Representation as Proposition: Democratic Representation after the Constructivist Turn

Samuel Hayat

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Samuel Hayat, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

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Political representation, both as a concept and as a central feature of liberal democracies, is currently undergoing a major redefinition (Castiglione and Warren 2006; Urbinati and Warren 2008; Brito Vieira and Runciman 2008). The power of elected representatives diminishes as they now face competition from other authorities, including unelected spokespersons (Saward 2008; Montanaro 2012). With the development of global governance, power and legitimacy become more and more dispersed (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008; Rosanvallon 2011). This does not extinguish the political relevance of representation, but it pluralizes its form and renders the concept harder to grasp with the traditional conceptual tools of political theory (Sintomer 2013). Among the different theoretical proposals, the constructivist framework of *representative claims* set by Michael Saward appears heuristic from a descriptive point of view, but it does not provide us with normative criteria to evaluate whether a given representative claim is democratic (Saward 2006, 2010). The aim of this article is to discuss some of the normative implications of the constructivist turn (Severs 2012; Mulieri 2013; Disch 2015). First, I will argue that the standard account of representation by Hanna Pitkin, but also by many of her critics, is based on a conception of representation as *composition*, which provides a strong democratic criterion to evaluate representation. Then I will distinguish between two ideal-typical conceptions of representation compatible with constructivism: representation as *imposition*, developed most notably by Pierre Bourdieu, in which the represented get their social identities from their representative; and representation as *proposition*, in which the represented acquire in the process of representation both their identity and some agency to judge it – a view of representation that is at the core of pragmatic sociology. Finally, I will discuss possible criteria for representation as proposition and propose inclusiveness as a democratic criterion that can form the basis of an alternate ideal of representation, inclusive representation[1].

Why a constructivist turn?

The idea of a constructivist turn in the theory of political representation is appealing. But what position are we turning from, and what are the reasons that make this turn desirable, both from a descriptive and from a normative point of view? The question is especially vivid if we consider that the theory of representation experienced not one, but two turns in the past decades: a representative turn in the theory of democracy and a constructivist turn in the theory of democratic representation. How are these two turns articulated and what are the potential contradictions between them?

Representation as composition

The representative turn in democratic theory, based on the idea that were was no contradiction between representation and democracy (Plotke 1997), could be said to occur in the wake of Hanna Pitkin's *The Concept of Representation* – in a way, it was her triumph. The same does not hold true for the constructivist turn, which is a departure from Pitkin's famous core definition of representation as "a making present again (…) the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (Pitkin 1972: 8–9). This definition rests upon the idea that *something* (the people, a social group or an institution) exists before its representation and that the act of representation is a certain way of making this something present *again*. When applied to democratic government, it is based on the vastly shared principle that the origin of any legitimate government should in a way be found in the people themselves – and thus that there is something called the people, a body of citizens, that should lie behind the acts of the government and the decisions of legislatures[2]. If one believes in national or in popular sovereignty, then any legitimate government or legislature should be a *composition* of elements that exist in the people or the nation, be it their social characteristics, their interests, their votes, their opinions or their wishes.

Representation as composition is not a concept of representation: it aggregates many different views of representation among which there may be real conceptual differences (such as those between descriptive and substantive representation, for example). It is, on the one hand, exemplified by the electoral procedure: the fact that a representative is elected by her constituents necessarily goes with the idea that this representative is legitimate because she is the expression of (and thus expresses) the will of the majority – although the represented are

not necessarily the voters themselves, as in Burke's virtual interest or Mansbridge's surrogate representation[3]. Selection by lot is another variant of this category of representation despite having nothing in common procedurally with election, as the representative body is composed by a random selection of citizens along characteristics that are said to be representative (Dowlen 2008; Sintomer 2011). From both cases, we can construct, as an analytical tool or a Weberian ideal-type, this category of representation as composition to designate any concept, discourse or institution that relies on three elements: 1) there is a preexisting represented body; 2) there is a procedure to draw a representative body from this represented one; 3) the legitimacy of the representative is based on the fact that it is a composition of some characteristics of the represented, as selected by the procedure.

