RESEARCH ARTICLE

Recurring Street-Level Encounters: How Bureaucratic Representation Changes Through Citizen Interactions

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ABSTRACT

Representative bureaucracy theory posits that policy outcomes made by bureaucrats will reflect the interests of groups with whom they share social identities. However, the question remains whether each bureaucrat consistently acts on behalf of its constituents across a series of street-level interactions. Considering the sequential nature of state-citizen encounters, this study incorporates both social identity theory and identity theory into representative bureaucracy and examines whether Black and Hispanic officers' previous issuance of traffic citations affects their current issuance of citations toward same race/ethnic drivers. Tracking traffic citation practices of individual officers from Florida reveals that racial/ethnic congruence between officers and citizens results in fewer citations. However, officers who issued citations in their preceding encounters are more likely to cite the same race/ethnic drivers in current encounters. These results indicate that bureaucrats' previous interactional contexts may limit their current provision of substantive representation, overwhelming the influence of shared social identities.

1 | Introduction

The theory of representative bureaucracy has provided valuable insights into state-citizen encounters, suggesting that a public workforce reflecting the demographic characteristics of its constituents will be more responsive to public interests. The theory holds that passive representation or a public workforce that mirrors the demographics of its constituents will lead to active representation or implementing policies that reflect the diverse interests of citizens (Meier 1993). Representative bureaucracy scholarship also suggests that shared social identity between bureaucrats and citizens influences public attitudes and values, which improves citizens' perception of government legitimacy or their willingness to cooperate with bureaucrats (Riccucci et al. 2018, 2014). By focusing on these two mechanisms, numerous studies have presented beneficial outcomes resulting from increased minority representation in various policies and service contexts. Nevertheless, a lack of placing state-citizen encounters in a continuous sequence leaves essential questions unanswered. Do bureaucrats consistently provide active representation across their dyadic interactions with citizens? If not, how do their previous contacts with citizens affect their active representation in current encounters?

Exploring how bureaucrats' active representation changes through their previous contacts is crucial for several reasons. First, bureaucrats, especially those who deliver public services at the frontline, encounter many citizens and make sequential decisions. Although each state-citizen encounter is independent and separate, bureaucrats' previously shaped experiences play a role in their daily routines and formulate their professional habits (Bourdieu 1994). Street-level bureaucracy literature suggests that social service workers' prior experience with their clients shapes their future ways of dealing with other clients (Davidovitz and Cohen 2023). Other evidence finds emotional spillover in sequential interactions, showing

Summary

- Same-race/ethnic dyads between officers and citizens result in fewer citations, but officers who issued citations in their preceding encounters are more likely to write citations to same-race/ethnic drivers in their subsequent encounters.

- As minority officers issued more citations cumulatively in their past five consecutive stops, they are more likely to cite the same race/ethnic drivers in current encounters.

- Black/Hispanic officers' previous enforcement experience hinders their current active representation, even with the increased share of Black/Hispanic officers per troop.

- Reassigning officers based on their previous enforcement activities may promote their consistent active representation.

that caseworkers who became emotionally strained by infuriated clients interacted more harshly with following clients in subsequent encounters (Döring et al. 2025). Representative bureaucracy scholarship has examined whether bureaucrats provide active representation, mainly responding to citizens with whom they interact. However, few studies have incorporated bureaucrats' repeated interactions with citizens and their potential impact on subsequent encounters,[1] which raises the question of whether behavioral consistency exists in each bureaucrat's active representation.

Furthermore, much representative bureaucracy literature relies on one's immutable characteristics, such as race or gender, as shared social identities between bureaucrats and citizens (Bishu and Kennedy 2020). These demographic identities impact organizational outcomes more than other demographics, such as age, marital status, and language (Ding et al. 2021). Nevertheless, identities are not static but relational and dynamic. They are constructed through one's lived experience, interactions with others, and the society in which individuals are embedded. Representative bureaucracy literature has explored how one's lived experience (Gade and Wilkins 2013; Merritt et al. 2020), institutional settings (Keiser et al. 2002), and regions or communities to which individuals belong (Grissom et al. 2009; Park and Favero 2023) shape the way demographic compositions of bureaucrats are translated into policy outcomes or public perceptions. However, what has received less attention is bureaucrats' interpersonal experience and how it plays out in their sequential contacts with citizens.

With this in mind, this study posits that bureaucrats' previous interactions with citizens will shape their present contacts with other citizens, which affects their active representation. Since individuals often liken their identities to their roles (Naff and Capers 2014), the present study incorporates both social identity theory and identity theory into representative bureaucracy to track 1500 Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) officers' issuance of citations in 2016. It tests whether Black and Hispanic officers' previous issuance of citations changes their current issuance of citations toward the same race/ethnic drivers.

2 | Theory of Representative Bureaucracy and Shared Racial/Ethnic Identity

According to representative bureaucracy theory, a public workforce that reflects the demographic characteristics of its constituents will help ensure that their interests are articulated in public service provision and policy implementation (Meier 1993). Studies of representative bureaucracy further show that bureaucrats who share their demographic characteristics with the public can induce improved public perceptions or attitudes toward their decisions or behavior. An underlying logic of representative bureaucracy comes from two mechanisms: (1) bureaucrats' backgrounds are associated with their experience in preorganizational socialization, which shapes their values, and (2) bureaucrats are likely to maximize their values and beliefs when making decisions and implementing policies. Therefore, demographically diverse bureaucrats will be more responsive to public interests. Scholars identify criteria on how descriptive representation brings substantial benefits for those represented, such as bureaucratic discretion necessary to implement policy and issue areas salient to the groups in question (Meier and Joseph 1992).

