

DEEPENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH CONSTITUENCY FORMATION VIA
'SELF-APPOINTED' REPRESENTATIVE CONTEXTS

by

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B.A., Universidad de la República, Uruguay, 2008.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

(Political Science)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

October 2014

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Abstract

Self-appointed representatives may deepen democracy beyond the limits of the standard accounts of representation. For self-appointed representatives to trigger democracy, it must be possible to generate alternative constituencies based on the 'all affected interest principle', that is, those individuals whose interests are affected by collective decisions should have the opportunity to influence those decisions. Likewise, this process of constituency formation, leads to the pluralization of the political subjects of democracy, the pluralization of the temporality of political processes of representation, and the pluralization of the spaces for political infusion, which in turn expand the opportunities for achieving individual self-determination and self-development.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, D. Rumeau.

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Section I: Introduction

When evoking the concept of representative democracy we tend to associate it with political representation based on free, fair and competitive elections through which the citizenry comes to authorize their representatives and make them accountable, assuring responsiveness. However, the scope of inclusion of the standard account of representative democracy has come to be contested in the increasingly complex political landscape. The multiplication of issues affecting people's lives and the demands for recognition of minority groups among other social claims, have given rise to the appearance of individual and collective actors in the political arena who claim to represent other peoples' interests outside traditional representative institutions. The formation of transnational advocacy networks, the proliferation of non-governmental organizations, the rise of public intellectual voices, and the activity of public figures like the popular singer Bono, are just a few examples of the proliferation of voices whose central feature is to offer themselves as representatives of people who did not vote for them. These actors *stand for* and *act for* different groups of people who have their capacity of self-determination and self-development undermined since they are excluded from the possibility of participating in the collective decisions that affect them. In this regard, self-appointed representatives may act as agents for promoting agency and inclusion of those marginalized groups. For instance, OXFAM acts on behalf of the poor without the explicit consent of that population in order to help them to get out of the oppressive conditions that constrain their self-development and self-determination. The Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared-Detainees

(FEDEFAM) speaks for and acts on behalf of all victims who were subjected to enforced disappearance, even on behalf of those sons and daughters who were born in prison and do not know they were kidnapped at the moment of their birth. Another example could be Human Right Watch, which claims to represent those people worldwide whose human rights are being undermined. Faced with this political reality, some of the most pressing questions that emerge are: Under which theoretical grounds can actors be considered representatives of the individuals they claim to represent? Why should they be considered to be entitled to speak for and act on behalf of people who did not vote for them to pursue those political goals? Can those actors promote agency and further democracy in ways that traditional representative institutions are unable to do?

This paper suggests that such actors are self-appointed representatives who act as agents that may generate alternative spheres of contestation and resistance to promote agency and further democracy in those cases where representative electoral institutions are not enough to include people's demands, and in those cases in which representative institutions are absent. This poses new challenges for democratic practice, and democratic theory since most of it has been focused on formal electoral representation.

The basic question that guides this paper is whether and how self-appointed representatives can further democracy, understood as the institutional conditions that promote self-determination and self-development in ways that electoral representation is unable to do. My provisional argument is that self-appointed representatives are agents with the potential to advance democracy through the creation of alternative constituencies based on the *all affected interest principle* in ways that electoral representation cannot. Particularly, I suggest that the features of constituency formation in self-appointed

context may generate the *pluralization* of political subjects of democracy, the *pluralization* of the temporality of political representative processes, and the *pluralization* of spaces of inclusion and contestation, which open spaces for triggering democracy.

The next section of the paper presents the elemental foundations of Representative Democracies and the limits of the standard account of political representation. Section III develops the *representative claim* theoretical approach, which enables an understanding of why self-appointed representatives can act on behalf of the others, and the distinctions between self-appointed representatives. Section IV presents the reasons why the construction of constituency under the *all affected interests principle* may promote individual self-determination and self-development. Section V, points out that the construction of constituency under the *all affected interests principle* generates *pluralization* of spaces that may enable the promotion of democracy.

Section II: Basic Principles of Representative Democracy

Democracy has been considered the best form to organize a political community and to make binding collective decisions. Particularly, Robert Dahl considers the democratic process “as the most reliable means for protecting and advancing the good and interests of all the persons subject to collective decisions” (1989:322). The theoretical defense of democracy in his seminal book *Democracy and Its Critics* (1989) provides persuasive arguments about the adequacy and desirability of democratically elected representatives to make collective decisions. The idea that “a democratic government provides an orderly and peaceful process by means of which a majority of citizens can induce the government to do what they most want it to do, and to avoid doing what they most want it not to do” is grounded in the Principle of Intrinsic Equality (1989:95). According to this principle every community member is equally qualified to govern, and should be given equal consideration in making binding collective decisions. Taking together the Principle of Equality and the presumption of moral autonomy – that is, the idea that all persons are the best judges of their own needs and interests – the democratic process is considered the best way to entitle everyone’s participation in making collective decisions.

Representative democracies enabled the incorporation of large numbers of people into the collective decision making process within a nation-state. The principle of political equality has not always included all members of a nation-state as it does in contemporary democracies¹. Exclusions from self-government were justified for racial,

¹ In current democracies there are minimal exceptions regarding the moral autonomy of individuals that can restrict their right to vote.

economical, educational, and sexual reasons. However, with the evolution of democracies, universal suffrage was the mechanism through which political communities legally recognized that each member of society has the right to govern him or herself since nobody is a better judge of one's interests but oneself. Thus, the establishment of institutionalized and systematic elections assures individual self-determination by enabling them participate in the collective decision-making processes that affected them, although on the basis of their belonging to a certain nation-state. Democratic electoral representation refers to a principal-agent relationship between the representative and the represented, in which, on the one hand, the former is authorized to act on behalf of the represented once he was authorized by vote, and, on the other hand, the represented are endowed through the vote with the power to make representatives accountable to them. Therefore, the vote constitutes simultaneously, the mechanism that assures authorization, accountability, and responsiveness.

