Rethinking Representation

Are YOU well-represented?

Birkland+ Model of Policy, goals, problems

- Policy Domain: what substantive problems are under consideration? This specifies:
  - The actors involved, official actors who can make decisions + **stakeholders**;
  - **Distribution of benefits/costs** ⇒ actor organization, e.g. iron triangle, policy community;
  - The systemic agenda;

- Input-output Model;
  - Actors: **legislature, executive, bureaucrats, justices and the available levers**;
  - Inputs: **agenda setting (application of power/social construction, focusing events, indicator change driven esp by unofficial actors) sets goals**, **determines the causal model**, which specifies the institutional agenda, and leads to the **policies** on the decision agenda;
  - Black box **decision making, timing (incrementalism, punctuated eq) driven by indicators/focusing events**, choice driven by e.g. median voter thm, Arrow's thm;
    - Round 1: **works on decision agenda**, leads to outputs (e.g. statute laws, rules, court decisions);
    - Round 2: **Implementation**, leads to outcomes;

- Outcomes: **Feedback from failure and success**, learning leads to iteration and updates.

Purpose of the paper:

- We (i.e. political scientists) have developed more sophisticated descriptions of the different ways that **representation** works;
  - Promissory representation;
  - Anticipatory representation;
  - Gyroscopic representation;
  - Surrogate representation;

- So for each of these what constitutes 'good' representation?
  - Expansion of knowledge above is positive – normative has not kept up;
  - Goal of paper is to catch the normative up;

- 'Good' means some sort of effective accountability;
  - Promissory has well-defined criteria but the rest do not meet it;
  - New criteria for the rest are **systemic rather than dyadic**...
  - ...and **plural rather than singular**.

Purpose of the paper:

...analyzing each form separately makes it possible to identify the underlying power relation in each form, the role of deliberation in each, and the normative criteria appropriate to each. These normative criteria are goals toward which to strive... one might say that the closer a system of representation comes to meeting the normative criteria for democratic aggregation and deliberation, the more that system is normatively legitimate.

Definitions

- Power (**Dahl**): *A* has power over *B* to the extent that *A* can get *B* to do something *B* would not otherwise do;

- Power (**Nagel**): causal relation between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself;

- **Retrospective Voting**: voters look back when deciding how to vote;

- **Aggregative Democracy**: adding voters preferences up to make a decision;

- **Deliberative Democracy**: the conversation.

Promissory Representation: power, deliberation, accountability

- This is the baseline model that came along first;

- Follows the principal–agent problem:
  - Control advantage allows the agent to deviate from the principal's goals;
  - Information advantage allows the agent to deviate from the principal's goals;

- Two flavors:
  - **Mandate**: representative promises to follow constituents instructions/desires;
  - **Trustee**: representative promises to further constituents long-run interests and interest of the nation as a whole.

Promissory Representation: power, deliberation, accountability

- Power relationship between voters and representative is linear in time:
  - Voter at time 1 extracts a promise from representative (election);
  - Representative at time 2 implements policy (governing period);
  - Voter at time 3 rewards or sanctions representative (election);
  - Clearly involves retrospective voting;

- Reflects Dahl and requires forward looking intentionality;
  - Voters (A) want to get representative (B) to make policy they would not otherwise;
  - Accountability comes through electoral sanctions;
  - Comes closest to an ideal where will of citizens is translated into policy;

- Normative standard: 'good' representation equals kept promises.

Anticipatory Representation: power, deliberation, accountability

- Representative tries to please future voters;

- Power relationship is backwards or non-linear;
  - Voter at time 1 extracts a promise from representative (election);
  - Representative is aware of the fact that voters may opt for a retrospective frame during future elections...
    - ...has **beliefs** about future voter preferences...
    - ...and **attempts to ensure those voters are satisfied with policy** at time 2 (governing period);
  - Voter at time 3 rewards or sanctions representative (election);

- Reflects more generalized power of Nagel and is derived from a marketplace model (see Stone);

- Two cases to consider:
  - Voter preferences are stable $\Rightarrow$ no important difference between anticipatory and promissory;
  - Voter preferences are unstable $\Rightarrow$ representative has incentives to search for time 3 voter characteristics.

