

# 1

## “¡Quitemos a Castro Ahora!”

### I

At first glance, the man selling limes on the busy street corner in Little Havana looked like any other vendor. But something set him apart. Perhaps it was the large bills passers-by stuffed in his pockets while leaving their limes behind. Or maybe it was the reverence with which the buyers treated him. No, this man wasn't just a fruit peddler. This man was a hero. This man was Orlando Bosch.

Bosch took up selling fruit on the corner of Flagler and LeJeune in protest. After violating probation for firing a bazooka from MacArthur Causeway—the busy road linking downtown Miami and Miami Beach—at a Polish freighter, a judge refused to allow him to travel for work while under house arrest.<sup>1</sup> The lime peddler did more than \$2,000 worth of sales in just two days and brought traffic to a halt. Clearly, Bosch still had the support of the community, despite a long history of illegal activities designed to overthrow Fidel Castro.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he was a terrorist, but he was their terrorist.

The passion of the Cuban American community is hard to overstate. For decades, those seen as even mildly accommodating toward Fidel Castro were vilified in Miami's Cuban community, where even innocuous statements invited violence. In 1972, for example, a crowd listening to Julio Iglesias at a nightclub rioted after he commented that he wouldn't mind singing for Cubans. Iglesias left under police escort, and most local radio stations dropped him from their play lists (Mullin 2000). In 1975, Valentin

Hernandez murdered Luciano Nieves, a local writer who advocated dialogue with Castro. Nine years after Hernandez's conviction, Governor Bob Graham received more than 6,000 letters calling for his early release. In 1994, a lawyer named Magda Montiel Davis made the mistake of complimenting Castro as "a great educator" during a pro-dialogue conference. She returned home to death threats and protesters. Her entire office staff quit (Mullin 2000). As recently as 2004, Larry Klamann, a Republican Senate candidate, ran on the slogan "¡Quite-mos a Castro Ahora! (Take Castro Out Now!)."

Given these events, politicians are understandably sensitive to the intensity of Cuban Americans. Although Cuban Americans make up just over 5 percent of Florida's population, politicians such as Senator Bill Nelson regularly stop in Miami to seek approval from leaders in the Cuban community before traveling to Cuba (March 2002). And despite most Floridians' indifference on issues pertaining to Castro's Cuba, not a single state official opposes the positions of the Miami hardliners who advocate increased restrictions on travel and trade. Even Democrats like Bob Graham and Bill Nelson, who would seem to have little to gain from courting the votes of the heavily Republican Cuban American community, support the "hardliners'" positions.<sup>3</sup>

Sensitivity to Cuban Americans' preferences extends well beyond Florida. In 2004, most Democratic presidential candidates supported the hardliners' positions, despite the fact that most Americans support the liberalization of ties with Cuba. Studies show that more than 66 percent of Americans and more than 55 percent of Floridians oppose the travel ban (Davies 2001; Rufty 1998).<sup>4</sup> Nationally, public opinion seems to have influenced politicians outside Florida, as separate bills repealing the embargo have passed both the House and Senate in the past few years. John Kerry concisely summarized this apparent contradiction with his admission that foreign policy on Cuba is dictated by "the politics of Florida" (Wallsten 2003).

Given Cuban Americans' intensity, it is not surprising that in the fall of 2002, while national headlines focused on security, terrorism, and the president's march toward war in Iraq, in Miami's newly created 25th congressional district the race focused on Cuba.<sup>5</sup> For the first time since Castro's rise, a major party candidate, Democratic State Representative Annie Betancourt, supported ending the ban on travel to Cuba, a centerpiece of the policies advocated by Miami hardliners. While a broad national movement was growing to repeal the trade embargo to open Cuba as a market for American agriculture, in Miami, Betancourt's stance was heresy.

Betancourt's stand was courageous, but it was also calculated. Her opponent Mario Diaz-Balart, scion of Miami political royalty, is Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart's brother and the son of Rafael Diaz-Balart, who served as majority leader in the Cuban House of Representatives from 1954 to 1958 (Nielsen 2002). Diaz-Balart was politically connected and well funded. Even more daunting was

the fact that Diaz-Balart drew the newly created 25th district for himself. After term limits had forced him out of the state Senate, he took a step down and ran for the state House in order to chair the Redistricting Committee. In so doing, he set himself up as a heavy favorite to win the plurality Republican 25th.

Betancourt was no slouch, though. Previously elected to the state House of Representatives from a district encompassed by the 25th, she had defeated a well-known Latina television personality to win the Democratic primary. Her most valuable asset, however, was her name: Betancourt was the name of a prominent Cuban family and one of Cuba's first presidents. Cubans would recognize her as one of their own. To non-Cubans, particularly those in the western part of the state who might not vote for a Hispanic, the name Betancourt seemed innocuous.

Public opinion was also with Betancourt. For the first time since Castro's ascent, a series of polls showed that a majority (57 percent) of Cuban Americans supported ending restrictions on travel to Cuba (Bendixen 2002). In the 25th district, which is more than 63 percent Hispanic, most of whom are Cuban, Betancourt's move was not just courageous, it was politically astute.<sup>6</sup> With a single announcement, Betancourt set the agenda for the campaign, generated immense free publicity, and temporarily made the race appear competitive.