The problems of composition

The constructivist turn is an attempt to break with this core idea of representation as composition. There is an epistemological break, linked with structuralist theories of language and accounts of social constructivism, with the basic assumption that there are entities that exist and can be known prior to their representation (see Saussure 2013: 75-79; Berger and Luckman 1966). From these epistemological perspectives, representation as composition is based on what Iris Young, following Deleuze and Derrida, calls the "metaphysics of presence" (Young 2000, 126). In the political realm, this epistemological critique means that the problem of representation is not so much the relation between the represented and their representative (the focus of most theories of representation), but the competing processes that construct both the representative and the represented. The proliferation of regional and international organizations and the empowerment of NGOs multiply both the scenes of political discourse and the voices heard in those scenes (Kröger 2014). When global governance becomes more relevant than State-centered government as a pattern to describe the political system, representation as composition becomes less relevant: with governance, there are undoubtedly representative *claims*, but with no preexisting constituencies (Mulieri 2014: 169–89). The metaphysics of presence did not simply disappear; it remains very much in use, especially in the discourse of State political actors, but it is now in competition with a new constructivist narrative, both in the political realm and in academic analyses.

These epistemological and factual reasons for the critique of representation as composition also have political and normative implications: according to its more radical critics, the metaphysics of presence does not simply obfuscate the reality of representation, it is

also a tool for dominant classes and groups to ascribe their own actions to those who are subjected to them. Hence Pierre Bourdieu's critique of representation as "usurpatory ventriloquism, which consists in giving voice to those in whose name one is authorized to speak" (Bourdieu 1991a: 211): the metaphysics of presence allows governments to act and speak not only on behalf of the people, but as if they were the one and only legitimate voice the people have. Even more importantly, representation as composition suggests that if a social group is not represented, it means it does not exist as a group, at least not as a political subject. As such, theories of representation as composition generally fail to take into consideration two kinds of relations of power. On the one hand, they downplay the power aspect of the relation between the represented and the representative, by failing to take into account the fact that representatives can make their own interests and opinions pass for those of the represented. On the other hand, they do not take into consideration the relations of power between social groups and the subsequent erasure of dominated persons and groups in the very definition of the represented. The refutation of representation as composition can thus be justified in reference to a theory of domination, such as Bourdieu's sociology, that seeks to unveil power relations hidden behind democratic discourse, both between representatives and represented, and among the represented themselves.

The normative implications of this critique regarding a theory of democracy are unclear: how can we discuss the norms of a good and just democratic rule when the basic premise of democracy – the existence of the *demos* – is questioned? The constructivist approach to representation, convincing from a descriptive point of view, deprives us of the strong normative criterion given by all forms of representation as composition: a legitimate representative, from a democratic point of view, must to a certain extent be composed of elements derived from the preexisting entity that it represents. This criterion makes it possible to describe power relations that render some groups invisible or allow representatives to unjustly ascribe their actions to the represented as forms of unfair misrepresentation. This leaves us with two possibilities: we can either accept this discrepancy between the descriptive and the normative realm by saying that the democratic norm of representation as composition provides us with standards to judge actual representative processes, even though it is based on an erroneous description of these processes[4]. Or we can take seriously the constructivist critique of representation as composition and try to frame a new democratic standard to judge representation, one that does not presuppose the existence of the people (and their opinions, interests, identities) prior to representation. I will try to follow the latter option, participating in the project of constructing

"a normative criterion adapted to the "constructivist turn" in theories of representation" (Disch 2014: 25).

Two conceptions of constructivist representation

From a constructivist perspective, the represented is created through the activity of representation. It does not mean that the represented is given its material existence by representation; but representation creates the represented as a *subject*. Assessing the democratic potential of representation requires therefore defining the criteria for a democratic process of *subjectivation* – the process through which a subject is made. According to Michel Foucault, the creation of subjects is deeply linked with the question of power: "There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault 1982: 781). This dichotomy between subjectivation as subjection and as conscientization is crucial to enrich our understanding of the constructivist turn and its normative implications. Indeed, as a process of subjectivation, representation implies power, and from a normative point of view any substantial form of *democratic* representation must guarantee some sort of power to the represented, including power over its representative (Christiano 1996). Thus the democratic potential of representation largely depends on the power relations allowed by the intertwined processes of subjection and conscientization.

Representation as imposition

Among all the different conceptions of representation that do not postulate the existence of the represented prior to representation, we can single out those that insist on the subjection aspect of the subjectivation process. Once again, these conceptions of representation are diverse; but we can construct an ideal-type, as an analytical tool, which stresses one aspect of these conceptions: the fact that they consider representation as the *imposition* of an identity on the represented. The famous chapters on representation in Hobbes's *Leviathan* contain elements that can be related to this idea of representation as imposition. For Hobbes, "A Multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented (…). For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the *Unity* of the Represented that maketh the Person *One*" (Hobbes 1909: 126). In the second part of the book, this definition justifies the *subjection* of

the multitude: when the Commonwealth is generated by covenant, it is embodied by one person, "this Person is called SOVERAIGNE, and said to have *Soveraigne Power*; and everyone besides, his SUBJECT" (Hobbes 1909: 132). Men become subjects, that is members of a polity defined by a common law, through an act of representation.