Representative bureaucracy scholars highlight the importance of shared social identity between bureaucrats and citizens through several streams of research. First, studies have documented the benefits of increasing descriptive representation, focusing on how shared demographic identity between bureaucrats and citizens leads to active representation or positive policy outcomes for the people served. The theory presumes that individuals of like backgrounds will undergo similar preorganizational socialization, making them formulate similar attitudes and values (Meier 2019). Thus, bureaucrats will reduce discriminatory practices against groups with shared demographics and act to advocate their interests (Headley and Wright 2020). Relatedly, as the share of minority representation increases, items that advocate minority interests are more likely to become a priority or be adopted as policies.

When linking passive to active representation, scholars further suggest that attaining a certain amount of descriptive representation of minorities enables the minority bureaucrats to make or implement policies that substantially advance the interests of citizens with shared social identities (Meier 2019). Using the notion of critical mass, previous literature often draws insights from Kanter's (1977) assumption that tokenism emerges in groups with a preponderance of one group over another up to a ratio of 85:15, and thus women's position in male-dominated organizations will improve if the female proportion increases to eliminate its token status. Despite some mixed evidence, critical mass conditions are important contexts that affect minority bureaucrats' behavior and are necessary when passive representation leads to active or symbolic representation (Keiser et al. 2002; Meier and Xu 2023).

The second stream of research suggests that shared social identities between bureaucrats and citizens matter when passive representation is translated into symbolic representation. That is, passive representation improves public perceptions of bureaucrats' decisions without their actions representing certain groups' interests. Despite some null evidence, the presence of Black officers can make Black citizens perceive police actions

as more legitimate (Theobald and Haider-Markel 2009) and enhance their perceptions of police performance, trust, and fairness (Riccucci et al. 2018).

In addition, scholars note the importance of shared social identities between bureaucrats and citizens by focusing on how descriptive representation provides both symbolic and active representation (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006) or their cross-influence (Hibbard et al. 2022).

Such research on shared social identity tied to representative bureaucracy can be understood through a social identity lens involving inter- and intragroup dynamics. According to social identity theory, self-identity is determined by social categories into which one falls, such as race or national origin, or feels a sense of belonging, such as sexual orientation. Therefore, social identity depends on individuals' group membership. Turner and Onorato (2014) describe this as self-categorization in which people evaluate the groups to which they feel they belong. Those who hold a common social identification become an ingroup, have prototypical perceptions toward each other, and exhibit commitment to the group, which leads them to maintain similar viewpoints and behaviors. From social identity perspectives, such ingroup homogeneity may result in ingroup bias. That is, ingroup members exercise discretion to evaluate those in the same group positively while exaggerating the negative aspects of outgroup members. Evidence suggests that individuals with discretion are more likely to grant benefits to ingroup members while allocating fewer resources to outgroup members (Tajfel 1981).

Similarly, representative bureaucracy scholarship has emphasized the importance of shared social identities between bureaucrats and citizens to improve policy outcomes for those represented. At the intersection of policing and race, there is mixed evidence on how racial congruence among officers and citizens influences street-level decisions. Much literature has explored how hiring more minorities in police forces, organizations, or districts would influence policing outcomes made by officers in those groups. Some studies show that efforts to achieve racial or ethnic congruence between police organizations and the communities they serve have the potential to reduce disparate treatment toward racial minorities, such as decreasing citizen complaints of police misconduct (Hong 2017a) or the proportion of stopped and searched minorities (Hong 2017b). However, other studies reveal that hiring more Black cops has no significant impact (Roberts and Smith 2023) but rather provides detrimental outcomes with Black communities (Brown and Frank 2006).

Similarly, there is inconclusive evidence on the impact of same-race dyads between officers and citizens on police outcomes. Despite the null evidence (e.g., Jetelina et al. 2017), same-race dyads matter for officers' poststop activities. Headley and Wright (2020) find that Black officers are less likely to use severe force against Black citizens, although the benefits of racial congruence decrease when officers have less discretion. When issuing citations, officers exercise relatively broader discretion, such as giving warnings instead of citations (Su 2021) or reporting a lower speed than actual speed (Anbarci and Lee 2014). Such discretion can provide officers

with the potential to lower the harsh practices toward those with shared racial identities. West's (2018) analysis of automobile crashes supports this, showing that officers are less likely to issue citations to same-race drivers. Consistent with findings on the link between passive and active representation of representative bureaucracy and in-group bias of social identity theory, this study expects that when reasons for vehicle stops are controlled, shared social identity between officers and citizens results in fewer citations.

H1. *Shared racial/ethnic identity between an officer and a citizen will result in fewer citations.*

3 | Role Identity, Emotional Carryover, and Representation

While much representative bureaucracy literature focuses on the demographic composition of the bureaucracy as a test of representation, there has been a question on whether demographic representation, such as racial congruence alone, yields benefit for those represented (Kennedy 2013). Early representation studies suggest that bureaucrats who perceive their role as minority representatives are more likely to increase minority access (Selden et al. 1998), and their adoption of minority roles is more predicted by value congruence with their clients than shared social identities (Bradbury and Kellough 2008). Nevertheless, it is still unclear how intersectional identity is translated into minority officers' behavior when interacting with citizens with shared social identities. Scholars have examined the double consciousness of Black officers' identities, but there is inconclusive evidence. Focusing on their dual identities, Alex (1969) finds that Black officers' behavioral propensity is influenced by their identification either as a cop or as Black in the police. Those identified as cops are more likely to enforce laws to show their White counterparts that they are the same cops, whereas those identified as being Black have sympathy for Black citizens. Sun and Payne (2004) suggest that Black officers' identities cannot be entirely blue cop or Black person in the police, given their double marginality in white-dominated police organizations and their Black communities. Instead, their identities are contingent on the type of police activity they perform. Given that identities are not static, but multiple, relational, and contingent, this study explores (1) how one's role identity motivates behavior, (2) how minority bureaucrats experience and respond to potential mismatch between their role identity and immutable social identity, and (3) how this intersectional mechanism impacts their active representation in subsequent encounters.

