

Some recent work in public administration also points to the relevance of representative bureaucracy for international organizations providing services in the field, such as the UN organizations (Eckhard 2018; see also Mele et al. 2015). Building further on Gravier's notion, Eckhard argues that bureaucrats with local knowledge provide 'linkage' between the organization and the local environment (see also Weller and Xu 2010). Eckhard defines linkage as 'the process by which bureaucrats, who by means of their geographical origin possess detailed knowledge of a geographical location which is affected by a future or present policy—including culture, language, customs, politics or history—pass on information or manage relations between their organization and that local environment' (Eckhard 2018, p. 1).

In addition, a small literature in international relations examines geographical representation among staff in international organizations, with applications to the UN organizations (Manulak 2017; Parizek 2017; Novosad and Werker 2019).² This work analyses the staffing of international organizations predominantly as a question of the power and control of member states over these organizations. Novosad and Werker point to country representation among international organization staff as a channel for member state influence, and see staffing patterns as an outcome of the power distribution among states. Parizek takes a broader view, arguing that staff representation not only reflects member states' desire for control but also serves functional and legitimation needs. International organizations need to be seen as impartial by member states, and they also rely on an understanding of local conditions to carry out their tasks. 'When IOs' secretariats are not representative of their membership, they are bound to lose the perception of legitimacy in the eyes of their client countries. They are also likely to lose access to the necessary expertise and "soft" information about them' (Parizek 2017, p. 560).

While the nascent work on bureaucratic representation in international organizations has produced important insights, it also has limits. The work in public administration has pointed to some reasons for representation and different types of actors that it may be relevant to represent. However, the argument about the linkage function of bureaucrats only captures one aspect of bureaucratic representation in international organizations; it does not address other aspects relating to power or equal opportunities. By contrast, international relations scholars are highly attentive to the question of power, and have also pointed to other needs served by staff representation. However, this work theorizes staff representation exclusively as a relationship between international organizations and member states, and does not consider representation relationships involving other actors like citizens and local communities. This article tries to fill this gap: it proposes a theoretical argument that captures the various rationales for representative bureaucracy and the various bureaucratic representation relationships in international organizations. To do so, it combines insights from the representative bureaucracy literature with the public service bargains framework. This framework is introduced in the next section.

3 | PUBLIC SERVICE BARGAINS

The 'public service bargains' framework presented by Hood and Lodge (2006) is a general framework for understanding the relationship between bureaucrats and political and societal actors. The core idea of the framework is that public administrations rest on explicit or implicit agreements between public servants and those they serve, that is, politicians, political parties, citizens, clients, etc. These agreements are what Hood and Lodge refer to as 'public service bargains'. Public service bargains can be formal—codified in constitutions or civil service regulations or addressed in case law—or informal, based on unwritten conventions or understandings.

The notion of a bargain implies that the parties to the agreement get something in exchange for something else. In a public service bargain, Hood and Lodge (2006, p. 7) argue, 'politicians normally expect to gain some degree of political loyalty and competence from bureaucrats or public servants, and those public servants normally expect to gain some assured place in the structure of executive government, a definite sphere of responsibility and some mixture of tangible and intangible reward'. Yet, exactly what politicians and bureaucrats bring to the bargain varies greatly. To what extent are public servants supposed to be loyal, and to whom? What kind of competences or attributes do bureaucrats provide? What kind of responsibilities and discretion are they granted, and what kind of rewards do they receive?

Hood and Lodge distinguish between two main types of public service bargains: 'agency' and 'trustee' bargains. In agency bargains, public servants are regarded merely as servants of the political master. Bureaucrats are agents subject to the direction and control of their political principal(s). In trustee bargains, by contrast, public servants enjoy

²There is also a literature on representation in international organizations which deals with the representation of member states in terms of seats or voting shares in decision-making bodies (Rapkin et al. 2016). However, this literature does not address representation within the bureaucracies of international organizations.

a more independent role: 'public servants are expected to act as independent judges of the public good ... to some significant extent' and 'possess a domain of autonomy in which they exercise discretion in a way that is not subject to commands or control from elected politicians' (Hood and Lodge 2006, p. 25). The loyalty of public servants lies not only with the political master but also with some broader entity, such as the 'public good' or the constitution (p. 26).