Though archetypal, Hobbes's conception of representation is by no means isolated in the history of political thought. During the French Revolution, Sieyes defended a conception of representation as imposition to justify the power of the National Assembly (Pasquino 1998). Such a conception is also central in Carl Schmitt's critique of liberal parliamentarism (Kelly 2004) or in Frank Ankersmit's aesthetic theory of representation (Ankersmit 2002). In general, representation as imposition is an important feature of discourses that legitimize the construction of modern States: it can be used during constituent processes, as rhetoric against rebels or secessionists, for nationalist purposes – every time defenders of the State and its unity claim that citizens exist first and foremost as subjects.

However, representation as imposition does not function solely at the national level. It is also a feature of discourses that are made on behalf of more delimited subjects, such as social classes. In his theory of the political field, started in his 1979 book *La Distinction*, Bourdieu stated that social classes could become political subjects only when they were represented by professionals in the political field. Members of the working-class, in particular, "have no choice but to abdicate (*démission*) or hand over their power (*remise de soi*) to the party, a permanent organization which has to produce the representation of the continuity of the class" (Bourdieu 1991b: 173). A few years later, in a series of articles, Bourdieu radicalized the constructivist aspect of his theory, by conceptualizing representation as a "process of institution, ordinarily perceived and described as a process of delegation, in which the representative receives from the group the power of creating the group" (Bourdieu 1991c: 248). This is what Bourdieu calls the "mystery of the ministry": a representative exists only as much as she speaks on behalf of the group she represents, but she creates the group by doing so. It is no surprise then to see Bourdieu use an analogy with Saussure's linguistic theory to explain the process: in the case of dominated groups at least, "the act of symbolization by which the spokesperson is constituted (…) happens at the same time as the constituting of the group; the sign creates the thing signified, the signifier is identified with the thing signified, which would not exist without it, and which can be reduced to it. The signifier (…) has the power to call into visible existence, by mobilizing it, the group that it signifies." (Bourdieu 1991a: 206–7) In Bourdieu's theory, the

process of subjectivation is entirely a process of subjection: representatives give to the represented their existence as subjects – they effectively *subject* them.

Representation as proposition

As a process of subjectivation, representation creates subjects, but what happens once these subjects exist? Either they simply obey and adhere to the identity that was imposed to them – the option privileged by approaches focusing on representation as imposition; or they develop a consciousness of their identity and formulate judgments about it. In the latter case, the reasoning is still constructivist: the represented are created by representation; but the conscientization at work in the process of subjectivation opens the space for some *agency* (Davies 1991; Ahearn 2001). As a result, representation appears here not as an *imposition* but as a *proposition*: by claiming to represent a group, the representative institutes this group – but its members can judge, criticize or even reject what is done and said in their name and the *representations* that are given of their identity. *Representation as proposition* can thus be constructed as an ideal type to describe theories and situations in which the focus is on the response of the represented to the process of representation.

This understanding of representation is at the core of Michael Saward's ambitious reframing which holds that representation is defined by a discursive activity of claim-making centered on different roles – and thus constructing the actors that play these roles in the process. But there are important differences with representation as imposition. The most important for our purpose is the role that Saward gives to what he calls the *audience*[5]. Representative claims are only offers by the makers to the audience about a relation between an object and a subject: therefore "representation is an ongoing process of making and receiving, accepting and rejecting claims", in which "audiences are not simply passive recipients of claims – they make counterclaims about themselves as subjects, or about the subjects proffered to them by other claims" (Saward 2010: 36–37)[6]. This is an important qualification to the constructivist conception of representation as imposition: there is an audience (not necessarily the represented) to any claim made by the maker (not necessarily the representative), and the success of a representative claim depends ultimately on the way it is received and judged by the audience. Representation is a "performance" and therefore "representative claims only work if audiences acknowledge them in some way, and are able to absorb, reject, accept, or otherwise engage with them. Processes of claim-making and consequent acceptance or rejection by audiences or parts of audiences produce representation" (Saward 2010: 66–67). Applied to the

problem of subjectivation, the conceptualization of representative claims helps to clarify the relation between subjection and conscientization: any representative claim creates both an object of representation (the identity of the represented) and a conscience, the audience, which judges if this object is adequate *and* if the subject (the representative) represents it adequately. The agency of the subjectivity created through the representative claim resides then in the capacity it has, as an audience, to accept or refuse claims made about itself as an object.

