Achieving party unity : a sequential approach to why MPs act in concert

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Chapter 2

Representation in parliament by individual or by political party: shifting emphasis

2.1 Representation in theory and in practice

The central normative problem of democracy is determining the proper relationship between citizens' preferences and the laws that govern them. Political representation complicates this relationship by introducing actors who mediate the preferences of citizens and political decision making (Rehfeld, 2009, 214). Although the two concepts are often thoughtlessly equated, democracy and representation have a problematic relationship (Pitkin, 2004). Etymologically the literal meaning of democracy—the people (demos) rule (kratein)—denies any separation between rulers and ruled. Whereas representation—to make present again of what is absent—specifies exactly such a separation between the represented and representatives (Ankersmit, 2002, 109; Fairlie, 1940a, 236; Pitkin, 1967, 8).

In its simplest form, the marriage of representation and democracy is viewed as a merely functional second-best alternative to direct democracy which is considered an impracticable ideal given the population size of most countries today. Representative democracy refers then to the means through which representatives are chosen: the selection method (i.e. electoral system) of representative actors is publicly approved which grants representatives the legitimacy to make political decisions. Alternatively, representative democracy is postulated as superior to direct democracy; representation not only enables democracy, but unites "the democratic principles of rule by the people with the Socratic and Platonic principle of the rule by the Wisest and Best" (Fairlie, 1940b, 459). At the core of most studies of representative democracy is the notion that representation entails a social relationship between the representatives and the repre-

sented (Eulau et al., 1959, 743), and what makes representation democratic is the link between the wants, needs and demands of the public and the behavior of representative actors in making government policy (Luttbeg, 1974, 3). Most of the literature on political representation deals with how, in the case of normative theory, this link ought to be shaped and how, in the case of empirical research, this link is shaped in practice.

Representative democracy "[...] features a chain of delegation from voters to those who govern [...] mirrored by a corresponding chain of accountability that runs in the reserve direction" (Strøm, 2000, 267). Representative democracy thus entails that political actors (agents) are delegated power to make, implement and enforce political decisions for citizens (principals).[1] It also requires representative actors to be responsive to the preferences of the public and to be accountable to that public for their behavior. Strøm (2000, 267) contends that what makes democratic regimes democratic is citizens' ability to select and control their representatives.

Political institutions provide a framework for this chain of delegation, as they not only set the rules that organize how delegation takes place, but also provide actors with tools that enable, but also limit, their own behavior as well as that of their agents in the chain. Within representative democracy one can distinguish between a parliamentary system of government, which is characterized by "a single chain of command, in which at each link a single principal delegates to one and only one agent (or several noncompeting ones), and where each agent is accountable to one and only one principal" (Strøm, 2000, 269), and a presidential system of government, which features agents that have multiple principals. In parliamentary systems of government, electoral systems provide a competitive means through which citizens elect who represents them in the parliament. Legislative institutions provide these representatives with a number of tools through which they can perform their tasks as agents of citizens, such as the ability to deliberate and vote on public policy. The legislative branch is also responsible for the selection of the executive branch of government. The executive branch, consisting of the Prime Minister and cabinet (junior) minsters, is charged with the execution of the laws made in parliament, for which the implementation is delegated to different ministries' civil servants. In presidential systems of government, electoral systems typically enable citizens to select multiple competing agents (the president, as well as the Upper and Lower Chamber of the legislative branch), and the heads of the executive departments and their civil servants report back these multiple, potentially competing principals.

In practice this chain of representation is complicated by the fact that political principals and agents are usually not individual actors but collectives with heterogeneous preferences that can be difficult to identify (Strøm, 2000, 267-268). Voters, for example, do not form a single homogeneous group in terms of identities and preferences, and the difficulties associated with the aggregation of these identities and preferences are central in many studies of political representation. The deconstruction of political par-

[1] There are a number of general arguments, not only applicable to the political realm, regarding why delegation may occur. These are a general lack of capacity and competence (and transactions costs associated with their acquisition) of actors to make timely, professional decisions, and the problems associated with social choice (preference aggregation problems), collective action and coordination at the aggregate level (Strøm, 2003, 56-58).

ties is arguably even more complicated, as they also consist of individuals with not only potentially different preferences, but also different roles, thus forming an arena in and of themselves. They also perform a multitude of different functions in both the electoral arena and legislative arena. Finally, within the legislative arena one can distinguish between individual MPs, political party groups—which consist of collectives of individual MPs—, and the legislature as a whole, as potential representative actors.

Manin (1997) describes three ideal-types of representative government: parliamentarianism, party democracy and audience democracy. One could argue that each form predominated political representation in western democracies during a particular period of modern history, although Manin (1997, 202) does explicate that the forms of political representation can coexist and fuse at a given point in time in a given country. The first two ideal-types, parliamentarianism and party democracy, can be connected to normative debates as to *how* representation ought to take form, and *who* should act as main representative actor in parliament. These normative debates function as the basis for models of representation used in the empirical analysis of political representation, with empirical models often lagging behind developments in political reality (Thomassen, 1994, 237, 240, 250). The third ideal-type, audience democracy, differs from the first two in that its normative debate is still ongoing, and the empirical models are in development. In the following sections, the three ideal-types of representative government and their associated normative and empirical models are reviewed, with special attention paid to *who* is ascribed the role of main representative actor in parliament: the individual MP or political party.