All in all, Representative Democracy implies the demarcation of the *demos* based on residence standards, which sets the limits of inclusion and exclusion of those considered affected by the rules of a certain political community. By virtue of that reason, they have the right to participate in self-government through the election of democratic representatives (Warren & Castiglione, 2006:4).

The Limits of the Standard Account of Political Representation

Pitkin has defined representation as a “substantive acting for other”, this means, “acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them.” (Pitkin, 1967:209). She asserts that political representation to be democratic needs the

institutionalization of responsiveness for the substantive acting for others by having systematic mechanisms of authorization and accountability, that is, through regular, fair, and free elections (Pitkin, 1967:209). The mechanisms by which the institutionalization of responsiveness in representative democracies is assured are elections. This implies simultaneously the following assumptions: the voters are equated with the *people*, the voter's choice is equated with the general *will*, all subsequent governmental political activity is a continuation of the moment of the vote, and elections are based on the idea of people's self-determination since individual's interests affected are assumed to be anchored to the belonging of the individuals to a certain nation-state (Rosanvallon, 2011, Ch.7; Pitkin, 1967). The standard account of political representation can neither cover the plurality of societies' demands for inclusion and recognition, nor further individual self-determination and self-development of the people affected by collective decisions in a political landscape where political spaces are increasingly de-centered. In this regard, actors such as non-governmental organization, civil society organizations, and intellectuals act as self-appointed representatives who may supplement the gap between the principles of democracy and the effective political exclusions. These exclusions can be found in those cases where electoral representative institutions are present but political inclusion does not fulfill social demands of representation, as well as in those cases where there is an absence of electoral representation.

The limits of the standard account can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, in electoral democratic representation it is assumed that the people's affected interests are tied to the limits of nation-state boundaries, which in turn is the principle under which constituency is created. This territorial criterion of inclusion is in itself

exclusionary and thus not democratic enough to respond to those interests affected by global collective decisions, as may be decisions around issues such as global warming or human rights. In this regard, self-appointed representatives may supplement electoral democracy since the generation of constituency responds to issue-based criteria and may fulfill the *all affected interests principle*. Self-representatives generate constituency by identifying a population who is being undermined in its conditions to pursue self-determination and self-development because the collective decision-making around an issue affects them somehow. The issue-based ground for the creation of *demos* is a wider democratic criterion underpinning the inclusion of those potentially affected than the residence-based ground.

Secondly, the aggregative character of electoral democracy in which the resolution of collective problems stems from the criterion of widely held preferences, may lead to the misrepresentation of minority groups, since those who did not vote for the winning governmental platform do not share the interest of the majority. Self-representatives usually operate as advocates for the interests of the minority groups that are underrepresented especially in majoritarian electoral regimes. Historical examples of struggling for inclusion outside electoral institutions are feminist movements advocating for equality, indigenous groups advocating for recognition, and the labor movement. Also, the aggregative character of electoral democracy implies a pre-political conception of citizenship, in which preferences are considered as given and reflected through the ballot, may lead to a de-emphasis of the need to create spaces that promote deliberation among community members. Since authorization and accountability in non-electoral representation are exerted outside the traditional domain of formal institutions, the

relationship between the represented and the representatives is strongly connected with deliberative action. For this reason, deliberation may constitute a mechanism of accountability and authorization within self-appointed representation.

Finally, the temporality of the political process in electoral democracy is determined by the moment of the ballot, in which the *general will* is directly expressed through the vote, and from which all subsequent political activity is taken as the continuation of that moment. From this perspective, the role of the electorate is reduced to authorizing a representative at the beginning of a governmental term and to rewarding or sanction the representative at the end of the term. Thus, the citizen is subjected to the logic of the so-called *yes-no* politics and therefore the *will* of the *people* can be associated with a conception of immediate democracy (Urbinati, 2000; Rosanvallon, 2010).

All in all, the standard account of political representation reduces the conceptualization of the potentially affected to the criteria of inclusion based on the individual membership to a nation-state. In contrast, since self-appointed representatives may construct new constituencies under the criterion of the *all affected interest*, by which the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of people are established based on whether those affected by a collective decision do or do not have the opportunity to influence those decisions, constituency formation may have more democratic foundations than electoral constituency formation. Therefore, I believe that democratic theory needs to widen its understanding of how societies deal with the exclusions derived from the standard account in order to sharply interpret the complexity of social processes and to highlight the relevance of the alternative forms by which political actors may further democracy.

Section III: Why are Self-Appointed Representatives Entitled to Speak For and Act On Behalf the Others?

The key function of representation is not to solve the impossibility of direct participation in large political communities, but rather it constitutes a mechanism for inclusion. As Plotke noted, “the opposite of representation is not participation. The opposite of representation is exclusion. And the opposite of participation is abstention” (1997:24). In this regard, outside the context of direct participation, in which each individual represents himself, representation became a condition of possibility for participation. This means that the possibility of influencing those decisions by which someone is affected appears after the voices of those affected are included in the political arena.

The inclusion gained through political representation stems from the process of dialogue between the parties involved in the process by which representation is authorized; a process in which the represented give their consent to the representative in order to *act for* or *stand for* them. By virtue of this, when representatives engage in any activity, the represented will be politically present because they actively participate throughout the construction of the representative relationship (Plotke, 1997:30). This is the reason why the represented are considered agents entitled with the power of determining the legitimacy of the representatives to act on their behalf. Since the *will* of the represented is made present through the representative, the activities in which they engage should reflect a substantive acting for others, or, in other words, representatives should act “...in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin, 1967:209). Although these authors conceived political representation within electoral

democracy, their central ideas about what functions –to act for and to stand for others- and what elements –authorization, accountability, responsiveness- constitute political representation, are central in justifying why advocates can be considered self-appointed representatives.