However, from an epistemological point of view, the problem remains to determine where the agency of the audience comes from. Indeed, if we intend to maintain that in democratic representation there is some sort of power of the represented (being both the object and the audience of the claim) over its representative (the subject and often the maker), then the ways through which the represented can gain some agency must be at the core of our normative reflection. There are important resources for exploring this question in a French sociological school that has not figured into debates over the constructivist turn, which have taken their normative moorings largely from deliberative democracy. This is pragmatic sociology, or sociology of tests (*sociologie des épreuves*), which develops the notion of "test" to make it possible for social scientists to confront contradictory representations of reality without resorting either to naturalism to affirm certain representations as truer, or to pure relativism, to concede that constructions taken as reality are merely the result of relations of power (Lemieux 2013). A test is "any situation in which actors experience the vulnerability of the social order, for the very reason that they feel a doubt about what reality is" (Lemieux 2013: 174). On this account, constructivism is no longer a rarefied position reserved for the social scientist; it is a common experience to have doubts about the representations of reality, and the testing of those doubts (leading to their reinforcement or their elimination) is the way each one of us constructs social reality. This is not a relativist position. Following Michel Callon and Bruno Latour's anthropology of sciences and techniques, pragmatic sociologists assert that "the world offers humans resistances and practical refutations to the definitions of reality they can adopt (…). Some realities turn out to be more "real" than others, meaning that they resist better to the different tests they are submitted to" (Barthe et al. 2014: 199). As Luc Boltanski, one of the founders of this strand of pragmatic sociology, puts it, one has to distinguish between reality, which is always socially constructed, and the world, defined as everything that happens: the discrepancies between the two explain why reality always needs testing, but also why not all realities are as robust – since there is indeed a world out there (Boltanski 2011: 57).

The representations that constitute social reality, including the social identities of the represented, are always put to the test, because no representation can exhaust the possible representations of the represented. Any representative claim is vulnerable to doubt, judgment, critique, not because the represented preexists its representation but because as a social construction it is always simpler than the entirety of the parts of the world it is related to. Conscious subjects that are created by representative claims can always recombine parts or use some other parts, coming from different experiences of the social world, to judge claims, i.e. to make these claims succeed or fail. With representation as proposition, understood in the pragmatic sense of the sociology of tests, power does not only flow from the representative to the represented: there is a constant circulation – and this circulation of power, inherent to the tests of representative claims, is what makes both subjection and conscientization possible[7].

An example of this process can be found in the history of the working-class movement. Workers constituted one of the first social groups to be the object of competing representative claims on a national and international scale. In France, after the revolution of 1848, the Provisional Government created an official representation of Parisian workers, the *Commission de gouvernement pour les travailleurs*, known as the Luxembourg Commission (Hayat 2014). The purpose of the government was to prevent popular unrest by making workers discuss a social reform to be presented to the Constituent Assembly after its election, instead of demonstrating in the streets. In Saward's terms, the government (maker) claimed in front of Parisian workers (audience) that the Luxembourg Commission (subject) represented them as a peacefully deliberating class (object), an image of actual workers (referent). By doing so, the government gave an official and unified voice to workers, something that organized workers were asking for since 1830 (Sewell 1980). But contrary to what the government intended, the elected members of the Luxembourg Commission did not settle for a peaceful deliberation. During the first session, they refused to sit if their demands were not satisfied, leading to the enactment of the first social legislation in modern France. Then they proceeded to establish themselves as a labour court by solving conflicts in the workplaces and they fostered the development of workers' associations and socialist experiments. Finally, after the Commission was dissolved, former delegates constituted the core of new endeavours to build a unified working-class movement, from the *Société des Corporations réunies* in June 1848 to the Parisian section of the First International in the 1860s. So the representative claim made by the 1848 French Provisional Government succeeded in creating a unified representation of Parisian workers. But members of the representative body used other elements present in actual workers

(the referent, in Saward's terms), such as their corporative tradition or their former projects to constitute an emancipatory association, to enact another representation of these same workers.

