Representation: Should political elites represent their constituency descriptively and substantially?

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Agenda

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1. **Descriptive representation**
-   **Theories & normative arguments**

2. **Empirical findings and relation to theory**
-   **Between group representation in Germany**
    ●   *Class discussion*
-   **Randomized policy experiment in India**

3. **Wrapping up**
-   **Empirical challenges**

4. **Post-presentation**
-   **Group task**

Representation

Descriptive representation → Substantive representation

"[R]epresentatives are in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent."

Mansbridge, J. (1999), 629.

"[A]cting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them."

Pitkin, H. F. (1972), 209.

Descriptive Representation: Normative view

Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent "yes". *The Journal of Politics, 61*(3), 628 - 57.

Mansbridge's argument

In **deliberative democracy**, 2 **conditions** under which descriptive representation **enhances** substantive representation:

1. **Mistrust** between social groups
2. **Uncrystallized**, not fully articulated **interests**

Representative democracy

"The primary function of **representative democracy** is to represent the **substantive interest** of the represented **through** both **deliberation** and **aggregation**" (p. 630).

Descriptive Representation: Definition

Descriptive Representation

"Representatives are in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent" (p. 629).

- Visible characteristics: Gender, skin color, etc.
- Shared experience: Occupation, place of birth

➔ "'Being one of us' is assumed to promote loyalty to 'our' interests" (p.629).

Issues

Normative: Should morons be represented by morons?

Empirical: No evidence to believe that descriptive representation on its own reliably leads to better substantive representation.

➔ Descriptive representation is not inherently desirable, but may **contingently** improve **deliberation and aggregation**

Descriptive Representation: Deliberative democracy

Aggregative function
Proportional representation of substantive interests of different groups.

➔ Descriptive representation not strictly necessary, if representatives vote in the interest of the group they represent.

➔ "Reelection incentives and other forms of accountability can make descriptive representation unnecessary" (p. 635).

Deliberative function
"Making collective decisions and exercising power in ways that trace to the **reasoning** of the **equals** who are subject to the decisions: **not only in their preferences**, interest and choices, but in their reasoning" (Cohen, 2007, p. 220, emph. added).

➔ "deliberation gives **communicative** and **informational advantages** to representatives who are **existentially close to the issues**" (p. 636, emph. added)

Descriptive Representation: Representation and Deliberation

Distrust

"A history of dominance and subordination typically breeds inattention, even arrogance, on the part of the dominant group and distrust on the part of the subordinate group" (p. 641).

➔ Descriptive representation facilitates vertical communication between representatives and constituents

➔ Descriptive representation facilitates issue surrogacy

Empirical evidence

Call your congressperson: Black constituents are more likely to contact their representative if he/she is also black (Gay, 2001), even across constituencies (Swain, 1995).

Equal Rights Amendment: ERA proponents reject male Senator's rewording of the amendment as "weak", which may have helped it to pass.

Descriptive Representation: Representation and Deliberation

Uncrystallized preferences
Compared to economic issues, debate on emerging social issues (i.e. gender, race) is more dynamic and less entrenched. With weak party discipline in the US:

➔ Legislators engage in "**introspective representation**": "acting on the basis of what they themselves have concluded is the right policy for their constituents and the nation" (p. 644).

Under introspective representation, voters exercise power via "**electoral selection**":

➔ Voters use, i.a., **descriptive cues** to **predict** whether a candidate, will represent their interests.

➔ Can be co-opted via "**pseudo-description**", i.e. representatives conduct themselves inauthentically to gain support.

Descriptive Representation: Costs

Lesser Talent

Microcosmic representation: Political assemblies should be a perfect microcosm of the population (like a perfect random sample). Implemented via **lottery**.

➔ Relative loss of talent by not specifically seeking out the most capable people to legislate

Selective representation: Institutional remedies to counteract disproportional adversity faced by **specific groups**.

Selection criteria

Selective descriptive representation requires choosing principled guidelines for selection of groups.

"Disadvantaged groups often need the full representation that proportionality allows in order to achieve several goals" (p. 636):

- Synergy
- Critical mass
- Dispersion
- Nuance

Descriptive Representation: Costs

Essentialism

Assuming members of a group have "a single or essential trait, or nature, that binds every member of a descriptive group together, giving them **common interests** that, in the most extreme versions of the idea, **transcend the interest that divide them**" (p. 637)

Social fragmentation: Citizens come to view themselves predominantly as member of their subgroup.