To accomplish this task, I will employ Saward's approach to representation, which goes beyond the traditional understanding of political representation, conceptualizing it as a claim-making process. This perspective enables us to grasp the constitution of a representative relationship between the self-appointed representatives and the represented, which starts with the identification of new constituencies through a claim-making process. It is this process which ultimately will give political existence to different groups of people through non-traditional, non-institutionalized processes of authorization and accountability that are associated with deliberative politics.²

Representation as a Claim-making Process: Non-democratic and Democratic Self-appointed Representatives

Saward conceptualizes representation as a representative claim making process, which is based on the following three background assumptions: 1) representation should not be understood as a relationship between constituents and representatives in certain moments, but as a process in which that relationship evolves over time; 2) Representation should be conceived as a process centered on the practice of *making claims to be representative*, and the associated dynamics of substantiating and contesting those

² This work does not engage in the discussion of which mechanisms of accountability and authorization can

claims; and 3) *constituents* and *representatives* are not restricted to the relationship of representation involved in parliamentary politics and electoral processes.

This understanding of representation as a claim-making process modifies the scope of representation itself; it opens the possibility to consider non-governmental organizations, public intellectuals, and civil society associations as representatives, and to expand the mechanisms of authorization and accountability beyond the ballot.

According to Saward, an actor performs a representative claim when:

The maker of the representative claim (M) puts forward a subject (S) as a standing for an object (O), related to a referent (R) and offered to an audience (A). (2010:36)

In other words, an actor (M) may offer itself or another actor, to stand for, act for, or symbolize (S) the needs, interests, or preferences, (O) of a group of people, country, or region (R) to an intended audience (A). (2010:38)

From the above, it follows that when an individual or an actor makes a representative claim, he is creating a potential new constituency based on an issue that affects the interest of the group of people he claims to represent. The claim may be accepted, rejected, contested, and changed by the potential represented not only in its inaugural moment, but also over time. In this regard, the whole process of representation should be understood as an active portrayal process of constituency that takes place outside the space and the time of electoral democracy. In other words, political representation is never something achieved, completed or ended, but rather something always in the making. Moreover, representation can take place outside electoral contexts, if and only if the audience accepts the claim made by the self-appointed representative. In this case the representative is being authorized to *stand for* and *act for* the group of

people he/she said to represent, which is the potential constituency the representative offered through the claim. This means that the legitimacy of self-appointed representatives stems from the reaction of the potential constituency defined by the representative claim. However, since the representative claim refers to those affected by an issue, and it is also directed to an audience, the questions that arise are: which is the constituency demarcated by the representative claim? In order for the representative claim to be legitimate, does the authorization of the representative claim need to come from the affected, from the audience, or both? Take, for example, the advocacy network Amnesty International, which claims to act on behalf of the people affected by human rights' abuses worldwide. To consider Amnesty International a legitimate representative of those abused requires the authorization of the affected or the authorization of those concerned about those people whose human rights are being undermined. Whose authorization can be considered enough to create a legitimate representation relationship?

To answer these questions, I follow the analysis developed by Montanara (2010), which sharply solves this crossroad by distinguishing between the *relevant audience*, and the *affected constituency*. This distinction, in turn, enables us to differentiate between self-appointed democratic representatives and self-appointed non-democratic representatives.

Montanara conceptualized the legitimate authorization of a self-appointed representative based on Rehfeld's conceptualization of *audience*. Rehfeld asserts that representation takes place "...whenever a particular audience recognizes a case that conforms to whatever rules of recognition it uses..." and defines an audience as "the relevant group of people who must recognize a claimant as a representative (...) in order

to perform a specific function” (2006: 5). This idea enables us to, on the one hand, consider as legitimate any mechanisms of authorization and accountability that a certain group may give to make collective decisions themselves, and on the other hand, it enables us to consider that the group which must recognize the rules can be any group which somehow is related to the functions that the representative would perform. In this regard, and building upon the previous example of Amnesty International (AI), it is possible to say that the *affected constituency* corresponds to the people whose human rights are being undermined, while the *relevant audience* is constituted by the supporters, members, and activists of AI within 150 countries, who are concerned about the *affected constituency*. Shortly put, according to Montanara’s view, AI is a legitimate representative since a relevant audience authorizes the representative, and it is responsive to the affected constituency in their actions. This means that under Saward’s perspective, political representation takes place when a relevant constituency authorizes the claim, which implies that political representation exists even though it may be non-democratic. Moreover, this theoretical framework does not provide criteria for establishing distinctions between democratic and non-democratic representation outside electoral contexts. However, Castiglione and Warren’s generic definition of what constitutes a democratic relationship solves this lack of criteria for non-electoral contexts.

Based on Pitkin’s observation about the inherent relationship between the existence of responsiveness through authorization and accountability in democratic electoral representation, Castiglione and Warren, have formally defined a *democratic relationship* between the represented and the representative.

The authors define that relationship as follows:

- “1. Political representation involves representative X being authorized by constituency Y to act with regard to good Z. Authorization means that there are procedures through which Y selects or directs X with respect to Z. Ultimate responsibility for the actions or decisions of X rests with Z.
2. Political representation involves representative X being held accountable to constituency Y with regard to good Z. Accountability means that X provide, an account of his or her decisions or actions to Y with respect to Z, and that Y has a sanction over X with regard to Z”. (2008:396)

This generic specification shows that a democratic relationship between the represented and the representatives is that of *empowered inclusion*, in which authorization and accountability from the affected constituency are needed. The need for consent and the practices associated with that consent reflect the non-passive role of the represented, which in turn reflects the exercise of agency by the represented and representatives. In other words, *empowered inclusion* takes place when the *constituency affected* authorizes the representatives and makes them accountable, ensuring that the political representation be responsive to the interests of those affected by an issue. The crux of this formula lies in that it deliberately does not specify the mechanisms through which responsiveness and accountability should be achieved, so that democratic relationships may be fulfilled by a diversity of actors that are not restricted to elected representatives, such as advocates, committees, citizen assemblies, avoiding one of the limitations of the standard account.

When combining Warren & Castiglione’s criteria with the previous distinction developed by Montanara between the *affected constituency* and the *relevant audience*, the differences between non-democratic and democratic self-appointed representatives is

clarified. The previous example of Amnesty International would be characterized, as not democratic self-representation because the authorization and accountability did not come from the *affected constituency*, thus this does not constitute an example of *empowered inclusion*. However, it is possible to characterize AI as a case of non-democratic self-appointed representation according the norm in which political representation takes place when a relevant group recognizes the claimant to perform a function. Supporters, members and activists who are concerned about the *affected constituency* form the relevant audience, which authorizes AI as a representative.

