Political Representation:
Subjects, Contents and Agents

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Summary

This paper surveys political science literature in search of a proper concep-tualization of political representation. The first section of the paper reviews most influential normative and theoretical understandings of political repre-sentation. The section concludes with a summary of general attributes of the concept of representation which ought to be taken into consideration in each study on representation. The second section reviews empirical studies of po-litical representation with one main intention: to provide a synthesis of differ-ent empirical understandings of "who is being represented", "what is being represented" and "who is the representative". Instead of conclusion a novel model of the process of representation is presented at the end, which should be read as a conceptual map for future studies on political representation.

Keywords: political representation, subjects of representation, content of repre-sentation, types of representatives

1 Introduction

New students of representation are often faced with an enormous body of literature with few constants. Representation scholars frequently disagree over understand-ings of a broader concept of political representation. The concept of political re-presentation is often poorly specified in political theory and divergently operation-alized in empirical analysis. Moreover there is a clear gap between normative and empirical studies. Lack of cross-fertilization between normative and empirical re-search left its consequences on the development of mid-range theories of political representation in quantitative research. As one might easily infer, different stan-

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dards of representation outlined in the literature have sometimes resulted in mutually incompatible assessments.

This paper surveys the relevant literature in search of a proper conceptualization of political representation. The first section of the paper reviews the most influential normative and theoretical understandings of political representation and concludes with a summary of the general attributes of the concept of representation which ought to be taken into consideration in each study on representation. The second section reviews empirical studies of political representation with one main intention: to provide a synthesis of different empirical understandings of "who is being represented", "what is being represented" and "who is the representative". The paper concludes with a novel model of the process of representation which should be read as a conceptual map for future studies on political representation.

2 Normative and Theoretical Approaches

Political philosophy, both traditional and contemporary, provides a rich groundwork of discussions that give direct attention to the concept of representation. I will only shortly review the most influential theories of political representation with a special focus on the most recent developments. Proper debate on the "nature of political representation" started with the development of classical liberalism, English conservativism, and modern republicanism. 18th- and 19th-century theorists of representation were focused exclusively on two issues: (i) the aims of representation: whether the representative, in his function of a lawmaker, should aim at fulfilling the good of the entire nation/kingdom or the good of his constituency only; and (ii) the source of his judgement: whether he should rely solely on his own judgement or on the judgement of a third party (the constituency) (Rehfeld, 2009).

These two issues contribute to the famous mandate-independence controversy. In the empirical literature this controversy is sometimes framed by the terms "trustees" and "delegates" seen as two opposing roles which representatives might have within each of these doctrines. On the one side, mandate theorists see representatives as delegates who receive instructions from electors and are obliged to ally their opinion to the opinion of their constituency. On the other side, independence theorists, as an eighteenth-century response to imperative mandate requests, deny the power of delegation and believe that representatives should aim at the good of the entire nation by basing their decisions on their own independent judgement.

The most famous, and oft cited, proponent of the independence doctrine is Burke. His understanding of the role of a representative was an extension of his general vision of representative government, which Pitkin describes as "antidemocratic, elitist hostility to unnecessary extensions of the franchise" (Pitkin, 1972: 189). According to Pitkin, this is why Burke insisted on the representation of inter-

est and not representation of persons. Interests are unattached and objective – they are matters of knowledge and reason and not opinion or will. A representative is just a trustee who can follow their own understanding on the way of representing the interests of their nation.[1]

Burke is often taken as exemplar of an extreme view on representative independence in later empirical work on political representation. However, Burke was surely not the first and certainly not the most convincing proponent of that position. Fairlie (1940) thus implies that the idea of practical representative independence was formulated long before 1774 when Burke presented his speech. As an example, he refers to Milton (1660), who argued that after the elections representatives are not responsible to their constituents, and Sidney (1698), who also insisted that Members of Parliament are not merely ambassadors of a particular constituency will but had "full powers to act for the whole kingdom" (Fairlie, 1940: 240).

Contemporary theories of political representation date back to 1961 when Hannah Pitkin successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the theory of representation. It is not an overstatement to say that there is no single book or journal article on political representation that does not refer to some element of Pitkin's dissertation published in 1967. It is astonishing that Pitkin's book became the single most used source of theoretical work on political representation. It rarely happens that political scientists agree on one standard account of a concept, and, even more surprisingly, it is rare to find so many adaptations of the normative theory[2] in practical, empirical research as is the case with Pitkin's arguments. However, as many note (Mansbridge, 2003; Disch, 2011), what became a standard account of political representation in empirical research is exactly the opposite of what Pitkin intended to achieve. Most of those studies adopted one version of the dyadic representation models, exactly the model which Pitkin (1972) so fervently criticised.

So why is Pitkin's work so important? Pitkin provided a detailed elaboration of the different ways in which the term "representation" is defined in order to fully understand the concept. She compares it to "a rather complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure" (Pitkin, 1972 :10). First of all, Pitkin, by relying on "ordinary-language" philosophy and semantic analysis, studies the conceptual and theoretical origins of the term "representation". She concludes this semantic voyage by extracting the central core of what representa-

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[1] In Burke's own words: *Parliament is not a Congress of Ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an Agent and Advocate, against other Agents and Advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative Assembly of one Nation, with one Interest, that of the whole; ... You choose a Member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not Member of Bristol, but he is a Member of Parliament* (Burke, 1999).

[2] Although some of Pitkin's research could also be regarded as pure empirical work.

tion actually means. Secondly, she provides a simple, widely accepted, solution for the mandate-independence controversy, stemming from her new understanding of the concept of representation and, lastly, she introduces a new vision of the mobilization concept of representation by making a dramatic break from the traditional American dyadic model of representation.