2.2 The individual as main representative actor

2.2.1 Parliamentarianism

Representation descends from a practice that that has little to do with modern democracy (Thomassen, 1994, 240). In fact, the monarchs in medieval Europe imposed it as a duty. During the period of feudalism in Europe (500 – 1500) rights, powers, and privileges depended on property ownership, and landowners from different regions were summoned as representatives to parliament to commit their locality to measures that the monarchs wished to impose. These measures mostly involved taxation, as the crown sought additional revenues to fight wars in order to defend the national interests. Gradually, parliament evolved into an arena in which representatives defended local interests in exchange for consent, which became conditional. Representation became a matter of right rather than a burden (Thomassen, 1994, 240; Pitkin, 2004, 337) although the practice can hardly be described as democratic in the sense of the selection of representatives. MPs operated as individuals and were considered to be the delegates of their communities, mandated with the task of giving or withholding their consent provisional upon redress of communal grievances.

Although most of the parliaments in Europe were dissolved during the period of absolute monarchy (1500 – 1800), the British Parliament gradually developed into the cen-

ter of power after successfully placing the sovereignty of Parliament above that of the king in the Glorious Revolution (1688). Parliament became increasingly responsible for national interests, and less an arena for the defense of local interests. Edmund Burke's (1774) speech to the electors of Bristol is renowned for reflecting this change in political practice, and signifies a critical juncture in the development of modern political thought. Burke argued that given Parliament's new role it should function as a deliberative arena in which the general good ought to be the dominant focus of representation:

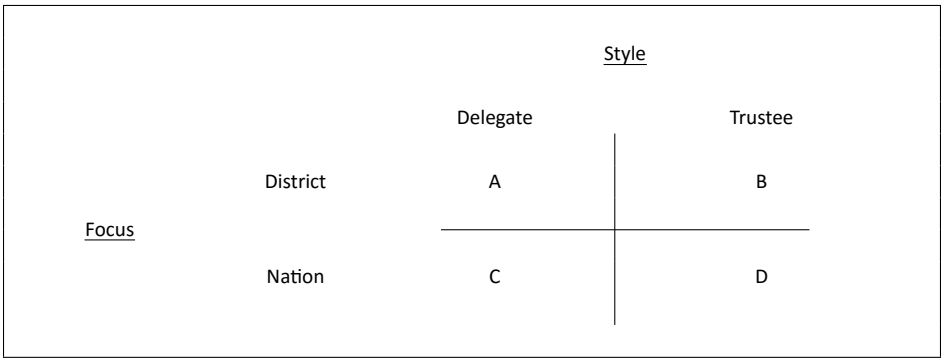
> "Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole—where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole" (Burke, 1887a, 96).

Following that parliament ought to act in the interest of the whole nation, Burke reasoned that this is incompatible with the practice of MPs following the instructions from their districts, and they should instead act according to their own judgment. So whereas the traditional 'mandate' style of representation holds that the represented should have control over their own representatives, either through recall right or binding instructions, Burke was a proponent of the 'trustee' style, which maintains that representatives are free to represent the interests of those they represent as they themselves see fit:

> "Their [constituents] wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfaction, to theirs; and, above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But, his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you; to any man, or to any set of men living. […] You chose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a Member of Bristol, but he is a Member of Parliament" (Burke, 1887a, 95).

Burke's speech marks a transition in political thought—from the domination of mandate representation directed at local interests to independent parliamentarians focusing on national interests—that is still reflected in constitutions that were written during the democratic revolutions of the first half of the nineteenth century. Manin (1997, 204) refers to the British House of Commons in the period after the Napoleonic wars (1803-1815) as the "[...] archetype of parliamentarianism" in terms of individual representatives' autonomy, and Beer (1982) considers the period in the United Kingdom between the First Reform Act (1832) and the Second Reform Act (1867) as "the golden age of the private MP". According to Manin (1997, 204) "[t]he political independence of the individual representative is due in part to his owing his seat to non-political factors such as his local standing". Political parties, moreover, hardly existed, and if there was any form of political organization outside of Parliament it was only for elections, and the individual MP was the uncontested leader in the electoral district. If MPs acted in concert with

Figure 2.1: The style and focus of representatives' roles



Source: Eulau et al. (1959)

each other in parliament, this was on the basis of deliberation, similarities between the regions they represented, or personal ties (Depauw, 2002, 20).

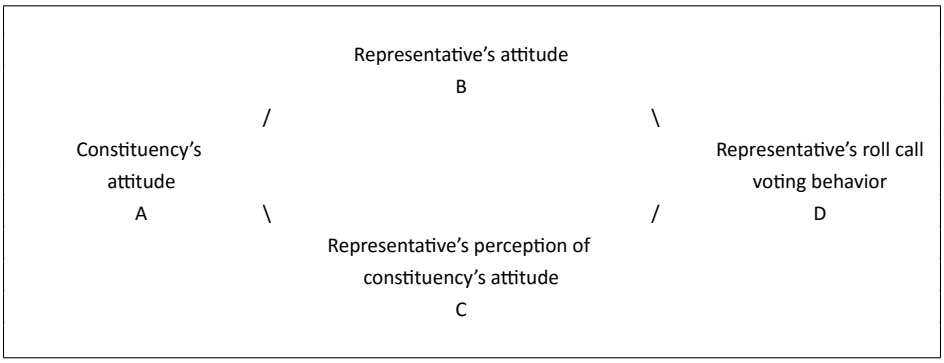
2.2.2 The mandate-independence controversy

Over a century after Burke's speech to the electors of Bristol, the mandate - independence controversy (Pitkin, 1967) — whether individual representatives should act as agents who take instructions from their constituents or act according to their own mature judgment — was picked up by Eulau and his associates (1959; 1962) as the basis of the model to describe representational role orientations in their study of United States state legislators. The authors distinguish between the style (delegate or trustee) and focus (district or national level) of representation (see Figure 2.1). Accordingly, one can place representatives who act according to the instructions from their local constituents in cell A, and Burke's preferred trustees who focus on the national interests in cell D.