Ultimately, Diaz-Balart's advantages were insurmountable. Betancourt was trounced. In a district in which Al Gore took about 45 percent of the presidential vote (despite a 43 percent to 35 percent Republican registration advantage over Democrats), Betancourt managed a meager 34 percent (Zollo 2002). While the candidates shared several important characteristics, including their Cuban American heritage, their shared emphasis on Cuban issues was perhaps most surprising. As one editorialist put it, "For a while it seemed like Diaz-Balart's only issue was his claim that Betancourt had only one issue" ("Best Political Miscalculation" 2003). Diaz-Balart emphasized Betancourt's stand on Cuba despite the fact that she propounded the majority's preferred position on the most important issue in the district.<sup>7</sup>

While Betancourt's support for liberalizing ties with Cuba may be viewed as a turning point in the politics of south Florida, it also serves as evidence of a more general political phenomenon. Betancourt lost while espousing the majority view on the most highly salient issue in the election. Perhaps even more curiously, Mario Diaz-Balart, the candidate propounding the minority view, did his best to focus the race on that issue. In so doing, he directly contradicted prevailing theories of representation that suggest Diaz-Balart should have moderated his position on the travel ban to appeal to the largest number of voters.

Precisely because the outcome runs contrary to basic tenets of democratic theory—candidates' supporting the position preferred by the majority of voters should be victorious—the example provided by the race for Florida's 25th district directly challenges the premise underlying what R. Douglas Arnold (1990)

calls the most fundamental question facing students of political science: To what degree can citizens in a democracy control their government? Outcomes in which minorities triumph over majorities lead us to question whether citizens can control their government at all.

While Orlando Bosch and the politics of south Florida are unquestionably unique, the counter-democratic example of a candidate's positioning on liberalizing ties with Cuba is not. Considerable evidence suggests that minority-preferred positions often gain elected officials' support. Whether it is Pennsylvania's Senator Rick Santorum supporting the criminalization of homosexual relations ("Gay Issue" 2003),<sup>8</sup> President Bush opposing the importation of prescription drugs from Canada (Nusbaumer 2003), California's Representative Henry Waxman promoting the regulation of vitamins and labeling in direct opposition to a district full of health-conscious consumers (Schwartz 1993), Florida's Democratic senators repeatedly supporting restrictive Cuba policy, or Florida's Governor Jeb Bush sending state police to seize the brain-dead Terri Schiavo to have her feeding tube reinserted,<sup>9</sup> minority positions seem frequently to win when pitted against the will of the majority.

## II

### *Do Legislators Represent?*

Democracy is characterized by its emphasis on the values of popular sovereignty, the idea that the majority should rule, liberalism, the idea that all people are equal, and liberty. A system in which minorities prevail over majorities appears inconsistent with these values.

Given the anecdotal evidence that politicians frequently take positions a majority opposes, it is hardly surprising that academics disagree about whether legislators represent their constituents' preferences. On the one hand, dozens of studies suggest that politicians are highly responsive to their constituents' preferences (e.g., Bartels 1991; Bianco 1994; Bianco et al. 1996; Erikson 1978; Erikson et al. 1975; Fenno 1978; Holian et al. 1997; Jackson 1971; Jackson and King 1989; Mayhew 1974; Medoff et al. 1995; Page et al. 1984). These results are counterbalanced, however, by many other studies that find little evidence of representation once alternative explanations are considered (e.g., Bernstein 1989; Bernstein and Anthony 1974; Cohen and Noll 1991; Dennis et al. 1998; Fiorina 1974; Kalt and Zupan 1984; Kau and Rubin 1979, 1993; Lindsay 1990; Page et al. 1984; Peltzman 1984; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Wilkerson 1990). Of course, many studies find mixed evidence; for a variety of reasons, responsiveness appears large on some issues but nonexistent on others (e.g., Achen 1978; Bond 1983; Elling 1982; Hero and Tolbert 1995b; Hutchings 1998; Key 1963; Kuklinski 1978; Miller and Stokes 1963; Pinney and Serra 1999; Theriault 2005).

Despite the considerable disagreement about whether or not legislators represent, there is much greater consensus about the process through which legislators try to represent. In the paragraphs that follow, I describe the traditional account of representation. I call it the demand model, which is characterized by politicians who consider the views of their entire district when making decisions, and who try to do what constituents either want or are likely to want.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Representation Process*

Perhaps the most common view of how representation works is the “Demand Input Model,” which holds that the public demands policy from its elected representatives, who respond (Wahlke 1971).<sup>11</sup> Citizens are linked to their representatives, who, motivated by reelection, produce policy that reflects the majority’s preference (Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974). Citizens evaluate legislators’ behavior through elections. Legislators are responsive when their behavior is influenced by constituents’ preferences. This basic model describes dynamic representation and behavior over time, as well as behavior across issues in a particular legislature.