Implementation

Diluted power: Concentrating (packing) minority voters into one electoral district diminishes their representation where their interests **overlap** with other others'.

Decreased accountability: Expecting descriptive characteristics to signal substantive representation may lead to **complacency** among voters.

The Diminishing Value of Representing the Disadvantaged

Motivation

Previous literature often explores descriptive representation in terms of the **share of minority MPs in parliament.**

Authors want to examine **incentives** for substantive of individual MPs.

Research question

How does substantive representation by minority MPs change over time?

The Diminishing Value of Representing the Disadvantaged

Theory

E.g. **presence model** more disadvantaged MPs leads to better substantive representation of their group, based on **shared experience** and **common background**.

However, link between descriptive and substantive representation is subject to **institutional constraints** , e.g. party discipline.

Legislators' activities change based on:

- **endogenous factors** (interests, expertise)
- **strategic considerations** (credible commitment, appearing competent, reelection, party/gov't position, seniority)
- **environment** (party colleagues/leadership).

➔ H1: MPs focus more on their group's issues than their colleagues
➔ H2: MPs focus more on their group's issues in the beginning of their career

The Diminishing Value of Representing the Disadvantaged

Data

1,277 Members of the Bundestag, quarterly activity, 39,392 observations.

Interpellations (*große/kleine Anfrage*) to gauge MP-activity. "A **credible** tool for **signaling** an opinion on an issue" (p. 540), because…

- **party discipline** -> little room for individuality in German parliamentary system

Methodology

Dependent variable: Number of interpellations in minority group related policy area (gender, migration, social class, age)
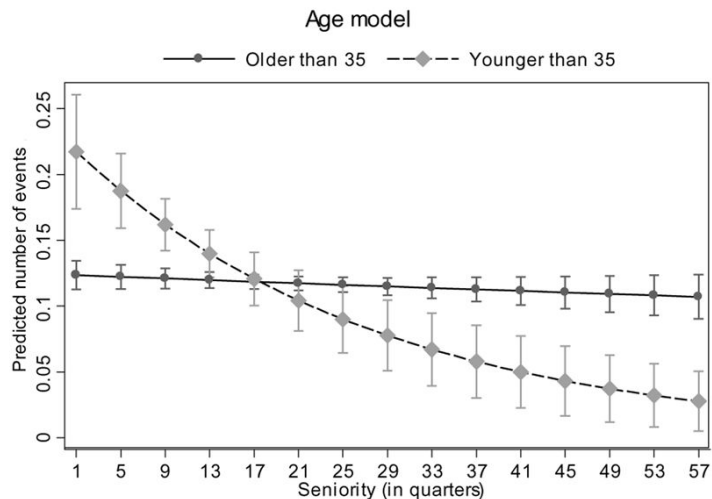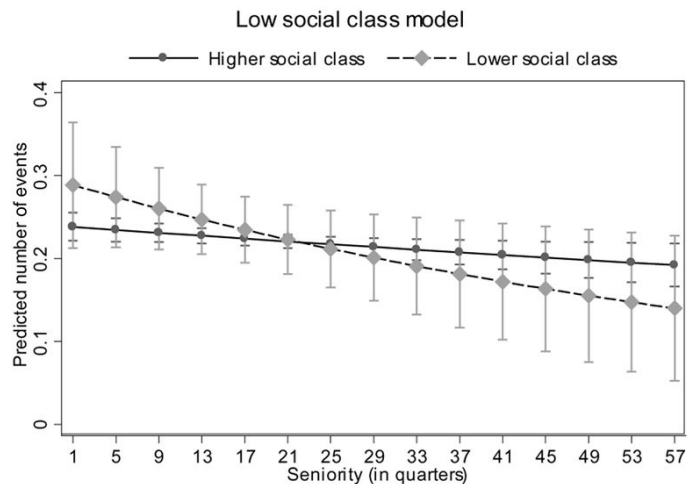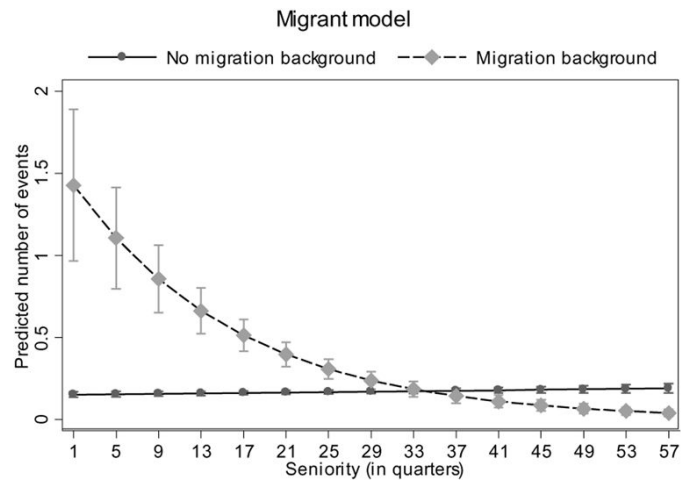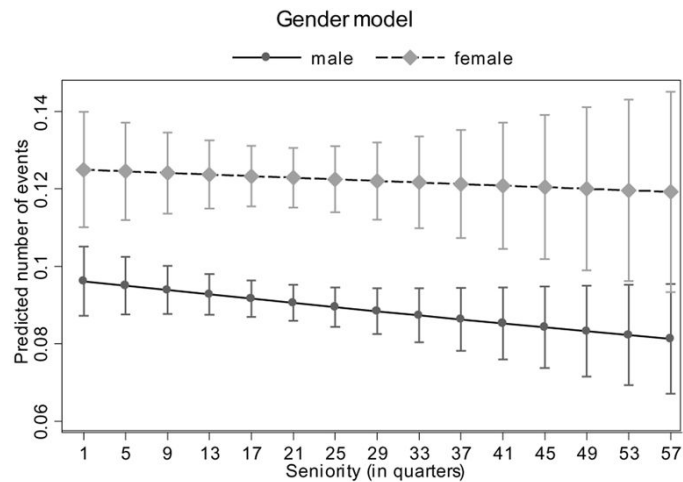
Independent variable: Minority status, seniority, minority*seniority interaction

