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**Representative Bureaucracy:
Passive and Active Representation
in German Ministries and Agencies**

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Representative Bureaucracy:

Passive and Active Representation in German Ministries and Agencies

Abstract

Public administrations struggle for diversity and passive representation in its leadership positions. The theoretically expected reward is not only increased legitimacy but also a boost in overall service performance. The proposed theoretical mechanism is the introduction and activation of distinct social identities into rather homogeneous groups, bearing the potential for higher diversity in attitudes and role perceptions, and the potential for active representation of marginalized groups. To test this claim, the paper analyses how socio-demographic factors (as gender, migrant background, socioeconomic status) influence role perceptions and attitudes of senior civil servants (SCS) in Germany. Controls are in place for type of organisation (ministry or agency), hierarchical position, educational and career background, religion and age. The analysis draws on the 2017 edition of the *Political-Administrative Elite* (PAE) survey capturing more than 1,000 senior civil servants from ministries and agencies at federal and state level. Our findings reveal that there is no larger effect of socio-demographic factors on role perceptions and attitudes, i.e. no correlation of passive and (the potential for) active representation can be reported. Bureaucratic socialisation, combined with mechanisms of elite reproduction, is likely to explain these results.

1 Introduction

Modern political systems are systems of representation. For more than 700 years, since the foundation of the first “parliaments” in the middle-ages, the idea of representation, as an important part of legislative decision making, has been developed and evolved into a concept which is essential for modern democratic rule (Chartier 2014; Lembcke 2016, p. 23). In her famous study *The Concept of Representation* (1967) Hanna F. Pitkin distinguishes descriptive (passive) and acting (active) representation as different forms of political representation. While passive representation is foremost descriptive and asks for congruence between citizens and the representatives with regard to social characteristics like gender, ethnics or culture (Pitkin 1972, p. 89 ff.), active representation is defined as decision-making in favour of specific group interests (Pitkin 1972, p. 114).

In public administration research, representation within bureaucracy is a widely discussed topic (e.g. Kennedy 2014). Three propositions can be distilled out of the debate on representative bureaucracy (Selden 1997): First, it is assumed that individuals with shared personal characteristics (socio-demographic background) share similar values and interests – even

beyond a socialisation process in organisations, i.e. they share a common *social identity*. Second, it is assumed that individuals in fact act on those values and interests and try to boost their relevance in everyday decisions (Meier and Morton 2015, p. 99; Yun 2018). Third, it is assumed that representativeness will improve public service performance (Pitts 2005), as the variety of societal concerns are acknowledged more comprehensively by bureaucracy (Peters et al. 2013) and addressed with broader knowledge and skills (Wegge et al. 2008). While significant progress has been made in the field, many questions remain to be answered by systematic and comparative research.

In the paper, we ask to which degree sociodemographic factors typically linked to specific social identities in bureaucratic representation theory indeed influence role perceptions and attitudes of senior civil servants (SCS). To do so, we take a two-step approach. First, we map the various group affiliations of the SCS in our sample and thus describe the passive (or descriptive) representativeness of SCS in Germany. Second, we analyse how socio-demographic factors – In our analysis restricted to gender, migrant background and socio-economic status (SES) – influence role perceptions and attitudes of senior civil servants in German ministries and agencies. The assumed causal mechanism is that the taking of specific identities (e.g. as outgroup or minority) influences the individuals' attitudes and actions. Based on our empirical findings, we discuss in how far the idea of an active representation of specific societal interests is reflected in the civil servants' role perceptions and attitudes. Controls are in place for type of organisation, hierarchical position, educational background, religion and age.

This paper is part of a comprehensive research project addressing questions of bureaucratic representation research for the most senior levels of the public bureaucracy in Germany. The research is based on survey data captured at the most recent replication of the sixth Political-Administrative Elite (PAE) survey in 2017 that was conducted by the authors together with Marian Döhler (University of Hannover, Germany). Altogether more than 1,000 SCS from ministries and agencies at federal and state level participated in the survey.

2 Theoretical framework

In this section, we first give a brief overview on representation as a key concept in social sciences with a particular focus on social identity theory and the concept of representative bureaucracy. Afterwards, we outline main findings from the literature with respect to the effects of three important identity-shaping socio-demographic factors – socio-economic status, migrant background and gender – on role perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. Based on this, we develop our hypothesis at the end of this section.

2.1 Theory of Representative Bureaucracy

Empirical research on representation has a long tradition in social science research. In political science, research is mainly focusing on members of parliaments and governments, i.e. on the political elite. Empirical studies revealed a lack of *passive representation* in many countries

reflecting inequalities and differences of power in society (Gaxie 2018). Therefore, scholars often argue for a more diversified political sector, i.e. a larger descriptive representation of different societal groups in parliaments (c.f. Bickford 1999; Williams 2000; Kymlicka 2003; Ruedin 2013; Varone et al. 2018). Empirical studies focusing on *active representation* often draw on the conceptual work of Miller and Stokes (1963) who developed a congruency model which defines a democratic representational system as legitimate, when a high congruency between the interests of voters and the actions of the representatives is given (c.f. Barnes 1977; Farah 1980; Pierce and Converse 1986; Bernstein 1989; Jackson and King 1989; Miller 1999; Budge and McDonald 2007).