Identity theory provides rich insights into the formulation of role identity and how it motivates behavior in a dynamic context. Unlike social identity theory, which categorizes self and others into distinctive social groups, identity theory posits that self-definitions are made by what individuals hold for themselves based on their role (Burke 1980). It proposes that people construct their role identities constantly through societal positions and interactions with others. Based on these two channels, role identities provide meanings for the self, and these meanings and expectations tied to a specific role shape behavior (Stets and Burke 2014).

Identity theorists highlight two mechanisms through which role identities are activated and guide behavior—identity salience and identity verification. The first mechanism explains that identity located high in one's salience hierarchy motivates behavior.[2] Identity salience refers to the probability or readiness to act out an identity, and it is influenced by how committed one is to that identity (Stryker and Serpe 1994). Salient identities are more likely to be activated and establish one's perspectives in evaluating and interacting with others, but they are not always invoked if situations impede their expression. Evidence shows that the degree to which the situation carries meanings relevant to one's identity affects the likelihood that the identity is activated in that situation (Stets and Burke 2014; Stets and Carter 2012). Thus, in the case of minority officers, their social identities are more likely to be activated in their interactions with same-race/ethnic citizens, compared to white citizens. Nevertheless, their social identity can be activated only when the situation allows. If officers initiate the interactions to sanction those who violated the law, officers' social identities are hardly invoked.

Once the identity is activated, its verification becomes important. As the second mechanism of the identity-behavior link, identity can be verified when the perceived self-meaning matches that of the situation. It assumes that people continue to compare perceived self-meanings in the situation with those in their identity standard and keep adjusting their behavior. In particular, how one sees oneself in the situation is often derived from how others see the self (Stets 2006). Such reflective appraisals ensure that others see them the same way they see themselves. Yet, one's activated identity is not automatically verified due to other types of identity.[3] While all bureaucrats experience pressure to adopt specific roles, minority administrators often face cross-pressures to serve administrative roles and advocate minority interests.

Identity theory highlights that identity verification involves emotions. A match between the self-meaning and that of the situation provides positive emotions, whereas a mismatch or disconfirmation results in negative emotions. To cope with identity non-verification and following distress, individuals employ several strategies. One is to criticize others or resist the current state to assert their identity meanings in the situation. Evidence suggests that those who experience identity nonverification are likely to counteract the meanings in the discrepant feedback (Stets et al. 2020). In the case of minority officers, iterations of citizen contacts can establish an internal feedback loop, which allows them to compare their self-meanings with how citizens see them and adjust their behavior. Through this process, minority officers counteract symbolic expectations from the same minority citizens and rather exhibit harsh attitudes toward them.

Another strategy is selective perception or interpretation, where individuals ignore cues that do not support their identity and attend to (or interpret) cues that confirm their identities in the situation. Hence, minority officers selectively adopt what fits the situation. However, this does not mean the wholesale rejection of either identity. In the face of social identity-based stereotypes on one's performance, identity bifurcation occurs, and people selectively disavow some portions of social identity that generate disparagement about their performance while maintaining the rest (Pronin et al. 2004). Similarly, minority officers will hold both racial and cop identities but selectively drop some race-based attributes that hinder their performance in street-level situations. Thus, challenges in identity verification lead minority officers to invoke their role identity rather than social identity, without rejecting either.

Beyond emotions as outcomes of self-verification, identity theory underscores the carryover effects of emotions, suggesting that "intrapersonal and interpersonal factors do arouse emotions in a situation, and these emotions influence subsequent interactions" (Stets and Osborn 2008, 174). Thus, people's affective state is not created anew in every interaction but is carried over to subsequent interactions. Emotion can be a proximal cause of one's behavior, but people also behave based on retrospective appraisals of their emotions (DeWall et al. 2016). Hence, people's current behavior is guided by what they have experienced previously, and their previous emotions provide feedback on future situations. Notably, negative emotions serve as a more direct cause for one's behavior than positive ones (Baumeister et al. 2007).

Street-level bureaucracy literature delineates how bureaucrats' negative emotions from one interaction are carried over to the next. Döring et al. (2025) show that caseworkers who experienced distress in the preceding encounter reacted harshly toward their next clients. Their study explains emotional spillover in sequential encounters as *interclient episodicity*, which involves reciprocal experiences of service providers and recipients. Davidovitz and Cohen (2023) find that social workers and teachers who experienced trust betrayal by their clients are more likely to be restrained and set boundaries in their future interactions with other clients. In a policing context, if officers stop a driver who violates the law and issue citations, it arouses negative emotions and facilitates their learning for subsequent interactions with other drivers. Such emotional spillovers and learnings through street-level interactions dominate officers' internal motivations to serve their future citizens. In this case, whether they share social identities becomes less significant, but negative emotions in the preceding encounter will become new inputs for the subsequent encounters, which makes the officer maintain their strengthened role identity.