Controls: Ministerial/party position, direct mandate, election year, party in government

Statistical Analysis: Negative binomial regression due to count data

	Gender related		Migration related		Social class related		Age related	
	Coef.	s.e	Coef.	s.e	Coef.	s.e	Coef.	s.e
MP Gender	0.30	0.04**						
(Visible) Migrant MP			1.26	0.12**				
Low Social Class MP					0.05	0.09		
Young MP (<35)							0.21	0.07**
Seniority	−0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00*	−0.00	0.00*	−0.00	0.00*
Ministerial/Party Position	−0.12	0.07	0.06	0.07	−0.13	0.06*	−0.15	0.06*
Direct Mandate MP	−0.63	0.07**	0.42	0.06**	−0.48	0.06**	−0.62	0.07**
Election Year	−0.80	0.06**	−0.42	0.06**	−0.68	0.05**	−0.43	0.07**
Member Coalition Party	−2.68	0.06**	−2.85	0.06**	−2.67	0.04**	−2.86	0.05**
Cubic Spline 1	0.08	0.01**	0.02	0.02	0.11	0.01**	0.07	0.01**
Cubic Spline 2	−0.01	0.06	−0.05	0.08	−0.30	0.05**	0.01	0.06
Cubic Spline 3	−0.43	0.16**	0.19	0.21	0.51	0.14**	−0.42	0.16**
Cubic Spline 4	1.20	0.19**	−0.11	0.24	0.10	0.17	1.11	0.20**
Constant	−15.28	2.06**	−5.05	2.62	−17.40	1.93**	−12.11	2.02**
Ln Alpha	0.42	0.07	1.79	0.04	0.98	0.04	0.69	0.06
Alpha	1.53	0.10	5.99	0.25	2.65	0.11	2.00	0.12
N	39,392		39,392		39,392		39,392	
Pseudo R^2 =		0.23		0.15		0.18		0.22
Log pseudolikelihood	−9,608.44		−11,891.78		−15,788.18		−10,496.60	