In public administration, similar concepts are applied. An early, class-centred argument was made by Donald Kingsley (1944), followed by many waves of debates drawing on the buzzword of representative bureaucracy (Selden 1997; Meier and Capers 2012; Peters et al. 2013; Maravić and Dudek 2013; Mosher 1968). According to Selden (1997), there are three main components of the theory of representative bureaucracy: passive representation, the potential for active representation (i.e. attitude congruence between bureaucrats and represented groups) and active representation (i.e. the effect of minority representation on policy outputs and outcomes). Most existing research has been focusing on passive representation (see Selden 1997 with many references) with the main goal of describing and explaining the degree of passive representation in different jurisdictions and organisational contexts. The passive representation of different societal groups in the group of SCS is usually rather low. The „law of increasing disproportionality" (Putnam 1976, p. 22) explains this phenomenon by the process of repeated selections that career civil servants have to go through until they can reach a high position in the civil service. This process (at best) reflects the Weberian merit principle and draws on norms like hierarchy, seniority and expertise (Rosenbloom et al. 2009, p. 463). However, these selection processes create and intensify deviations from passive representation of the general society. The experts-know-best approach clashed for a long time with the public demand for diversity in the civil service (Peters et al. 2013, p. 5). More recently, the ideal of a “representative bureaucracy” has become more commonly accepted. Beyond the background of growing immigration and social movements as, e.g., the feminist movement, it is argued that representative hiring can have positive effects on social freedom and inclusion (Peters et al. 2013, p. 112 ff.) and could result in a higher identification of the people with the administration, because a representative bureaucracy can be a symbol for the openness of the society (Meier and Capers 2012, p. 421).¹ According to the theory of representative bureaucracy (Mosher 1968), effects of passive representation are not limited to symbolic and external effects. In addition, scholars often assume that organisations perform better if their employees mirror the constituent population (see below). Empirical studies² investigating the effects of demographic

¹ But even if all actors want to diversify the public sector, Meier and Capers identify one essential barrier: the educational level. They conclude: “To the degree that access to education is not equally distributed across the salient identities for representation in a country, bureaucracies will be unrepresentative of the population” Meier and Capers 2012, p. 422.

² Note that most of those studies have investigated street-level bureaucrats and not SCS as it is the case in our study.

characteristics on civil servants' attitudes and actions have however yielded contradictory results (Selden 1997).

2.2 Social Identity Theory and group effects

As individuals act in socially structured systems, social identity theory and the interlinked Self-Categorisation Theory assume that membership in groups influences their individual behaviour (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987). Membership in groups is considered a question of self-perception: Which groups do individuals consider themselves to be a member of? And which groups do individuals consider themselves not to belong to? The theory argues that there is “an in-group bias – that is, the tendency to favour the in-group over the outgroup in evaluations and behaviour” (Tajfel and Turner 1979, p. 38). In other words: perceived membership in a group leads to favouritism towards other members of this group (ingroup favouritism) and to a discrimination of individuals not belonging to this group (outgroup discrimination). A meta-analysis of economic experimental studies found that there is only a moderate tendency towards discrimination, with a majority of studies that show no discrimination towards the outgroup (Lane 2015, p. 377). Lane’s meta-analysis moreover reveals that the type of group identity influences the occurrence and level of outgroup discrimination: the discrimination is for example higher when individuals are divided into socially distinct groups than when divided according to ethnicity or nationality.

Social Identity Theory claims that individuals possess manifold identities; and that, certain *accessible* identities become salient, when they *fit* the context or social field (Oakes et al. 1991). This is by no means considered a mechanistic, but a dynamic process influenced by social interaction (Hogg and Terry 2001, p. 7 f.). Moreover, the literature discusses various organisational conditions, under which identities likely got chosen, which include, e.g., the diversity in the work group, the overlap between demographic characteristics and functional areas or the size and status of demographic subgroups (Pratt 2001, p. 26 f.). The chosen social identity then becomes the guiding principle of action. As such, individuals drawing on a social identity defined by a minority status (perceived as *out-group*) on a certain category (as e.g. race, gender, age, socio-economic status) should hence act differently as individuals who draw on a social identity shared by a majority of organisation members.

At group level, two conflicting narratives on the effects of social diversity exist: While a *social categorization perspective* predicts higher cohesion and hence increased performance within homogenous groups, an *information/decision-making perspective* assumes that heterogeneous groups “are more likely to possess a broader range of task-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities that are distinct and non-redundant and to have different opinions and perspectives on the task at hand” (van Knippenberg et al. 2004, p. 1009). Roberson et al. (2017) conduct a meta-analysis of studies investigating the effect of different kinds of diversity on private business firms’ performance. While they find – as to expect – mixed effects, this study shows that the overall assumption of diverging behavioural patterns depending on the composition of groups seems to hold true.

Modern diversity policies in the private and public sector clearly follow the latter line of argument, investing strongly in measures pushing ‘diversity’. However, in HR-terms, diversity is mostly defined via *surface-level* characteristics, as gender or race. As such, so called *job-related* or *deep-level* attributes, covering the “level of task orientation, or the [...] degree to which each captures the knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to the performance of cognitive tasks in organizations” (Roberson et al. 2017, p. 198) are largely ignored. This might be problematic, as it is those deep-level characteristics which are linked to aspects of information processing, while surface-level characteristics are commonly related to intergroup relations (Roberson et al. 2017, p. 198). Hence, HR-practices possibly play only on that half of the gamut of diversity which seems less relevant for organisational performance. However, as van Knippenberg and Mell (2016, p. 136) sum up the existent literature on the impact of various diversity dimensions, concluding that “all dimensions of diversity can, in principle, be both positively and negatively associated with firm performance”, no premature conclusions shall be drawn here. For the purpose of this paper, the relation of descriptive representation and individual attitudes is of particular interest. The following sections explore the literature on potential influences of the three (at least in the German context most important) socio-demographic factors gender, socio-economic status and migrant background.