At the beginning she argues that political theorists provided at least four different definitions of representation: (i) formalistic representation, (ii) descriptive representation, (iii) symbolic representation, and (iv) substantive representation, and sets two conditions that each definition of political representation must fulfil. Firstly, representation must be conceptualized as an activity and, secondly, representation has to be substantive. Representation as activity means: "... acting in the interest of the represented, in the manner responsive to him. The representative must act independently; his action must involve discretion and judgement; he must be the one who acts" (Pitkin, 1972: 209). From this it follows that representation contains a constitutive element, representation cannot be a simple mirroring of the characteristics of the constituency. By acting as a representative, a person chooses which elements of the constituency deserve to be considered for "reproduction" (Dovi, 2007) – and the outcome of representation cannot be equal to its input. Two requirements are fundamental for Pitkin's critique of formalistic, descriptive and symbolic representation. None of these three approaches to representation include both representation as activity and substantive requirement. This leaves her with a "substantive acting for others" representation which Pitkin (1972) endorsed.

The ability of constituencies to act as well as the ability of representatives to act has to be taken into consideration during the process of representation. This understanding stands in the middle of the mandate-independence controversy. One the one hand, one cannot expect that a representative should act only in the manner in which its constituents would like him or her to, and, on the other hand, one cannot expect that the representative would ignore their constituents and base his or her action solely on his or her independent judgement. Representation thus includes both poles, adding up to a paradoxical requirement: the represented is "simultaneously both present and not present". These arguments lead to one, by now widely accepted, position within the normative camp – that there is no single governing rule which can tell us how a representative is supposed to act at all times (Rehfeld, 2009).

However, what distinguishes Pitkin's work from all previous understandings of political representation is the de-centered view on political representation which she offers in her final chapter. She breaks both from traditional political theorists and from the orthodox practical conception of representation by suggesting that political representation is not a "one-to-one, person-to-person relationship" (Pitkin,

1972: 221). Political representation cannot be reduced to a simple constituency-representative relationship or to the measures of "congruence" as a match between constituents' preferences and legislators' votes. For Pitkin, "political representation is primarily a public, institutional arrangement" insofar as it involves "many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements. What makes it representation is not a single action by one participant, but the over-all structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people" (Pitkin, 1972: 221-222).

Constituency is here replaced by the representation of an "unorganized group": through the process of representation these groups are invented as constituencies from the whole (Disch, 2011). In fact, this is why Pitkin refers to representation as a complex phenomenon, since representation conceptualized as an activity which constantly reinvents itself cannot be easily assessed nor measured empirically. As she herself notes 40 years on, her conception did not address technical questions, in the end it offered "at most an overview of this troubling concept of diversity" (Pitkin, 2004: 336).

After Pitkin (1972), the topic of political representation regained its visibility within contemporary democratic theory (Warren and Castiglione, 2004; Young, 2000; Manin, 1997; Mansbridge, 2003, 2004, 2009; Rehfeld, 2005) and the democratic rediscovery of representation began (Disch, 2011). Renewed interest in political representation resulted in a number of theoretical papers dedicated solely to particular aspects of political representation. Moreover some of these authors aim not only at providing normative suggestions on the proper conceptualization of representation, but also insist on making these suggestions practical and "measurable".

It is onerous to synthesise all that has been said on political representation since Pitkin. Yet it is possible to draw general lessons regarding the concept of political representation which could be a guide to future empirical endeavours. This list is by no means exhaustive since it focuses only on those parts of normative work which could be fruitful in thinking about facets of political representation in an empirical way. We can accordingly draw seven lessons from contemporary political representation theory.

1 Representation has to be understood as a relationship. Contemporary theorists, starting with Pitkin, agree that representation should be conceptualized as a "social relationship, constituted in part by shared meanings". Conventional studies of representation take representation either as a top-down view from the perspective of the representative or as a bottom-up view from the perspective of constituents. Newer theory suggests that we should always look at representation in its entire dynamics. We should consider that both actors have an ability to act in the process. Moreover, this relationship should not be limited to the constituency-legislator dy-

ads and simple principal-agent relationship. Representation, embedded in a social and cultural world, includes a wide range of political organizations and actors and it is never a one-way street. This process-based vision of representation should be taken into account when we create static measures of congruence which capture only one direction of the representational process: and it should be taken into account when we consider causal linkages between various representational elements.

2 Both inputs and outputs of representation are relevant. Representation should be conceptualized both as a process of collective decision-making (process representation), and as an output representation or legitimacy (concerned with the outcome of the process of representation). We should be interested in both what comes in the process and what the final result of the process is. In consequence, empirical research on political representation that focuses only on policy preference responsiveness is inadequate since it focuses only on the representational input and asks little about the actual output or, even further, about the actual outcome of representation.

3 Representation is not only electoral, territorial representation. This claim belongs to a new understanding of what should be represented, to a new understanding of constituencies. As the main initiator of this position, to which he dedicated an entire book, Rehfeld (2005) argues that electoral districts should not be constructed on the basis of permanent residence. He claims that "the use of territory to define electoral constituencies persisted as a habit of mind, a historical remnant no longer serving its original purpose of representing communities of interest, but so ingrained that it was never seriously challenged..." (Rehfeld, 2005: 9-10). He goes even further to suggest that we should remove territory from the equation and simply use random assignment of each potential voter to new electoral constituencies.