	Gender related		Migration related		Social class related		Age related	
	Coef.	s.e.	Coef.	s.e.	Coef.	s.e.	Coef.	s.e.
MP Gender	0.26	0.07**						
(Visible) Migrant MP			2.31	0.18**				
Low Social Class MP					0.20	0.14		
Young MP (<35)							0.60	0.12**
Seniority	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00*	0.00	0.00
Interaction Minority_Seniority	0.00	0.00	−0.07	0.01**	−0.01	0.01	−0.03	0.01**
Ministerial/Party Position	−0.12	0.07	0.06	0.07	−0.13	0.06*	−0.15	0.06*
Direct Mandate MP	−0.63	0.07**	0.43	0.07**	−0.48	0.06**	−0.62	0.07**
Election Year	−0.80	0.06**	−0.41	0.06**	−0.68	0.05**	−0.42	0.07**
Member Coalition Party	−2.68	0.06**	−2.87	0.06**	−2.67	0.04**	−2.87	0.05**
Cubic Spline 1	0.08	0.01**	0.02	0.02	0.10	0.01**	0.07	0.01**
Cubic Spline 2	−0.01	0.06	−0.05	0.08	−0.30	0.05**	0.00	0.06
Cubic Spline 3	−0.43	0.16**	0.20	0.21	0.50	0.14**	−0.39	0.16*
Cubic Spline 4	1.20	0.19**	−0.13	0.24	0.11	0.17	1.06	0.20**
Constant	−14.98	2.06**	−5.03	2.63	−17.33	1.92**	−12.28	2.02**
Ln Alpha	0.43	0.07	1.78	0.04	0.98	0.04	0.70	0.06
Alpha	1.53	0.10	5.92	0.24	2.65	0.11	2.01	0.12
N	39,392		39,392		39,392		39,392	
Pseudo R^2 =		0.28		0.15		0.18		0.22
Log pseudolikelihood	−9,608.19		−11,877.77		−15,787.21		−10,482.37	

Gender model

male — ♦ female

Migrant model

No migration background — ♦ Migration background

Low social class model

Higher social class — ♦ Lower social class

Age model

Older than 35 — ♦ Younger than 35

Critical remarks & theory connection

Operationalization of dependent variable: Interpellations

Intersectionality: Sorting of MPs into non-mutually exclusive groups (see especially age).

Fundamental difference in theorized mechanisms linking descriptive and substantive representation:

- Mansbridge: Shared experience, communication, deliberation

- Bailer et al: Incentive structure, institutional constraints

Discussion (max. 10 minutes)

Is the link between descriptive and substantive representation an external mechanism (i.e. constraints, institutions, incentives) or internal (i.e. shared experience, deliberative process)?

Women as Policy Makers
## Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India

Chattopadhyay, R. & Duflo, E. (2004).

Does descriptive representation lead to substantive representation?

Empirical strategy: determining the "…effect of being reserved for a woman, rather than not reserved, in a system where there is reservation" (ibid., 1426).

- Women reservation as head of village council (IV)
- Public goods provided (DV)
    - Determining women's preferred policies by content in requests and complaints.