Trustee-type bargains are in turn divided into two categories: 'tutelary' bargains and 'representational' bargains. In the main form of tutelary bargains—technocratic bargains—public servants provide particular technical expertise, which they exchange for status and discretionary power. This type of bargain is found, for instance, in independent regulatory agencies or central banks.

Representational bargains, by contrast, correspond to the idea of representative bureaucracy. In this type of bargain public servants are regarded as representatives of the society that they serve, on dimensions such as geography, gender, language or race. 'In a representational bargain', Hood and Lodge (2006, p. 34) argue, 'the implicit or explicit exchange is between support for the state or the regime by the groups that are represented and a significant share in the administrative power of the state'. In other words, represented groups provide the state with legitimacy in exchange for access to the bureaucratic apparatus. This type of bargain may apply both to the top bureaucratic echelons and to street-level bureaucrats. And it is particularly relevant in societies with deep ethnic, religious, linguistic or territorial cleavages: 'representation within the bureaucracy is often a key part of implicit or explicit conventions about the governance of divided societies' (p. 35).

Importantly, Hood and Lodge discuss representational bargains as a type of trustee bargain rather than as an agency bargain: 'representation through the bureaucracy comes to take on aspects of "trusteeship" when that representation is expected to imply some degree of independent action by those bureaucrats as part of some broader political settlement, and not just the role of a robot programmed or directed by others' (2006, p. 34). Bureaucrats merely executing orders from the group that they are representing thus falls outside their notion of a trustee-type representational bargain.

Public service bargains vary widely 'across time, across countries, across levels of government, and across different parts of the public service' (Hood and Lodge 2006, p. 24). And bargains are not static: bargains are forged and can persist over time, but they can also be renegotiated or break down and give way to new bargains. Variation and change in bargains are the result of both historical processes and strategic action. Bargains are shaped by 'past events and practices that vary between countries and institutional settings', but also depend on 'the combined strategic choices of all the parties to the bargain'—that is, the actions of bureaucrats and politicians, citizens and clients (pp. 5–6). This can be understood either through the lens of rational choice, involving strategic interactions that can be modelled as games, or more broadly as a form of social exchange.

The public service bargains framework is applicable to public administrations at different levels of governance, including the administrations of international organizations. Yet, Hood and Lodge do not specifically address international bureaucracies. How can the framework be applied to international organizations?

Public service bargains of both the agency type and the trustee type are relevant at the international level. On the one hand, the delegation of responsibilities to international secretariats may be accompanied by strict direction and control by member state principals, pointing towards agency-type bargains (Hawkins et al. 2006). Member states may distrust international organizations and seek to limit their room for manoeuvre. For instance, Dijkstra (2016) finds that in international organizations concerned with military operations, member states invest heavily in various control mechanisms to avoid becoming dependent on international bureaucracies. On the other hand, specific features of international organizations may be conducive to trustee-type bargains (Christensen and Yesilkagit 2019). International secretariats face a collective principal or multiple principals rather than a unitary principal, which makes it more difficult to establish direct control over the bureaucracy and increases the scope for bureaucratic autonomy (Ellinas and Suleiman 2012, pp. 14–15; see also Lyne et al. 2006). International secretariats also partly base their legitimacy on being neutral and objective (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Mele et al. 2015). The explicit provisions in many treaties and staff regulations of international organizations that commit international civil servants to

defending the organization's goals and prohibit officials from taking instructions from member states are a formal expression of a trustee-type bargain.

Within the trustee category, both tutelary (technocratic) and representational bargains can be important in international organizations. Global governance issues are often complex and uncertain, making specialized expertise an important source of legitimacy for international organizations (Haas 1992; Litzo-Monnet 2017). Yet, representational bargains can also play an important role in international organizations, for reasons discussed in the next section.

To conclude, several aspects of the public service bargains framework make it relevant for discussions about representative bureaucracy. First, the notion of public service bargains focuses squarely on the relationship between bureaucrats and the political and societal environment, which is at the core of representative bureaucracy. Second, the framework sees representative bureaucracy as one possible source of legitimacy for public administrations, alongside other sources such as expert knowledge or unwavering political loyalty. This draws attention to the question of when bargains will be based on representation rather than on other features. Third, the framework operates with a broad notion of whom public servants serve—politicians, citizens and clients—making it possible to capture the multiple bureaucratic representation relationships in international organizations. In the next section, the various types of representational bargains in international administrations are theorized.