This example illustrates the analytic distinction between imposition and proposition, as two ideal-types of constructivist understandings of representation that stand very differently on the question of power. In representation as imposition, the represented is purely subjected to their representatives. Thus, even when potential representatives have to compete for the capacity to impose their representations of the represented, they only compete against each other. As a process of subjectivation, representation as imposition can sometimes lead to the emergence and the recognition of subjects that were previously invisible and thus contribute to the transformation of power relations in society in a more egalitarian way and even to the development of some agency for the represented. But as a process of subjection, it does not favor the conscientization of the represented and strictly limits the progress of their agency, especially regarding the relation with their representatives. A theory of representation as imposition is then necessarily a theory of domination and obedience. Whereas it may be an important tool of critique, because it effectively indicts democratic representation as a contradiction in terms, it is of no help in laying the foundations for normative judgments regarding when acts of representation are more or less democratic. With representation as proposition, on the contrary, representation is possible only through a process of testing (and thus judgment, doubt, and eventually rejection or acceptation) of representative claims by audiences created through the activity of claim-making itself. These tests open up the possibility, for the represented, as objects, to acquire an existence and thus transform power relations in society, but also, as parts of the possible audience for claims that concern them, to gain agency in the relation of representation itself. The purpose of a constructivist theory of democratic representation is to delineate the ways to maximize such an agency and the desirable forms it should take.

Inclusiveness as a democratic norm for constructivist representation

As long as democratic representation is understood as a proposition, constructivist theorists of representation do not have to give up on the possibility of normatively assessing which acts of representation are more or less democratic. While the constructivist turn questions the validity of norms that depend on the preexistence of the represented (such as

responsiveness), it opens new avenues for normative investigation. At the core of these rests the simple idea that representation is democratic if the represented gains some agency in the process of subjectivation that constitutes it as a subject. To be democratic, this agency should find its expression in two sets of activities. On the one hand, it should empower the subject to act and to be recognized in the broader society, especially when the subject constructed by the representative claim is composed of subaltern and dominated persons and groups[8]. On the other hand, the agency acquired by the represented should lead to a constant activity of *testing* representative claims in the pragmatic sense – this is the distinctive democratic trait of representation as proposition. In the wake of the representative turn of the theory of democracy, it is of paramount importance that the represented *gain* and not only retain some agency in the process; otherwise representative democracy would only be a "second best" or a "defective substitute" for direct democracy (Brennan and Hamlin 1999: 111; Urbinati 2006: 4; Mansbridge 2003: 515). Pending a proper constructivist theory of democratic representation, I will just offer two reflections about the possible criteria of good representation in such a theory.

Against congruence

The mere acceptance of representative claims by the represented – what David Runciman calls the "non-objection criterion" (Runciman 2007) – does not constitute in itself the proof that this claim is satisfying from a democratic point of view (Severs 2010). As Pitkin herself argued in discussing the *Addressat* theory, according to which an audience is necessary to representation and "the existence of representation is to be measured by the state of mind, the condition of satisfaction or belief, of certain people, be they the represented of the audience", such theories transform representation into "a kind of activity to foster belief, loyalty, satisfaction with their leaders, among the people" – as she noticed provocatively, "at the extreme, this point of view becomes the fascist theory of representation" (Pitkin 1972: 106–7). When a representative claim passes the test of reality and is accepted by the constituency it creates, while there is undoubtedly representation, there is no way to know if it is *democratic* representation, i.e. if the success of the claim is the expression of the agency of the represented and not of the coercive power of the claim-maker. The discrepancy between the world and reality, the gap between the referent and the object, the vulnerability of the social order, all these signs that a test is actually happening *and that the represented is the tester* must be evident and palpable – even though in the end representative claims can pass the test and be accepted.

For this reason, any form of undisputed congruence or accord between the representative and the represented should cast doubt on the democratic aspect of the relation of representation.

Luc Boltanski has argued that disputation should emerge by virtue of the role that institutions play in the constitution of social reality, which he describes as giving rise the "hermeneutic contradiction" (Boltanski 2011: 86). In order to avoid a permanent state of doubt, we rely on institutions to state "the whatness of what is" (*ce qu'il en est de ce qui est*), that is to confer some robustness and stability to our social reality. But because institutions are "bodiless beings" that exist only through their spokespersons, there is a discrepancy between reality and account that potentially gives rise to a perpetual suspicion regarding "whether the spokespersons who enable the institution to express itself clearly convey the will of this bodiless being or, under the guise of lending it their voice, simply impose their own will." In light of this discrepancy and the "hermeneutic contradiction" to which it gives rise, representatives should perpetually face suspicion—barring a coercive power that prevents the expression of public doubt. Its absence indicates that institutions do not work properly.