One important challenge to the idea that legislators respond to constituents’ demands is offered by Robert Bernstein (1989), who suggests that legislators could not behave retrospectively even if they wanted to because citizens lack meaningful preferences on most of the issues legislators confront in Congress. This observation, which is supported by extensive research on public opinion (e.g., Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), leads to an important question: How can elected officials represent people who lack meaningful preferences?

A pragmatic answer to this dilemma describes legislators who seek to account not just for the district’s opinion on an issue, but for citizens’ latent (i.e., Key 1963) or potential preferences, which might be aroused by a challenger or an interest group before the next election (Arnold 1990). In Arnold’s view, legislators must account for both current and potential preferences, the latter of which are weighted by the probability that they will be informed and aroused. This explanation accounts for politicians who are either prospective or retrospective, as well as for limitations in the public’s knowledge and interest. Jane Mansbridge (2003) describes the prospective process in which legislators seek out constituents rather than simply respond to their expressed preferences retrospectively as anticipatory representation.

While virtually every representation study empirically investigates responsiveness in a manner consistent with the demand input model, as we will see, relatively few suggest that legislators are entirely retrospective. To date, however, only a handful of empirical representation studies account for these differences (e.g., Stimson et al. 1995).<sup>12</sup> While it is difficult to observe cases where citizens’

opinions were never aroused because astute incumbents were proactive, evidence suggests that incumbents anticipate threats by looking to the behavior of their most recent challengers and co-opting their issues (Sulkin 2005).

Tracy Sulkin's (2005) observations are especially valuable in that they demonstrate one means by which campaign behavior affects behavior in Congress (e.g., Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Jacobson 2003), an observation that may help to reconcile differences between retrospective and prospective views of representation.<sup>13</sup> When combined with the iterative nature of the democratic process—the overwhelming majority of incumbents repeatedly stand for and win reelection—one can infer that whether politicians appeal to citizens' expressed or potential preferences, in either Congress or in the campaign, they work hard to satisfy voters. Legislators who anticipate a preference and act on it in Congress can then incorporate that position into their next campaign, both to appeal to voters and to insulate themselves from their challengers' attacks. A legislator's action on the issue in the following Congress amounts to a retrospective appeal to those voters. The repeated process of campaigning and legislating essentially simplifies to a process consistent with the demand input model described by John Wahlke (1971). In the chapters that follow, I refer to studies that assume that candidates and legislators appeal to voters as the demand model, whether the mechanism is retrospective, prospective, or some combination of the two.

In addition to sharing a view about how representation works, the demand model holds that politicians advocate constituents' majority-preferred alternative. Consistent with the notion of popular sovereignty, in a democratic republic responsive politicians are expected to appeal and respond to shifts in the view of the majority. Scholars typically account for this expectation either by imputing a unified preference to constituents (e.g., Theriault 2005) or by averaging districts' characteristics to estimate the majority-preferred alternative.<sup>14</sup> In the latter case, the strength of majority support is often assumed to vary across districts with the proportion who support a position.<sup>15</sup> Large numbers who support one position will pull the district's average toward that position. No matter how it is measured, this majoritarian perspective assumes a perfect liberalism in which all citizens are equal; the views of the legislator's most vociferous critic are given the same weight as those of the staunchest supporter (Achen 1978). Hence, only by considering everyone's views can the majority-preferred position be identified.<sup>16</sup> As we will see, this assumption is highly problematic (e.g., Canon 1999).

Since most of the controversy about representation arises from studies that examine whether legislators represent their constituents' policy preferences, the demand model is applied to questions of policy responsiveness.<sup>17</sup> When we observe typical legislators, whether in committee pursuing allocation responsiveness (e.g., Hall 1996; Shepsle 1978), doing casework pursuing service responsiveness, or at home in the district projecting a sense of "home style" and pursuing

symbolic responsiveness, we find them preoccupied with servicing their constituents (e.g., Fenno 1978, 1996; Mayhew 1974). The controversy about whether legislators represent does not seem to extend to other aspects of representation.

In many ways, the demand model is quite satisfying. After all, when we observe legislators closely, they seem to work hard to satisfy their constituents' demands (e.g., Mayhew 1974). While they may not always be responsive on policy, they are responsive in other ways (Eulau and Karps 1977), so the system seems quite responsive overall (e.g., Fenno 1978).<sup>18</sup> Such results imply that pluralist democracy is alive and well. The elected work hard to respond to citizens' preferences. A cursory glance at the democratic process, however, suggests there is considerable slippage in the degree to which elected officials respond to the citizenry.

### *A Party-Based Theory of Representation?*

Party provides a plausible alternative theory of representation that explains behavior of both voters and elected officials. Party identification serves both as the single best predictor of individuals' voting decisions (Campbell et al. 1960) and as a simple heuristic for holding elected officials accountable for their actions in office by evaluating candidates based on their party's performance (Arnold 1990). Party leaders also provide legislators with a voting cue, especially on those votes about which they know little or lack strong preferences (Kingdon 1971).