2.3 Socioeconomic status, attitudes and representation

The effect of material conditions and social class on human life is one of the primary questions in humanities and social science. Pushed by the growth in social inequality in many countries, empirical research brought about new findings on the importance of SES on all aspects of human life. SES describes an individual’s position in terms of economic, educational or occupational possessions or attainments (Manstead 2018, p. 269). SES might be operationalised via various subjective (perceived) and objective measures of material conditions – relative to others. Across the board, from medical research, sociology to social psychology, there is plenty of evidence that individual SES has a much more profound impact on all aspects of our lives, than one would concede right away (Côté 2011; Manstead 2018). There are several highly instructive findings for public administration research within these strands of literature.

First, SES not only shapes the external conditions of individual human lives, e.g. the access to life-enhancing assets such as healthy food, education or medical services, but also much more profoundly the construction of the self and the perception of the social environment. As such, medical studies showed that the mere perception of being better off reduces the risk of health issues (Cohen et al. 2008) due to reduced stress-levels. Social psychology studies revealed that social and material conditions in upbringing construe specific “culture-specific selves” (Stephens et al. 2014). Children brought up with higher material constraints develop a different perspective on their environment, more interdependent with others, while individuals experiencing higher SES are enabled to follow the “independent cultural ideal – expressing their personal preferences, influencing their social contexts, standing out from others, and developing and exploring their own interests” (Stephens et al. 2014, p. 615). In a similar vein it has been found that a lower SES is associated with a reduced feeling of control over one’s life (Kraus et al. 2011) and a higher level of perceived threat.

Second, SES not only shapes our construction of the self, our perception of the world around us and our social identity, but also triggers the reaction of others in social encounters. Social conditioning leads individuals to expose their roles, goals and actions. These signals allow others to “judge” about their counterpart’s social status and derive expectations concerning his or her attitudes, capabilities and actions (Kraus et al. 2011). The underrepresentation of individuals with lower SES-background in prestigious workplaces and the difficulties to rise to leading positions are explained by these signalling effects and resulting self-fulfilling prophecies (Hartmann and Kopp 2001; McNatt 2000) as well as the discomfort working-class employees feel among their high-SES peers (Manstead 2018, p. 283). Active representation might be one reaction to these mechanisms, urging objectively or subjectively marginalised organisation members to improve the chances of their social identity group.

Third and equally important for this analysis, there is considerable alignment in various strands of research that SES not only shapes who individuals “are” and to which groups of cultural identity they feel drawn to, but also how they act – in private and as organisation members (Kraus et al. 2011). Côté (2011, p. 55 ff.) compiles studies that show effects of SES on the “moral foundations” of individuals. Perceived status seems, for instance, to be a good predictor for the support for redistributive policies (Brown-Ianuzzi et al. 2015). Côté concludes that “social class may affect judgments of morality and reactions to various acts in organizations because members of different classes place different weights on moral foundations” (Côté 2011, p. 57). The same applies to the influence of organisation members’ SES on their judgement and decision-making. Belonging to a higher class seems to be associated with higher risk-taking in good times, while lower-SES individuals take higher risks under adverse conditions. At the same time, working-class employees include more context-information into their decisions and commit less attribution-errors concerning the causes of outcomes (Côté 2011, p. 59 f.). No matter what (combination of) factors accounts for the above findings, they are obviously highly relevant with regard to the social composition of workforce and leadership-teams in private as public organisations. The inclusion of lower-SES individuals into homogeneous executive levels could buttress alternative perspectives and balance risk-taking in decision-making.

2.4 Migrant background, attitudes and representation

A migrant background is, besides gender and age, often an obvious “surface-level characteristic” allowing to categorise persons into a distinct social group (Ayman and Korabik 2010, p. 158). This categorisation affects not only first-generation immigrants, but is handed down onto second and third generation offspring as well (Skrbiš et al. 2007, p. 262 f.). Two potential consequences of such a categorisation are identified in the literature: First, a migrant background confronts individuals with multiple cultural identities build on diverging cultural beliefs and practices. Depending on context and community they interact with, they might switch between identities by necessity or strategic choice. No matter why, this skill implicates broad “cultural competences’ [...] as they negotiate their lives in plural cultural contexts” (Skrbiš et al. 2007, p. 263). These competences might be exactly what diversity managers hope for: the informational asset facilitating better group performance. Second, persons with a migrant background carry one more attribute which might expose them or members of a

community they identify with to acts of discrimination (Safi 2010). Several studies show that a migrant background has a considerable effect on voting behaviour (Wüst 2004; Sanders et al. 2014). Strijbis (2014) assumes that experienced *out-group negativity* strengthens a migrant group identity and subsequently political choices. Although most possibly moderated by the (high) SES of leading public servants, such experiences could not only frame the attitudes but also the behaviour of individuals within public service organisations and their stance towards active representation of such communities.

2.5 Gender, attitudes and representation

There is a rich literature on gender effects in role perceptions and decision-making behaviour, and several empirical studies have shown differences between men and women in this regard. For instance, a study by Dodson and Carroll (1991) found that female state legislators devote more attention to women's rights issues than their male colleagues (Dodson and Carroll 1991). A survey study by Dolan (2000) among members of the U.S. federal Senior Executive Service found that female SCS "are most likely to adopt female friendly attitudes when they work in an agency or department with an office devoted to women's issues and when higher percentages of elite women are positioned within the organization's leadership ranks" (Dolan 2000, p. 513). Again for the U.S. context, a study of department heads showed that more female than male top civil servants have policy areas at the top of their agenda that are intended to help women while „at the same time, the strongest influence on priority choice for both women and men was identical – their own personal values, beliefs, and experiences“ (Saidel and Loscocco 2005, p. 159). In a similar vein, a study by Kaiser and Spalding (2015) underlines that personal characteristics influence women's behaviour more than gender as a surface-level attribute especially in male-dominated fields: In such a context, women with weak gender identification tend to favour male against female subordinates. In contexts that are not dominated by males, this effect disappears.