Although the representational role orientations typology continues to be widely applied, Thomassen (1994, 239-240) argues that the scientific interest in the mandate-independence controversy is inversely proportional to its relevance in modern representative democracy. A first problem with the role typology is that it forces representatives to choose between the delegate and trustee role, thereby treating representational roles as a mutually exclusive dichotomy. But as highlighted by Pitkin (1967, 151), "in the mandate-independence controversy both sides are probably right":

> "It is true that a man is not a representative—or at most is a representative 'in name only'—if he habitually does the opposite of what his constituents would do. But it is also true that the man is not a representative—or at most a representative in name only—if he himself does nothing, if his constituents act directly" (Pitkin, 1967, 151).

Figure 2.2: The connection between constituencies' attitudes and a representative's roll call behavior



Source: Miller and Stokes (1963)

This criticism is actually aimed at the normative underpinnings of both the 'trustee' and 'delegate' model, which contradict the nature of representation, defined as to make present again of what is absent (Ankersmit, 2002, 109; Fairlie, 1940a, 236; Pitkin, 1967, 8). A representative taking on the trustee style of representation cannot completely ignore the opinions of those he is representing, as then that what is absent is not present. But a representative cannot perfectly reproduce the opinions when taking on the role of the instructed delegate, because then there is no representation of what is absent for it is already present. For this reason the original typology was postulated as a continuum, with the delegate and trustee as the two extremes. However, by including a third middle role, the politico, for whom it depends on the circumstances whether he acts more as a trustee or a delegate, Eulau and his associates (1959; 1962) treat it as a categorical variable. Later applications of the representational role orientation typology also failed to acknowledge the continuous nature of the typology, also treating it as a categorical variable.

Another problem with the application of the representational role orientation typology in later empirical analyses is the choice between the two foci of representation: the district or the nation. Again, these two foci can be traced back to Burke's contrast of parliament as a competitive or deliberative arena. The question is whether district interests are a pertinent focus of representation when most legislators today are concerned with general policy making for which specific geographically defined local interest are arguably less relevant. Connected to this is the another criticism, which is most relevant for the study at hand: the typology does not acknowledge the political party as either a potential alternative focus of representation from the perspective of the individual representative, or representative actor in and of itself.

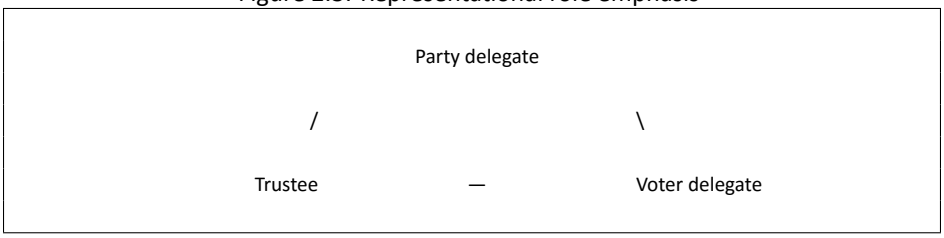
The Miller-Stokes model (1963, see Figure 2.2), introduced by the early Michigan school, expands on the representational style of representation (limiting the focus of

representation to the district). The empirical validity of the model was tested by comparing the congruence between constituency and representatives' attitudes in different policy domains to roll call voting behavior of representatives. The lower path of the model (ACD) describes the workings of the instructed delegate, which necessitates that the representatives perceive constituency attitudes correctly and that there is a high correlation between constituency attitudes (A) and representatives' perceptions of these attitudes (C). The upper path (ABD) presents the workings of the Burkean trustee, whose own opinion is determinant for the representatives' behavior. It may still be the case, however, that a representative expresses the will of the public in spite of himself, i.e. there is a high correlation between his own opinion (B) and those of the citizens in his constituency (A). Miller and Stokes (1963, 56) conclude that the strength of the different pathways of the model depends on the kind of issue area. In the case of social welfare, members of the US House of Representatives generally followed the upper path, taking on the role of the Burkean trustee, whereas when it came to civil rights, representatives were more likely to take on the role of instructed delegate (Miller and Stokes hypothesize that this is out for fear of electoral consequences).

Attempts were made to apply the Miller-Stokes model in a number of different countries through which it became clear that the model was not fully transferable outside the United States' presidential, single-member district system with weak political parties. Although the model does allow the testing of the modes of representation under different circumstances, therefore allowing these modes to vary, its focus is on the dyadic relationship between constituencies and their representative (which was especially problematic in electoral systems with multi-member districts), and does not account for the paramount importance of political parties in mitigating the link between representatives and the public in parliamentary systems. In presidential systems the executive has its own electoral mandate and is not dependent on a majority in legislature for its survival, whereas in parliamentary systems the executive does not have its own mandate and is very much dependent on its majority in parliament for its survival, making party group unity in parliament, at least among government parties, essential. That the political party is of overriding importance is especially apparent when it comes to Miller and Stokes' dependent variable: representatives' (roll call) voting behavior. Once political party (group) membership is taken into consideration the different pathways have very little substantive effect in parliamentary systems.