Suspicion should be even more frequent in the case of elected officials because they are doubly representative: they claim to represent the institution they are part of *and* to represent the constituency that elected them. They may betray not only institutions, but the persons who gave them the right to speak on behalf of those institutions in the first place. Representatives then face the choice between embodying the unity of the institution before their constituency – and thus betraying its inherent multiplicity – and trying to give way to this multiplicity and thus failing at accomplishing the role of unification inherent to the institution. Bruno Latour calls this dialectics between unity and multiplicity the "circle of representation" or the "political circle", which is essentially a circle of mutual betrayal: "She who talks in the name of all must necessarily betray those she represents, otherwise she will fail to obtain the transformation of the multitude into a unit; in turn, those who obey must necessarily transform the order received, otherwise they will simply keep repeating it without implementing it" (Latour 2003: 151)[9]. Perfect representation, i.e. maximal congruence between the representative and her constituents, goes along with perfect obedience. A democratic conception of representation requires on the contrary a continuous public attention to the multiple and ever-renewing discrepancies between institutions, elected officials and the people. Hence the relevance of approaches of representation that value the role of public judgment and surveillance and that underline the need for representatives to be under permanent scrutiny (Kateb 1981; Rosanvallon 2008; Urbinati 2014).

On a constructivist account, which foregrounds the construction of subjects by means of claims that define the borders of both the representative and of the group to be represented, acts of representation should be the most prone to debate and contestation. This point has been dramatized by the history of social movements that claimed rights for dominated groups: these struggles always accompanied deep reconfigurations of the political subject constructed through these claims and generated discussions and sometimes refusals of those claims (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). This is particularly clear in the history of feminism: the borders (external and internal) of "women" as a political subject were constantly questioned as the movement gained momentum[10]. In the United States, from the beginning of the 1970's, some feminist movements contested whether rich women could speak on behalf of the poor, white women on behalf of black women, straight women on behalf of lesbians. bell hooks argued that it was impossible to constitute the object of the claim of the early feminist movement (women as a whole) without making "the white American woman's experience (…) synonymous with the American woman's experience" (hooks 2015: 186). The erasure of the experience of black women could only be stopped through a major reconfiguration of women as a political subject. This reconfiguration did not mean a fragmentation – black feminism did not contradict the existence of a unified feminist movement – but a different way to construct this subject, integrating elements of the world that were considered irrelevant, paying attention to what would be called intersectionality, that is the plurality of sometimes contradictory effects of domination (Crenshaw 1991). The same kind of argument was at the core of the invention of subaltern studies: the majoritarian narrative of decolonization movements often rested on the monopolization by indigenous social elites of the right to speak and act on behalf of the majority, thus extending the erasure working-class colonized groups suffered under colonial domination (Guha 1997; Spivak 1988). In any representative claim that concerns a social group, congruence is not necessarily the indication that the group is properly represented in its multiplicity; it can also result from the erasure that the dominated parts of the group suffers – a central concern for theories of group representation (Young 1990; Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Young 2000; Williams 2000).

Inclusiveness and inclusive representation

These limits to the congruence criterion all point to the fact that democratic representation supposes that representative claims should not be usually accepted in the terms they are first made. To use Jacques Rancière's vocabulary, democratic representation should be

based on *disagreement* over representative claims, the features and borders of the groups these claims create, and the represented should play the major part in these disagreements (Rancière 1999). Claims should create subjects that become both active in the existing system of power relations and active in their relation to the claims that gave them this agency. There should be a constant disposition of the represented to use their agency to judge, criticize and transform both the social world they live in and the claims made in their name and that contribute to giving them their identity.

I propose to call this state *inclusiveness*, a term that carries a different meaning in the wake of a "propositional" account of representation than it has done in the context of traditional "compositional" accounts. Inclusiveness, as I understand it, is the opposite of Pitkin's criterion, responsiveness. To begin with, it is a property of the represented, not of the representative: it describes the ability for the represented to act as subjects by their inclusion in the existing power relations and to react to a representative claim that concerns them by their (often disruptive and agonistic) inclusion in the process of claim making. Similar to responsiveness, inclusiveness is both a systemic property and something that has to be at least potentially present in any given representative claim. But contrary to responsiveness, it does not presuppose that the represented preexist the relation of representation – it embraces the constructivist idea that before any disagreement, there is a claim made. More importantly, inclusiveness is a truly democratic criterion, while responsiveness is a criterion of good government, which solely relies on the good-mindedness of leaders. Inclusiveness depends on citizens to be actively engaged in discussing and judging both the existing social order and the claims made in their name; hence, it often requires institutions that assist them in acting as subjects and in putting representative claims to the test[11].