Party leaders directly influence legislators' decisions as well. One view, called conditional party government, holds that as the majority party becomes more homogeneous, party leaders are better able to advance their policy agenda (Rohde 1991). Alternatively, some hold that legislative parties act as cartels that both dispense benefits and enforce rules to overcome collective action and coordination problems (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2004).<sup>19</sup> Through agenda control, the party induces legislators to vote as it wants.

A vibrant literature illustrates the mechanisms and effects of party (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1993; Lebo et al. 2006; Lowell 1902; Rohde 1981). The power of political parties is contested, however, because party members are more likely to share the same issue preferences and background characteristics. Most notably, Keith Krehbiel (1993, 1999) questions the power of party and suggests that, unable to distinguish between the alternative explanations of party and preferences, most studies that document the effects of party are inconclusive.

Despite this, parties play little if any role in most representation theories, because legislators frequently cast roll-call votes against their parties' positions. A single national platform inhibits the flexibility candidates need to reflect the wide variety of interests that constituents have across districts and states. Consequently, because so many violations of party voting occur, representation

studies tend to discount the effects of party as conduits for representation. Instead, scholars disregard the central role of the citizenry and examine party leaders' influence on legislators' decisions in Congress independent of the influence of constituencies.<sup>20</sup>

Subconstituency politics provides an explanation for why politicians take positions contrary to those advocated by their parties. Politicians spurn their parties to exploit the benefits of subconstituency intensity. Moreover, party leaders not only accept but may also encourage such behavior because they recognize that the disproportionate power that accrues to the party is dependent on the party's maintaining its majority status. A party's ability to pressure members is tempered by members' need to be reelected.

### *Three Puzzles*

If, as Harold D. Lasswell (1936) says, politics is the study of "who gets what when and how," then clearly the provision of policy is a central, perhaps even the most important, form of representation. Provision of policy is essential for people to get what they want and need from government. When policy representation occurs, the actions of the elected reflect the preferences of the largest portion of the citizenry.

Given contemporary events, even a casual observer of politics may question whether the majority will prevail. Since policy responsiveness is the most carefully studied aspect of representation, the failure to explain legislators' policy behavior is a major limitation of the demand model. As commonly expressed, the demand model advocates a view that leads to three puzzles, a fact that implies that it poorly explains the democratic process.

Studies that examine the policy link between legislators' behavior and constituents' preferences reach conflicting results that the demand model cannot explain (see Bishin 2000; Fiorina 1974; Krehbiel 1991; Shannon 1968; Uslander 1999 for reviews). As seen earlier, while some studies find that legislators reflect constituents' policy preferences, numerous others find that legislators are responsive only sometimes or not at all.<sup>21</sup> Post hoc explanations for these conflicting results, such as the Issue Visibility Thesis, which holds that legislators' responsiveness increases as issues become more visible, are untested and, at best, leave us with an incomplete understanding of representation that is unable to explain most of what occurs in Congress, since most issues are of low visibility to the public (e.g., Kuklinski and Elling 1977; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Miller and Stokes 1963).

Compounding matters, published studies almost certainly overstate the degree to which legislators are responsive on policy. Consider the process through which political-science research is published. A scholar interested in



assessing the influence of constituency on legislators' decisions is likely to have a difficult time getting a manuscript published if the key constituency variable that assesses responsiveness is not statistically significant.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it is difficult to construct tests that demonstrate that representation does not occur because conventional statistical tests do not allow us to demonstrate the existence of “no relationship.” Instead, the researcher is only able to find that we cannot reject the possibility that there is no relationship between constituents' preferences and legislators' behavior. The bias against publishing null findings (e.g., Gerber and Malhotra 2006), taken in combination with the conflicting results observed in published scholarship, suggests that support for the demand model is likely weaker than commonly thought.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the standard for a finding of responsiveness is shockingly low. Scholars typically report a finding of responsiveness any time constituency preferences are significantly related to legislators' behavior. Such a finding, however, indicates only the existence of some, perhaps very small, relationship.

A second puzzle arises from the study of candidates' positioning in campaigns. The logic of the demand model is typically applied to campaigns and holds that candidates should appeal to the average voter in the district through the median voter theorem. The logic holds that candidates who offer policy to the median voter position themselves closest to the largest number of voters. Little evidence exists to validate this prediction, however. In response, a large literature has developed to explain why candidates diverge from this apparently optimal position (e.g., Adams et al. 2004; Burden 2004; Groseclose 2001; Lewis and King 2000; Merrill and Grofman 1999; Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989).

Many of these studies are theoretical, however, and not easily tested. Contrary to models that suggest that candidates converge to the center of the distribution of voter preferences on the issues salient in their districts (Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984; Hinich and Munger 1997), evidence suggests that candidates usually take non-centrist positions (e.g., Adams et al. 2004). The directional and discounting models have been offered to explain this finding. The directional model posits that voters evaluate candidates according to the direction and intensity of their proposals, thus giving candidates an incentive to deviate slightly from the median position (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989). The discounting model suggests that voters discount what candidates say they will do and instead consider the positions that the legislator is likely to be able to implement (e.g., Lacy and Paolino 1998, 1999; Merrill and Grofman 1999). One major weakness with these explanations is that they do not accurately reflect the level of sophistication of either the voters or the candidates whose behavior they are attempting to predict. As a result, explanations for candidates' taking non-centrist positions predict relatively modest divergences from the median.