To sum up, while Saward's perspective of political representation enables us to understand the process and the constitutive elements of a political relationship, as well as the existence of self-appointed non-democratic representation, Warren and Castiglione set the criteria to distinguish democratic representation from non-democratic representation beyond electoral contexts. Besides, Montanara distinction between the *affected constituency* and the *relevant audience* helps us to easily categorize non-democratic and democratic cases of self-representation.

In this section, it was shown that representation can take place outside electoral contexts, and that it is possible to distinguish, at least, two different types of self-appointed representatives. In order to move forward with the argument and explore how self-representation – both democratic and non-democratic – may promote and enhance democracy, the next section will examine how self-representatives create alternative constituencies based on the *all affected interest principle* and how that is linked with self-determination and self-development.

Section IV: The Importance of Constituency Creation Based on the All-Affected Interests Principle for Promoting Self-determination and Self-development

I argue that the creation of alternative constituency is the core function by which self-appointed representation may trigger democracy. The process of constituency formation outside electoral contexts may establish the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of people on the basis of the *all affected interests principle*, which can complement electoral representation by those who are excluded from electoral representation or those excluded in contexts in which representative institutions are absent.

The traditional standard account of representation constructs the *demos* based on residence criteria and assuming that there is an existing *will* of the people by virtue of sharing a common location. This implies that people's interests are anchored or defined in a certain territory because it is assumed those who live nearby will affect their interests. However, this association between interests and territory is not enough to account for the real interests that affect the agency capacity of people, that is, their self-determination and self-development conditions. Constituency in standard account of representation is not constructed democratically; rather it is a pre-established constituency, defined by territorial principles in which the existence of the *people* as a political subject seems to exist previous to the moment of elections. The limitation of assuming a residence-based *demos* lies in that it is insufficient to fulfill people's needs, since the affected interests of people cannot always be defined territorially. For example, territorial constituency formation may underemphasize or ignore environmental, ethnic, or gender issues.

The idea of egalitarianism and self-determination in democratic electoral theory from which the *one citizen one vote* norm came from, is based in the principle of *all affected interests principle*, but under the assumption that people's interests are defined by virtue of the territory they share with others. As stated by Goodin, the *all affected interests principle* is the standard by which inclusion in the *demos* has been implicitly employed in every constitutive *demos* method (Goodin, 2007). In this regard, the *affected interest principle* entails that those whose interests are affected by collective decisions should have the opportunity to influence those decisions, even beyond electoral contexts.

Applying the *affected interests principle* for constituency formation outside electoral contexts may enhance democracy in ways that the standard account is unable to. This principle allows us to think that through self-appointed representation it is possible to create constituency from more democratic foundations. Self-appointed representation contests the limits of constituency formation in the standard account by highlighting how the interests of people are actually affected. Particularly, it may shed light on how people's self-determination and self-development is undermined by decisions taken around issues that are not restricted by their location, or that are not taken into account within electoral representation contexts. Therefore, by making representative claims, self-appointed representatives enable the possibility of generating alternative constituencies, on the basis of how different issues affect people's interests.

Issue-based constituencies are malleable since *the people* and their *will* is not longer a given element, but a construction, and thus, may change over time according to the issues and problems that a group face. Considering the conceptualization of a representative claim, according to which authorization is needed for the effective

generation of a representative relationship, it can be said that the authorization of the claim implies that people have the opportunity to decide whether to become part of the constituency proposed by the claim. This opportunity for deciding to become part of the *demos* proposed is a reflection of the principles of self-determination and self-government that exist outside of electoral contexts. Moreover, contrary to constituency formation in electoral representation where belonging to *demos* is generally exclusionary—exceptions can be found when nation-states allow multiple citizenship- in self-appointed representative contexts, constituents can be part of multiple and non-exclusionary *demos* according to those issues that affect their interests. For instance, an individual can authorize and decide to be part simultaneously of different constituencies because her/his interests are affected by gender, race, and class issues. So that, constituencies generated in self-appointed contexts overlap and generate the possibility of holding multiple, non-exclusionary forms of citizenship. These features of self-appointed representation multiply and diversify the political subjects of democracy by creating different visions of the self.

In order to show why self-representation broadens the possibilities of people to struggle for self-determination and self-development beyond the limits of electoral contexts, it is necessary to note the extent to which traditional representative institutions may disregard people's opportunity to influence those decisions which affect them in their agency capabilities. To show this, I follow Young's conceptualization about the relationship between democracy and social justice. As she posits, in current democracies structural inequalities, such as inequalities of wealth, education, and economic power, produce or reinforce institutional conditions that undermine individual self-determination

and self-development. These structural inequalities usually cause the exclusion and marginalization of the voices of the most vulnerable groups in relation to the privileged ones. On the face of it, individuals and collective advocates engage in a communicative process by pressing one's claims on others under the conviction that those claims are just. For instance, advocates struggle for greater justice for those disadvantaged groups by raising issues, persuading others about their claims, and struggling to make their voice heard in decision-making spaces (Young, 2000:Ch.1). In this regard, it is possible to say that self-appointed representatives advocate for the self-determination and self-development of those affected by collective decision making. In other words, self-appointed, non-electoral representation may further democracy by the inclusion of the affected with the aim of changing institutional conditions of oppression and domination.

As defined by Young, self-development refers to “just social institutions that provide conditions for all persons to learn and use satisfying and expansive skills in socially recognized settings, and enable them to play and communicate with others (...) in contexts where others can listen”, which is the opposite of oppression. Self-determination refers to “being able to participate in determining one's action and the condition of one's action”, which is the opposite of domination (2000:31-32). In the same vein, she argues that the interests of individuals are affected when whatever means are necessary or desirable for realizing the ends that the agent itself has set are undermined by oppression and domination. (Young, 2000:134).