To sum up: The policy preferences of men and women can be expected to differ (regardless the fact that there are other important factors influencing policy preferences such as, e.g., agency affiliation) and a slight in-group bias of female SCS in their policy preferences can be expected. On the other hand, there is a bunch of potential intervening factors such as agency affiliation, individual gender identification or personal experiences. It is nevertheless plausible to assume that male and female SCS show some differences in their role perceptions and attitudes.

2.6 Hypothesis

This paper links the concept of representative bureaucracy with Social Identity Theory. Building on the two theoretical arguments presented above we argue that SCS with socio-demographic characteristics making an 'out-group social identity' accessible to them should show attitudes diverting from those of their in-group peers. One could claim that only when this reasoning is correct, diversity policies aiming at aliquot passive representation can have a positive impact *beyond* mere symbolic effects. Such variation is proof of more diverse

knowledge and perspectives and hence can be considered a necessary condition for more diverse organisations to indeed perform better. Thus, the following hypotheses can be derived:

H1: Outgroup SCS show a higher disposition for active representation than ingroup SCS.

This hypothesis is the starting point for our empirical analysis. We test (1) in how far women, individuals with a migrant background and persons with a lower SES indeed form “minorities” in the group of SCS in Germany (section 6) and (2) if these attributes indeed lead to differences in SCSs’ attitudes and role perceptions (section 7).

3 Data and Methods

The hypothesis will be tested with data gathered by the German *Political-Administrative Elite Survey 2017* (PAE 2017), covering senior civil service positions in federal and state ministries as well as federal agencies in Germany.³ Within the federal ministries, (administrative) state secretaries (*StaatssekretärInnen*, StS), heads of divisions (*AbteilungsleiterInnen*, HoD), heads of subdivisions (*UnterabteilungsleiterInnen*, HoSD) and heads of units (*ReferatsleiterInnen*, HoU) were included in the survey. Within the federal agencies and federal research agencies, the two highest hierarchical positions were covered. At state level, the heads of divisions (*AbteilungsleiterInnen*, HoD) of all state ministries in six (out of 13) states (*Länder*) were asked to participate in the survey. PAE is an online survey with closed questions. The survey aimed at a full inventory of the target group. The response rates generated for the different organisations and hierarchical positions can be considered as satisfactory.⁴ The total number of cases lies at 1.007 split into different categories (see table 1).

Table 1: Number of cases

Hierarchical Level	Federal Ministries	Federal Agencies	Federal Research Agencies	State Ministries
Level 1	6	30	16	34
Level 2	50	80	40	152
Level 3	79	-	-	-
Level 4	520	-	-	-
Total	655	110	56	186

To measure role perceptions and attitudes, four items have been used (see table 2). With these variables the general attitudes of the respondents towards group interests, individual interests, loyalty to the state per se and party patronage are tested. Note that we could not test which societal groups or interests are supported by the SCS. Table 3 gives an overview of the

³ PAE 2017 is part of a series of surveys based on the questionnaire of the *Comparative Elite Study* initiated by Aberbach et al. (1981). Starting in 2005, the PAE surveys has been conducted every four years at the end of each legislative term of the German parliament (Bundestag) (Ebinger et al. 2018).

⁴ Response rates: Federal Ministries 34.1 per cent, Federal Agencies 50 per cent, Federal Research Agencies 48.7 per cent, State Ministries 45.8 per cent.

operationalisation of our independent variables and table 4 describes all control variables included in the analyses.

Table 2: Dependent Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Operationalisation</i>
<i>Advocate</i>	<i>Does the respondent understand himself/herself as an advocate for broader societal groups or demands?</i>	<i>1 complete approval to 4 complete disapproval</i>
<i>Agent</i>	<i>Does the respondent understand himself/herself as an agent for specific organised interests?</i>	<i>1 complete approval to 4 complete disapproval</i>
<i>Trustee</i>	<i>Does the respondent understand himself/herself as a representative of the state?</i>	<i>1 complete approval to 4 complete disapproval</i>
<i>Patronage</i>	<i>Does the respondent see party patronage as a threat for the merit principle?</i>	<i>1 complete approval to 4 complete disapproval</i>

Table 3: Independent Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Operationalisation</i>
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Is the respondent male or female?</i>	<i>0 male 1 female</i>
<i>Migrant background</i>	<i>Does the respondent or one of his parents or grandparents have a migrant background?</i>	<i>0 no 1 yes</i>
<i>Socio-Economic Status</i>	<i>Do or did the parents of the respondent hold a leading professional position and / or a university degree?⁵</i>	<i>1 High SES 2 Middle SES 3 Lower SES</i>

Table 4: Control Variables⁶

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Is the respondent a Catholic?</i>
<i>PhD</i>	<i>Does the respondent hold a PhD?</i>
<i>Law</i>	<i>Does the respondent hold a law degree?</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>Is the respondent 50 years or older?</i>
<i>Parent Civil Service</i>	<i>Did or does at least one parent of the respondent work in the civil service?</i>
<i>Hierarchy</i>	<i>Is the respondent a top civil servant (in federal ministries Level 1 & 2, in the other organisations Level 1)?</i>
<i>Federal Ministry</i>	<i>Does the respondent work in a federal ministry?</i>
<i>State Ministry</i>	<i>Does the respondent work in a state ministry?</i>
<i>Federal Agency</i>	<i>Does the respondent work in a federal agency?</i>
<i>Federal Research Agency</i>	<i>Does the respondent work in a federal research agency?</i>
<i>Conservatism</i>	<i>Does the respondent hold conservative values?</i>
<i>Career Changer</i>	<i>Has the respondent worked a minimum of five years outside the civil service?</i>

⁵ Respondents whose parents held a leading professional position and had a high level of education (university degree and over) got allotted in group 1. Respondents whose parents had either a leading position or a high educational level got allotted in group 2. Finally, respondents whose parents neither had a leading position or a high educational level got allotted in group 3.