4 Multiple forms of political representation exist in practice. As one of the key proponents of the second generation of contemporary political theory of representation, Mansbridge (2003) is the one intent on bridging the gap between theory and empirical approaches. She emphasises the multidimensional nature of representation and the need to operationalise representation in terms of different modes of representation. She envisages representation as a continuous process that involves more than interest aggregation. She calls for an approach that will incorporate new understandings of representation as a process of deliberation through different channels of democratic politics, involving media, systems of socialization and civil society.

5 Multiple forms of political representation interact. Both Pitkin and Mansbridge theorize about competing conceptions of political representation. Pitkin sees substantive acting for representation as the best solution, and discards formalistic, de-

scriptive and symbolic representation. On the other hand, Mansbridge sees the importance of all competing visions and says it is possible that they exist at the same time. However, neither of them discusses the consequences of all of these forms individually or combined for actual democratic practice. The big question here is how do these different forms of representation relate to each other and whether it is possible to justify these different visions and actual practices of representation with the pluralist nature of representative democracies (Dovi, 2006).

6 Representation should not be limited to electoral representation only. Electoral representation has its functional limitations. Higher stability of representative institutions implies that they are less flexible and they respond slowly to new identities and marginalized groups (Urbinati and Warren, 2008). Because of these limitations, many authors suggest looking at other, non-electoral, practices of representation. On the one hand, they look at a more active role of self-authorizing agents such as advocacy groups, NGOs or foundations, which is not necessarily beneficial for democratic practice, and, on the other hand, the call for a new form of citizen representatives.

7 Linkage between representation and participation as complementary forms of citizenship. We should be concerned with linking, both in study and in practice, representation and participation. When only electoral representation is analysed, assumptions are made about the "represented". We pay attention to voters by excluding those who did not vote, are not eligible to vote or do not have the right to vote. This is a major setback in both traditional standard accounts of political representation as well as in the practice of empirical research. By broadening the scope of representation to non-electoral forms, analyses should also be broadened to include participatory input and to consider the influence of other domains of participation besides the ballot box.

3 Empirical Research

The very first examples of empirical research into political representation, both qualitative and quantitative, date back to the 1950s. They include a wide range of general and more specific research questions, methodological approaches and conceptualizations of political representation. In a review written in 1983, Jewell identified research on political representation in (i) studies of the representative character of legislative bodies; (ii) studies of legislators' styles or roles of representation towards variously defined constituencies; (iii) studies of public opinion that ask about support for the representatives; (iv) studies of policy responsiveness and methodological papers on different measures of congruence; and (v) studies about other roles legislators might have in addition to the legislative function such as allo-

cation and service activities. This list is not an exhaustive one since after the 1990s there is presence of the topic in (vi) studies on the opinion-policy nexus, (vii) studies on the representative character of the European Parliament, (viii) gender studies which mainly focus on descriptive representation of social groups, and, finally, (ix) comparative studies on vote-seat representation.
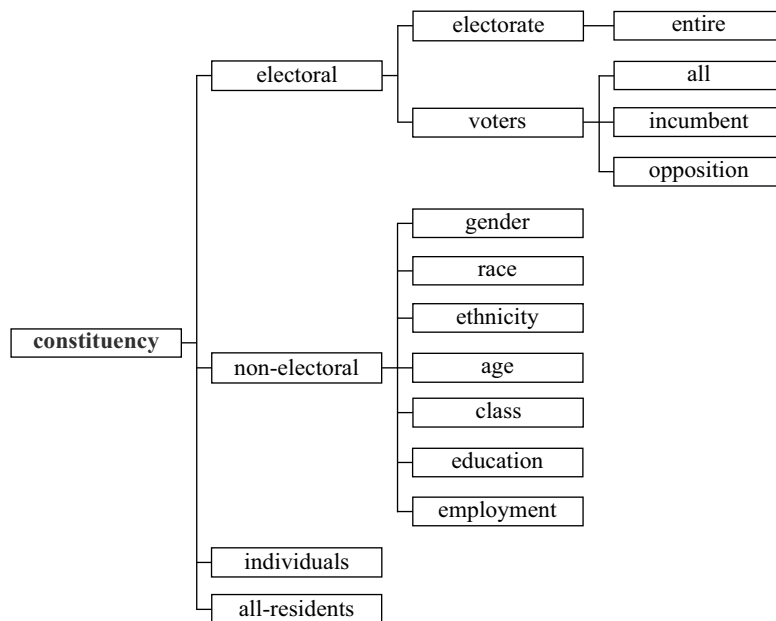
It is necessary to untangle the web of empirical representation studies by reviewing the most prominent work. With this aim this section provides a survey of the relevant literature in search for answers to the following questions: (i) *who is being represented*: Do representatives need to represent only voters, or should they represent all citizens? Are they representing individuals or groups of citizens? What constitutes a constituency?; (ii) *what is being represented*: Are we to be looking at ideological representation, preference aggregation, symbolic representation or at actual policy outcomes as results of representation?; (iii) *who the representatives are and how they see their role as representatives*: Are they individual legislators, a directly elected president, members of school boards or ministers and entire governments? Should a constituency be represented by one individual legislator or should the whole nation be represented by the entire parliament?

3.1 Who is Being Represented?

The question on the subjects of representation is the very first question any analysis of representation has to address. By defining the subjects we define whom to encompass by the notion of "the people" that constitute the democratic domain; that is to say, we define the constituency. As said before, this issue has received new attention in normative theory. While constituency is often used as a synonym for electorate, some theorists and, in recent years, empirical researchers, argue as well that a constituency should not be defined only within the legal frames of the electoral systems. Rehfeld (2005) offers a useful distinction between electoral and non-electoral constituencies so as to differentiate between strictly electoral understandings of constituencies and between other, more recent, definitions thereof. Figure 1 on the next page identifies the main approaches to the conceptualization of constituencies.