Recalling Plotke's idea that representation is the opposite of exclusion, it follows that the processes of political inclusion of marginalized groups made by self-representatives increases the possibilities of creating institutional conditions of self-

determination and self-development. In this regard, self-appointed representatives, such as non-governmental organizations, public intellectuals, and other actors of civil society, identify critical issues that affect constituency, try to convince others about what is to be done regarding the situation of those whom they considered need representation, and try to push for certain policies in order to promote the capabilities of the represented (Dovi, 1999). All these actions related to the role of civil society are essential for self-representatives to decide the contents of the representative claim, which contributes to including the political subject previously excluded, as well as to decide the purpose of the representation, and the relevant audience to which the claim is directed.

Representative claims open the possibility for a certain group of people to decide whether or not they want to be part of the people offered by the claim. With the authorization of the claim, a new constituency and a new representative relationship is actually created, which in turn implies that another political subject is included in the political arena. This inclusion is the condition of possibility for struggling for institutional conditions of self-determination and self-development. As stated by Fraser (1995) representation is the arena in which struggles for justice – in dimensions such as, distribution, and recognition – are played. In this regard, representation itself is a dimension of justice since it is a condition of possibility for promoting self-development and self-determination.

The potential for self-appointed representatives to create new constituency broadens the spaces for seeking democracy by including new groups of people whose interests are affected by collective decisions that are not captured by representative electoral institutions. The features of self-representation change the traditional

parameters of electoral representation, modifying and diversifying the subjects of democracy, the timing of political representation, and the spaces of contestation to make people's needs heard. These three changes open up spaces for seeking self-determination and self-development in ways that electoral representative institutions are unable to do. Therefore, the criterion by which constituency is created shifts the limits of political inclusion and exclusion of people, performing functions that may complement the gaps between the norms of democracy and the reality.

Section V: Self-appointed Representation may Trigger Agency and Enhance Democracy: The Pluralization of Political Subjects, Political Temporality, and Spaces of Inclusion

The possibility of creating new constituency based on the *all affected interests principle* is the core function by which self-appointed representation may promote or enhance democracy in ways that electoral representation cannot do. I suggest that the performative process of constituency creation by self-representatives may produce *pluralization* in the following three dimensions: a) the pluralization of political subjects of democracy; b) the pluralization of the *temporality* of political representation; and c) the *pluralization* of *spaces* of inclusion and contestation. The *pluralization* of the temporality of political representation is a consequence of the features of the process of constituency formation in self-appointed contexts – that is, contexts of non-electoral representation.

The creational process of constituency in self-appointed contexts involves a process of reflexivity by which representatives and represented monitor the conditions of self-determination and self-development of individuals, and decide who among those excluded needs to be included in the political arena. In this regard, self-appointed representatives make public interpretations of reality, of history, construct identities, generate alterative expressions of the people's *will*, denounce inconsistencies between democratic norms and reality, and offer alternative ways to struggle for deepening democracy.

The Pluralization of the Political Subjects of Democracy

The *pluralization* of the political subjects of democracy is accomplished by self-representation through the process of constituency formation, which is issue-based and may follow the *all affected interests principle*. I would like to point two ways in which self-appointed representation pluralizes the political subjects of democracy. Firstly, it generates different political subjects from the figure of citizen and electoral representatives. Secondly, self-representatives have the potential to create political subjects that are not aware they are affected by a certain issue. This *pluralization* of political subjects may expand the opportunities for inclusion, and thus, the opportunities to expand individual self-determination and self-development.

1) Regarding the first manner in which self-appointed representatives pluralize the political subjects of representation, it is necessary to recall the idea that the core function of self-appointed representation is constituency formation, which may enable the inclusion of people on the basis of the *all affected interests principle*. This inclusion, in turn, may enhance democracy in ways that electoral representation is unable to do, since self-representatives have the potential to create alternative, non-exclusionary, and issue-based constituencies. Although it is true that constituency formation is a co-creational process because it requires on the one hand, that the self-representative makes a representative claim, and on the other, the authorization to validate the claim for effectively construct constituency, the possibility of this constituency construction starts when people other than the affected think about the affected and publicly express their will and reasons to represent them. Before a self-appointed representative makes a claim public, they interpret the reality and identify the issues that undermine the interests of a

group of people that is being excluded from the possibility of influencing those collective decisions that affect them. When the claim is made public, self-representatives are offering themselves as potential representatives –implicitly or explicitly³. They identify the potential constituency, the audience, and they make normative considerations about the gap between the reality people live in, and how they should live according to self-determination and self-development principles. As we have stated, unlike electoral representation in which the *people* are pre-existent to the moment of authorization through the vote, in self-appointed contexts, the political subject is created after an offering for existence and its approval by the constituency. This means that in self-representation, people may determine whether the proposed constituency is actually created, and whether they will become part of that constituency. Therefore, when a representative claim is made, the constituency proposed by the claim has an object to judge. The constituency will judge the actor who is offering itself to be representative, they will assess if the affected constituency identified by the claim is a subject of concern for the audience, the affected constituency proposed by the claim will assess whether or not the issue affects them. Ultimately, they will judge the purpose of the claim, determining if the *affected constituency* needs to be represented. For example, Human Right Watch (HRW) identifies the people affected by human rights violations who need representation and the audience that should authorize this actor to be a representative. In this regard, we should note that the affected constituency is defined by those whose

³ For example the singer Bono explicitly stated: “I represent a lot of people who have no voice at all”. However organizations, such as OXFAM, AI, HR, Greenpeace that do not state they are representatives in an explicit manner, *speak for* and *act on behalf of* certain groups.

human rights are abused worldwide, and the audience are supporters, members, and staff in more than 90 countries that take action including meeting with governments, financial institutions, and corporations in order to press for changes in policy and practice that promote “human rights and justice around the world”. In this case, those who authorize HRW as a representative for those who are abused are opening the possibility to give voice to those oppressed. However, self-representatives, also represent ideas and positions towards different social problems, as in the case of Greenpeace, claiming about environmental problems. Self-appointed representation pluralizes the political subjects of democracy, since multiply and diversify the represented and the representatives in the political arena, raising demands and judgments related to issues that exceed nation-states boundaries that affect individual self-determination and self-development. Besides, self-representatives may represent ideas or values, rather than people itself, as it can be the case of those actors that raise their voices against animal and nature mistreating.