In sum, this study expects the following. Frontline workers have a different salience hierarchy among multiple identities. As they interact with citizens in sequential encounters, they are put in a feedback loop. From the identity theory perspective, same racial/ethnic encounters are more likely to make minority bureaucrats confront internal challenges in their identity verification due to inherent discrepancies between their social and role identities and expected behaviors tied to them. As a self-appraisal process, minority bureaucrats are likely to exhibit harsh attitudes toward the same minority citizens to counteract their symbolic expectations or selectively drop race-related features that desensitize their law enforcement activities. Such processes not only lessen the distress but also make them invoke their role identity rather than their social identity. Thus, sequential interactions with citizens on the street may make minority officers concentrate on their law enforcement practices. Along with this mechanism, officers' experience of stopping drivers who violate the law and issuing citations
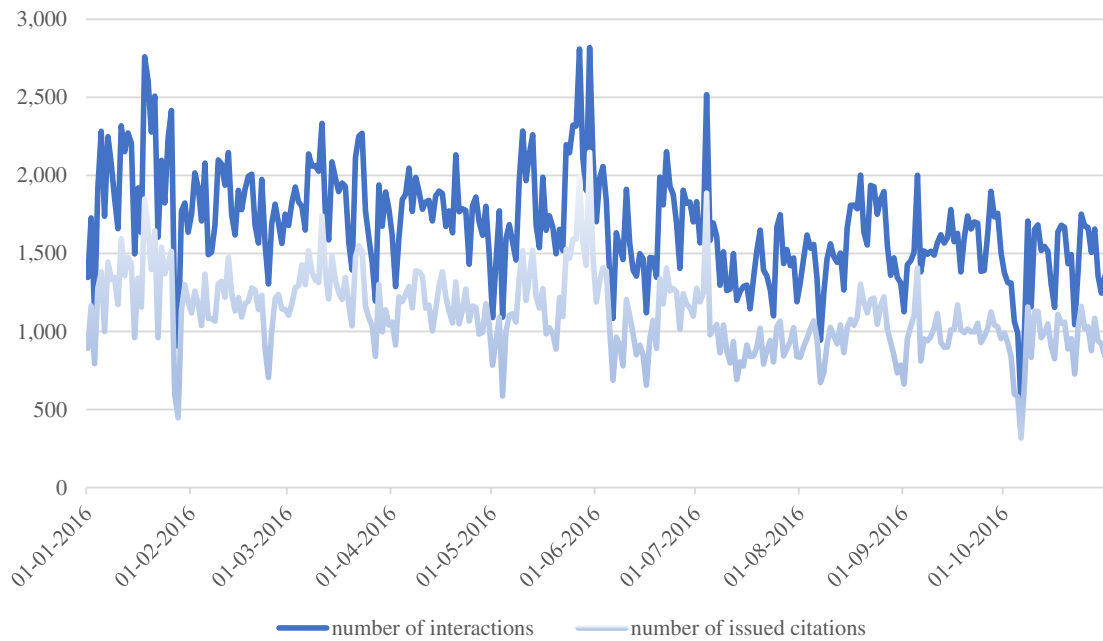
FIGURE 1 | Number of traffic stops and issued citations in FL, 2016.

can formulate another unpleasant emotion, which will be carried over to subsequent encounters. Therefore, an officer is likely to maintain sanctioning behavior toward the following citizens in the ensuing encounter, regardless of their social identity, and it ultimately cancels out the benefits of active representation.

H2. *A minority officer who issued citations in the preceding encounter is more likely to issue citations to the same race/ethnic driver at a current encounter.*

4 | Empirical Strategy

4.1 | Settings and Data

In Florida, it is illegal to establish or maintain traffic ticket quotas. In 2014, officers in the city of Waldo police department disclosed their implicit ticket quotas, and traffic tickets accounted for nearly half the city's revenue. Consequently, Florida state law was enacted in 2015, which prohibits its highway patrol, local police, and sheriff agencies from establishing ticket quotas and requires cities and counties to report to the state if their revenue drawn from traffic tickets exceeds a third of the cost of operating their law enforcement agencies.

The study uses data from multiple sources. First, it uses FHP's data from the Stanford Open Policing Project, which provides each officer's ID, detailed demographics of officers and drivers, reasons for stops, and whether citations were issued (Pierson et al. 2020). There were 513,898 police-citizen interactions from January 1 through October 31, 2016.[4] During this period, 163 Black and 147 Hispanic officers interacted with citizens (see Table A1). Second, the Florida Estimates of Population Report from the University of Florida is used to collect percentages of the Black or Hispanic population per county. Third, information on road networks and traffic volume is collected from the Florida Department of Transportation. Fourth,

community factors are drawn from the Florida Department of Health. Finally, percentages of Black or Hispanic officers per troop are collected from the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

4.2 | Variables

A dependent variable, *citation*, indicates whether an officer issued citations to drivers. Figure 1 shows the daily number of state-citizen interactions and issued citations by 1500 officers across the state. Of 513,898 stops, 338,767 citations were issued. Table A2 displays the counts of issued citations per officer and driver's race. As key explanatory variables, two same-race dyad variables are created. *Same Black* indicates whether the race of both the officer and the stopped citizen is Black. Likewise, *Same Hispanic* indicates whether officers and stopped citizens are both Hispanic. Another key explanatory variable, *Citations in the Preceding Stop*, takes 1 if an officer issued citations in their preceding interaction and 0 otherwise. To test whether issuing citations in a preceding stop affects officers' active representation, two interaction terms, *Same Black×Citations in the Preceding Stop* and *Same Hispanic×Citations in the Preceding Stop*, are created.

Control variables are grouped into five categories. The first category indicates the demographic characteristics of officers and citizens. It includes eight dichotomous variables of officers' and citizens' race/ethnicity—White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian. Thus, the "other" category becomes the reference for officers' and drivers' race/ethnicity in the regression. In addition, officers' age, gender, and tenure are considered.

The second category captures situational circumstances of encounters, such as *reasons for stops*. Within 513,898 encounters, there are countless combinations of reasons for each stop, so reasons that account for at least 1% of the total reasons are selected (see Table A3).

The third category indicates types of road hierarchy, such as whether stops are made on *arterial* or *collector roads*. According to Title XXVI of Florida Statutes, arterial roads carry high traffic volume, long trip length, and high operating speed, whereas collector roads have low traffic volume, average trip length, and moderate operating speed. Therefore, highways and expressways are categorized as arterial roads, while local streets to access residential properties are collector roads. Evidence suggests that citations are often issued on arterial roads rather than collector roads (Su 2021). Thus, this study includes each county's arterial (or collector) road mileage as a percentage of total arterial (or collector) road mileage in the state.

The fourth category captures environments of encounters, such as the percentage of Black or Hispanic population, median household income, crime rates per 1000, and unemployment rate. Evidence suggests that discriminatory police practices toward minorities are found in regions with lower median incomes, higher crime rates, and higher unemployment rates (Smith and Petrocelli 2001).

The last category captures institutional settings, including percentages of Black or Hispanic officers per troop. Evidence suggests that achieving a certain amount of minority representation is necessary for minority employees to advocate for the interests of those represented (Meier 2019). Table A4 presents summary statistics for all variables.