3.1.1 Electoral Constituencies

A major part of empirical research until the 2000s has used variations of electoral constituencies, and this is so mainly because of the widespread acceptance of the standard account of representation as a dyadic relationship between the representative and his electoral constituency. Only an individual representative is considered as the carrier of the representative act: moreover, constituents are defined solely as supporters of that particular representative, which excludes all of those who did not vote at all or all of those who did vote for election winners.

Figure 1: Types of constituencies in empirical research

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This is a particularly narrow understanding of representation – a step further would be to consider all eligible voters as the focus of representation. To distinguish between the two, which are both legitimate understandings of representation, Rehfeld notes that we can define electoral constituency in two ways: one, as "the group of people who are eligible to vote for a particular representative (or party)", or, two, as "the group of people who voted for a particular representative (or party)" (Rehfeld, 2005: 35). As will be demonstrated later on, both of these definitions, with additional nuances each, have been utilized in empirical research thus far.

The entire electorate. By asking whether constituency opinion is substantively represented in the US Congress, Miller and Stokes (1963) use this understanding in their seminal study by measuring the constituency opinion of all eligible voters in the districts. This formulation is also identical to the term "geographical constituency" used by Fenno (1978) and it is the most common use of the term constituency in the empirical literature. Fenno (1978) refers to the electorate as the geographical constituency since electoral constituency is often territorially based.

All of those who actually voted. The second definition of electoral constituency by Rehfeld (2005) refers to all eligible voters who actually participated in elections and cast their vote regardless of their actual vote choice. Many researchers either use entire electorate or all voters in a district/state/region as a basis for measures of constituency preferences. Many studies that use survey data usually select only those who participated in elections when measuring constituency attitudes (Hansen, 1998; Erikson and Wright, 1980; Erikson, 1971; Kuklinski, 1978; Converse and Pierce, 1979).

All voters of the winning party. The third definition of constituency, as a subgroup of all of those who actually voted, includes only those voters who cast their ballots for the winner of the election. In empirical literature this understanding is known under the term re-election constituency also coined by Fenno (1978). Scholars, such as Wright (1989) and Clausen (1973) argue that re-election constituency represents a more realist view of the representative process, since voters of the winning party/ representative should be more homogeneous and it is more likely to expect that they will manage to communicate their views to their representative more successfully than opposition voters.

It does make a difference for a general understanding of representation whether we suppose that all eligible voters or only those who are part of the participant public have the right to be substantively represented in representative bodies. By narrowing our understandings of constituencies to only those who voted or to only those who voted for the winning party/representative we are also reducing the scope of the concept of representation and we limit our conclusions to only one dimension of representation. Selection of the proper concept of constituency is always both a normative and an empirical question, and it should equally be guided by both specific research questions and by some general ideas of what political representation actually is for the researcher conducting the analysis.

3.1.2 Non-electoral Constituencies

Rehfeld (2005) defines non-electoral constituencies somewhat vaguely as "the group of people whose interests a representative (or a party) looks after and pursues" (Rehfeld, 2005: 35). The basic premise of this definition is that a group of people should have some shared interests and some unique characteristics that will draw the attention of representatives. However, any group of two or more people can constitute a group with a shared interest and unique characteristics. These problems lead us to two fundamental questions. Are those interests and group characteristics politically relevant and which politically relevant groups actually deserve academic attention?

Verba and Nie (1972) provide the only definition – at least to my knowledge – of political relevance in the scientific literature. They define politically relevant group characteristics as those "whose visibility to a public official might make a difference in their responses to citizen participation" (Verba et al., 1995: 170). The range of politically relevant characteristics changes with those changes which occur in the political agenda and social structure. As a threshold for deciding on the saliency of a characteristic Verba and others suggest that group characteristics should be pertinent to the political conflict, as well as that the group that is delimited by that characteristic should be clearly distinguishable from all other groups.

Nonetheless, this definition obviously includes all possible combinations of characteristics. Interest groups such as professional and trade associations clearly fit this definition: they are homogeneous, publicly visible, and involved in various political conflicts; moreover, they are most likely to have different preferences than the overall electorate. But we rarely find any research on political representation that is concerned with the proper representation of interest groups.

This leads us to the second problem of group representation: which groups, aside from electoral constituencies legally defined by electoral rules, deserve attention in research on political representation? Normative and empirical studies suggest that we should be concerned with those groups who cannot, given their specific characteristics, be represented through conventional, mainly electoral, channels. They argue that we should be analysing the quality of representation of socially, economically and politically disadvantaged groups.

Since the publication of Verba and Nie's study on political participation in America in 1972, many empirical studies have shown that voters differ from non-voters in their socio-economic compositions (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba et al., 1987; Verba, 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Their findings suggest that distinct socio-economic composition of these groups also leads to distinct ideological positions and policy opinions which might result in policies that bias non-voters. As a result "unequal participation spells unequal influence" (Griffin and Newman, 2005: 1206).

This group of scholars, such as Griffin (2011) or Childs (2008), focuses on minority representation, usually advances a positive view on descriptive representation, examines the impact of legislators' race on their representation of specific groups of constituents (in most cases of African Americans, but lately of Latin Americans also), assesses the impact of electoral rules on election outcomes and on policy outputs relevant for minority and other socially disadvantaged groups, or analyses the concentration of minorities in electoral districts along with its impact on various political outcomes. A number of these studies have found that evident disparities exist among racial, ethnic, gender, age or educational groups. For in-

stance, Griffin and Newman (2005) analyse patterns of minority representation of Latinos in the United States by focusing on the equality of government actions: they find that most members of the House of Representatives vote in ways that are closer to white constituents' preferences than to those of Latino constituents.