Demand models poorly explain candidates' position taking, a crucial aspect of the democratic process. As with the conflicting results in the legislative-representation literature, the lack of voter and candidate convergence implies a misunderstanding of how representation works.

A third puzzle emerges from work that investigates voters' opinion and participation. Perhaps the most widely reported finding in the opinion literature is that the American public is unknowledgeable about and uninterested in politics (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Citizens' representation and interest is crucial to understanding representation inasmuch as these characteristics raise questions about both citizens' ability to evaluate elected officials' performance and legislators' need to consider citizens' views. While the demand model offers explanations of how civic participation might explain responsiveness by anticipating citizens' potential preferences (e.g., Arnold 1990; Bailey 2001), these alternatives have yet to be empirically examined. Moreover, apathy among citizens is especially problematic, since even if citizens become informed, it is not clear how, why, or under what circumstances they might act. Consequently, while the demand model offers a potential solution to citizens' limitations, as yet it offers little empirical evidence to support its theory. Thus, we have a poor understanding of how citizens' civic capacity affects politicians' behavior in campaigns and in Congress.

These puzzles suggest that prevailing theories of representation as reflected by the demand model inaccurately describe the democratic process. To reconcile them, I offer a new theory—called subconstituency politics theory—in which groups of intense and active citizens, rather than the citizenry as a whole, constrain legislator behavior.

### *Toward a Unified Theory of Representation*

This book develops a unified theory of representation based on subconstituency politics. Subconstituency politics occurs when politicians advocate the preferences of groups of intense citizens over those of the majority in a district. The theory provides an explanation for democratic political behavior that links our understanding of the capabilities and attributes of the citizenry, the role of campaigns and elections in translating the people's views into policy positions, and the behavior in Congress of those who win election. In so doing, it builds on work that seeks to provide macro-democratic theories that describe entire processes rather than focusing only on democracy's component parts (e.g., Sulkin 2005).<sup>24</sup>

Scholars focus a great deal of attention on legislators' behavior in campaigns, in committees, and on roll-call votes but are only beginning to develop theories that simultaneously explain behavior in all of them. As a result, we have learned a great deal about particular aspects of the democratic process, but the ability

to generalize our findings is limited. Seldom do theories explain how representation works across the different aspects of the democratic process, examining, for instance, how position taking in campaigns affects roll-call voting in Congress. Only recently have scholars begun to develop and test theories that explain behavior across democratic venues.

Such theories are rare because they require knowledge of distinct, though complementary, subfields. As Sulkin (2005) points out, the organization of the political-science discipline and, in particular, the division of American politics into the study of behavior and institutions further militates against the development of broad theories that cross subfield boundaries. In the case of subconstituency politics, social psychology explains citizens' opinions and intensity, and the intensity of opinion influences candidates' position taking, which in turn affects legislators' behavior in office.

Despite the scarcity of holistic theories, the idea that subjects central to these subfields affect actors central to others is not especially controversial. Behavior scholars have long recognized that group identity and attachment affect citizens' attitudes (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960). Similarly, students of campaigns note that citizens' opinions affect candidates' campaign positions (e.g., Downs 1957). While under-studied, the notion that candidates' campaign behavior affects their roll-call behavior, and vice versa, is also widely accepted (e.g., Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Jacobson 1983; Sulkin 2005). Finally, a number of scholars have examined the degree to which aggregate government policies move in tandem with citizens' preferences (Stimson et al. 1995).

While scholars increasingly recognize the importance of subconstituencies such as Cuban Americans, no theory of representation exists that adequately explains why and how politicians appeal to intense minorities rather than to the district as a whole. This book rejects the often unstated, but almost always present, liberal assumption inherent in the demand model, which holds that politicians view all citizens equally. Instead, I develop and test a theory of representation that accounts for the observation that not only do politicians appeal to groups but also the groups to which they appeal may vary across districts and issues. While normatively appealing, treating all citizens equally mischaracterizes the nuanced way that politicians actually see their constituencies (e.g., Fenno 1978) and overlooks the possibility that politicians' view of their constituencies might vary across issues, districts, and elections (e.g., Bishin 2000; Clausen 1973).

A good deal of evidence has accumulated suggesting that politicians appeal to different groups in different districts. Research shows that candidates target their appeals to specific groups within the constituency depending on the nature of the district (Huntington 1950), and that the degree to which a legislator supports particular positions is related to the existence of groups that may act as a source of control (MacRae 1958). Even legislators from the same state and party may represent different groups of constituents who provide them with different

benefits (Dexter 1957; Schiller 2000, but see Higgs 1989). Politicians thus see the constituencies to whom they appeal as variable. The particular groups to whom candidates make themselves heard depend on the incidence of costs and benefits to the groups. Arnold (1990) explicitly defines these groups of knowledgeable, informed, and interested citizens as “attentive publics.”