Case: The Panchayat System
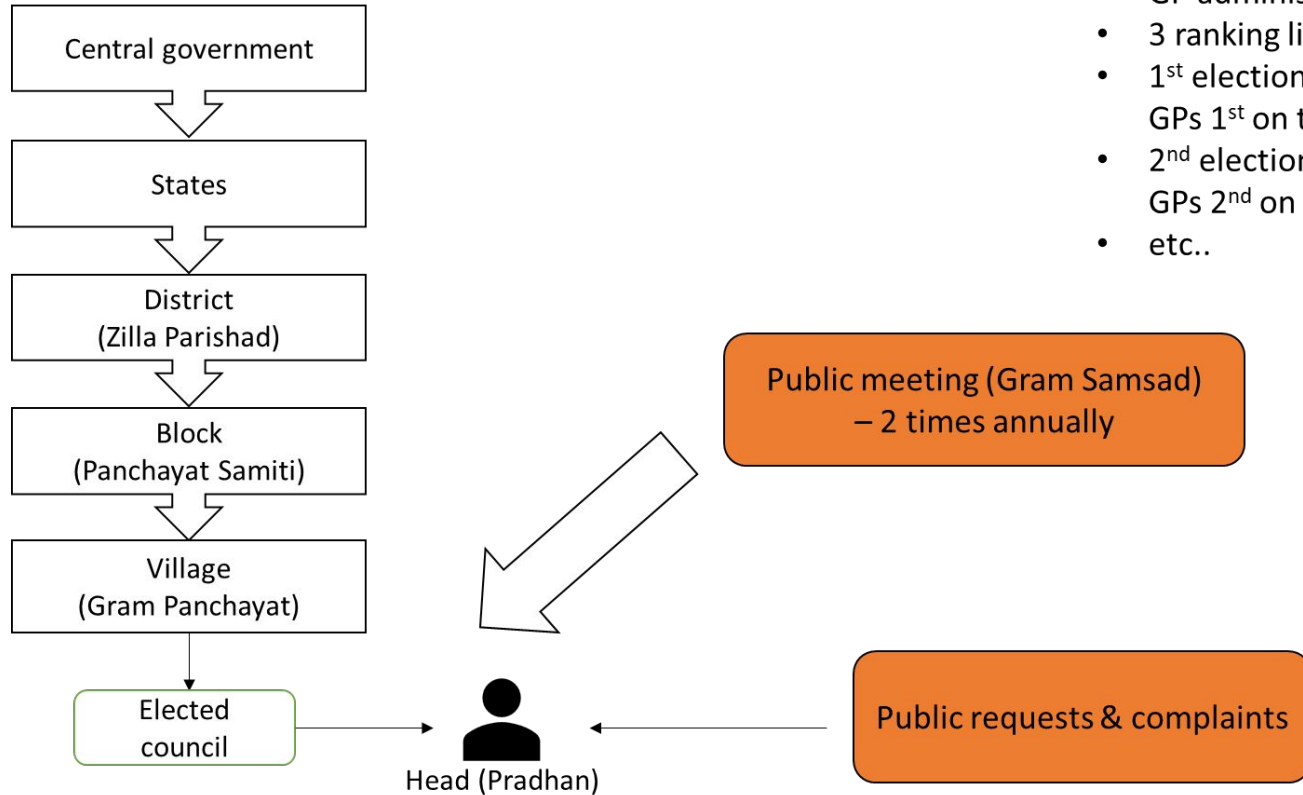
Fitting for a field experiment:
- GP administrative number
- 3 ranking lists
- 1st election, women reservation for GPs 1st on the list
- 2nd election, women reservation for GPs 2nd on the list
- etc..

Central government

↓

States

↓

District
(Zilla Parishad)

↓

Block
(Panchayat Samiti)

↓

Village
(Gram Panchayat)

↓

Elected council → Head (Pradhan)

Public meeting (Gram Samsad) – 2 times annually

Public requests & complaints →

Research design & theory modelling

Field experiment
- Control group (unreserved)
- Treatment group (reserved for women)

Theoretical modelling

- $\delta_w > \delta_m$

- $\mu´ > m$

- Reservation & women running = policies closer to m_w and m_m since it counterweights $\mu´$.

TABLE 1: Women and men have different preferences

PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES RAISED	WEST BENGAL			RAJASTHAN		
	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE
Drinking water	31%	17%	+13	54%	43%	+9
Road improvement	31%	25%	+6	13%	23%	-11
Housing	11%	5%	+5	3%	4%	-1
Electricity	8%	10%	-1	3%	2%	+1
Education	6%	12%	-6	5%	13%	-9
Irrigation and ponds	4%	20%	-17	2%	4%	-2

MIT, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (2006)

TABLE 2: Women invested more in public goods preferred by women

|	WEST BENGAL			RAJASTHAN		
	MEAN RESERVED GP	MEAN UNRESERVED GP	DIFFERENCE	MEAN RESERVED GP	MEAN UNRESERVED GP	DIFFERENCE
(A) VILLAGE-LEVEL						
Number of drinking water facilities (repaired or built)	23.83	14.74	+9.09	7.31	4.69	+2.62
Road condition (1 if good)	0.41	0.23	+0.18	0.90	0.98	-0.08
Number of council-run education centers	0.06	0.12	-0.06			
Irrigation facilities (repaired or built)	3.01	3.39	-0.38	0.88	0.90	-0.02
(B) GP-LEVEL						
1 if new tubewell was built	1.00	0.93	+0.07			
1 if metal road was built or repaired	0.67	0.48	+0.19			
1 if there is informal education center in GP	0.67	0.82	-0.16			
1 if at least one irrigation pump was built	0.17	0.09	+0.07			

MIT, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (2006)

Robustness tests & covariate control

- Interaction D_i = strength of the difference between women's and men's preferences for a particular good.

- Interaction S_i = preference for the aggregate population, assuming an equal share of men and women.