2) Regarding the second manner of political subjects’ *pluralization*, it should be noticed that a representative claim is an offer for inclusion, and a public call for thinking about our own and others’ construction of the self. It is a call to think about ours and others’ self-determination and self-development, a call to empathize with the suffering of the others. Since the representative claim needs to be authorized to create representation, individuals inherently enter in a process of self-inquiring constituency, and in a process of otherregarding. Individuals are called to think about themselves as political subjects whose interests are being affected by a certain issue. The case of those associations that represent relatives of disappeared-detainees during the periods of dictatorship in Latin America, such as, “Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo”, or “Mothers and Relatives of

Uruguayan disappeared-detainees” are particularly interesting because of the extent of the representation. These actors not only represent mothers and relatives, but also the figure of the disappeared, as well as those sons and daughters who were born in prison and do not know they were kidnapped at the moment of their birth. It is important to note that these self-representatives represent people who do not know that they are being represented because they are unaware of their true identity. This is the case for those sons and daughters who were born in prison during the dictatorships and were raised by families who never revealed to them their real origins. This means that self-representatives represent people who are unaware of the fact that they are being represented, because they their history. However, in spite of this situation, the work of those self-appointed representatives has caused at least 115 individuals in Argentina to be hesitant about the identity they have lived with. Those 115 individuals entered in a process of self-inquiry, thought about whether the dictatorships could have affected them, and finally decided to look for their true identity⁴. In this regard, self-appointed representation, not only represents political subjects who are self-aware, but also political subjects that may exist without being aware of their existence as political subjects.

It is possible to conclude that self-representatives pluralize the political subjects that look for self-determination and self-development. This *pluralization* implies a proliferation of the political subjects who have a voice, and also a diversification of the issues that affect them. In the case of non-democratic self-representatives, they may promote empowerment of those marginalized –as OXFAM does by taking actions with the affected in order to make them speak and for them to have spaces to be heard. This

⁴ The last Argentinian grandchild was found August 22, 2014.

process of empowerment may take time to reach the point in which people who live under oppression and domination can achieve self-determination and self-development. However, that process multiplies the spaces and opportunities for a future *empowered inclusion* by working on the transformation of a latent constituency into a self-conscious one. Those political subjects created by self-representatives are out of the scope of possibility of the inclusion offered by the electoral representative institutions.

The Pluralization of the Temporality of Political Representation

The *pluralization* of the temporality of political representation is a consequence of the features of the process of constituency formation in self-appointed contexts, that is, contexts of non-electoral representation. I would like to point out three ways in which self-appointed representation shifts the temporal patterns of electoral representation. The first refers to the temporality of the constitution of the representative relationship, the second refers to the temporality of the duration or stability of self-appointed representation, and the third refers to the temporality of the subjects of political representation. Considering this, I suggest that this pluralization of temporality opens up spaces that may trigger individual agency and democracy in ways that electoral representation cannot.

1) Regarding the temporality of the construction of the representative relationship in self-appointed representation, we should recall that, the timing of electoral representation is initiated at the moment of the ballot, and spans the lifespan of the elected government established in the Constitutions. The timing of authorization and accountability, as well as the timing of the construction of the representative relationship,

is determined by the moment of the vote. The *people*, which is somehow considered pre-existent to the moment of the authorization, is expected to express its *will* by choosing representatives and government platforms. However, since the construction of *demos* in self-appointed contexts is issue-based and the representative claim offers a potential *demos*, as well as explanations about the need of representation for the group affected in its self-determination, and self-development, individuals have the opportunity to assess the claim, modify it, and decide whether or not to become part of the offered constituency. Thus, the self-appointed representative offers potential *demos*, which will be constituted just after a retroactive authorization by the affected or the relevant audience. This retroactive authorization is needed to effectively constitute an alternative *demos*, which opens opportunities for individuals to express their will and modify the claim offered by the potential representatives. Moreover, once the self-appointed representative has been authorized, and the representative relationship has been created, the authorization and accountability of representatives is continuous since there are no pre-established or institutionalized mechanisms to enter or exit the representative relationship. In this regard, as noticed by Saward, “representation is an ongoing process of making and receiving, accepting and rejecting claims -in, between, and outside electoral cycles-” (Saward, 2010:36). This *always in the making* feature of self-appointed representation, and the retroactive authorization of the claim, opens spaces for assessing whether to become a part of the alternative *demos* in relation to an issue of concern. It opens the possibility for the affected constituency and the relevant audience to decide by themselves to become part of the *people*, which implies the possibility of being autonomous in assessing and giving themselves reasons for their political actions at any

moment. I would like to emphasize, as alluded to earlier, that in the case of non-democratic self-appointed representatives, the pluralization of the timing of the process of political representation also gives the opportunity to the *affected constituency* to become a active part of the *demos* afterward. In non-democratic representation, the people who are concerned about the *affected constituency* give authorization for representation. As a consequence, the affected are not participating in the constitution of the representative relationship; thus, these individuals do not reach self-determination in this instance, since they are not directly participating in decisions that may affect them. However, since the relevant audience is giving voice to them and acting for them, it can be the case that this non-democratic form of representation enables self-determination by creating *empowered inclusion*. Over time, the role of giving voice to the powerless has been a means of struggling for justice dimensions such as distribution and recognition that can trigger empowered inclusion in the long term. Examples of this movement from voicelessness to inclusion are the worker movement, the abolishment of slavery, indigenous people, and victims of domestic violence, among others. Moreover, the activities of non-democratic self-representatives may promote self-development, even during the span of time when the affected do not reach self-determination as defined by Young. Let us take again the OXFAM example to show how the activities of this self-representative can in the long-term empower the affected while promoting self-development. OXFAM's strategy to overcome poverty involves activities that include the affected in order to claim for their human rights by themselves. For instance, OXFAM organizes meetings with local community members generating spaces for them to talk about themselves, to share their daily problems, and to think together about solutions to the situations that affect them. In

this regard, OXFAM is generating spaces for promoting self-development “...to help them speak out and demand justice, and to assert their leadership”. Besides, the activities include the *spread of the affected wording* by sharing collective storytelling, images and videos, which are used to claim for distributive justice and recognition worldwide. These actions that happen over time, provide conditions for the affected “to learn, communicate with others, or express their feelings and perspectives on social life in contexts where others can listen” (Young, 2000:32).