4 | REPRESENTATIONAL BARGAINS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This section presents a theoretical argument about the rationales for and forms of representative bureaucracy in international organizations, combining elements from representative bureaucracy theory, the public service bargains framework and international relations literature. It first discusses how distinct features of international organizations may be conducive to representational bargains, before outlining the various types of representational bargains in international organizations.

Two features of international organizations, in particular, suggest an important role for representational bargains in international public administrations (Christensen and Yesilkagit 2019). First, international organizations serve a diverse polity, made up of multiple member states, citizens from different countries and a diverse client population (Gravier 2013, p. 820). As such, the international polity resembles societies that are deeply divided along ethnic or racial lines (Eckhard 2018). Ensuring that this broad set of interests is fairly represented—not only politically but also administratively—is a key concern for international organizations. Most obviously, geographical cleavages are highly salient in international politics, meaning that the geographical background of staff is of greater significance in international bureaucracies than in most national ones.

The second feature is the precarious legitimacy of international organizations. In descriptive terms, the legitimacy of international organizations can be understood as the degree to which the organization and its policies are accepted by member states, citizens and other stakeholders (Tallberg and Zürn 2019). International organizations face particular challenges in terms of legitimacy, which have become more pressing as they have gained increasing political authority (Zürn 2004). Most importantly, international organizations usually offer more limited opportunities for participation in decision-making and accountability than national governments (input legitimacy). Whereas national bureaucracies are directly accountable to elected governments, international bureaucracies do not answer directly to individual governments and are usually far removed from citizens. International organizations may also face challenges concerning output legitimacy. Although output legitimacy was traditionally seen as international organizations' strong suit, recent scholarship highlights that the performance of international organizations—that is, their ability to deliver effective solutions—is also often contested (Zürn and Stephen 2010; Tallberg and Zürn 2019).

For international organizations, a lack of legitimacy with member states and citizens may lead to less funding or stricter oversight, or it may encourage states to pursue unilateral action, bilateral cooperation or to pivot to other

multilateral institutions or create new ones (Morse and Keohane 2014). While the literature on the legitimacy of international organizations argues that organizations may employ various strategies to counter legitimacy challenges, it does not address bureaucratic representation. Yet, in international organizations starved of legitimacy, a representative bureaucracy may be a significant additional source of legitimacy (Gravier 2013; Murdoch et al. 2018). Given the discretion and potential policy influence of international bureaucracies, the representativeness and responsiveness of these bodies becomes an important aspect of their legitimacy. Representation may thus be a way to compensate for the democratic deficits of international organizations and to improve their performance.

Building on these considerations, three specific types of representational public service bargains can be relevant in international organizations. These bargains are inspired by the three conceptions of representative bureaucracy distinguished by Groeneveld and Van de Walle (2010). Yet this article goes beyond their typology by theorizing these conceptions as bargains between bureaucrats and those they serve, and by applying their general conceptions to representative bureaucracy in international organizations.

4.1 | Bargain 1: representation as power

The first type of representational bargain centres on the relationship between international organizations and member states. Given the precarious legitimacy of international organizations with states and the deep cleavages in international politics, ensuring that the organization's bureaucracy reflects international political power balances is crucial. In 'representation as power' bargains, international organizations seek to gain political and financial support from member states—particularly powerful ones—by giving them a share of administrative power. This entails incorporating national elites in important positions in the international bureaucracy. This can strengthen the organization's input legitimacy, by increasing member state participation in policy-making. States that are well represented within the senior administration have a stake in the organization and are less likely to oppose it than states that are excluded from administrative power. Conversely, states that provide political and financial support may expect a significant share of administrative positions. This bargain can hence be identified empirically with international organizations in which member states that are powerful or major funders account for a dominant share of senior administrative staff.

An example of this bargain is the calculation of staff shares in international organizations based on financial contributions. In the UN organizations, states' budget contributions are part of the formula for calculating desirable ranges of state representation in the professional staff category: in most UN organizations 55 per cent of these positions are distributed according to financial contributions, in some organizations even more (Parizek 2017, p. 568). In fact, in the UN's early years (1948–62), the desirable ranges for staff representation were based exclusively on financial contributions (United Nations Joint Inspection Unit 2012, p. 11). The High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community adopted a similar practice (Gravier 2008).

