A Democratic Balance: Bureaucracy, Political Parties and Political Representation

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Preface

We are happy to bring out this Occasional paper under the series of Occasional papers under the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) of this department. The series of Occasional Papers will mostly consist of research work done by the faculty members of the department. The purpose of this series is to make available to students, researchers, college teachers and colleagues the 'work-in-progress' that has benefited from the resources of the CAS.

The Department is currently running the first phase of the CAS after successful completion of three phases of Special Assistance Programme of the UGC from 1991 onwards. During those fifteen years, the Department initiated the practice of publishing Occasional papers and many have been subsequently revised and published separately or as part of edited books. We hope that this series will also help in disseminating the research work of the Department and benefit students and researchers.

The CAS was inaugurated in January 2009 though the scheme has been granted by the UGC for the period 2008-13. The thrust area of research is Indian Politics with the theme of State of Democracy in India in Global Context.

This paper by Professor Pradeep Chhibber is based on his inaugural speech at the department on January 25, 2009. We are thankful to him for visting the Department and giving this manuscript to be brought out as an Occasional Paper under Center for Advanced Studies.

Coordinator,
CAS

INTRODUCTION

A spate of new work (Manin, 1997; Mansbridge, 2003; Rehfeld 2006; Urbinati, 2000, 2006; Urbinati and Warren 2008; Warren 2008; Williams, 1998) has generated renewed interest in political representation – an idea that had been virtually silenced after Pitkin's (1967) masterful treatment of the subject in *The Concept of Representation*. This paper[*] focuses on political representation in electoral democracies and make three claims: first, that minimal notions of democracy are not compatible with representative democracy and need no longer be the focus of research; second, that political representation requires a well-functioning bureaucracy; and, third, that only political parties whose organization precludes them from becoming vehicles for the advancement of the interests of individual politicians can be representative.[i]

A voter is represented by her elected representative when an institutionalized policy relationship links the state and the voter – or, a bureaucracy that implements political decisions fairly. In nation-states that are capricious—in which the bureaucracy is corrupt, politicized, or virtually nonexistent—political representation is unlikely. Political representation is also difficult to achieve when political parties, which are *the* political agents of representation, become the handmaidens of individual politicians. Political representation, therefore, requires three elements: first, a mechanism for electing representatives; second, a state that can successfully institutionalize the interests of the voter with the decisions made by her representative; and, third, a party whose organization has mechanisms for advocacy of voter interests.

Free and fair elections are often equated with representative democracy on the reasoning that democracy begets representation.[ii] But if the claims in this paper hold up, we

[*] An earlier version was presented at the annual international Conference organized by the Penn Conference on Democracy, Citizenship, and Constitutionalism. I would like to thank Devesh Kapur, and Richard Vallely for comments on the paper and Francesca Jensenius and Adnan Naseemullah for a conversation about this subject.

may be faced with a distinctly uncomfortable theoretical possibility – that electoral democracy need not be representative.[iii]

The first section of the paper isolates authorization, sympathy (either as advocacy and/or stand-in representation), and accountability as the three main features that define political representation. Formally (and consistent with the claims of polyarchy) voting is supposed to ensure representation, especially authorization and accountability. If, however, we ask why voters vote the way they do we need to articulate a sympathetic relationship between a voter and a representative. Such an articulation leads to the conclusion that minimal notions of democracy are not representative and, hence, devoid of any real political content. The development of this sympathetic relationship between the voter and her representative is only possible when the interests of the represented to the representative are institutionalized *within* the state.

The second section of the paper discusses the social cleavage theory of party systems. Only those social groups whose interests are institutionalized *within* a state can successfully be represented by a party system. The third section introduces the notion of a capricious state – a state in which ad hoc and arbitrary policy implementation is the norm. A capricious state undermines political representation. In capricious states the norm is not political representation but selective political representation – a form of representation in which a voter sees the political process as representing someone else's interests, not hers. A capricious state severs the self-interested tie of a voter to her representative.

The fourth section provides evidence from India where, despite fifty years of elections, a capricious state has undermined political representation. This section provides evidence for the capricious state and shows that political parties are organized around the ambitions of individual politicians, conditions that lead citizens to see the state as selectively representative; consequently, the links of social divisions to the party system are weak and

fragile. The fifth section provides evidence that political representation is possible where the bureaucracy is doing its job and parties are not the tools of individual politicians. The paper concludes with some implications and caveats.

1. **The Vote, Political Representation, and Minimal Theories of Democracy**

Without prejudice to the various claims and counter claims about whether political representation is a coherent concept, a consensus exists that political representation in a democracy (an institutional arrangement in which some group of voters elects a representative) entails authorization, a sympathetic relationship between the voters and the representative (either as advocacy and/or as stand in representation), and accountability (Urbinati and Warren 2008; Rehfeld, 2006). Urbinati (2000) states this succinctly when she observes that political representation is the idea that "a constituency must authorize a person (party) to represent them; that person (party) must act in some way to pursue her constituents' interests; and finally, the constituency must have some ability to hold that representative accountable for what she did." The values of each of these terms could, however, vary widely, a fact that gives representation a multifaceted slipperiness (Pitkin, 1967). Despite this elusiveness, contemporary theorists of representation agree that the three terms—authorization, "substantive" acting for, and accountability—are necessary for any case to be properly classed as "representative."