4.3 | Model Specification

To evaluate the first hypothesis, the model is expressed as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 R_i + \gamma_1 X_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where Y_i denotes whether an officer i issued citations, R_i indicates whether the officer i encountered the same-race citizens, X_i is a vector of the other explanatory variables, α_1 is the constant, β_1 and γ_1 are coefficients of the variables, and ε_i is an error term. Then, an interaction term is added to test whether issuing citations in the preceding encounter may alter the officer's active representation in current encounters.

$$Y_i = \alpha_2 + \beta_2 R_i + \delta V_i + \mu R_i V_i + \gamma_2 X_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where V_i refers to whether the officer i issued the citation in the preceding stop, and both δ and μ are coefficients of newly added variables. This study performs probit regressions, with individual fixed effects.

5 | Findings

The first columns in Tables 1 and 2 present probit estimates, showing that racial/ethnic congruence between an officer and a stopped driver results in fewer citations. In detail, same Black encounters are 4.6% less likely to result in citations, whereas same Hispanic encounters are 1.9% less likely to result in citations[5] (see Column 1 in Tables 3 and 4). These

TABLE 1 | Probit results for same Black encounters.

	(1)	(2)
Same Black	−0.163*** (0.02)	−0.189*** (0.02)
Citations in the preceding stop		0.642*** (0.00)
Same Black×Citations in the preceding stop		0.057* (0.03)
Percentage of Black officers in a troop	0.030*** (0.00)	0.024*** (0.00)
White officer	−0.077*** (0.04)	−0.050*** (0.01)
Black officer	−0.026** (0.01)	−0.029** (0.01)
Hispanic officer	−0.146*** (0.01)	−0.127*** (0.01)
Asian officer	0.040† (0.05)	0.082† (0.02)
Officer age	0.002*** (0.00)	0.002*** (0.00)
Years of service	−0.000† (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
Male officer	−0.043*** (0.01)	−0.036*** (0.01)
White driver	−0.171*** (0.01)	−0.183*** (0.01)
Black driver	−0.073*** (0.01)	−0.081*** (0.01)
Hispanic driver	0.007 (0.01)	0.008 (0.01)
Asian driver	−0.044 (0.21)	−0.021 (0.02)
Arterial roads	5.161*** (0.19)	4.342*** (0.19)
Collector roads	1.536*** (0.07)	1.320*** (0.07)
Percentage of Black population	−0.000 (0.00)	−0.004 (0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.005*** (0.00)	0.004*** (0.00)
Median household income	0.002*** (0.00)	0.002*** (0.00)
Crime rates	−0.001** (0.00)	−0.001** (0.00)
Unemployment rate	0.072* (0.00)	−0.008† (0.00)
Constant	−0.324*** (0.04)	−0.596*** (0.01)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included
N	512,667	511,168
Wald Chi^2	141,002.04	162,206.86
Prob > Chi^2	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R^2	0.2143	0.2437

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
†$p < 0.1$.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$.

findings support the first hypothesis grounded in representative bureaucracy and social identity theory that racial/ethnic congruence between bureaucrats and citizens matters for their active representation. To get clearer contexts of their

TABLE 2 | Probit results for same Hispanic encounters.

	(1)	(2)
Same Hispanic	−0.065** (0.02)	−0.287*** (0.01)
Citations in the preceding stop		0.650*** (0.00)
Same Hispanic × Citations in the preceding stop		0.343*** (0.01)
Percentage of Hispanic troopers	0.000† (0.00)	0.000 (0.00)
White officer	−0.076* (0.04)	−0.062*** (0.00)
Black officer	−0.060 (0.04)	−0.061*** (0.00)
Hispanic officer	−0.108** (0.04)	−0.093*** (0.00)
Asian officer	0.096† (0.05)	0.083*** (0.01)
Officer age	0.002 (0.00)	0.002*** (0.00)
Years of service	−0.001 (0.00)	−0.000 (0.01)
Male officer	−0.042 (0.03)	−0.033 (0.00)
White driver	−0.182** (0.01)	−0.191*** (0.01)
Black driver	−0.091*** (0.02)	−0.098*** (0.02)
Hispanic driver	0.026** (0.01)	0.024*** (0.01)
Asian driver	−0.044*** (0.01)	−0.037*** (0.02)
Arterial roads	4.284** (0.64)	3.567*** (0.19)
Collector roads	2.151** (0.53)	1.826*** (0.07)
Percentage of Black population	0.005** (0.00)	0.004** (0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.007*** (0.00)	0.005*** (0.00)
Median household income	0.015*** (0.00)	0.013*** (0.00)
Crime rates	0.001† (0.00)	0.001† (0.00)
Unemployment rate	0.072*** (0.01)	0.058*** (0.00)
Constant	−1.137*** (0.14)	−1.255*** (0.12)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included
N	512,667	511,168
LR Chi^2	141,002.04	159,940.16
Prob > Chi^2	0.0000	0.000
Pseudo R^2	0.2143	0.2438

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
†$p < 0.1$.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE 3 | Marginal effects for same Black encounters.

	(1)	(2)
Same Black	−0.046*** (0.00)	−0.051*** (0.01)
Citations in the preceding stop		0.174*** (0.00)
Same Black × Citations in the preceding stop		0.015** (0.01)
Percentage of Black officers per troop	0.008*** (0.00)	0.006*** (0.00)
White officer	−0.017*** (0.01)	−0.014*** (0.00)
Black officer	−0.007** (0.01)	−0.008** (0.00)
Hispanic officer	−0.042*** (0.00)	−0.034*** (0.00)
Asian officer	0.011† (0.01)	0.010† (0.01)
Officer age	0.001*** (0.00)	0.000*** (0.00)
Years of service	−0.000† (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
Male officer	−0.012*** (0.01)	−0.010*** (0.00)
White driver	−0.049*** (0.00)	−0.050*** (0.00)
Black driver	−0.021*** (0.00)	−0.022*** (0.00)
Hispanic driver	0.002 (0.00)	0.002 (0.00)
Asian driver	−0.007 (0.01)	−0.006 (0.01)
Arterial roads	1.467*** (0.05)	1.178*** (0.05)
Collector roads	0.437*** (0.02)	0.358*** (0.02)
Percentage of Black population	0.001 (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)
Median household income	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)
Crime rates	−0.000** (0.00)	−0.000** (0.00)
Unemployment rate	−0.003* (0.00)	−0.002† (0.00)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included
N	512,667	511,168