⁶ All control variables are dichotomised.

In a first mapping we display the frequencies of the descriptive demographic variables gender, migrant background, religious denomination, educational level and the social background to check whether we can identify a descriptive representation in the sample. For the analysis of active representation, we use cross tables combined with a chi-square test at a five percent significance level to check whether we can identify group effects. In addition, we apply ordinal regressions to check the validity of our findings.

4 Mapping Descriptive Representation

The analysis of the passive (or descriptive) representativeness in our sample leads to the expected result of a lacking congruence of SCS and the general population. To present a complete picture of passive representation, we present the composition of SCS concerning gender, migrant background, religion, educational background as well as SES. The underrepresentation of distinct groups refers to all of the analysed categories.

Gender: 30.2 per cent of the SCS in the sample are female, while 69.8 per cent are male. The share of women varies across the different types of organisations: the share of women in SCS positions is largest in federal ministries (32.8 per cent) and lowest in federal research agencies (20 per cent). In state ministries 27.6 per cent and in federal agencies 25.3 per cent are female. Hierarchical position influences the share of women: In top civil servant positions, 24.3 per cent are female compared to 32.6 per cent in lower SCS positions. Comparing the results of the four PAE surveys, we can identify a rising share of female SCS at both hierarchical levels over time. In top positions, the share of women rose from 6.7 per cent in 2005, over 17.7 per cent in 2009 to 21.2 per cent in 2013 and 24.3 per cent in 2017. In lower SCS positions the share of women rose from 15.4 per cent in 2005, over 19 per cent in 2009 and 29 per cent in 2013 to 32.6 per cent in 2017 (see also Schwanke and Ebinger 2006; Ebinger and Jochheim 2009; Ebinger et al. 2018). Comparing the organisations, we can observe that 27.7 per cent of the top civil servants (STS and HoD) in federal ministries, 27.1 per cent in the state ministries, 11.1 per cent in the federal agencies and 7.1 per cent in the federal research agencies are female. Noticeable is that the federal research agencies differ significantly from the whole sample: Here the share of women is far lower. As a preliminary conclusion we can state that women, even if their share is rising over time, are still strongly underrepresented in the senior civil service as a whole and especially in the highest hierarchical positions.

Migrant background: 3.7 per cent of the sample has a migrant background. Compared to 23.6 per cent of persons with a migrant background the German society (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017), this group is strongly underrepresented in the administrative elite, even when considering the high migrant influx of the recent years due to the refugee ‘crisis’. The differences between the organisations are low: in the federal ministries we can identify the highest share (4 per cent) and in the federal research agencies the lowest (1.8 per cent). The share of migrants is particularly low in top positions: 2.4 per cent of the civil servants in top positions have a migrant background. There are more top civil servants with a migrant

background in state ministries and federal agencies than in federal ministries and research agencies.

Religion: Analysing religious denominations we found that 32.7 per cent are Catholic, 39.4 per cent are Protestant and 27.8 per cent do not belong to any religious denomination. There is one of the Jewish faith, but no Muslim in our sample. We cannot identify significant differences between the federal ministries, federal agencies and federal research agencies. Only the state ministries differ in two categories from the sample: 20.5 per cent are Catholic and 38.4 per cent do not belong to any religious denomination. Owing to the selection of our cases regarding German states, the relatively low share of Catholics is not surprising as most of our selected states have a lower share of Catholics in society than Germany on the whole. A second reason for the difference is the fact that at least 39.9 per cent of the SCS in federal ministries and 40 per cent of the members in federal agencies were born in North Rhine-Westphalia, a catholic territory by tradition. Here the Federal Statistical Bureau identifies 28.5 per cent of Catholics, 26.5 per cent of Protestants, 34.5 per cent who do not belong to any denomination, 5.5 per cent of Muslims, 0.1 per cent of Jewish people and 4.9 per cent who belong to another religious group, for example Buddhism or Hinduism (Statista 2016).

Education: In the sample all, but one, hold a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), 64.8 per cent hold a university degree and 35.9 a PhD. The deviations between the ministries and agencies are rather low and the groups do not differ significantly from the whole sample. In the German society 31.9 per cent hold a GCSE and 17.6 per cent a university degree (Statistisches Bundesamt 2019). For the share of PhDs in the German society no reliable data is available.

Socio-Economic Status: In the last step of this mapping we examined the SES of the sample. To do so, the individual's family background, defined by the professional position and the educational level of the parents was used. 23.5 per cent were allotted into the high SES cohort, 22.8 per cent into the middle SES cohort and 53.6 per cent into the lower SES cohort. So, 53.6 per cent of the sample have parents who did or do not hold a leading professional position or a university degree, which seems to refer to a high social permeability of the civil service. The federal and state ministries have more or less the same shares as the aggregated sample. For the agencies, we can identify a lower share of higher SES background civil servant (around 19 per cent in both groups) and a different distribution between middle and lower SES. While in the federal agencies 35.5 per cent got allotted into middle SES cohort, only 17.9 per cent of the civil servants in federal research agencies were grouped into this category. For the lower SES cohort, we see that 45.5 per cent of the civil servants in federal agencies and 62.5 in federal research agencies got allotted into this group.