This point is made clear by Converse and Pierce's (1979; 1986) application of the Miller-Stokes model in their study of political representation in France, and Farah's (1980) study of West Germany. Both find limited feasibility of the model in the context of (hybrid) parliamentary systems and the influence of the political party overriding. Converse and Pierce therefore propose the introduction of a third representative role, the party delegate, a variety of the delegate with the party rather than the voters as the focus of representation (see Figure 2.3). Indeed, in their study of representational role emphasis the party delegate role was found to be most dominant—both in terms of individual representatives' policy preferences and roll call voting behavior—the trustee role coming in second and the voter delegate coming in a distant third. Although Andeweg and Thomassen (2005, 508) question the relevance of this triangle in how it can aid in the

Figure 2.3: Representational role emphasis



Source: Converse and Pierce (1979)

understanding of political representation in terms of the relationship between the voters and the actors who represent them, the party delegate role may help us understand the relationship between individual MPs and their political party (group).

2.3 The political party takes over

2.3.1 Party democracy

The second ideal-type of representative government identified by Manin (1997) is party democracy. The change of parliament from an arena for local interest articulation to national policy formation not only increased the power of parliament, but also the complexity of parliamentary work. The focus on national policy made it more efficient to organize along ideological lines than geographical ones, which led to cooperation among individual MPs from different regions. According to Patzelt (1999, 23), some observers go so far as to claim that that "[…] it is denounced as historical fiction [...] there has never been a 'normal' parliamentarism with individual members (instead of parliamentary groups) playing a significant role" in describing how common these forms of cooperation were. Again, it is Edmund Burke who is often cited for identifying the function of the political party in this respect, defining a political party as "a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed" (Burke, 1887b, 530). He thus seemed to recognize ideology as the basis of a parliamentary party group. Duverger (1954) categorizes these parliamentary groups as 'internally created' elite (or cadre) parties, functioning as a means to align the interests of individual MPs and make parliamentary work more efficient, thereby stabilizing parliamentary politics. Examples include the forerunners of today's British Conservative and Liberal parties, the Democratic and Republican Party in the United States, and the Liberal parties in Germany, Italy and other parts of continental Europe (Lapalombara and Anderson, 1992, 396).

Thus far, individual MPs were considered the core representative actor in both political practice and political thought. Attitudes towards political parties (or factions) were generally hostile, especially among normative theorists who inspired the drafters of the constitutions (Schattschneider, 1942, 3-6). From a republican perspective, politics is

the search for the common good for the entire public, brought about through deliberation and consensus, not through competition that results in winners and losers. De Tocqueville (1835), for example, considered political parties, representing specific interests, to be inherently oppressive and to embody the danger of a tyrannical majority depriving minorities of fair representation. Those responsible for the constitutions during the democratic revolutions were so hostile towards political parties that they explicitly attempted to make government by parties impossible, or at least impracticable. That individual MPs are formally not supposed to take instructions from anyone, for example, makes the involvement of political parties in the act of representation in a strict sense unconstitutional.

The practice of coordination in parliament was also extended into the electoral arena, as parliamentary minorities attempted to boost their position in parliament by increasing their share of votes in the electorate (Aldrich, 1995). With the extension of universal suffrage at the turn of the nineteenth century 'externally created' mass parties that developed in society also entered the struggle for representation in parliament. These political parties were based on mass membership and represented those interests that were not yet present in the political system (Duverger, 1954). Voting was an expression of identity in terms of class and religion represented by parties, rather than the expression of a personal bond between voters and individual MPs in parliament. Examples of 'externally created' mass parties include the European socialist, communist, and Christian democratic parties (Lapalombara and Anderson, 1992, 396).

Early twentieth century political thinkers who acknowledged political parties were not pleased with their development. Both Ostrogorski (1902) and Michels (1915) saw parties as oligarchic organizations dominated by leaders and subordinating individuals, inhibiting the realization of democracy as the search for the common good. The economist and political realist Schumpeter (1942), however, endorsed the development of political parties. Schumpeter disputed the idea that democracy was a process of identifying the common good and he also had little faith in the public's ability to form opinions and make rational political decisions. He considered the ideal democracy postulated by liberal thinkers as impossible and undesirable, and instead offered a minimal, procedural definition of democracy as an institutional arrangement with a central role for political parties:

> "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter, 1942, 269).
>
> "A party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for power […] Party and machine politics are simply the response to the fact that the electoral mass is incapable of action other than in a stampede, and they constitute an attempt to regulate political competition exactly similar to the corresponding practice of a trade association" (Schumpeter, 1942, 283).

Schumpeter clearly held an elitist vision of democracy. Like Burke, he advocated a trustee model of political representation in the relationship between the representatives and

the represented, following Weber (1919) in stipulating that politicians should be of a high quality—suited, trained and qualified to act as representatives—and that citizens should respect the division of labor between politicians and voters. He considered representation to be a top-down relationship (Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996), in which political parties put their views to the citizens, and citizens' preferences are endogenous to their interaction with political parties (Schumpeter, 1942, 263). In terms of the relationship between political parties and their MPs, Schumpeter (1942, 294) seemed to hold Converse and Pierce's (1979; 1986) party delegate model of representation, as he maintains that individual MPs ought to exercise democratic self-control and resist the temptation to upset or embarrass the government.[2] Duverger (1966, 7-8) also recognized this party delegate relationship between political parties and their MPs in the practice of representation, classifying political parties that had such a relationship with their MPs as 'rigid'. Again, it seems to be the Parliament in the United Kingdom that took the lead. Members of the House of Commons were organized in a very strict manner, discipline was imposed upon them in voting on all important issues, and the authority of the party group leader was not questioned (Duverger, 1966).