4.2 | Bargain 2: representation as equal opportunities

The second type of representational bargain concerns the relationship between international organizations and citizens. Citizens here refer to all citizens of the organization's member states. In 'representation as equal opportunities' bargains, international organizations seek to strengthen legitimacy and credibility with citizens by ensuring equal access to administrative jobs for citizens from all member states. This involves giving disadvantaged groups—for example, citizens from poor member states—the same opportunity to be hired and promoted as advantaged groups. Represented groups not only get a chance to have their interests considered within the administration. They also get access to the tangible and intangible benefits of working for an international organization. Empirically, this bargain can be identified with international organizations in which citizens from all member states are fairly represented among the bureaucratic staff as a whole. This bargain is thus distinct from a 'representation as power' bargain in

three ways: it focuses on citizens rather than member states, it is not limited to citizens from powerful member states, and it is not specifically focused on higher administrative ranks.

One expression of this bargain is the provision in the treaties and staff regulations of many international organizations that recruitment should occur on 'as wide a geographical basis as possible' (e.g., UN Charter, Article 101). Another expression is the often generous benefits tied to working for international organizations: 'IOs offer high salaries (often untaxed), important benefits (health insurance and good pension plans), and compensation packages as another in-kind advantage for fieldwork abroad and relocation' (Giauque and Varone 2019, p. 345). In addition to extrinsic benefits, working for an international organization offers intrinsic rewards (stimulating work), altruistic rewards (work that makes a difference) and social prestige.

4.3 | Bargain 3: representation as diversity

The third type of representational bargain concerns the relationship between international organizations and clients. Clients are here understood as actors who receive services from international organizations. This includes the governments of client countries (e.g., the least developed countries), local communities, economic and civil society groups, and individual service recipients in client countries.³ International organizations deliver services in countries all over the world, which vary in economic development, political regime, societal structure and culture. International organizations' ability to design and implement effective policies for this diverse range of clients is key to their performance and output legitimacy. They need to adapt global policies to specific local conditions and demands, and doing so requires an appreciation of local politics and society (Weller and Xu 2010). A diverse bureaucracy may be key to achieving this goal. Locally recruited staff give the organization access to specific local perspectives and knowledge, which may help it find effective policy solutions and improve its relationship with clients (see Eckhard 2018 on linkage; Parizek 2017). In return, client communities get the chance to shape policy implementation. Empirically, this bargain can be identified with international organizations in which individuals from client countries or communities make up a major share of staff in the implementing arm of the bureaucracy. Diversity bargains can thus be distinguished from power and equal opportunity bargains based on two features: they focus on client countries/communities rather than on powerful member states or all citizens, and they centre on the street-level bureaucracy rather than on top administrators or the entire bureaucratic workforce.

Weller and Xu's description of the role of locally recruited staff in World Bank country offices offers one example of this bargain. These officials 'have connections with the national bureaucracies out of which many of them came and understand the intricate local politics ... Many provide the local institutional memory, a continuing source of insights and information about the country' (2010, p. 226). Another example is the diversity policies adopted recently by several international organizations. For instance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) presents an explicit diversity rationale for geographical (and other) representation, which links diversity and organizational performance:

A diverse staff allows us to effectively draw on different perspectives to enhance the quality of the decision-making, deepen the relevance of our policy advice, and enhance our efficiency and effectiveness. Diversity thereby strengthens the legitimacy and relevance of the Fund in delivering services to our member countries. (International Monetary Fund 2017, p. 3)

To summarize, three distinct representational bargains relevant to international organizations can be distinguished (see Table 1). These bargains concern different relationships, that is, the relationships of international administrations with member states, citizens and clients. The bargains differ in what representation provides the international organization with: political support from national elites, legitimacy with citizens or performance-enhancing local knowledge.

³To illustrate the difference between citizen and client: for a UN organization, an individual in Indonesia who receives disaster relief from the organization is both a citizen and a client, whereas an individual in Sweden who does not receive such relief is only a citizen.

TABLE 1 Representational bargains in international organizations

1. Representation as power	International organization <i>Provides share of administrative power</i>	↔	Member states <i>Provide political and financial support</i>
2. Representation as equal opportunities	International organization <i>Provides equal access to administrative jobs that confer administrative responsibility and extrinsic and intrinsic rewards</i>	↔	Citizens <i>Provide input legitimacy and credibility</i>
3. Representation as diversity	International organization <i>Provides opportunity to shape policy implementation</i>	↔	Clients <i>Provide local knowledge and experience that can improve performance and output legitimacy</i>

The bargains also differ in what member states, citizens and clients get in return: a share of administrative power, the benefits of administrative jobs or the ability to shape policy implementation.