Anticipatory Representation: power, deliberation, accountability

- Empirical implications – redirects attention from time 1 to time 3:
  - Representative has incentives to attempt to change time 3 voters $\Rightarrow$ model become **more deliberative** – communications cycles;
  - Representative has incentives to engage **interests rather than policy preferences**;
  - **Voters can be educated** by representatives, parties, interest groups, media, etc;
- Normative implications – accountability mechanisms have to be forward looking:
  - Representative is entrepreneurial, trying to attract votes of future customers $\Rightarrow$ **prudential relationship w/ future voters**;
  - Communication between representative and voter depends on entire system $\Rightarrow$ **what should system do**?
  - Representative has incentives to try to change voter preferences $\Rightarrow$ is this **education or manipulation**?
- Representative anticipatory actions should be judged by three criteria:
  - Non-manipulation – no misleading voters;
  - Illumination of interests – as opposed to policy preferences;
  - Retrospectively approvable transformation – use of power to change the situation would be approved of by voters.

Gyroscopic Representation

- Representatives act in ways the voter approves of without external incentives;

- Representative looks within: understanding of interests, interpretive schemes, conscience, principles;

- Voters seek to elect a 'good' type:
  - A single issue representative;
  - Commitment to the common good;
  - Character;
  - Party ID;
  - Descriptive characteristics;

- Voters affect political outcomes by **inducing systemic preferences rather than individual preferences** $\Rightarrow$ power is over the system;

- Note: may account for as much as 75% of all voter-representative relationships;
  - Most important mechanism for President and Senate;
  - Most important mechanism for House is anticipatory.

Gyroscopic Representation

- Power relationship between voter and representative is over once election is finished – they do not relate as principals and agents;
    - Key to voter ability to affect outcomes is **predictability** – ability to construct good estimates of how a representative will act;
    - Party ID can help with this;
    - Reputation, descriptive characteristics, and character;

- **Voter expects discretion** from representative:
    - Representative is expected to act as voter would wish;
    - Empowers creative deliberation, e.g. compromise, changes of mind, etc. are allowed;

- Normative implications:
    - Accountability is irrelevant;
    - Ongoing communication between voters and representative is irrelevant;
    - Deliberation at authorization (no intentional deception during election) is really important $\Rightarrow$ predictability, illumination of interests;
    - Ease of maintenance and removal.

Surrogate Representation

- Representation by representative with no electoral relationship – e.g. a representative from another district;

- Why would a representative give any attention to non-constituents?
  - Campaign contributions;
  - In-kind services, volunteer time, information, expertise;
  - A felt sense of responsibility, e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, class, occupational similarity, etc.

- The only power relationship between voters and representatives is the threat to withhold;
  - Creates possibility for significant political inequality given campaign finance laws.

Surrogate Representation

- Dyadic voter–representative accountability is irrelevant;

- Normative implications – the legislature as a whole should should represent the perspectives of the public in proportion;
  - **Adversary representation**: aggregative aims of democracy mean that most conflictual interests get representation;
  - **Deliberative representation**: deliberative aims of democracy mean perspectives most important to a decision be represented during decision making – but not necessarily proportionally;

- Note: these are systemic criteria.

Conclusion

- Good deliberation is required for each representation form to work effectively;

- Each form of representation also has effects on deliberation:
  - Anticipatory: communication between public and representatives probably has follow-on effects of legislature deliberation;
  - Gyroscopic: selection of individuals who deliberate well;
  - Surrogate: inclusion of varied perspectives;

- No form is normatively 'best' and so no normative criteria for 'good' representation should eclipse the others.

Why should we care?

Whenever you are advising an elected official these sorts of feedback effects will structure their receptivity to your recommendations. In this sense, gyroscopic representatives may be simultaneously the easiest and most difficult to manage – all you need to do is convince them.