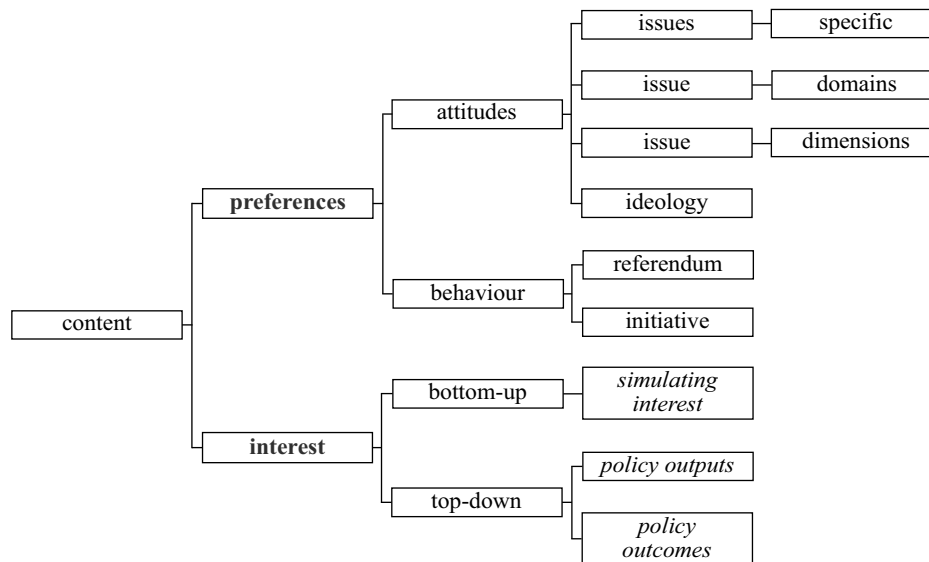### 3.1.3 Individuals as Constituents and All Residents as Constituents

Most of the empirical studies use public opinion surveys with individual responses on specific issue items; they aggregate those responses in order to calculate constituency opinion. So why not conceptualize constituents as individuals, why not calculate individual differences of opinion between each constituent and his or her representative/party or parliament? Rehfeld (2005) actually says that the term "constituent" was well known to political theorists as it appeared in The Federalist 53 times, according to his count. He also argues that the term "constituency", as a collection of many individuals appeared relatively late, in the mid-nineteenth century. However, we find only one example of an analysis that takes individuals as constituents. Ruedin, in a recent paper (2012), considers measures of congruence between individuals as constituents and their individual representatives (one-to-one relationship), and measures of congruence between individual constituents and collective representatives (one-to-many relationship).

Another novel approach to constituents has moved beyond group representation and even beyond a fundamental understanding of citizenship as a basis for full membership in a polity. Those authors ask for proper representation of non-citizens. Immigrant groups in many countries who do not have citizenship status and thus do not have basic political rights, groups like Moroccan migrants in France (Dumont, 2008), should have some political voice. These new streams of research ask not only for the expansion of social and political membership rights, but are also advocates of change in the understanding of political representation as based on citizenship rights.

3.2 What is Being Represented?

The empirical literature on political representation is a rich pool of sources for various understandings of the content of representation. The content of representation is captured by this simple question: How do we conceptualize constituency will? The fundamental difference, already visible in the mandate-independence controversy, is a confrontation between preferences expressed and genuine interests.

Traditional accounts of political representation, which Disch (2011) refers to as the "bedrock for social choice", use a common-sense notion that representatives should represent those preferences expressed by constituents. This vision of representation is also closely connected to classical understandings of democratic

Figure 2: Approaches to the content of representation

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representation, wherein representative democracy is defined as "continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens" (Dahl, 1971: 1). The second understanding of constituency will relates to the view that representatives should represent constituents' interests. This is probably most visible in the oft-cited summary definition of representation Pitkin presented at the end of her book, where she argues that "representing here means acting in the interest of the represented..." (Pitkin, 1972: 209).

This debate between preferences and interest representation is clearly visible in empirical research. Two, essentially not mutually competing accounts of representation are usually employed: (i) preference representation as the representation of existing (and inevitably somewhat inarticulate) citizen demand regarding which policies to follow, and (ii) interest representation as the representation of anticipated choices citizens would make in an ideal situation of fullest possible understanding of alternatives and its consequences.

3.2.1 Preference Representation

Ever since the influential study by Miller and Stokes (1963), a central place in empirical research was given to a comparison of policy preferences of constituents and representatives. Policy preferences were taken as the main measures of con-

stituency attitudes. Figure 2 illustrates the main approaches which tried to capture constituency preferences. The key distinction is between an attitudinal approach which uses expressed attitudes toward specific issues, and a behavioural approach using actual behaviour to extract preferences. Attitudinal approach is most visible and it is mostly based on survey-extracted measures of individual positions towards specific-issue problems, more general issue domains, issue dimensions aggregated from answers to specific-issue problems and, finally, ideological self-placement of individual respondents. Behavioural approach is rare, but we do find several papers which use actual data on referendum or initiative vote to deduct constituency opinion on issues that were subject to direct decision-making procedures.

3.2.2 Interest Representation

Empirical studies on interest representation are still relatively rare. This is understandable since measuring constituency interest is not an easy task, neither in theory nor in practice. As we have seen before, interests are seen as those choices a person would make if he/she had information on all possible outcomes of his choice. Ideally speaking, interest presupposes highly informed individuals and a naturally highly transparent political environment with readily available information. However, given the complex web of informational sources in developed democracies, and sometimes lack of directly relevant information, individuals often lack time or personal skills to consider all possible alternatives. Literature deals with this problem in two ways as demonstrated in Figure 2.