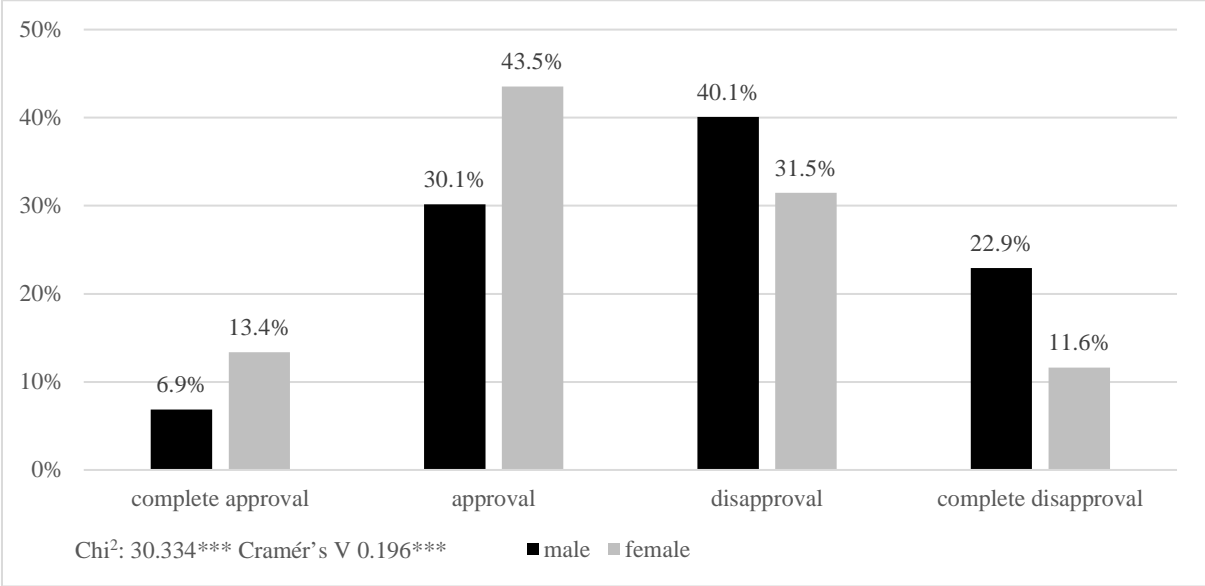
5 Group effects on role perceptions and attitudes

After outlining the passive representation of our sample, we analyse here whether there are differences in role-perceptions and attitudes of the SCS with regard to the three most prominent aspects of diversity: gender, migrant background and SES. As our sample is quite homogeneous

with regard to education and religious denomination we did not check group effects for these variables.

Gender: At first, we checked for gender-effects via chi-square tests. For the questions “Does the respondent see patronage as a threat for the merit principle” and “Does the respondent understand himself/herself as an agent for specific organised interests?” we did not find any gender-effect. For the *Advocate* and *Trustee* variables, we were able to identify an effect: Women more often perceive themselves as an *advocate* for broader societal groups than their male colleagues. The effect is, however, rather weak (Cramér’s V = 0,196).

Figure 1: Cross Table Gender x Does the respondent consider his role as an advocate for broader societal groups or demands?



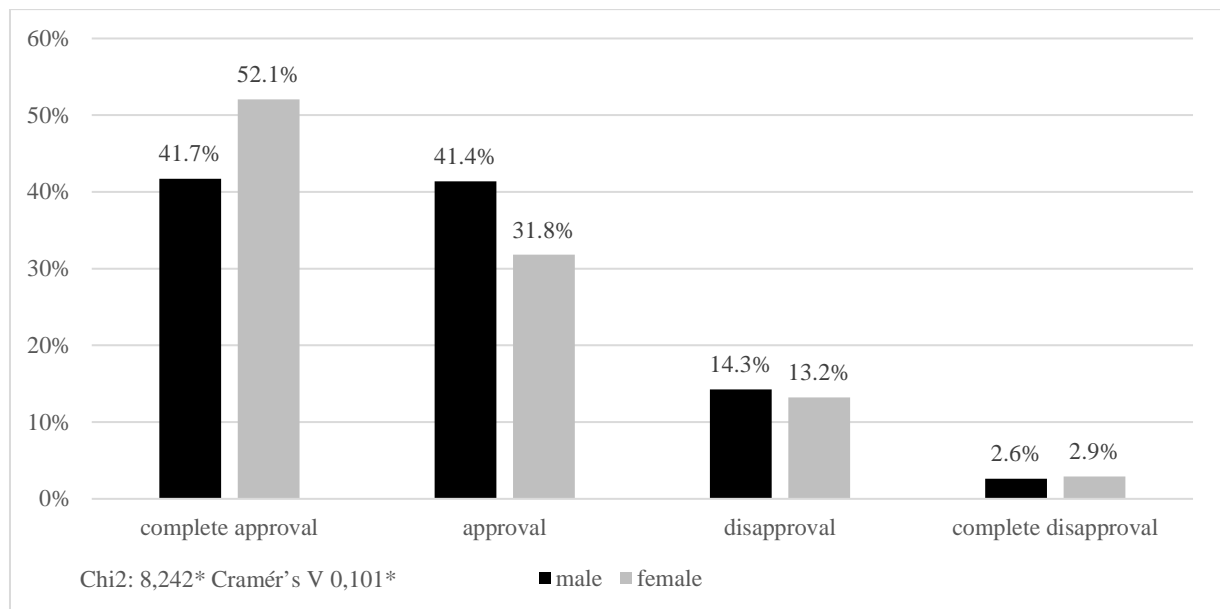
We checked this effect with an ordinal regression. It turned out that the small effect identified with the chi-square test is quite stable even when control variables were added into the regression model. Gender has a significant influence on the identification with the role as an *advocate for broader societal groups*. Scrutinising the control variables reveals that civil servants who work in a federal agency do not perceive themselves as promoters. Career changers, however, perceive themselves more often as *advocates for broader societal groups*. The explained variation for the dependent variable is, with a Nagelkerke’s R² between 4.1 and 6.4 per cent, quite low. Other factors than the tested independent variables and controls, must have an influence.