Many positivist theorists followed Schumpeter in their high regard for political parties as representative actors in parliament. Stokes (1999, 244) suggests that this may be because their normative world is ordered not around notions of the public good but around effective representation, for which political parties as an organizing principal are considered vital.[3] In 1950 the American Political Science Association became the primary advocate for the normative responsible party model. The 1950 report by the APSA Committee on Political Parties, chaired by E.E. Schattscheider, urged reforms to make the two political parties in the United States more "democratic, responsible, and effective" (1950, 17). The responsible party model departs from Schumpeter's competitive model of democracy in that it holds that the popular will can and must be reflected in government policy, whereas Schumpeter had little faith in the popular will (Thomassen, 1994, 251). As is the case in Schumpeter's competitive model, the responsible party model holds that political parties enable democracy through competition in the electoral arena.

There are three requirements: 1) political parties should present voters with sufficiently different policy program alternatives. These party programs should be the result of democratic decision making within the political parties and supported by a large proportion of the parties' members. 2) Voters should be aware of the differences between parties, and are assumed to then cast their vote for the political party whose program comes closest to their own policy preferences. 3) In turn, because voters base their choice on the party's program, party representatives in office are expected to follow the

[2] More specifically, Schumpeter (1942, 294) argues that "supporters of the government must accept its lead and allow it to frame and act upon a program and that the opposition should accept the lead of the 'shadow government' at its head and allow it to keep political warfare within certain rules".

[3] Mainwaring and Scully (1995), for example, argue that highly institutionalized party systems are necessary for high democratic performance, in order to offer citizens clear coherent choices (Carey, 2003, 193). Bowler et al. (1999a, 3) consider the existence of cohesive legislative voting blocs, realized through political parties, a prerequisite for effective accountability.

party program in making government policy. Indeed, the APSA report (1950, 17-18) prescribed that "[a]n effective party system requires, first, that the parties are able to bring forth programs to which they commit themselves and second, that the parties possess sufficient internal cohesion to carry out the program". If representatives do not follow their party's program the report suggests possible sanctions the political party (group) could apply. Party unity in both the electoral and parliamentary arena is thus not only considered the condition for success (APSA, 1950, 20-23), but party disunity is also held to impair democratic representation. The responsible party model holds that the political party ought to be the main actor in the representational relationship, "[i]ndividual politicians play a second fiddle, at most" (Thomassen, 1994, 251).

2.3.2 The responsible party model

As argued by Thomassen (1994, 248), models that prioritize the political party have more a priori validity in the context of (European) parliamentary systems of government than models that highlight the relationship between individual MPs and their voters (or districts). Although originally postulated as a normative model, the responsible party model has been used as an empirical tool as well.

In political party models of representation, the political party is treated as a collective, unitary actor and its parliamentary counterpart is considered the main representative actor in the legislature. Thus, in terms of the three requirements of the responsible party model, it is the third—that parties must be sufficiently unified to enable them to implement their policy program—that has become a central assumption in the empirical analysis of various aspects of political representation. Indeed, if one considers the voting behavior of party group members in European parliaments, this assumption is the least problematic of the three (Thomassen, 1994, 252). Consequently, scholars use party manifestos and party strategies in the elections and coalition-formations, and aggregate speech and policy congruence on the basis of party group membership in parliament, in order to study the representational links between voters and their representative actors. How political parties, and more specifically their parliamentary groups, come to act as unitary actors, however, was for a long time taken for granted in representation studies.

The United States is generally categorized as a weak party system. Even in this weak party system, however, Cox and McCubbins (1993) recognize political parties as one of the organizing principles in legislature. However, the authors do not make the same assumptions about political parties as the literature on representation in Europe tends to do. Indeed, in defining political parties Cox and McCubbins (1993, 100) reject both structural and purposive perspectives. Whereas the structural approach, which defines parties according to observable features of their organization, is generally aimed at the extra-parliamentary rather than the intra-parliamentary organization, the purposive approach, defining parties by their goals, is criticized for assuming too much about the internal unity of parties. As highlighted by Cox and McCubbins (1993):

> "[t]he unitary actor assumption has proven valuable for many purposes – spatial models of elections and models of coalition formation come readily

> to mind – but it is not a useful starting point from which to build a theory of the internal organization of parties. Such a theory must begin with individual politicians and their typically diverse preferences, explaining why it is in each one's interest to support a particular pattern of organization and activity for the party. Accordingly, we begin not with parties and postulate collective goals but rather with legislators and postulate individual goals" (Cox and McCubbins, 1993, 100).