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
†$p < 0.1$.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$.

active representation, Table A5 shows Black, Hispanic, and White officers' interactions with each racial group of citizens, controlling for their stopping reasons. It appears that only the same Black and same Hispanic encounters result in fewer citations, whereas White officers' interactions with White or Black drivers increase the citations. Perhaps, this may imply that active representation in this study is minority bureaucrats' use of discretion to give warnings instead of issuing tickets toward those with shared social identities to decrease the overcitation of minority populations.

The second column in Tables 1 and 2 shows how Black and Hispanic officers' issuance of citations in the preceding encounter affects their current citation issuance. First,

TABLE 4 | Marginal effects for same Hispanic encounters.

	(1)	(2)
Same Hispanic	−0.019***(0.00)	−0.078***(0.01)
Citations in the preceding stop		0.177***(0.00)
Same Hispanic×Citations in the preceding stop		0.093***(0.01)
Percentage of Hispanic officers per troop	0.000† (0.00)	0.000 (0.00)
White officer	−0.022***(0.00)	−0.017***(0.00)
Black officer	−0.017***(0.00)	−0.017***(0.00)
Hispanic officer	−0.031***(0.00)	−0.025***(0.00)
Asian officer	0.028***(0.01)	0.023***(0.01)
Officer age	0.001***(0.00)	0.000***(0.00)
Years of service	−0.000† (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
Male officer	−0.012***(0.01)	−0.009***(0.02)
White driver	−0.052***(0.00)	−0.052***(0.00)
Black driver	−0.026***(0.01)	−0.027***(0.00)
Hispanic driver	0.007 † (0.00)	0.001 † (0.00)
Asian driver	−0.013* (0.00)	−0.001 † (0.01)
Arterial roads	1.212***(0.05)	0.972***(0.05)
Collector roads	0.618***(0.02)	0.498***(0.02)
Percentage of Black population	0.002***(0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.004***(0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Median household income	0.000***(0.00)	0.003***(0.00)
Crime rates	0.000***(0.00)	0.000***(0.00)
Unemployment rate	0.020***(0.00)	0.016***(0.00)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included
N	511,168	511,168

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
$^{†}p < 0.1.$
$^{*}p < 0.05.$
$^{**}p < 0.01.$
$^{***}p < 0.001.$

regardless of race, officers who issued citations in their prior encounters are more likely to issue citations at the current stop. Second, those officers who experienced issuing citations in their preceding encounters are more likely to give citations to same-race/ethnic citizens at the current stop. These results stay constant when other racial/ethnic match variables are included (see Tables A6–A9). The second column in Table 3 displays that encounters between Black officers who issued citations in their preceding encounters and Black citizens are 1.5% more likely to result in citations. Similarly, when

Hispanic officers issued citations in their preceding encounters, their interactions with Hispanic drivers are 9.3% more likely to result in citations (Column 2 in Table 4). This suggests that minority officers' previous enforcement activities diminish the benefits of same-race encounters in current encounters, which lends support to the second hypothesis.

Considering the shared minority identities between Black and Hispanic populations, this study further tests whether collective shared social identity matters for active representation and the influence of officers' previous interactional experience. Table A16 shows that collective social identity matters for both Black and Hispanic officers' active representation, but these benefits are diminished by their previous enforcement experience (Column 1), and such results stay constant when considering the cumulative number of citations issued within the past five encounters (Column 2).

Furthermore, this study provides two extensions. First, it explores whether the cumulative experience of issuing tickets affects minority officers' current behaviors. It examines how the cumulative number of citations each officer issued within their past three or five encounters, respectively, impacts their current issuance of citations to same-race/ethnic drivers. To ease the interpretation,[6] marginal effects of predictor variables are presented in Table 5. As Black officers issued citations within their past three encounters, they are 0.7% more likely to issue citations to Black drivers at the current stop. The more they issue citations within their past five encounters, Black officers are 7.4% more likely to issue citations to Black drivers. These results indicate that Black officers' cumulative issuance of citations within previous contacts is expected to dissipate the benefits of same-race encounters, although its effect slightly diminishes. Similarly, Table 6 shows that as Hispanic officers cumulatively issue citations within their past three consecutive encounters, they are 4.2% more likely to issue citations toward Hispanic drivers at the present stop. However, considering the cumulative number of citations issued within their past five consecutive stops, Hispanic officers are 2.5% more likely to issue citations to Hispanic drivers.

Another extension concerns the critical mass of representative bureaucracy and its impact on Black and Hispanic officers' current issuance of citations toward the same race/ethnic citizens. Tables A12 and A13 consider how different percentages of Black or Hispanic officers per troop, respectively, affect their current issuance of citations toward the same race/ethnic citizens. Table A14 shows that Black officers who issued citation(s) in the preceding encounter and work in the troop where Black officers constitute less than 5% are 7.8% (0.180 + 0.044 − 0.146 = 0.078) more likely to issue citations toward Black citizens in current encounters. Likewise, Black officers who issued citation(s) in the preceding encounter and in the troop where Black officers constitute 5%–10% are 17% more likely to issue citation(s) to same-race citizens in current encounters. Findings consistently show that Black officers with previous citation experience are more likely to write citations to the same-race citizens in present encounters. Figure A1 illustrates that as the share of Black cops increases in the troop, this association gets lower at one point but generally becomes stronger.

TABLE 5 | Marginal effects of cumulatively issuing citations (Black officers).