Importantly, these three bargains are ideal-types. Representational arrangements in international administrations will often have elements of different bargains, for instance with representation serving to ensure both support from member states and local knowledge. Different bargains may also operate simultaneously at different levels of an international organization; for instance, a power bargain in the senior bureaucracy and a diversity bargain in the street-level bureaucracy. Bearing these caveats in mind, the next section discusses under which conditions different types of representational bargains are likely to be struck.

5 | PROPOSITIONS ABOUT REPRESENTATIONAL BARGAINS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

As argued above, general features of international organizations point towards an important role for representational bargains. Yet, the type of representational bargain can be expected to vary across international organizations and over time within the same organization, depending on features of the organization and the context in which it operates. International organizations differ along many dimensions, including function, geographical reach, exposure to public attention, and political environment. This section presents a set of propositions about the specific organizational and environmental conditions under which different representational bargains are likely to be struck. Several of the propositions highlight the dynamic character of public service bargains, by outlining the mechanisms through which an existing bargain can be renegotiated in favour of another bargain. These mechanisms generally involve a change in environmental conditions that generates new demands from states, citizens or clients, which in turn elicit an organizational response. While empirically testing the propositions is beyond the scope of this article, the propositions provide starting points for future empirical research.

In the first type of bargain—representation as power—the international organization's core concern is to ensure legitimacy with member states, particularly powerful ones. One can therefore expect this type of bargain to be important when the organization's legitimacy with powerful member states is particularly weak or threatened. From this general expectation two specific propositions are derived:

Proposition 1: 'Representation as power' bargains are more likely in periods of changing international power balances than in periods of stable power relations. International organizations operate within a broader international

political environment. Power relations in the international system can be characterized by stability or change. Changes in the international power balance, such as the ascent of new powers, come with legitimacy challenges for international organizations (Zürn and Stephen 2010; Stephen 2012). Established international organizations often lack input legitimacy in the eyes of newly powerful states, since their programmes and governance structures reflect the dominance of established powers and are not representative of or responsive to the preferences of new powers. Examples are the distribution of permanent seats in the UN Security Council or the unequal voting rights in the Bretton Woods institutions, which give little influence to new regional powers such as India, Brazil and South Africa (Stephen 2012). Rising powers can react to this bias in ways that threaten international organizations, including by spoiling their functioning or by establishing competing bodies (Stephen 2012; Morse and Keohane 2014, p. 386). To avoid this, international organizations can seek to bolster their input legitimacy by accepting calls for greater political representation of new powers, such as the redistribution of voting rights in the World Bank and the IMF (Zürn and Stephen 2010). But they may also offer greater bureaucratic representation: including elites from these countries in the top administration may be a way to shore up the organization's legitimacy and support among rising powers, which corresponds to a 'representation as power' bargain.

Proposition 2: 'Representation as power' bargains are more likely in periods in which an international organization faces intense competition from other organizations than in periods of limited competition. International organizations also operate within a broader field of international organizations, where they face varying degrees of competition from other bodies. In some periods an international organization may operate unchallenged; yet at other times it may face intense competition due to states shifting responsibilities to other multilateral organizations or creating new organizations in the same policy area (Morse and Keohane 2014). If other organizations encroach upon the turf of an international organization, this calls into question its relevance and imperils its sources of funding and political support. As a consequence, the organization faces pressures to shore up its legitimacy with powerful states (Morse and Keohane 2014, p. 390). Barnett and Coleman illustrate this dynamic in a study of Interpol, where they show how competitive pressures from new international police organizations and networks in the 1970s–80s increased Interpol's organizational insecurity. This led the organization to accept demands from member states, agreeing to take on tasks relating to counter-terrorism and inviting the United States to play a greater role in the organization in terms of funding and staffing (Barnett and Coleman 2005, pp. 611–614). Giving powerful member states a share of administrative power may thus be a means to bolster legitimacy and dampen support for competing bodies.