In line with the United States tradition, Cox and McCubbins continue to give precedence to the individual representative in legislature. They take on a rational-choice perspective of individual representatives who seek reelection. There are a number of factors that improve the probability of reelection, of which the authors consider reputation to be most important. A representative's legislative activity affects his individual reputation (a private good), his political party's collective reputation (a public good), or both. Cox and McCubbins (1993, 113) argue that the realization of the latter poses a collective action problem that, left unchecked, will lead to legislative inefficiencies. Political party legislative group organizations are the key to solving this collective action problem. By creating legislative (leadership) positions that are both attractive and elective—entailing that there is intra-party competition for these positions and incumbents can be held accountable if they fail to act in the collective interest—and organizational structures, representatives will 1) internalize the collective interest of the party and 2) monitor their fellow partisans. This especially holds for the party group leadership positions which are given control over selective incentives, either in the form of positive rewards for those who cooperate, and negative sanctions to discipline party group members who defect from the party group line (Cox and McCubbins, 1993, 121-122). Political party groups therefore act as 'legislative cartels' that—especially when in the majority—are able to seize power to make rules that govern the structure and process of legislation. Parties are floor-voting and procedural (having committee appointments and agenda-setting power) coalitions. In building a theory of the internal organization of parties, Cox and McCubbins heed to Panebianco's (1988, xi) complaint that "…something has been lost: namely the awareness that whatever else parties are and to whatever other solicitations they respond, they are above all organizations and that organizational analysis must therefore come before any other perspective".

Cox and McCubbins' study of the relationship between individual members of Congress and their political parties in the United States highlights the practical tension between individual representatives and their political parties in terms of rationalist economic theory. Whereas individual representatives possess an inherent tendency to value their own reputation above that of the party, political parties as organizations value their collective reputation. This parallels the tensions between individual and collective representation found in normative theory. In the empirical study of representation and legislative behavior in the context of European parliaments, this tension has been resolved in favor of the party as a unitary actor, implicitly favoring models of collective representation by political parties.

2.4 The return to the individual?

2.4.1 Audience democracy

Since the 1970s, election results in western democracies vary significantly from one election to the next, even though the socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of individual voters have remained relatively stable (Manin, 1997, 218). Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) attribute the increased electoral volatility and weakening of voters' partisan ties to the desecularization and modernization of society. These societal changes contributed to "today's alleged crisis in representation" (Manin, 1997, 196-197), a change from party democracy to audience democracy, the third ideal-type of representative government. By audience democracy, Manin (1997, 223) means that "the electorate appears, above all, as an *audience* which responds to the terms that have been presented on the political stage".

Manin (1997, 222-223) argues that because of desecularization and modernization in a number of Western societies, no socioeconomic and cultural cleavage is more politically important or more stable than others. On the one hand, this leaves political parties vulnerable in the electoral arena, as they cannot rely on a stable voter or membership base. This has been the basis for the (mass) party in decline thesis (or rather question) (Mair, 1994; Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995). On the other hand, this also entails that voters themselves do not base their decision on their socioeconomic or cultural identity, but on their perception of what is at stake in a particular election, which is decided on by politicians. This means that the initiative of electoral choice belongs to politicians, and the reactive instead of expressive dimension of voting predominates. This is very much in line with Schumpeter (1942, 263), who considered citizens' preferences endogenous to their interaction with political parties.

With the literature on political parties (and not specifically their party group counterparts in parliament), a number of authors connect these changes in the electorate to the (potentially resultant) changes in party structures (Depauw, 2002, 24-26). These are modeled, among others, by the catch-all party (Kirchheimer, 1966), the electoral professional party (Panebianco, 1988) and the cartel party (Katz and Mair, 1994). These empirical models differ from the (mass) party model and the APSA's (1950) responsible party model in that they do not assume that citizens' preferences are exogenous to their interactions with political parties, and do not hold party's policy platforms as distinct and forming the basis for voters' electoral choice. Moreover, parties' policy programs are less the result of intra-party democratic decision making and party member support.

Kirchheimer's (1966) catch-all party is a vote-seeking machine that, having lost its ideological voter and its membership base, tries to appeal to the increased number of floating voters by providing the electorate with a wide array of policy positions instead of one set ideological profile. Panebiano's (1988) electoral professional party model is a re-specification of the catch-all party, defined more precisely in organizational terms (Wolinetz, 2002, 137) and emphasizes the professionalization of politics, entailing that traditional party office holders are displaced by technical and political specialists. As

feared by both Ostrogorski (1902) and Michels (1915), the political party leadership increasingly draws power to itself. Because party leaders are less interested in servicing their party members, vote-seeking is prioritized above party-building efforts. The extra-parliamentary party organization is instrumentally aimed at winning elections for its party leaders through professionalization and political marketing. Opinion polls and marketing strategies determine not only campaign strategies, but even the party's position on issues (Depauw, 2002, 24-26). Katz and Mair's (1994) final extension, the cartel model, characterizes political parties as increasingly dependent on, and interwoven with, state instead of societal resources and interests, to the point that political parties become agents of the state.

According to Mair (1994), political parties scholars building forth on these models have taken on two strategies. On the one hand, there is a focus on collecting data on political parties: (changes in) membership numbers, financial resources and staff (and where these originate and/or how these are allocated), organization, functions of different organs and the (power) relationship between them, etc. (see for example the data handbook on political parties, Katz and Mair, 1992) in order to provide empirical data on which to base the analysis of the party in light of the changes in the electorate. On the other hand, there is also an explicit attempt to:

> "... move away from the conception of party as a unitary actor, and especially to move away from the almost exclusive concern with the relationship between parties and civil society, by disaggregating party organizations into at least three different elements, or faces, each of which interacts with the others [...] the *party in public office*, that is, the party organization in government and in parliament [...] *the party on the ground* [...] *the party in central office* ..." (Mair, 1994, 4).