	(1)	(2)
Same Black	−0.051***(0.01)	−0.304***(0.01)
No. of citations within the past three encounters	0.105***(0.00)	
No. of citations within the past five encounters		0.026***(0.00)
Same Black × No. of citations within the past three encounters	0.007* (0.00)	
Same Black × No. of citations within the past five encounters		0.074***(0.00)
Percentage of Black officers per troop	0.005***(0.00)	0.008*** (0.00)
White officer	−0.010***(0.00)	−0.015***(0.00)
Black officer	−0.009***(0.00)	−0.010 (0.00)
Hispanic officer	−0.028***(0.00)	−0.024***(0.00)
Asian officer	0.007 (0.01)	0.013** (0.01)
Officer age	0.000***(0.00)	0.000***(0.00)
Years of service	−0.000 (0.00)	−3.170 (0.00)
Male officer	−0.007***(0.00)	−0.012***(0.00)
White driver	−0.050***(0.00)	−0.049***(0.00)
Black driver	−0.022***(0.00)	−0.021***(0.00)
Hispanic driver	0.003 (0.00)	0.004 (0.00)
Asian driver	−0.006 (0.01)	−0.006 (0.01)
Arterial roads	0.972***(0.05)	1.478***(0.05)
Collector roads	0.294***(0.02)	0.385***(0.02)
Percentage of Black population	−0.000 (0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.001***(0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Median household income	0.001***(0.00)	0.002***(0.00)
Crime rates	−0.000** (0.00)	0.000***(0.00)
Unemployment rate	−0.002 (0.00)	0.010 (0.00)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$.
$^{*}p < 0.05$.
$^{**}p < 0.01$.
$^{***}p < 0.001$.

TABLE 6 | Marginal effects of cumulatively issuing citations (Hispanic officers).

	(1)	(2)
Same Hispanic	−0.100***(0.01)	−0.098***(0.01)
No. of citation(s) within the past three encounters	0.107***(0.00)	
No. of citations within the past five encounters		0.079***(0.00)
Same Hispanic × No. of citations within the past three encounters	0.042***(0.00)	
Same Hispanic × No. of citations within the past five encounters		0.025***(0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic officers per troop	0.000 (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
White officer	−0.013***(0.00)	−0.011***(0.01)
Black officer	−0.016***(0.00)	−0.017***(0.00)
Hispanic officer	−0.021***(0.00)	−0.019***(0.01)
Asian officer	0.017* (0.01)	0.014* (0.01)
Officer age	0.000***(0.00)	0.000***(0.00)
Years of service	−0.000 (0.00)	−0.000 (0.00)
Male officer	−0.007***(0.00)	−0.006** (0.00)
White driver	−0.051***(0.00)	−0.050***(0.00)
Black driver	−0.026***(0.00)	−0.025***(0.00)
Hispanic driver	0.007† (0.00)	0.007* (0.00)
Asian driver	−0.009 (0.00)	−0.007 (0.00)
Arterial roads	0.811***(0.05)	0.737***(0.05)
Collector roads	0.399***(0.02)	0.352***(0.02)
Percentage of Black population	0.001***(0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Percentage of Hispanic population	0.001***(0.00)	0.001***(0.00)
Median household income	0.003***(0.00)	0.002***(0.00)
Crime rates	0.000† (0.00)	0.000† (0.00)
Unemployment rate	0.012***(0.00)	0.010***(0.00)
Reasons for stop	Included	Included

Note: Standard errors are clustered at an officer level.
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$.
$^{*}p < 0.05$.
$^{**}p < 0.01$.
$^{***}p < 0.001$.

Similarly, Table A15 indicates that Hispanic officers who issued citation(s) in the previous encounter, regardless of the share of Hispanic population per troop, are more likely to issue citations to the same ethnic citizens in current encounters. For example, Hispanic officers who issued citation(s) in the preceding encounter and work in the troop where Hispanic officers constitute 10%–20% of the troop are 27.4% more likely to issue citations toward the same ethnic citizens in present encounters. Figure A2 describes that Hispanic officers' previous interactional experience still limits the benefits of same-ethnic encounters, but this is not linearly dependent on the proportion of Hispanic officers per troop.

6 | Discussion

This study finds that shared racial/ethnic identity between an officer and a citizen matters for active representation, but officers' previous enforcement activities may limit the benefits of racial/ethnic congruence in subsequent encounters. From identity theory perspectives, minority officers experience internal conflicts and employ strategies to better match their self-definitional meanings with those in the situation. Without rejecting their social identity, minority officers may counteract symbolic expectations from the same minority citizens or concentrate on their duty by criticizing citizens for violating the law, which ultimately constrains their active representation. Along with this mechanism that invokes officers' role identity, negative emotions aroused from their previous enforcing activity are translated into their subsequent encounters and make them maintain sanctioning behavior for those who violated the (traffic) law.

Further, findings shed light on considering minority bureaucrats' previous contacts for their sustainable active representation. Contact literature examines how the quality or quantity of people's previous interactions may shape their attitudes or intergroup relations, focusing on interracial interactions (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Yet, this study is grounded in representative bureaucracy, suggesting that policy outcomes of previous encounters affect intragroup relations. Therefore, thoroughly considering each officer's previous interactions should be considered to promote consistent active representation. Law enforcement agencies may reassign minority officers based on their previous enforcement activities to enhance their consistent active representation. Moreover, given the emotional carryover among sequential encounters, emotional intelligence training is worth considering. Although it is impossible to discard the emotions from human interactions, training can help officers recognize their emotional triggers and carryover among sequential encounters and take deliberate actions to manage emotional distress and maintain professionalism per encounter.

The first extension of this study is linked to psychology literature on repeated behavior, suggesting that past behaviors offer predictions for subsequent behavior (Ouellette and Wood 1998). Experiments on blood donors show that donors begin to label themselves as regular donors at their third or fourth donation (Piliavin et al. 1984), and the more donations people have made in the past, the more likely they are to donate in the future (Charng et al. 1988). Similarly, this study suggests that the cumulative issuance of citations in the past three or five encounters makes officers label themselves as cops, which results in their issuance of citations and hinders active representation in subsequent encounters.