2) Regarding the second manner of *pluralization* of temporality, which refers to the stability of self-appointed representation, it can be said that it can supplement electoral representation because, by contrast to the *demos* in electoral representation, which is stable by virtue of the territoriality principle upon which it is constructed, the *demos* constituted by self-appointed representation can vary in its stability over time due to the *all affected interest principle* and its function. First, the objectives or the purposes of self-representation will be the horizon of the stability and durability over time. For example, the objectives established by OXFAM are long-term achievements since its goal is to get people out of poverty. Thus, it is reasonable to think that the duration of the self-representatives will be long-term as well. However, it could be the case that self-representation has a short-term objective such as collecting signatures to claim for a certain good at whatever level, local, national, or international. Second, the stability and duration of the self-appointed representation depends on the continuous decisions regarding authorization and accountability of the represented. The issue-based construction of the *demos*, coupled with the non-institutionalized and continuous mechanisms of authorization and accountability, bestow to self-representation a

substantial flexibility regarding its stability over time. Again, these elements determine that the existence of self-representatives depends on the *will* of the potential constituency offered by the claim that enables self-determination and self-development of the affected or the audience. This flexibility expands the representative options of individuals beyond electoral times. Third, borrowing Rehfeld's concepts of *voluntariness* and *homogeneity* developed in *The Concept of Constituency*, I may suggest that self-authorized representation can operate as a supplement to electoral representation, contributing as a mechanism of proportional representation, because it may lead to more homogenous and voluntary constituencies, features that according to the author are found in PR electoral systems. *Voluntariness* "describes the extent to which a constituency allows entry or exit. In a completely voluntary system, constituencies are self-defined-individuals decide how to define themselves for the purpose of electing political representatives" (2005:44). In this regard, since self-authorized representation implies by definition that those potentially represented actively respond to the claim by modifying it, the group represented can define the entry or exit by defining themselves. By *homogeneity* Rehfeld means "the degree to which members of an electoral constituency share some similar feature" (2005:40). As said before, the constituency in self-authorized representation is issue-based, so it can be said that the level of homogeneity of the group is high because those who authorize the self-representative – either the affected or the audience – have *common interests* around the issue proposed

3) Finally, I would like to point out that self-appointed representation enlarges the temporality of the political subjects represented, which has consequences regarding the temporalities of the self-determination and self-development that they are struggling

for. Consider, for example, the case of Greenpeace. It operates in more than 40 countries, and has more than 2.9 million members worldwide, and it defines its existence in the following terms: “it exists because this fragile earth deserves a voice. It needs solutions. It needs change. It needs action”. The example of Greenpeace shows a different particularity than, for instance, Human Rights Watch; regarding the extent that self-representation may have within self-appointed context, in comparison with electoral politics. This example not only is a call for rethinking our practices in relation to nature, but also posits the issue of representation for the future, for its sustainability. It is representing the concern for the right of self-determination and self-development of those who are absent (or not here yet) – future generations – (Schlosberg, 2003). In this regard, self-appointed representation broadens the representation; it makes present political subjects who are not present yet. The uncertainty of environmental issues, such as the consequences of global warming, to which expert knowledge does not have a unique and unequivocal response, shows the need of people’s participation for choosing present practices and policies with the idea of self-determination of *transgenerational people* (Rosanvallon, 2011:148). Self-representatives introduce a change in the temporal horizon of inclusion, since the long-term is becoming increasingly important under circumstances of uncertainty. This, change our present relation with our material world – for instance, regarding the depletion of natural resources –, and changes the traditional feature of electoral representation about what representation is about. In this case, Greenpeace retains the connection to the constituency (millions of supporters) by offering representation for ideas and positions about issues that will affect –present- future generation and non-human nature.

To summarize, self-representation diversifies and multiplies the temporality of political representation regarding the construction of representation, and regarding the subjects represented over time. This pluralization expands the opportunities of more individuals to struggle or achieve self-determination and self-development by enabling the representation of those who are not here yet, of those who were here but cannot claim for justice, and for those who are here and are oppressed and marginalized.

The Pluralization of Spaces of Inclusion and Contestation

The *pluralization* of spaces of inclusion –representation- and contestation is also a consequence of the features of the process of constituency formation in self-appointed contexts. There are two ways I want to highlight about the scope in which self-appointed representation pluralize spaces for inclusion and contestation. The first one refers to the idea that self-appointed representation takes place outside institutionalized electoral mechanisms, which show affinity with public space and deliberative politics. The second one, points out that self-representation may represent people in governance structures beyond nation-state ones. In this regard, the pluralization of spaces for inclusion and contestation expand the horizons for justice claiming which may trigger individual agency and democracy.

1) Regarding the pluralization of representative spaces which show affinity with deliberative politics, we should recall the idea that issue-based constituency formation of self-appointed representation is an answer to situations in which conditions exist that undermine self-determination and self-development of certain groups of people. Thus, this type of representation does not intend to offer a complete set of policy positions -as is

the case in electoral representation-, but rather identify an issue that self-representatives consider is not properly considered by electoral representation when those institutions are present, or is absent or need attention in those cases where electoral institutions are absent. In this regard, self-appointed representation is not a substitute for electoral representation, but a supplement or complement to it that expands the individual's options of representation. This alternative, understood as a different means for inclusion, operates outside institutionalized mechanisms of representation, which is why it shows affinity with deliberative politics within civil society and the public sphere. As stated by Dovi (1999), the functions of non-governmental organizations, associations, public intellectuals, among others, need assessment, mobilization and reflection, which are tasks that enrich, fortify, and produce a vibrant civil society, which in turn, is considered an essential element to complement electoral democracy (Habermas, 1998: Ch.8).