In the second type of bargain—representation as equal opportunities—the international organization's main concern is to ensure legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. In general, one can expect this type of bargain to be important when legitimacy with citizens is salient. Two specific propositions can be derived:

Proposition 3: 'Representation as equal opportunities' bargains are more likely in periods of expanding membership (enlargement) than in periods of stable membership. During their life course, international organizations alternate between periods of stable membership, periods of enlargement to include new members and periods of declining membership. Recent examples of enlargement are the EU's Eastern enlargement in the 2000s and the OECD's expansion beyond the most developed countries from the 1990s onwards. Enlargement often raises questions about the composition of the organization's administrative staff (Gravier 2008; Ban 2013). New member states demand a fair share of administrative jobs and are eager to ensure that their citizens have the same opportunities as citizens from old member states. In periods of enlargement, fair and equal representation may thus become an overriding concern and suppress other considerations in staffing. For instance, it has been shown how successive EU enlargements entailed a shift away from specialized expertise as a basis for recruitment to the European civil service towards an emphasis on fair geographical representation (Christensen 2015; Christensen et al. 2017). Put differently, an expertise-based public service bargain in staff policy gave way to a representational bargain as a result of enlargement. We therefore expect enlargement periods to favour equal opportunities bargains in which citizens from different countries are given equal access to administrative posts and related benefits. (This dynamic differs from the one described in proposition 1, since the concern here is the fair representation of citizens from all new member states rather than giving administrative power to newly powerful states.)

Proposition 4: 'Representation as equal opportunities' bargains are more likely when an international organization is highly exposed to public attention than when an organization faces limited exposure. International organizations also vary in their exposure to public attention. Some organizations are constantly in the public eye (e.g., the EU or the IMF), whereas others rarely make the news (e.g., the International Energy Agency or the International Telecommunication Union). The exposure of an organization also fluctuates over time. Zürn (2014) argues that international organizations that are well known and the target of political attention will be more responsive and more attentive to normative aspects of fairness, equality, transparency and inclusion, evidenced for instance by the World Bank's increasing openness to societal demands. Parizek and Stephen (2018) apply this logic to staff representation. They argue that international organizations that are more exposed to public attention will attract greater scrutiny regarding the representativeness of its staff, which will lead them to put greater emphasis on fair representation. We therefore expect equal opportunities bargains to be more likely in highly visible international organizations than in organizations that go under the radar.

Finally, the third type of bargain—representation as diversity—can be expected to be most relevant when the effective delivery of services on the ground is central to the organization's legitimacy. Two specific propositions can be developed:

Proposition 5: 'Representation as diversity' bargains are more likely in international organizations with greater operational responsibilities than in organizations with limited operational responsibilities. International organizations vary in terms of function or task: while some organizations are mainly engaged in the development of policies, rules and standards, others have extensive operational responsibilities, for instance providing development aid or peace-keeping services in conflict zones (Rittberger et al. 2019, p. 6). Organizations with substantial operational responsibilities interact directly with clients and need local knowledge to deliver effective policies (Eckhard 2018). For instance, Eckhard describes how UN peacebuilding staff rely heavily on knowledge about the local environment, and how local staff are the most important source of this kind of information. 'Representation as diversity' bargains are therefore more likely to be struck in operational organizations than in organizations with limited operational responsibilities.

Proposition 6: 'Representation as diversity' bargains are more likely in international organizations whose activities have a broad geographical reach than in organizations whose activities have a restricted geographical scope. Finally, the geographical reach of the activities of international organizations varies. Some organizations operate across the world, while others are limited to a specific region. Organizations with a global reach face greater challenges of delivering services in diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, economic and political-institutional contexts. For instance, Weller and Xu note about the World Bank—an organization with projects all over the world—that its country offices 'face quite different challenges across countries when representing the Bank in the field. They have to adjust to local aspirations and idiosyncrasies. Demands and styles vary from region to region' (2010, p. 220). Organizations with a global reach have an increased need for context-specific knowledge which client communities can provide. Therefore, diversity bargains are more likely to be forged in these organizations than in regionally focused organizations.

6 | CONCLUSION

This article has contributed to the nascent literature on representative bureaucracy in international organizations. Going beyond existing work in public administration and international relations, it offers a coherent theoretical framework for analysing the multiple rationales for representative bureaucracy and multiple bureaucratic representation relationships in international organizations. Drawing on the notion of public service bargains, it has theorized three types of representational bargains in international administrations and the conditions conducive to these bargains. This argument sheds new theoretical light on the phenomenon of representative bureaucracy in international organizations and provides an analytical scheme for future research. It also contributes to broader debates about international public administration by discussing how the specific features of international organizations—and the

ways in which these organizations vary—matter for the relationship between international bureaucracies and their political and societal environment.