The first group of scholars, by using a bottom-up approach, suggests we should simulate constituency interest by using available information on individual preferences on various issues. Since theory suggests that constituency preferences might be substantively different from actual "enlightened preferences" or "genuine interest" one approach is to use some form of counterfactual claims. Bartels assumes that individuals or groups of citizens with enough knowledge and information would choose alternatives reflecting their genuine interest (Bartels, 1991: 9-10). He proposes a model of simulating "enlightened preferences" by comparing the preferences "of group members with differing degrees of enlightenment, holding (actually or statistically) constant other factors that we expect to influence their preferences". However, this model did not see any real applications in empirical research and many questions still remain open.

The second approach, a top-down one, is more present in the literature. The group of scholars in favour of this approach introduces measures of policy outputs and implications of actual policy outcomes for various constituents (Brooks, 1987; Jackson and King, 1989; Brooks, 1990; Bartels, 1991; Hill and Leighley, 1992; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994; Hill et al., 1995; Brettschneider, 1996). This approach is
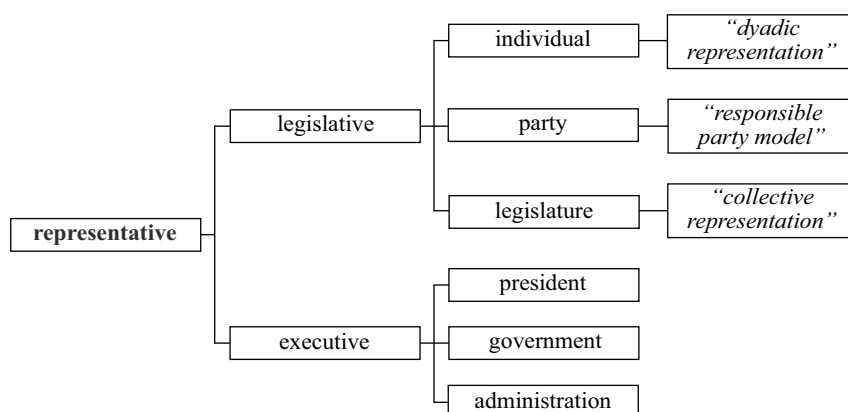
based on a thought experiment; scholars decide what a desired policy output would be for certain groups given some of their selected characteristics. They move a step further from preference representation, and, in line with Pitkin's recommendation, ask not only about input of policy preferences, but also about actual policy outputs and outcomes that should reflect the interests of the represented. Literature that focuses on policy outputs includes legislative and executive decisions such as budgetary spending, executive orders, international treaties or voting records of representatives and can be summarised by the motto: "Watch what we do, not what we say" (Brooks, 1990).

3.3 Who is the Representative?

The dilemma of the agent of representation has been the least controversial element of representative theory and empirical research. Standard principles of representative democracy clearly dictate that the carriers of representative acts should be only those who are directly elected by the constituents through elections. This implies that the main agents of representation should be either individual members of the legislature, political parties in the legislature or the legislature taken as a collective agent.[3] We will refer to this view of representation as legislative representation. However, the literature on political institutions recognizes the importance of particular types of regimes (parliamentary, presidential and mixed) and of legislative electoral systems (majoritarian, proportional, multi-tier and mixed), as determinants of political representation linkages. For instance, US scholars also examine responsiveness of directly elected President or Supreme Court justices. And scholars in parliamentary systems sometimes analyse the impact of government ideology on types of policy outputs or outcomes. This approach indicates that we should also be looking at the quality of executive representation. Figure 3 illustrates this main distinction of the actors of representation.

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[3] In order to simplify the account on agents of representation I have focused only on abstract characterisation of most prominent agents of representation (parties, legislature and executive), neglecting, for the purpose of parsimony, more broader understanding of institutions which would include interest groups, mass media and other civil society actors. For instance, literature on interest group influence on agenda-setting and decision-making process is developed in the United States, but we rarely see attempts to analyse the impact of interest group politics on actual quality of representation of citizens both in the US and Europe. Notable exception is a recent book by Gilens (2012) that analyses whether interest groups influence policies in the direction of more affluent individuals or their organized interest might favour the preferences of less-well-off Americans.

Figure 3: Types of representatives

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                                          ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
                                          │  individual  │───│    "dyadic         │
                                          └──────────────┘   │  representation"   │
                        ┌──────────────┐                     └────────────────────┘
                        │  legislative │  ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
                        └──────────────┘──│    party     │───│   "responsible     │
                                          └──────────────┘   │   party model"     │
┌────────────────┐                                           └────────────────────┘
│ representative │                        ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
└────────────────┘                        │  legislature │───│    "collective     │
                                          └──────────────┘   │  representation"   │
                                                             └────────────────────┘
                        ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
                        │  executive   │  │  president   │
                        └──────────────┘──└──────────────┘
                                          ┌──────────────┐
                                          │  government  │
                                          └──────────────┘
                                          ┌──────────────┐
                                          │administration│
                                          └──────────────┘
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3.3.1 Legislative Representation

The majority of studies on the linkage between constituents and representatives focuses on agents of representation as individual representatives, on political parties in legislatures or on the legislature as a whole. Given the prominence of standard accounts of representation, the connection between constituency and individual representatives is most commonly analysed. Here the concept of representation "involves correspondences between roll-call votes and the subjective policy preferences (as revealed by verbal survey responses, sampled and simulated) of constituencies" (Page et al., 1984: 749). Dyads of electoral constituency and individual candidates for Congress, representatives in the House of Representatives or individual Senators are usually taken as units of analysis in dyadic representation models (i.e. one legislator and one constituency). This model has been dominant in the United States ever since Miller and Stokes' study which was followed by a large number of publications even outside the United States. The most famous examples include a paper by Converse and Pierce (1979) on the roles of representatives in France, and their later book on the relationship between public opinion and policy from 1967 to 1973 (Converse and Pierce, 1986).