The performative character of self-representation is inherently associated with the subjective place occupied by the claim-maker. Advocates such as NGOs, OSC, TANs, and other individuals who make claims, belong to a system of power in which they are already embedded, and in which by virtue of their own situatedness they have an idea of responsibility for consciousness within the system, with themselves and to the others. By performing a representative claim, the claim-maker enters into a process of reading the interests, needs, situations, and positions of those involved in an issue, in order to create an idea, a concept, a signifier to be transmitted. In order to do this effectively, they must no longer place themselves "somewhat ahead and to the side" (Foucault & Deleuze, 1997) to express the stifled truth of the collectivity, but rather they must struggle against the forms of power that oppress the lives of the marginalized, and

assume a vigilant, if not adversarial, attitude in relation to other cultural discourses that might imply domination. In that way it is possible to recognize the non-totalizing, but local and regional features of claims. As Dovi argues, advocacy entails three different tasks: assessment, mobilization, and reflection. These tasks are related simultaneously to the features of the non-electoral claim and to the ways in which self-authorized representatives -in this case advocates- can be democratically legitimized. The first task remarked by Dovi, which is “identifying the critical issues affecting a constituency” (1999:19), shows the relevance of advocates’ embeddedness for successfully framing an issue. It requires meeting the needs of the group that they aim to represent. In doing this, advocates use, for instance, group meetings, one-on-one conversation, and surveys, to determine the needs of the potentially represented. These mechanisms show the connection of self-authorized representatives’ tasks with deliberative politics, which may promote or trigger deliberative processes or institutions. In this regard, advocates, as self-authorized representatives, are part of civil society, and consequently part of the public sphere in which they play an essential role for the construction of deliberative democracy. As Habermas (1996) points out, civil society might “push topics of general interest and act as advocates for neglected issues and underrepresented groups” by raising the claims to the governments or to international spheres which exert influence on the policy making process (Habermas, 1996:368). This dimension is connected with the second task remarked by Dovi. *Mobilization* understood as a “persuasive act, which tries to convince others about *what is to be done*” is also related to the necessity of deliberative spaces in which represented and representatives have the possibility to enter in processes of communicative action (Dovi, 1999). In order to transform the oppressive reality of the

represented, advocates participate in a dialogue with policy-makers, which involve threats and promises. Lastly, *reflection* is defined as the responsibility of advocates to push for certain policies, to promote the capabilities of the represented, and to remain open to the criticisms of the represented. These tasks introduce the accountability dimension of self-authorized representation. In this regard, Dryzek (2000) argues that deliberation mechanisms should promote the emancipation of individuals from oppressive forces, which should be the main goal of advocates' activities. Because of the elements mentioned above, it is possible to assert that the tasks of self-authorized representatives are strongly connected with deliberative action, and as a consequence, there is affinity between this type of representation and deliberative politics. Moreover, Habermas has advocated for more legitimate or better representation through deliberation. In this regard, deliberation also constitutes a mechanism of accountability in self-authorized representation, which opens spaces for self-development as defined by Young.

2) Regarding the pluralization of spaces for inclusion and contestation, it is necessary to depart from Plotke's idea about representation demarcating the bounds of inclusion and exclusion of those entitled to participate in those collective decisions that affect them. We also showed that electoral representation does not cover all the needs of individuals regarding inclusion, and that there are some contexts in which the representative institution does not even exist. This also implies that those excluded do not have the possibility to raise their voices for justice, which includes self-determination and self-development. Constituency formation in electoral representation has a pre-determined criterion for including those who count as members of a political community

to participate in the collective decision of that community. According to the all interest affect principle, people who are affected by certain issues are excluded from the possibility of participating in the decisions involving those issues. In this regard, self-appointed representation may open opportunities at different levels –local, national, transnational- to expand the boundaries of inclusion. By creating alternative constituency, self-representation has the potential to avoid the boundaries of political membership that may wrongly exclude people who may be entitled to have a voice according to the *affected interests principle*. This, in turn, widens the spaces to promote self-determination and self-development. Moreover, those excluded from different governance structures that make decisions affecting the former, may have the opportunity through self-representatives to raise their voices and contest the criteria of inclusion/exclusion of those governance structures. For example, people who live in dire poverty are excluded from governance structures such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. In this regard, self-appointed representatives may operate as agents to promote democracy by raising the voices of those excluded, and by broadening the spheres of contestation of the excluded.

Summarizing, the pluralization of spaces of inclusion and contestation may enable those people affected to make their voices heard, and to struggle for self-determination and self-development not only at the local or national level, but also at the international one, excreting collective pressure around an issue in global governance structures.

Section VI: Concluding Remarks

With the advent of the third wave of democratization the value of representative democracies have been highly valued as the political regimen to assure individual self-determination and self-development. The institutionalization of authorization and accountability of elected representatives through fair, free, and competitive elections are essential mechanisms in order to ensure government responsiveness. However, there are still contexts, in which representative institutions are absent, and contexts where electoral democracies seem to be insufficient to respond to the increasing and multiple interests that affect people's lives in the global context. Under those circumstances different actors, such as, non-governmental organizations, civil society associations, public intellectuals, and public figures *speak for* and *act on* behalf of those who live in conditions of oppression and domination. On the face of it, this paper has addressed the role of these actors as political representatives, which operate outside the institutionalized electoral contexts may supplement representative democracy. Particularly, I have argued that self-appointed representatives are agents that may promote democracy, because the process of constituency formation may be based on the *all affected interest principle* around a certain issue that affects the interests of the people excluded from the possibility of influencing those decisions. Moreover, I have argued that the features of constituency construction in self-representation generate the *pluralization* of the political subjects of representation, the temporality of representative processes, and the *pluralization* of the spaces of inclusion and contestation, which may trigger democracy. In sum, I have tried in this paper to highlight the existence of alternative forms of representation that may widen the opportunities to promote democracy.

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