That combination of these two avenues of research has led to an abundance of literature that deals with the question of party decline. Studies show that the so-called decline of the political party seems to be limited to the party on the ground; the party in central office, and especially the party in public office, seem to unaffected, or according to some have even gained in strength (as modeled by Katz and Mair's (1994) cartel model). The disaggregation of the party organization in the political parties literature has allowed scholars to differentiate between the different ways that desecularization and modernization in Western democracies has affected different parts of the political party organization. The question remains, however, how these changes have affected the relationship between the parliamentary party group and individual MPs as representatives (Katz and Mair, 2009, 762), which requires disaggregating to the level of the individual MP.[4]

Manin (1997, 227-228) expects that the ongoing change from party to audience democracy will lead representative actors in parliament to have more freedom of action vis-a-vis voters once elected, as the electoral promises "take the form of relatively

[4] This is not to say that there are no studies within the political parties literature on the parliamentary party group as a 'face' of the party (see the different country case studies in Heidar and Koole (2000), for example).

hazy images". At the same time, he predicts that due to the societal changes and party professionalization outlined above, voters will tend to increasingly vote for a person, or the image of a person, rather than a party's policy platform. Manin also specifies, however, that this personalization mainly holds for party leaders. Although political parties' parliamentary counterparts are increasingly considered part of the party leadership, and less as agents of the party-as-a-whole, Manin (1997, 231-232) expects parties to remain unified around their party leader in terms of parliamentary voting. But he also concedes that the decrease in importance of the party program will lead individual representatives to engage in a more direct personal relationship with interest groups and citizens associations. It is thus unclear what, according to Manin, the change from party democracy to audience democracy means for relationship between political parties and their individual representatives (i.e., whether there could a be return to parliamentarianism in terms of the individual MP as main actor in parliament, or a move in another direction).

There are calls for formal institutional changes from political reformers, who propose modifications of electoral and intra-party selectoral institutions in order to alter the workings of political parties, and create a more personal relationship between the voters and the individuals who represent them. These reforms target the workings of political parties in parliament in particular. Political reformers argue that giving the electorate and party members a greater say in the selection of representatives will improve the quality of representation as it increases direct responsiveness and accountability of individual MPs, implying that reformers deem that the individual—and not the political party—ought to be the main representative actor in parliament. Carey (2009, 8) notes that the proposed reforms are especially aimed at increasing the accountability of party (group) leaders, who are shielded from punishment by electoral systems (particularly in party-oriented electoral systems) that do not allow voters to discriminate among candidates as long as candidate nomination is centralized among party leaders. However, on a more general note, the call for the personalization of electoral and selectoral institutions is aimed at making all individual representatives more responsive and accountable to citizens' demands, favoring a dyadic relationship between MPs and voters instead of a collective relationship through political parties:

> "Whereas advocates of collective, partisan representation are primarily concerned with the ideological and policy content of party labels, the decisiveness of legislatures and the voters' assessments of overall government performance […], advocates of individual-level accountability are more concerned with maximizing virtues – deterring the betrayal of the demands of particular votes who picked an individual legislator as their representative" (Carey, 2009, 8).

2.4.2 Personalization

In an attempt to create a uniform conceptual approach to personalization, Rahat and Sheafer (2007) propose a typology of political personalization, of which two types are rel-

evant at this point: institutional and behavioral personalization.[5] The above mentioned calls for changes to electoral and selectoral institutions fall under institutional personalization, as they propose "the adoption of rules, mechanisms, and institutions that put more emphasis on the individual politician and less on political groups and parties" (Rahat and Sheafer, 2007, 66). Behavioral personalization can refer to either the public or politicians. Public behavioral personalization entails that the voters' increasingly place emphasis on individual politicians at the expense of the political party, whereas politicians' personalization involves a decline in party activity in favor of individual politicians' behavior. Balmas et al. (2012) further specify this typology by differentiating between centralized personalization (sometimes referred to as presidentialization), which entails that political power is increasingly placed in the hands of a few party leaders, and decentralized personalization, which means that political power is diffused from the party as a collective to those individual politicians who do not belong to the party leadership.

In their survey of the literature on personalization, Balmas et al. (2012) conclude that there is mixed evidence for the phenomenon of centralized institutional personalization, which would entail the institutional empowerment of political leaders, and party members' increased power when it comes to the selection of their party leadership (Kenig, 2009; LeDuc, 2001; Scarrow, 2001). Although less research has been done on decentralized institutional personalization, those studies that have been conducted generally point in the direction of a strengthening of the institutional position of individual politicians: Bille (2001) and Scarrow et al. (2000) both identify a trend of democratization of parties' candidate selection methods in established democracies the between 1960 and 1990. When it comes to the electoral system, the weight of the personal vote has increased in countries such as Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden (Karvonen, 2010). In the Netherlands, for example, the threshold for obtaining a seat in parliament on the basis of personal votes was decreased from 50 percent to 25 percent of the electoral quotient (given that the candidate's party is entitled to the seat) in 1998.