However, some have started to question this mainstream approach. Weissberg (1978: 535) argued that there exists a large tradition of normative work which views representation "in terms of institutions collectively representing people" and individual representation is not the only way of approaching representation. Weissberg (1978) here refers to the Burkean understanding of representation of interests by trustees, where the purpose of the entire legislature was to represent the interest of

the people. Since the individual legislator was not taken as delegate there was no reason to expect that in reality representation has to be deduced to constituency-legislator pairs. All legislators collectively, no matter which district they had been elected from, should aim at representing the broadly conceptualized nation-wide constituency. Representation is hereby understood as a policy agreement between the majority of all citizens and the majority of all legislators. The concept of collective representation introduced by Weissberg (1978) did not have a large impact on the practice of analysing dyadic representation in the United States.

The third model of representation according to the actors of representation is the responsible party model. This model is partly developed from the idea of responsible party government, whilst partly inspired by the collective representation concept of Weissberg (1978). Although collective representation was no match for the undisputed dyadic model of representation in the US, it did find many followers in parliamentary democracies of Western Europe. The notion of responsible party government assumes that the party which wins the elections represents the national majority. Members of the winning party should be seen representing their electoral districts only if the majority opinion of that district is actually congruent with the majority opinion of the whole electorate (Weissberg, 1978).

This simple understanding was also evident in the political practice of Western democracies. In countries that use proportional representation electoral systems, such as the Netherlands with the whole country a single electoral constituency, there is no clear connection between the constituency and individual members of legislature. And in countries such as Sweden where dyads could be analysed, party discipline was so strong that roll-call votes of individual legislators did not vary at all outside of party boundaries. Similar problems were detected in other Western countries which led researchers, the first of whom was Thomassen (1994), to present an alternative view to dyadic representation models: that of the responsible party model. In the responsible party model, party discipline is essential to the survival of the government; political parties and not individual representatives should be analysed as main agents of representation.

3.3.2 Executive Representation

The importance of government for the representative process is often ignored, but some research does go a step further and asks about the linkage between public preferences and executive decisions. The concept of executive representation comes from two sources: (i) literature that focuses on interest representation by measuring policy outputs and outcomes and (ii) literature that analyses the representative character of directly elected President and Supreme Court justices in the US.

The most visible example of a policy approach to executive representation is a work by Brooks (1985, 1987, 1990) on the US, Canada, the UK, France and Ger-

many. He studies the actual nexus between mass opinion and governmental policy in a comparative manner, which was a novelty for classical public opinion-policy research conducted mainly in the US at that time. He compares the distribution of the "national mass sentiment" measured by various opinion polls to public policy defined as "governmental actions or positions regarding selected issues as indicated by legislative, executive, and/or judicial decisions". His measure of representation is the so-called "democratic frustration score" which indicates the level of inconsistency between public opinion and public policy. Not surprisingly, Brooks does not refer to this measure as a measure of representation as he positions himself clearly in the field of opinion-policy research. This could also be the reason why he takes government actions and the US Supreme Court decisions into consideration, since this was an unusual practice for mainstream representation research. Conversely, whether intentionally or not, Brooks did move a step further to actual analysis of executive representation.

The second example of executive research is specific for the United States since many executive functions there are filled by means of direct electoral procedures and, according to the standard account of representation, it does make sense to ask whether the President, Supreme Court justices or Governors are responsive to their electorate. The most common question on presidential responsiveness is whether public opinion affects presidential policy-making. For instance, Jacobs and Shapiro (1995) analyse the impact of public mood on leadership role and responsiveness of Clinton during his first year in office.

4 Analytical Model of the Process of Representation

Political scientists understand the connection between citizens and representatives in terms of linkages. The ways in which linkages are achieved are called modes, types or forms of political representation. This paper has demonstrated that the literature offers a variety of, sometimes overlapping and thus confusing, concepts: such as symbolic representation, surrogate representation, ideological congruence, policy congruence, opinion-policy nexus or opinion thermostat, policy agreement, interest representation or gyroscopic representation. I have discussed most of these different understandings of representation, both in normative and empirical studies, hopefully in an order which clarifies why differences between concepts actually occur in the literature and where these different understandings originate from. However, several questions remain open. How do we analyse the ways in which these different understandings of representation (given by who, what and by whom questions) interact and form a complex process of representation? And, can these notions of representation be generalized and applied in various political contexts?