Table 5: Ordinal regression: Gender x Advocate.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Gender	-.799***	.804***	.804***	.782***	.782***	.802***	.777***	.762***
Migration		-.158	-.159	-.142	-.144	-.111	-.148	-.138
Upper SES		.004	.003	.040	-.039	-.034	-.057	-.069
Middle SES		.034	.032	.015	.015	-.024	-.022	-.034
Catholic			.012	.012	.013	.017	.063	.077
PhD				-.127	-.127	-.065	-.072	-.067
Law				-.241	-.240	-.220	-.205	-.201
Age					.009	.019	.038	.041
Parent Civil Servant						.084	.084	.094
Hierarchy						.193	.193	.201
Federal Ministry						-.436	-.436	-.450
State Ministry						-.591	-.591	-.605
Federal Agency						-.871**	-.871**	-.883**
Conservatism							-.207	-.204
Career Changer								1.463*
Nagelkerke R ²	.041	.042	.042	.047	.047	.058	.064	.064

Women also perceive themselves rather as a *trustee of the state* than the male civil servants in our sample. Especially the variation between male and female respondents for the first answer “complete approval” seems to be quite strong. The chi-square test supports this effect, but with a Cramér’s V of 0,101 the effect size is relatively small.

Figure 3: Cross Table Gender x Does the respondent consider his role as a representative of the state?



We also checked this effect with an ordinal regression and found a small (the explained variation is with 0.7 per cent in model 1 rather low) gender effect. But as controls like a *Law*, *Hierarchy*, *Parent Civil Servant* and *Federal Ministry* were added, the explained variation rose

up to 5.1 per cent. This suggests that the assumed gender effect in fact is a hierarchical and organisational effect as the listed controls lead to a higher approval of the question.

Table 6: Ordinal regression: Gender x Trustee

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Gender	.327*	.315*	.326*	.365*	.359*	.350*	.347*	.354*
Migration		-.346	-.369	-.357	-.368	-.367	-.371	-.376
Upper SES		-.313	-.324*	-.251	-.241	-.163	-.167	-.162
Middle SES		.031	.011	.046	.049	.061	.061	.067
Catholic			.189	.194	.197	.181	.186	.179
PhD				.095	.097	.190	.189	.186
Law				.378**	.380**	.267	.269	.269
Age					-.071	-.047	-.045	-.044
Parent Civil Servant						.411**	.410**	.406*
Hierarchy						.535*	.539*	.535*
Federal Ministry						.810**	.814**	.819**
State Ministry						.356	.354	.360
Federal Agency						.495	.499	.503
Conservatism							-.026	-.028
Career Changer								-.737
Nagelkerke R ²	.007	.015	.017	.028	.028	.050	.050	.051

Migrant background: For the migration variable we did not find any effect in the descriptive analysis and the regression models. The expected effect that civil servants with a migrant background perceive themselves as *agents for specific organised interest* or *advocates for broader societal groups* is not observable. Summing up, the small group of migrants in our sample does not differ from the whole sample.

Socio-economic status: SES did only generate an effect for one of the four dependent variables (trustee role). For the *trustee* variable (i.e. the role perception as representative of the state), the descriptive analysis revealed the expected effect that SCS with at least one parent in a leading professional position and with a university degree identified themselves stronger with the role-image as a *representatives of the state* than others. With a Cramér's V of 0,088 this effect is however very weak. This finding is supported by the ordinal regression in which the effect disappears when the control variables *Law*, *Hierarchy*, *Parent Civil Servant* and *Federal Ministry* are added. Alike the gender effect, the effect of the SES in fact is a hierarchy and organisation effect.

Figure 5: Cross Table Socio-Economic Status x Does the respondent consider his role as a representative of the state?



6 Discussion and Conclusion

In the analysis above, we did hardly find any effects of the independent variables gender, migrant background and SES on role perceptions and attitudes. This result seems to be at odds with two prominent claims made within the practitioner community on the effects of group diversity: First, diversity policies are generally legitimised (inter alia) with the projected enrichment in perspectives and subsequently improved decision-making and performance. Second and more specific for the realm of public service provision, aliquot passive representation of societal groups is linked to active representation as an expression of an inclusive bureaucracy.

In line with these arguments, we tested a straightforward mechanism linking the concept of active representation with Social Identity Theory. Based on Social Identity Theory, we argued that deviant employees (potentially recruited to warrant *passive representation*) brought into organisations with a rather homogenous workforce would act differently, as they draw on diverging experiences. The proposed mechanism behind this result builds on the activation of a specific outgroup identity among employees, which would bear the *potential for active representation* (attitude congruence between the respective bureaucrats and the represented group). This attitude congruence is a necessary antecedent for the *active representation* of group interests (Selden 1997). Obviously, things are not as simple and the proposed causal chain between passive and active representation is corrupted. Various constraints and limitations formulated in the research on social identity and (group) effects could help us to understand the observed outcome.