Whether these institutional changes have led to more behavioral personalization by the public and politicians is unclear (Karvonen, 2007, 13). Some studies show that voters are increasingly more likely to base their vote on the identity of the party leader instead of their evaluation of the party as a whole, whereas others find little supporting evidence for this (Balmas et al., 2012, 40). On the other hand, Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010, 632-635) find that among the Dutch electorate the percentage of votes cast for candidates other than the party leader increased from less than 5 percent in the first post-war election to over 25 percent in 2002, pointing towards an increase in the public's decentralized behavioral personalization. They conclude, however, that voters still consider the political party to be more important than the individual candidate

[5] Rahat and Sheafer (2007, 67) also include media personalization as a third type of personalization, which entails that the media increase their focus on the individual politicians at the expense of the political party. Balmas et al. (2012) specify that media personalization is centralized when journalists and political campaigns increasingly focus on a few political leaders (presidents, prime ministers, party leaders) instead of on cabinets and political parties as collectives. Decentralized personalization means that the media increase the attention they pay to, and political campaigns increasingly revolve around, individual politicians who are not party leaders or the heads of the executive.

when casting their vote, but that within the political party the choice for an individual candidate clearly matters. In Belgium, where voters can choose between voting for a party list as a whole or an individual on a party list, the share of voters who cast a preference vote also increased from around half in the 1980s to almost two-thirds at the start of the 2000s (André et al., 2012, 7-8). In both cases, one could argue that the institutional change led to an increase in voters' personalized behavior, although the trend in increased preference voting had already set in before the institutional changes took place. Contrarily, however, Karvonen (2011) finds no evidence of a systematic increase in Finnish voters' personalized voting behavior over time. The evidence for public behavioral personalization is thus mixed.

Unfortunately, very little research has been done on whether these institutional reforms have led to any behavioral personalization by politicians (which might indicate an increase in the responsiveness and accountability of individual politicians), but the few studies that have been done do seem to point in the direction centralized behavioral personalization (Balmas et al., 2012, 40). According to Balmas et al. (2012, 40), empirical evidence of decentralized behavioral personalization in the parliamentary arena, whether individual MPs engage in more individual—instead of party—oriented behavior, is "... is hard to find. In fact, we have none, save for the case of Israel" (Balmas et al., 2012, 40). Rahat and Sheafer (2007) find that institutional personalization in Israel leads to behavioral personalization by individual representatives in both the electoral arena (campaigning for personal votes) and the parliamentary arena (measured as an increase in number of the submissions and adoptions of private member bills). The latter indicator is also used by Balmas et al. (2012) in their own study of the Israeli Parliament. Balmas et al. (2012, 43-46) add the increased use of roll call voting and the use of self-references (the use of the first person singular, for example) in parliamentary speech as possible indicators of personalization, both of which point in the direction of an increase in decentralized behavioral personalization.

2.5 Conclusion

Both parliamentarianism and party democracy have left their mark on political representation in modern day democracies. As a result of the period of parliamentarianism, most (European) parliamentary democracies still ascribe a central role to the individual MPs in their constitutions. The stranglehold of political parties, remnants of the age of party democracy, also remains, although the primacy of political parties seems to be declining, as evidenced by the increase in electoral volatility and weakening of voters' partisan ties. For some, the change towards what Manin (1997) terms audience democracy constitutes a crisis in representation, as the ability of political parties to meet standards of responsiveness and accountability is questioned. Political reformers' calls for institutional personalization highlight the tension between individual representation by individual MPs and collective representation by political parties, and seem to favor (a return to) the former.

The tension between individual MPs and their political parties as representative ac-

tors is, however, of all times. Although Manin's (1997) first ideal-type of representative government, parliamentarianism, favored the individual MP as the main representative actor, the change of parliament from an arena for local interest articulation to national policy formation already led to MPs' coordination and collective action within parliament. The extension of universal suffrage tipped the balance towards the political party as the main representative actor, as this collective organization was extended into the electoral arena. Although some consider the decline of political parties a crisis in representation, one could also argue that the primacy of the political party as the main representative actor in western democracies has been a time-bound phenomenon; it is not unequivocally desirable or virtuous in and of itself from a normative perspective. In more practical terms, democratic representation does not by definition necessitate that the balance between the individual MP and the political party favor the latter.

Even though personalization may be on the rise, political parties in most (European) parliamentary democracies still behave as unitary actors, at least in terms of their legislative voting behavior: "the usual, though not invariable, practice in the world's parliaments is that legislators vote together by party" (Olson, 2003, 165), and are by and large treated as such by both academics and political observers. That political parties act as unitary actors is certainly not automatic, however. How party group unity is established, i.e., how the tension between individual MPs and their political parties is resolved in favor of the latter, is a topic that has received only modest attention. As highlighted by Olson (2003, 165), and evidenced by the recent interest in political personalization, "[w]e pay attention to 'rebellion' or 'dissent' as exceptions, while assuming unity is the more usual behaviour and thus requires less detailed explanation [...] each body of research examines departures from its respective 'normal'".

Whether the change towards audience democracy indeed marks a crisis in representation is a normative question, as is whether unitary parliamentary parties are still, or have ever been, necessary or desirable. Empirical research cannot provide the answer. Empirical research can, however, provide an important basis for the normative debate. How party group unity is established is a key question that remains understudied. Do MPs vote with their party group voluntarily, or do they do so involuntarily in response to (threatened) negative sanctions or (promised) benefits by the party (group) leadership? If MPs do vote with their party group voluntarily, is this because they simply agree with their party group's position on the matter, or because they have been socialized to subscribe to the norm of party group loyalty and consider their party group their main principal? Do MPs even have an opinion on matters that are put to a vote in parliament, or do they rely on their party group specialist and/or spokesperson for their voting cue? The relative role of these different mechanisms, or pathways to party unity, and whether their contributions to party unity have changed through time, and whether their use differs between institutional settings, are important pieces of information if one wants implement institutional changes to increase responsiveness and accountability of representative actors, and (re-)establish the representational link between voters and individual MPs (or the primacy of the unified political party).