This is not to say that scholars entirely overlook the fact that politicians appeal to groups. To be sure, many studies look at the impact of specific groups, most often by accounting for a group’s district population and then imputing preferences to all members. To the extent that subgroups have been broadly considered (e.g., Fiorina 1974), they have generally been defined in narrow, usually partisan, terms focused primarily on the idea that politicians appeal only to fellow partisans (e.g., Clinton 2006; Wright 1989), partisans plus independents (Medoff et al. 1995), those who vote (Griffin and Newman 2005), or past supporters (Clausen 1973).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, examples of politicians’ appealing to groups in current events, such as Vice President Al Gore’s rejecting Clinton administration policy and opposing the deportation of Elian Gonzales during the 2000 presidential campaign, are common. In general, however, groups are considered in a largely idiosyncratic and atheoretical way that fails to account for the fact that the groups that matter vary across issues, districts, and time.<sup>26</sup>

Groups must be considered in a systematic way, because differences in legislators’ behavior are related to heterogeneity within districts (Bailey and Brady 1998; Bishin et al. 2006; Goff and Grier 1993). Studies that account for subconstituencies find a more consistent role for constituency as an influence on legislators’ behavior (e.g., Bishin 2000; Peltzman 1984; Wright 1989). Moreover, applying several of the various constituency concepts described earlier, Robert Weissberg (1979) shows that differing constructions of constituency lead to very different results about the degree to which legislators represent. Failing to understand when and how politicians appeal to groups means that we fail to understand how and when citizens influence their elected officials.

The purpose of this book is to develop and test a unified theory of representation that overcomes the limitations of past representation research. To do so, I build on past research that recognizes the importance of intense minorities via issue publics (e.g., Converse 1964; Dahl 1950), the role of interest groups (e.g., Berry 1999; Hansen 1991; Olson 1971; Schattschneider 1960; Truman 1951), and social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987). Subconstituency politics holds that, owing to the fact that different voters care about different issues with differing levels of intensity, the will of minorities is often represented at the majority’s expense.<sup>27</sup> Politicians appeal to the preferences of passionate subconstituencies to build coalitions of intense supporters who are more likely to participate.

Subconstituency politics is grounded in social identity theory (Turner et al. 1987), which explains how and why individuals coalesce into groups. Subcon-

stituency politics provides an explanation for the behavior observed in the everyday actions of politicians including those of Mario Diaz-Balart. It holds that politicians appeal to minority preferences over those of the majority when the benefit of advocating the minority's position outweighs the cost of alienating the less interested majority. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to defining and explaining the subconstituency politics theory and laying out the plan of the book.

### *The Challenge of Politics*

Getting votes from a citizenry that is politically uninterested and unknowledgeable is a difficult challenge, yet candidates' careers depend on their ability to transform passive citizens into active supporters. Appealing to groups of voters called subconstituencies helps solve this problem. Individuals carry multiple and overlapping social identities created through past experiences, which serve to frame the way that they perceive the world. Group identities are activated in large part on the basis of candidates' policy and non-policy (i.e., symbolic) positions. Once an identity is activated, individuals who share it view issues in the context of the group, thereby leading to shared preferences and intensity. Candidates try to develop coalitions of intense groups of individuals who care so strongly about a particular issue that a candidate's advocacy guarantees those individuals' support in the next election. Candidates build a coalition of supporters by developing platforms consisting of positions across multiple issues, each of which appeals to intense groups of constituents. Groups are disproportionately valuable to candidates because their members are not only more likely to vote but also more likely to provide other important resources. Once elected, candidates' behavior reflects the positions of the groups to which they appeal.

In a sense, subconstituency politics merely articulates a phenomenon long described by politicians and observed by journalists, but too frequently overlooked by social scientists—that politicians see constituents not as individuals, but as groups (Hamburger and Wallsten 2006). For many voters, an issue, or small group of related issues, may exist such that a candidate's position will dictate the voter's support. While subconstituency politics theory shares some basic characteristics of the demand model, the different views of constituency generate different implications. A summary of the differences between traditional representation theories and the subconstituency politics theory is seen in Table 1.1.

The main difference between these theories lies in the way the model accounts for constituents' influence. Rather than appealing to the constituency as a whole, politicians appeal to groups of citizens who are likely to be intense on particular issues. Through the course of this book, I show how this crucial distinction serves to explain the puzzles described earlier, comports better with

**TABLE 1.1 DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTERISTICS OF REPRESENTATION MODELS**

	Subconstituency Model	Demand Model
Politicians' proximate goal	Reelection	Reelection
Primary influence on behavior	Intense groups of citizens	Average citizen
Does responsiveness vary across issues?	No, but the group to whom legislators respond varies	Yes, depending on the visibility of the issue
Amount of knowledge and interest required of the average citizen	Low	High
Other influences on politicians' behavior when citizens lack meaningful preferences	Ideology, party	Ideology, party

the observations of political observers, and overcomes two central observations of research on political behavior: that the average citizen knows and cares little about politics, and that candidates seldom appeal to the median voter.