This criterion is not enough in itself to characterize democratic representation, but it may help to delineate ways to reassess the theory of democratic representation in the wake of the constructivist turn. As Catherine Colliot-Thélène has argued, the current pluralization of powers reveals a feature of democracy that was dissimulated by the idea of popular sovereignty: democracy is essentially the activity of addressing claims for equal rights to institutions that have authority (Colliot-Thélène 2011). Thus it is not the quality of decisions or the legitimacy of ruling institutions that makes a system democratic; a system is democratic when citizens are able to face these institutions that have power over them in order to claim rights. Bryan Garsten has similarly argued that "a chief purpose of representative government is *to multiply and challenge governmental claims to represent the people*" (Garsten 2010: 91). As a result,

democratic representation does not rely on the government's responsiveness or on the congruence between the represented and representatives, but on the dynamics of claim-making and claim-challenging. Lisa Disch also presents such an argument when she defends a mobilization conception of representation: after having rejected congruence and responsiveness as criteria for democratic representation (for constructivist reasons), she proposes "reflexivity as the normative standard for evaluating political representation". Reflexivity in her sense would require that the "representation process (…) encourage contestation". (Disch 2011: 111) Colliot-Thélène, Garsten and Disch propose that what makes representation democratic is not a feature of government: it rests on the pluralization of institutions and claims, and more importantly on the ability of the represented to be included in the representation process through dissenting, protesting, right-claiming, sometimes against their representatives – activities that require that the represented have some agency, but do not contradict the constructivist conception of representation as proposition.

Finally, it is possible to draw on the criterion of inclusiveness to delineate a conception of representation that could function as a regulative ideal. I call *inclusive representation* any form of representative claim or system of representative claims that has as its consequence the increase of direct participation and the proliferation of activities of testing claims by the represented. I distinguish it from *exclusionary representation*, which on the contrary limits these (Hayat 2013, 2018). Inclusive representation is realized through the participation of the represented in the discussion of collective outcomes and of representative claims, but also in the pluralization of these claims. Indeed, some forms of inclusion can be internal to the existing means of representation (politicization, judgment on elected representatives) or external to them, through the formation of alternate representative claims, in social movements (such as Occupy movements), NGOs, and so on, in order to equip the represented with other means of recognition and action. They can involve citizens as individuals or as social groups – in the latter case, once again it can take internal forms such as quotas, or external through movements and associations that claim to represent the social groups in question. Some forms of inclusion can rely on political subjects already recognized, or initiate new processes of subjectivation. But all these forms of inclusion share the same basic feature: they activate political subjects as objects and audiences for representative claims and by doing so accord them agency. By contrast, the devices of exclusionary representation deprive them of agency.

Conclusion. Inclusive representation and democratic legitimacy

The constructivist turn poses a real challenge to normative democratic theory. As Dario Castiglione and Mark Warren put it in their chapter in this volume, "a normative conception of democracy entails *the empowered inclusion of the community of those affected in collective decisions and actions*". Constructivism deprives us of any simple means to make representation adequate to this principle, by highlighting the power relations that underlie the determination of the "community of the affected". While the institutions of representative government take for granted the existence of a community of citizens that are represented through elections, the constructivist turn leads us to turn our attention to the processes through which the represented are spoken for, signified, performed and thus created as political subjects – or erased. My conceptualization of inclusiveness is a way to reformulate this democratic criterion to make it more aligned with constructivism. It builds on the fact that, as Dario Castiglione and Mark Warren state, "it is distinctive of *democratic* representation that persons are represented on the assumption that they actively participate in the asserting, authorizing, and approving that which is represented on their behalf". Instead of interpreting constructivism as a mere impossibility for the represented to be agents, representation as proposition takes into account the double movement of subjection and conscientization implied by the processes of subjectivation triggered by representative claims. In this perspective, representation is democratic to the extent that it allows for the inclusion of the represented as conscious agents, able to gain enough visibility and agency through representation to put to the test the power relations that subject them, including the very representative claims that gave them agency.