Formally, the very act of voting for someone - either a candidate or a party that has sought your vote - can yield authorization and accountability. In an electoral democracy where a candidate and/or party is elected by a group of people according to well established rules that are understood by all, the candidate and/or party who gets votes is authorized to be a representative. Formal accountability is ensured as long as the representative can be removed from office when the candidate and/or party actively seeks votes to remain a

representative in subsequent rounds of elections.

This formal understanding of authorization and accountability is consistent with the minimalist theories of democracy in which democracy is constituted solely by elections. Huntington's (1991) theory represents democracy as a system in which the "most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes." The popular renditions of Dahl's polyarchy (1971) only require formal authorization. Polyarchy entails that control over government decisions about policy are constitutionally vested in elected officials; elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon; practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials and have the right to run for elective offices in the government; citizens have an effectively enforceable right to express themselves on political matters broadly defined, without danger of severe punishment; and they also have effective rights to seek out alternative sources of information and to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups are in place (change).

Since the almost universal adoption of this minimal definition of democracy in both the policy world and in quantitative democracy research, free and fair elections have become synonymous with democracy. Political representation has no place in this version of electoral democracy. This is somewhat ironic since Dahl (1994) presents polyarchy as central to representative democracy - an institutional arrangement he saw as a central characteristic of the national-state. For Dahl, the representative nature of contemporary democracy differentiated it from direct democracy.

While elections can indeed bestow formal authorization, this relationship can only be sustained if we do not ask why a representative draws votes in an election. The moment we focus on this question we assume a sympathetic relationship between the voter and her

representative.[iv] Accountability poses the same dilemma. While a candidate and/or party that is standing for reelection can indeed be removed from office, the formal requirement does not assess the reasons for which a voter seeks to reinstate or replace her representative. Determining why a voter votes for or against a candidate depends on the extent to which a representative's actions are tied to those of the represented. As long as we have formal authorization and accountability – without asking why one is authorizing someone and what one is holding that person accountable for (hanging)- we do not need the notion of a sympathetic relationship. Once we ask those questions we are placing sympathy at the heart of the relationship between the representative and the represented.[v]

Minimal notions of democracy concern themselves only with the procedures of authorization and accountability and rate democratic quality on regular free and fair elections.[vi] These assessments are not concerned with political representation or the nature of the sympathetic relationship between a voter and her representative. Put simply the mechanical act of 'free' voting is seen as sufficient for defining an electoral democracy. To focus merely on voting without asking voters' choices runs afoul of our understanding of political representation. Political representation requires a sympathetic relationship between the voter and her representative and, hence, reasons for why a citizen votes and why she votes the way she does. Minimal notions of democracy are, by definition, therefore, not consistent with the idea of representative democracy. Modern democracy is representative democracy. It is this representativeness that distinguishes it from direct democracy and minimal notions of democracy should, perhaps, no longer be the focus of attention.

2. Political Parties and Political Representation:

Theories of political representation have focused on establishing a direct relationship between voters and their representatives by asking either whether the representative has a sympathetic

relationship with the voter or identifying the conditions that lead to such a relationship. Political parties, as Urbinati and Warren (2008) note, are surprisingly absent from this conversation. In modern electoral representative democracies political parties lie at the very center of the relationship between a voter and her representative. Few independent representatives exist anywhere and as long we have legislative bodies representatives will form collective organizations (political parties) to make policy. Political parties are representative institutions insofar as the mechanisms authorizing them to legislate and govern, such as electoral rules, are in place.[vii] These rules also guarantee accountability since parties seek to return to power through periodic elections. When and how do political parties substantively 'act for' the voters? [viii]

The classic case of parties acting on behalf of their constituents is the social cleavage theory of party systems. According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967) modern European party systems were stable because of the presence of strong social cleavages that gave rise to thriving and stable electoral preferences. The growth of parties that mobilized these cleavages, and the institutionalization of these cleavage-based parties through repeated electoral competition, ensured a stable party system. Bartolini and Mair (1990) call this "cleavage closure" and argue that strong party-cleavage linkages stabilize party politics by making cross-party alliances less likely and providing fewer viable alternatives to voters.

For a party successfully to represent a social group, a bureaucracy that will implement the policies adopted by the politicians reliably becomes essential. But if a bureaucracy acts capriciously – and thus distorts the state project - a party can no longer remain representative. In all states, bureaucrats implement the policies adopted by political parties and the bureaucrats need to "forgo the selfish and capricious satisfaction of their subjective ends" (Hegel 1967, pp. 191), an important point because "the conduct and culture of officials is the sphere where the laws and government decisions come into contact with individuals and are

actually made good. Hence it is on the conduct of officials that depend not only the contentment of citizens and their confidence in the government, but also the execution – or alternatively the distortion and frustration – of state projects" (Hegel pp. 192).