### *Methodology*

For decades, the unavailability of data has impeded the study of representation. While progress is continually being made, data do not yet exist that, for example, allow for the reliable estimation of citizens' preferences for congressional districts or for small groups within a state or district, or of opinion on a wide variety of less visible issues with which politicians regularly deal. To overcome these limitations, I test the subconstituency politics theory in a wide range of contexts, evaluating as many implications as possible. Specifically, I test the theory's implications in each of the three aspects of the democratic process: public opinion, candidates' behavior in campaigns, and legislators' behavior in Congress.

Doing so requires a mixed-methods approach, employing both case studies and statistical analyses to investigate each of the various aspects of the competing theories of representation. The use of statistical analyses to draw broad generalizations about the nature of representation is often limited by the unavailability of the data necessary to perform such analyses. Two examples stand out. First, reliable estimates of subconstituency opinion are seldom available for congressional districts. Second, data on the opinion of constituents are rarely available on low-visibility issues, which tend to get less news coverage.

To address this limitation, I maximize the generalizability of the results by examining a broad range of policies based on their visibility. Since proponents of the demand model hold that visibility conditions whether or not politicians represent, issues reflecting differing visibility levels are examined. More specifically, I test the implications of the subconstituency politics theory in the context of the Cuban trade embargo (very low visibility), the extension of hate crimes

to cover people based on sexual orientation (low visibility), the extension of the ban on assault weapons (high visibility), and abortion policy (very high visibility). Within these particular issues, observations for which particular groups are most likely to exist, and are thus typical of cases where groups exist, are identified to investigate whether politicians respond to such groups. Importantly, because the issues and groups to whom politicians respond vary across issues and districts, as we will see, some observations represent easy tests of subconstituency politics, while others are hard. To the extent that diversity within a district conditions representation, the degree to which an issue constitutes a difficult test can vary dramatically across states and districts.

The incorporation of case studies, a method often overlooked in studies of legislative representation, has ancillary benefits as well. While broad statistical analyses are essential for drawing generalizations about the state of representation, scholars who employ them frequently overlook the substantive impact of representation and cause us to alter the questions we ask about representation. We often speak, for instance, of “responsiveness,” a term that describes whether legislators move with their constituents, rather than examine whether legislators are behaving in the manner preferred by, or most consistent with, the views of their constituents. The subtle distinction is important because, as Weissberg (1978) points out, one can observe high levels of responsiveness on issues in which few legislators behave as their constituents would prefer. Examination of candidates’ and legislators’ positions on specific issues is a simple way to overcome this problem.

A second challenge in investigating the power of subconstituencies is to ensure they are identified in a systematic way and thereby preclude the ad hoc construction of groups for the sole purpose of evaluating the theories. Given the formal definition of groups in the chapter that follows, in any district one is likely to find some configuration of citizens who have common characteristics and fit the data simply by mining public-opinion polls for compatible results after an issue has been resolved. To assuage this concern, the tests that follow rely only on groups identified in previous research. In most cases, I rely on the taxonomy of (largely informal) groups identified by Stanley Greenberg in his book *The Two Americas* (2004). This book defines and describes numerous groups that are identified by their demographic, socioeconomic, and experiential characteristics, all of which relate to socializing experiences that are consistent with the way psychologists view social identities as being formed. Greenberg links these groups to issues they care strongly about, which we can then apply to test the subconstituency politics theory. These groups, which include, for instance, “The Faithful,” “F-You Boys,”<sup>28</sup> “Secular Warriors,” and “Super-Educated Women,” when combined with more widely recognized and well-researched groups such as African Americans, gays, and Cuban Americans, provide independent verification of the existence of formal and informal groups that are

active on the policy issues investigated herein and thus allows for a rigorous testing of the subconstituency politics theory.

Despite important differences in institutional design created to influence responsiveness, a general theory of representation should apply to both the House and the Senate. Theories that explain only one chamber or one issue are not very general. Throughout the book, therefore, I test the implications of the theory across chambers. To the extent that these results are consistent across issues and chambers, confidence in the generalizability of the theory and our conclusions increases.

### *Plan for the Book*

The subconstituency politics theory explains citizens' and politicians' behavior in the democratic process. Because subconstituency politics is a psychologically based theory, its implications should be widely generalizable across countries and levels of government. As a first step, this study tests the theory using citizens' knowledge, as well as the behavior of candidates for, and legislators in, the U.S. Congress. Testing subconstituency politics in the context of congressional behavior provides a robust test, since races for and behavior in Congress reflect a diverse set of actors in a wide variety of social and electoral contexts. Moreover, studying Congress offers the potential to contribute greatly to our understanding of representation, since it has been a primary focus of representation research.

The book proceeds in three sections. Chapter 2 completes the first section and articulates the subconstituency politics theory more fully. The second section of the book, Chapters 3–5, focuses on testing the implications of the theory: Citizens' propensity and ability to hold politicians accountable is better explained by subconstituency politics than by the demand model, and the process through which politicians represent constituents is the same for candidates in campaigns and for legislators in Congress. In both cases, politicians appeal to subconstituencies rather than the district as a whole. The third section of the book consists of two chapters that apply the theory to address two unresolved questions of representation. Subconstituency politics suggests an alternative explanation for the puzzling result that politicians from homogeneous states are more responsive than those from heterogeneous ones (Bailey and Brady 1998). Subconstituency politics also directly challenges the issue visibility thesis, which holds that the visibility of issues conditions responsiveness. These applications show that subconstituency politics better explains the interplay between citizens' preferences, candidates' position taking, and legislators' behavior. The book proceeds as follows.