The second extension relates to the critical mass of representative bureaucracy while considering the bureaucrat's previous interactional experience. Even with the increase of racial/ethnic representation per troop, Black and Hispanic officers' previous enforcement experience still weakens their active representation. This association becomes weak for Black officers when they constitute 10%–15% of the troop. Hispanic officers experience the same when they constitute 20%–30% of the troop. This implies that achieving those amounts of demographic representation matters for bureaucrats' behavior, but minority officers' active representation is still largely influenced by their previous enforcement activities. In other words, the role of bureaucrats' street-level interactional experience appears more influential than their institutional settings regarding their active representation. These findings do not negate the importance of demographic representation of the organization but rather emphasize considering various street-level factors to better predict the officers' behavior and promote their substantial representation.

7 | Conclusion

Despite burgeoning research on representative bureaucracy, a lack of placing state-citizen encounters in a continuous sequence leaves open the question of whether there is a consistent translation of passive into active representation at the micro level. Using individual-fixed effects, this study finds that each bureaucrat's passive representation is not consistently translated into active representation. It shows that officers' previous enforcement experience diminishes the benefits of shared social identities between officers and citizens in subsequent encounters. While much representative bureaucracy literature has focused on one's immutable social identities, this study considers identities continuously influenced by street-level environment and interpersonal experience and examines how the interplay between different types of identities changes one's active representation in the dynamic contexts. By blending multiple theories from various disciplines, the present study explains understudied aspects of representative bureaucracy theory and enhances its practical application in state-citizen encounters.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, reliance on quantitative data restricts it from pinpointing bureaucrats' identity and its impact on their behavior.[7] The nature of quantitative data limits precise identification of the extent to which identities are activated and verified. Since it is inconclusive whether individuals have multiple identities that overlap or jointly operate, or one most salient identity outranking the others, doing surveys or interviews can lessen such challenges. Of course, these approaches are either retrospective or prospective in capturing one's identity and may involve self-reporting bias. Identity theorists have questioned how survey questions can be valid for understanding one's identity (Burke 1980; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Future research may conduct ethnographic studies or use time diary data to comprehensively analyze each bureaucrat's activity.

Second, the study cannot include all potential variables due to data constraints. Detailed information about stopped drivers other than their demographic characteristics may affect each officer's issuance of citations. For example, drivers receive more citations when they are disrespectful to officers (Brown and Frank 2005), not the residents of local municipalities (Makowsky and Stratmann 2009), or residents in wealthier areas when there is a revenue need and retention (Mughan and Singla 2023). Although traffic volumes are controlled, other variations can alter traffic flows or the thoroughness of officers' patrol operations. Moreover, workplace culture within the troop is not monolithic. Furthermore, ticket quotas are illegal, but there have been allegations that some police agencies pressure their officers.[8] Future research can consider whether and how much officers feel pressure to meet invisible ticket quotas, their chief officer's leadership styles, and how often officers engage in community policing or training.

Another limitation concerns the generalizability and causality. Future research can extend its sample into multiple states over a longer time[9] or consider other enforcement activities and incidents where officers did not initiate vehicle stops. There may be selection bias since the data only contains poststop records when policing outcomes are involved and does not include incidents where officers stopped the drivers but let them go. This limits our understanding of how much discretion officers use toward the stopped citizens and whether it varies by shared social identities between officers and citizens. Similarly, this study uses individual fixed effects to control each officer's personal characteristics that may affect their street-level decisions, but it cannot control the officers' hesitancy to stop the same race/ethnic drivers in the first place, which may skew the findings. Moreover, observational data raises concerns about causal claims, which can be tested with propensity score matching. Finally, data is released from the FHP, which may involve self-reporting bias.

Overall, this study provides a broader picture of bureaucratic representation influenced by previous interactional experience at the micro level. Future research can specify the types of episodes or communication qualities by analyzing video footage or verbal data of encounters. Furthermore, considering the level of public trust or expectation would advance our understanding of how symbolic values drawn from demographic representation intersect with its substantive representation. Finally, other identities, including political identities of senior officials (e.g., Jackson et al. 2023), can be incorporated to better understand how different aspects of each identity come into play in one's self-meanings and shape street-level decisions. Thus, this study closes by calling for more studies that weave into unique work settings of client-serving bureaucrats and their diverse identities developed and declined by recurring street-level encounters.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Endnotes

[1] This study focuses on active representation, but the literature on symbolic representation also considers repeated police-citizen contacts (Theobald and Haider-Markel 2009).

[2] Unlike social identity theorists, who merge the identity salience and activation, identity theorists distinguish the two processes.

[3] Aside from role and social identity, personal identities are tied to and sustain the self and impact one's behavior. However, the variance of the personal identity is controlled in this study through individual fixed effects.

[4] The 2016 data from the FHP is available from January 1 through October 31.

[5] The coefficient of *Same Black* in Table 5 indicates marginal effects of encounters involving Black officers and Black citizens, which is the focus of this study.

[6] Table A7 presents probit estimations for same-Black encounters, and Table A8 shows those of same-Hispanic encounters.

[7] Nevertheless, this study focuses on identities, not attitudes, to predict one's behavior. According to Charng et al. (1988), blood donors give blood (behavior) when they have a salient blood-donor role identity rather than having attitudes toward donating blood. They also provide an example of college professors. Some professors have negative attitudes toward preparing the lecture but do it to serve their role. Thus, identity-behavior link reflects a more comprehensive picture than the attitude-behavior link, which omits how people interact with others and are linked to society.

[8] Two FHP officers resigned in 2017 after emailing their colleagues to encourage troopers to issue at least two tickets per hour.

[9] In this case, fiscal conditions of local governments (Su 2021) are worth considering if they retain revenues from ticketing and have high revenue needs (Mughan and Singla 2023).

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.