The article makes a novel theoretical move by using the public service bargains framework to address the issue of representative bureaucracy. This theoretical combination offers some distinct advantages for the analysis of administrative representation at the international level: the ability to see representative bureaucracy as one of several forms of agreement/compact between bureaucracies and those they serve, and the ability to capture the range of representativeness relationships that matter for international administrations—that is, with member states, citizens *and* clients. In addition, the public service bargains framework has a dynamic quality that offers opportunities that are not fully explored in this article. While the article has sketched some mechanisms through which bargains can change, a promising next step is to closely examine the dynamics underlying the forging, decline, renegotiation and replacement of representational bargains in international organizations.

Yet, what are the implications of the theoretical argument for the central question in representative bureaucracy theory about how passive representation translates into favourable outcomes for represented groups? The representational bargains outlined indicate that a representative international bureaucracy can affect policy outcomes through the 'symbolic representation channel' (Ricucci and Van Ryzin 2017) by increasing perceived legitimacy with member states, citizens and clients, and positively influencing the interaction with these actors. A representative staff can also produce better policy outcomes through the additional knowledge gleaned from a diverse staff (Gravier 2013). But do representational bargains also allow for active representation? The agency/trustee dichotomy in the public service bargains framework speaks to this question, distinguishing between relationships where bureaucrats are tightly controlled by their principal and relationships where they have a more independent role. Following Hood and Lodge, this article has discussed representational bargains as trustee-type bargains. This implies that civil servants do not simply carry out orders from the group they represent—be that member states or clients. This excludes at least some forms of bureaucratic activism on behalf of represented groups. However, it is not clear that a trustee role conflicts with all forms of active representation. For instance, a bureaucrat who seeks to make policies that address the needs of her socio-demographic group based on her own views of what is in the group's interest does not seem to breach the trustee ideal.

What are the prospects for studying representational bargains in international organizations empirically? The article has outlined a set of empirically researchable propositions about how the type of representational bargain depends on specific organizational or environmental factors. Yet, given that bargains are partly informal institutions, establishing their characteristics and identifying what is exchanged is not straightforward. For instance, it can be difficult to determine whether positions in international administrations are valued mainly for the possibility to voice concerns, for the ability to transmit information or for their material benefits. Still, there are concrete ways in which to examine bargains empirically.

First, scholars can systematically examine the formal and informal elements of public service bargains in international organizations. Formal elements can be found in provisions in treaties and staff regulations. Informal elements—that is, unwritten conventions or understandings—can be studied based on surveys or interviews. An example of empirical research that addresses the informal aspects of the relationship between bureaucrats and those they serve is the extensive survey- and interview-based research on the role perceptions of international bureaucrats (e.g., Trondal et al. 2010). Second, the variation in representational bargains across international organizations can be studied quantitatively by examining the observable implications of different bargains for the composition of international organization staff. Whereas an over-representation of staff from powerful states in senior administrative positions indicates a power bargain, equal opportunity bargains can be identified with equal representation in the bureaucratic workforce as a whole and diversity bargains with greater shares of staff from client countries in the implementing parts of international bureaucracies. These indicators make it possible to test the propositions using the type of large-N empirical data on staff representation employed by Parizek (2017) and Novosad and Werker (2019), for example. Third, the factors shaping the making, maintenance and breaking of representational bargains can be studied through comparative-historical research. The underlying mechanisms of the propositions can be

investigated by tracing the initial agreements about the composition of international administrations and how these bargains were renegotiated in the face of later events like changing power balances, organizational competition or enlargement.

Finally, the article has implications for the more practical question of how to bolster the legitimacy of international organizations at a time when these bodies are increasingly challenged by unilateralism. International relations scholars have argued that international organizations need to tap into new sources of legitimacy, such as broader and more equal political representation (Zürn and Stephen 2010). Representative bureaucracy scholars have suggested that a representative international administration can be an additional source of legitimacy (Gravier 2013; Murdoch et al. 2018). This article points to some concrete strategies for boosting the legitimacy of international organizations through bureaucratic representation, which target different audiences. These strategies include shoring up political support with powerful member states by inviting national elites into positions of administrative power, increasing legitimacy with citizens by offering equal access to the bureaucratic workforce, and increasing output legitimacy by involving clients in the application of global policies to different local settings.

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ORCID

Johan Christensen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2582-7827>

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