Chapter 2 articulates the logic underlying subconstituency politics. Candidates take non-centrist positions in campaigns to appeal to intense groups of constituents who hold positions that are more extreme than those of the average



citizen. Because of these groups' intensity, the benefits obtained from appealing to them frequently outweigh the benefits obtained from appealing to the district's average voter. Moreover, taking extreme positions does not cost candidates the votes of those who disagree, since different people care about different issues. Precisely because the average citizen does not feel intensely about the issue, a candidate's advocacy of the minority position seldom prevents her from obtaining the support of the voter who is opposed to the position but does not feel strongly about the issue. Once elected, legislators work to implement the positions they advocated in the campaign.

Chapter 3 performs a “crucial test” of the implications of subconstituency politics and the demand model for individuals' political knowledge. A common explanation for the conflicting results of representation studies is that politicians are responsive only on visible issues since these are the issues on which citizens are most likely to notice legislators' behavior. This explanation is called the issue visibility thesis, and it explains how the likelihood of citizens' becoming informed drives the conflicting results in the representation literature. Specifically, it holds that enhanced visibility, through media coverage, leads to higher levels of knowledge among citizens. The demand model thus implies that those who are more highly exposed to news media should be more knowledgeable about politics. In contrast, subconstituency politics implies that people are more knowledgeable on issues that relate to an activated group identity and generates the hypothesis that citizens with an activated group identity should exhibit increased political information about issues pertaining to that identity. Consequently, subconstituency politics reconciles the ignorance and apathy commonly ascribed to the citizenry with the democratic requirement that citizens be able to hold the elected accountable.

To test whether subconstituency politics explains behavior within and across democratic venues (i.e., in both campaigns and institutions), Chapters 4 and 5 develop and test its predictions on the issue positions taken during campaigns and on the roll-call votes cast in Congress, respectively.

In Chapter 4, I examine candidates' behavior on two “hard,” low-visibility issues: the Cuban trade embargo and the extension of hate-crimes legislation to homosexuals. These are issues about which most citizens lack meaningful opinions and about which responsiveness is expected to be low. I also examine two “easy” issues, partial-birth abortion and banning assault weapons, in which conventional theories are thought to best explain legislative behavior because almost all Americans have meaningful opinions on the issues. More specifically, I test the hypothesis that subconstituency preferences positively influence candidates' campaign positions. Chapter 4 shows that the positions candidates and legislators take appeal not to the average voter, but to subconstituencies.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that the positions legislators take in Congress reflect the preferences of the groups to whom they appeal in their campaigns.

Specifically, I test the theory in the context of legislator behavior in Congress. I test three specific hypotheses: First, subconstituency preferences are positively associated with legislators' roll-call votes; second, once elected, candidates' campaign positions are positively associated with legislators' roll-call votes; and third, legislators from districts with active subconstituencies are more likely to take a leadership role on issues important to the group in the district. In combination, the results of these tests show that legislators' votes in Congress are directly influenced by subconstituency opinion and indirectly influenced through campaign positions that are influenced by subconstituencies. In addition, legislators from districts with active groups are more likely to take leadership roles on the issues that are important to the groups.

Chapter 6 applies the theory to resolve the curious finding that the impact of constituency has been found to vary depending on the degree to which a polity is heterogeneous (e.g., Bailey and Brady 1998). The implication of such research is that the process of representation varies across these states according to diversity. Subconstituency politics instead suggests that, owing to how constituents' preferences are measured, it is easier to detect responsiveness in homogeneous than in diverse states. More specifically, in homogeneous states and districts, the relevant subconstituencies are larger and thus more similar to estimates of mean state opinion. Consequently, the subconstituency politics theory of representation implies that diversity is not associated with increased responsiveness; therefore, legislators from diverse districts should be as representative as those from homogeneous districts. The results show that once we account for subconstituencies, representational differences across states are no longer apparent.

Chapter 7 empirically investigates the demand model's explanation for the conflicting results observed in the literature on roll-call voting that legislators are more responsive on more visible issues. Subconstituency politics holds, in contrast, that legislators should be responsive to groups regardless of levels of issue visibility, since group members are acutely sensitive to issues related to their group identities. Thus, the subconstituency politics theory hypothesizes that legislators will be no more responsive on visible issues than on less visible issues.

Chapter 8 concludes by summarizing the results and discussing the implications of subconstituency politics for democratic theory and for applied politics. The central conclusion is that candidates and legislators are quite responsive but neither in the manner commonly thought nor to the public as a whole. Instead of responding to centrist opinion, they respond to intense subconstituencies. Consequently, subconstituency politics provides a view of representation that is contrary to pluralist principles. In the end, it explains why Mario Diaz-Balart wins even though he advocates minority-preferred positions.