- Pradhan's characteristics other than gender.

- Party group.

- Experience.

- Re-election prospects.

- Comparison to reserved SC and ST.

- Husband proxy (43% helped by husband, 13% for men counterparts).

Critical remarks & theory connection

- Generalizability: local-level government in rural India.
  - Mansbridge's (1999) context of group mistrust or uncrystallized interests?

- Internal validity: Self-fulfilling prophecy due to awareness of the regulation's motivational background.

- Formal requests and complaints as a measure for m_w.

- Variables D_i and S_i might be outcomes of the reservation policy, i.e. unfit as interaction variables.

- Theoretically assumes µ´-position to be unaffected by women's influence. The µ´-position might change with a woman Pradhan.

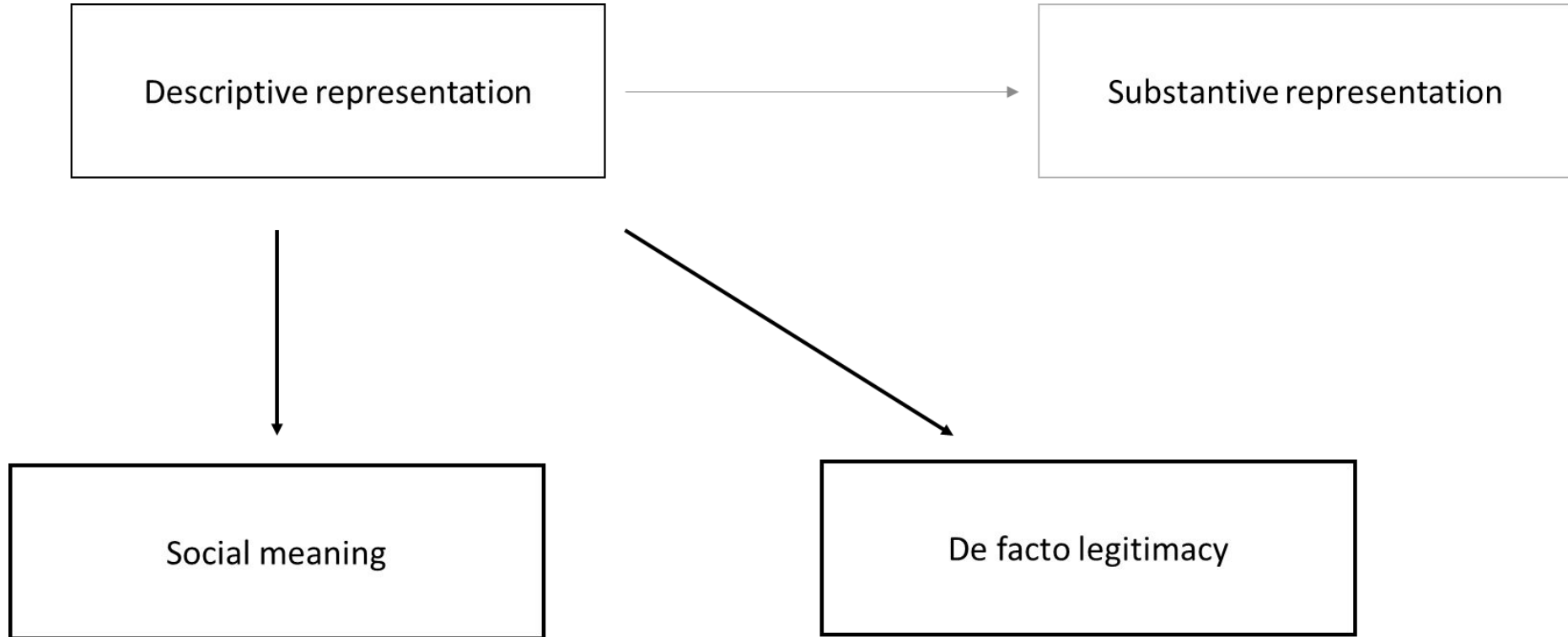- Undesirable relating to Mansbridge's (1999) critique of permanent quotas.
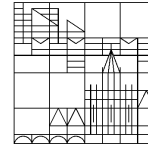
Wrapping up

Empirical challenges

- Intersectionality

- Time-dependency

- Context-dependency → Generalizability(?)

Other values of descriptive representation(?)

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Group task: add variables, nodes and arrows