First, one could argue that our sample of SCS shows too little variation in relevant characteristics to cause any meaningful effects on our dependent variables: Two of our independent variables – gender and migrant background – are *surface-level* characteristics. This

might be problematic, as it is the so-called *deep-level* characteristics which are linked to aspects of information processing, while *surface-level* characteristics are commonly related to intergroup relations (Roberson et al. 2017, p. 198). *Deep-level* or *job-related* attributes cover the “level of task orientation, or the [...] degree to which each captures the knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to the performance of cognitive tasks in organizations” (Roberson et al. 2017, p. 198). Hence, even though surface-level aspects might make distinct social identities accessible to outgroup-members, those aspects would hardly result in any different attitudes or actions, as their bearers’ experiences do not differ substantially from those of the ingroup. While our third independent variable SES covers at least partly a deep-level aspect, institutional selection processes – i.e. the repeated selections that take place in recruitment and promotion in the civil service – might have eliminated truly deviant candidates. As outlined above, social psychology research shows that signalling effects induced by applicants’ and employees’ SES most likely will lead to the early (de)selection of career aspirants. Summing-up, for HR-practice this could mean that the usual surface-level variation on gender and migrant background might just “mimic” diversity, but in fact bring about little variation in attitudes and actions. The chances of improved group performance might hence be limited.

Second, based on empirical findings from research on active representation in bureaucracies (c.f. Meier and Capers 2012) one could argue that potential outgroup identities do not get salient in our sample. Following social identity research, employees carry multiple identities, which become salient when triggered. Such a trigger is the existence of defined social subgroups within an organisation. These subgroups might be defined by tasks, organisation units or by individual characteristics, as proposed in our case. The assumed causal link might be corrupted, when the *outgroup identity* of the corresponding individuals does not get salient. Two reasons are easily identified which could bring about this result.

The first one is rather straightforward: Although several studies (c.f. Rosenbloom and Featherstough 1977; Meier and Stewart 1992) confirm the effect of social identities on attitudes and actions, this result might require a critical mass of minority bureaucrats within the organisation (Hindera and Young 1998). Marginal minorities seemingly do not see the outgroup identity as “fitting” the situation and hence might renounce to take it. In our sample, this might be the case for SCS with a migrant background but not for women and individuals with a lower SES. The share of 30.2 per cent female SCS clearly exceeds any possible threshold value, which might explain the effect of gender on selected dependent variables.

The second reason might be the profound organisational socialisation of SCS inside ministries and agencies. “What decision makers know and believe is also partly determined by the organisational position.” (Egeberg 2009, 77 f.) Organisational socialisation is a process in which employees of a certain organisation acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours expected in a work role at their new organisation (c.f. Ashforth et al. 2007; Korte 2010; Wanberg 2012; Hatmaker 2015). Newcomers arrive with images and attitudes acquired over the years in particular social, geographical and educational settings. The socialisation inside an organisation starts with the entry into the organisation (Egeberg 2009, p. 79; Hatmaker 2015, p. 1157). Egeberg identifies three mechanisms how people get socialised: First, new members of organisations feel a moral obligation to do so. The separation of private and

professional life is implemented in the culture of modern societies. Second, new members comply to role expectations and codes of conduct to ensure their promotion prospects as superiors may aggrandise civil servants who comply to the organisational culture more likely. Seniors may act as role models who demonstrate desired performance and values and show newcomers how they may behave at work. In that manner seniors can actively influence the behaviour of newcomers (Sluss et al. 2012). Third, social control and pressure from peers make dissenting behaviour less likely (Egeberg 2009, p. 78). The steady feedback of colleagues leads to a change of “wrong” behaviour to “right” behaviour. These socialisation mechanisms lead to the construction of a public service identity in which the newcomer incorporates bureaucratic values and is motivated to act in accordance with bureaucratic behaviours (Oberfield 2014, 12 f.; Hatmaker 2015, p. 1157).

The effect of bureaucratic socialisation on the role perceptions and attitudes of SCS is reinforced by internal promotion procedures that reward desired (institutionalised) behaviour combined with the fact that SCS in Germany are usually recruited internally, i.e. from positions within the public service (Bach and Veit 2018). Identity construction can be considered a swift process, which, as socialisation processes within organisations continue, deepens with increased length of service. Egeberg calls this process of overwriting of original attitudes and norms “resocialisation”. (Egeberg 2009, p. 79). These “resocialised” civil servants identify themselves strongly with their ministry or agency and advocate its interests. They take these interests for granted and legitimate without further deliberation (Egeberg 2009, p. 79). This view is supported by two studies which investigated the effect of divergences in the socialisation process of male and female civil servants in bureaucratic organisations (c.f. York 1988; Gidengil and Vengroff 1997). Both studies find no evidence for a different organisational socialisation of men and women. After the organisational socialisation process male and female civil servants share the same norms and values. How strong organisational socialisation affects the work behaviour shows a study by Wilkins and Williams (2008, 2009) who revealed that new US policemen from racial minorities adapt quite fast to the values of their police department and practice racial profiling as often as their white colleagues. Dolan (2002) shows a similar effect for spending priorities of male and female civil servants in the US Federal administration. Women and men in the same department “are closer to one another in terms of their spending preferences than they are with colleagues of their own gender from other departments” (Dolan 2002, p. 371). Overall, persons who made their way up in the hierarchy of the German core administration are likely to be so well integrated, that organisational socialisation effects are stronger than representation effects. This explains that there are no larger effects of gender, migrant background and SES on role perceptions and job-related attitudes as found in our analyses.

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