Figure 4: Model of political representation
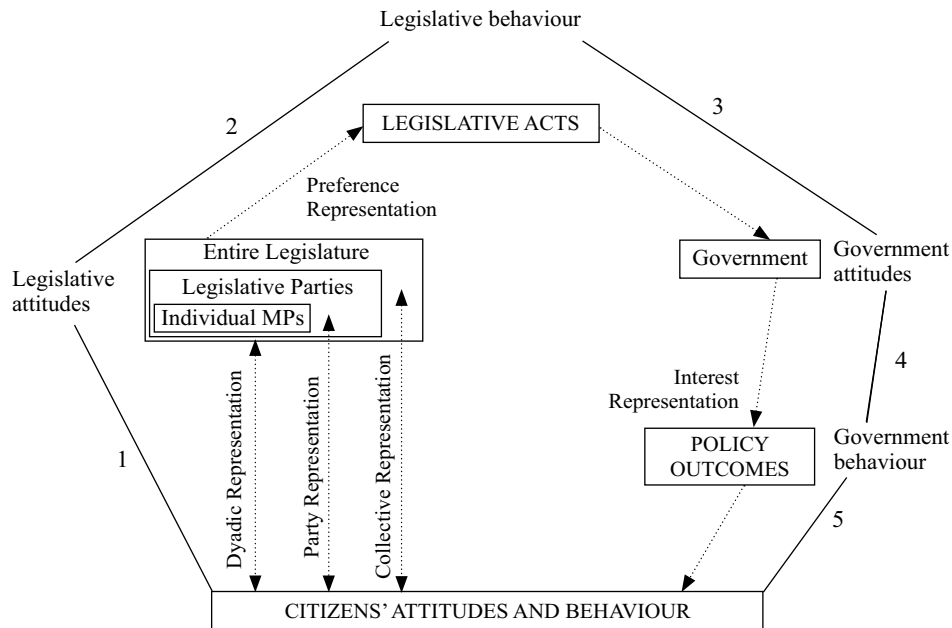
To answer the first questions we need a model in which we can see the overall process of political representation understood as dynamic relationship. The most straightforward way is to understand this process in terms of different types and levels of linkages. Figure 4 illustrates an adjusted vision of political representation linkages created on the basis of normative suggestions and findings from empirical literature presented in this chapter. This model is similar to Powell's chain of democratic responsiveness but, as causal arrows show (dotted lines), it does not end with policy outputs or with policy outcomes (Powell, 2004).[4] Political representation process, in this hexagonal projection, is presented as a circular phenomenon. We expect that final policy outcomes will have an effect on citizens' attitudes and

[4] Powell (2004) provides a schematic overview of the concept of systematic responsiveness. He argues that democratic responsiveness occurs "when the democratic process induces the government to form and implement policies that the citizens want". He sees democratic responsiveness as a chain of causally connected links. At the first stage citizens' preferences are formulated. Stage 2 refers to the process whereby citizens' attitudes influence citizens' voting behaviour. Citizens' voting behaviour influences election outcomes and government formation at stage 3 and, finally, the process of linkages ends with government formation affecting public policies and outcomes.

behaviour. This expectation comes from many studies on the opinion-policy nexus, which demonstrate that a reciprocal relationship that goes from elites to citizens should also be analysed.

The hexagonal model of political representation starts with a linkage between citizens' attitudes and behaviour and legislative attitudes (1). This linkage might occur through various mechanisms. The most common mechanism is the election process where citizens' preferences are aggregated by the act of voting (under various types of electoral laws and regulations). However, elections are not the only mechanism that creates this linkage. Citizens also might choose alternative forms of involvement, some of which are more content- and information-rich. Most commonly discussed are petitioning, protests, campaigning, membership in non-governmental organizations or unions. Three types of representation (dyadic, party and collective) were already discussed and it is assumed that each of these approaches has its shortcomings and benefits, but they are all based on the comparison of citizens' attitudes and legislative attitudes or behaviour.

The second linkage (2) illustrates the connection between legislators' attitudes and legislators' actual behaviour. We assume that legislators' attitudes come prior to legislators' behaviour so other factors considered have to be placed before attitudes and not as direct influences on behaviour. However, as Weissberg (1978) early noticed, the most important limitation of representation studies is the focus on micro-level analysis of individual congressmen behaviour and not on the responsiveness of the whole political system. Thus many authors who followed this advice decided to focus on policies and legislative acts themselves as aggregate output of entire legislatures and not on individual legislators' behaviour. In this case units of analysis are not individual representatives and their roll-call vote records, but entire legislature and output that comes from the legislature – specific legislative acts (policy outputs).

The third linkage (3) connects two types of representation based on constitutional divisions of power: legislative and executive representation. This linkage is mainly determined by specific institutional arrangements of the political systems. The type of institutional arrangements and real constitutional practice will influence whether agenda-setting powers lie mostly in the hands of the legislature or in the hands of the executive branch. These settings will in turn have an impact on the process of interest representation, where actual policies and policy outcomes come into the picture, and not solely preference representation. What follows is a linkage between policy outputs in form of legislative and executive acts and actual policy outcomes (4). This part of the representation process has not been analysed by many scholars. Usually, the literature on democratic performance focuses on these issues. Scholars in this field ask whether specific institutional arrangements, ideological composition of the government or type of government influence spe-

cific policy outcomes such as unemployment rates, quality of living conditions or economic growth.

And, finally, the last linkage depicts a relationship between actual policy outcomes and citizens' attitudes and behaviour (5). This stage is usually analysed by those who research the opinion-policy nexus and by scholars who form election forecasting models. Although many of them ask about the impact of public opinion on policy outputs and outcomes, some argue that the causality might also flow the other way. Actual policy outcomes, such as high unemployment, might have an effect on the behaviour of citizens on election day or on the behaviour of citizens through other, non-electoral, channels of involvement.

The presented model has demonstrated how different understandings of modes of representation can work together if we take political representation as a process. What remains to be discussed is how these ideal linkages work in different structural conditions. Future research should focus on within-country temporal differences and cross-country variations in the quality of representation so we could distinguish the impact of specific institutional arrangements on the process of citizen-representative linkages. Moreover, analysis of the quality of representation should be grounded both in normative prescriptions and previous empirical findings. Because, as Thomassen argues, "the purpose of most studies of political representation is not to develop a causal model of political representation that can explain as much as possible of the empirical reality of the process of political representation, but to assess to what extent political reality is consistent with the normative ideal" (1994: 237).

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