As a democratic criterion for representation as proposition, inclusiveness may help us reconsider some of the problems about the democratic legitimacy of political representation, such as the ones raised by Nadia Urbinati's chapter in this volume, and to renew the normative critique of representative government from a constructivist perspective. Nadia Urbinati's account of constructivist representation is very pessimistic about its compatibility with democratic legitimacy. According to her, either representative claims are mere forms of advocacy, distinct from government and party politics, and then they only belong to the liberal sphere of free judgment and have nothing to do with democracy legitimacy; or representative claims are intended by their makers to have some democratic legitimacy and then they should accept the rules and procedures of the electoral formation of popular will. While Nadia Urbinati's argument is well-founded, it largely deprives constructivism of its epistemological and political relevance. The constructivist critique of the institutions of representative government, as articulated by Bourdieu, is that they obfuscate the power relations between

social groups and between representatives and their constituents, allowing elected representatives, through representation as composition, to ascribe their actions to the governed. Thus determining the democratic legitimacy of representative claims by their electoral success (or any other procedure) avoids the normative conundrum raised by the constructivist turn. Inclusive representation is a way to revert this logic. Instead of saying that representative claims should abide by the rules of representative government to acquire democratic legitimacy, I contend that the institutions of representative government should be considered as one (admittedly sophisticated) way to make representative claims, which should be deemed democratic only if they satisfy the norms of inclusive democracy. It means that mere congruence, as measured by electoral success for example, does not provide any substantial legitimacy to elected representatives as far as inclusiveness is concerned. From this perspective, only the popular agency that results from an electoral success, including the activity of testing and challenging the elected representative's claim, and the way these activities actually affect political outcomes, may render an election democratic.

To be sure, inclusive representative does not equate with democratic representation; it is only one of its features, born from the necessity to reformulate a theory of democratic representation adequate to the epistemological and normative implications of the constructivist turn. It should therefore be completed with further investigations related to other features of democracy, such as equality and the pursuit of common good, in order to delineate a broader theory of democratic representation. In particular, when political subjects are institutionally stabilized and competition between representative claims provisionally loses its intensity, representation as composition undoubtedly has democratic merits. But even in these situations, representative claims will and should be challenged, leading to the emergence of new political subjects willing to circumvent the power relations that both constitute and constraint them. From the perspective of a democratic theory of representation willing to take constructivism seriously, inclusive forms of representation as proposition should be regarded as democratically preferable to both institutionalized representation as composition and exclusionary claims of representation as imposition.

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[2] The theory of representation was first built to describe the relation between elected representatives in legislative bodies. But as Pierre Rosanvallon notes, the executive branch is now largely prevalent in most democratic polities,

displacing the focus from representation to other features in order to maintain and expand democracy (Rosanvallon 2015).

[3] On the concept of surrogate representation and its relations with virtual representation, see (Mansbridge 2003; Rehfeld 2009; Mansbridge 2011; Rehfeld 2011).

[4] An example of this move is the study of congruence between representatives' actions and the constituents's wishes as a way of testing the system's responsiveness to popular influence (Miller and Stokes 1963; Pierce and Converse 1986): the epistemological assumptions are false from a constructivist point of view, since the constituents do not have an opinion as such before it is produced by the activity of their representative or by the study itself (Bourdieu 1979). Still, it can be tested and produces results epistemologically flawed but with acceptable normative implications.

[5] The role of the audience in representation is also central in (Rehfeld 2006), in which the author argues that "political representation (…) results from an audience's judgment that some individual, rather than some other, stands in for a group in order to perform a specific function." (p. 2). However, as Lisa Disch rightfully notes, Rehfeld's conception of the role of the audience is not constructivist (Disch 2015: 499).

[6] The word "subject" can be ambiguous, since in Saward's conceptualization of representative claims it designates the claimed representative. To avoid confusion, we will not use subject in this sense and use the word "representative" instead.

[7] This can be compared with the conceptualization of power by Michel Foucault : exerting power over a subject supposes the existence of a subject that can act accordingly to what is expected of her, which always leaves open the possibility of resistance. As an "act upon (…) actions", power as a relation requires "that "the other" (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up." (Foucault 1982: 789).

[8] I thank Yves Sintomer who insisted on the importance of this aspect.

[9] A similar point is made by (Mineur 2010) in a more ontological perspective: the impossible identification between the representative and the represented creates a permanent state of crisis.

[10] On feminism and representation I am especially grateful to Virginie Dutoya for the references she provided me and her authorization to use them.

[11] I tried to analyse how this form of inclusiveness was institutionalized during the revolutionary period of the French 1848 Republic (Hayat 2014, 2015).