Ahuja and Chhibber (2009) term the distortion of the state project a capricious state. In a capricious state all citizens do not share equally in the services provided by a state. Some need the state's services but do not have access to them, and are consistently (over a long period of time) excluded from the public goods provided by the state. More important, even when public services are provided, the access of the citizens to these public services is not institutionalized but is instead sporadic and ad-hoc. Policies are made but not implemented. When these citizens come in contact with state officials, they are treated disrespectfully by them and often dismissed. If the state project is distorted, or if the state acts capriciously, the sympathetic relationship between a voter and her representative is weakened.[ix]

Representation and the Social Cleavage Theory of Party Systems

The social cleavage theory of party systems provides a clear instance of the representativeness inherent in an institutionalized relationship between voters and their representatives. In this theory political parties represent a particular group in society. Each group is aware of which party represents what group. The social cleavage argument (and its various versions) has tremendous resonance in comparative and party politics and has been invoked to explain the formation of new parties (parties represent groups which care about new issue areas); the switching of votes from one party to another (realignment); and voters losing faith in a party system (dealignment).

The mechanism by which social cleavages are represented by a political party is usually left unclear. One common way in which social divisions are linked to a political party is by assuming that a voter's social and/or economic interests are ontologically prior to the position

adopted by political parties. Once we know these voter preferences we can construct (either through some quantitative technique or qualitative/textual analysis) how these claims are represented in the party system.

This line of reasoning has one obvious shortcoming. It is impossible to isolate social and/or even economic interests that are ontologically prior to a given set of political institutions. While this seems prosaic, the extent to which social interests can be aligned with a party system is dependent upon whether the relationship between the voter and her representative is institutionalized within the state.

Bureaucracy and Representation in the Social Cleavage Theory of Party Systems

In the classic version of the social cleavage theory of party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), the link between parties and social divisions required three institutional arrangements: first, a state in and through which political parties could represent their constituents; second, an unstated assumption the representativeness of the party was ensured by institutionalizing the policy interests of its voters in the state; and third, political parties were organized to respond to their voters. In Lipset and Rokkan's interpretation, political parties were representative only in a state upon which they could make claims on behalf of their supporters. What is left unstated, but assumed, is that once a policy is adopted by a state it would be implemented reliably by the state for all voters who belong to a group that would benefit from the policy. Only then would voters who constitute that group continue supporting a particular party.

Examples abound. In Spain socialist politicians who instituted policies that represented the interests of their voters created the class cleavage. These politicians did indeed represent the policy interests of their constituents – labor and pensioners but for the class cleavage to have contemporary resonance in Spanish politics these policies needed to be

institutionalized within the state and implemented relatively fairly within a group. Similarly, in Israel the electoral dominance of the Labour Party was due not only to its tight relationship with *Histradut* but also because the state consistently implemented a set of policies that were pro-labor.

This, however, need not always be the case. Often (unfortunately), a state can implement the favorable policies it adopts for a group in an ad hoc fashion. In such instances, the representative relationship between the group and the parties breaks down rather rapidly. Voters may belong to a group for whom a set of policies was adopted, but they do not necessarily draw any benefits from those policies. In these circumstances, the state project is distorted by ad hoc policy implementation (the policy that can tie voters to a party is not institutionalized within the state). In this case, the sympathetic relationship between the representative and the voter is also severed.

Examples of the distortion of the state project and the capricious state come from patronage politics and vote buying. In patronage politics – in the classic versions of Chicago or Tammany Hall –politicians target individual voters, not groups. As long as this relationship is contingent (and not regular and sustained over a long period) political parties cannot be the representatives of a group. Similarly, if votes are bought by individual candidates the sympathetic relationship between a group of voters and their representative is cut off since the act of voting is just a cash transaction and parties feel no pressure to develop a sympathetic relationship based on advocacy with their supporters.

Political representation requires that the relationship between politician and voter is institutionalized through an impartial bureaucracy. If the state project is distorted or with a capricious state, it becomes difficult for a voter to sustain a sympathetic tie with her representative. These conditions electoral democracy coexists without tangible political representation.

3. The Organization of Political Parties and Representation

The social cleavage theory of party systems also presumes particular kinds of parties – minimally, political parties that are not solely vehicles for the advancement of their own leaders. Machiavelli, for one, observed that feuds among politicians do not injure a republic unless they take the form of factions – party leaders creating partisans to support their personal interests. Factions pose difficulties for representation, especially when political parties compete primarily on behalf of their leaders. A political party or a "representative" who sells out her constituents for her own good would not be 'acting for' in any substantive way (even though the person is authorized and accountable under electoral rules) and hence, would not be properly considered a political representative. Given this, no supporter of partisan politics finds parties that are controlled by a single leader as theoretically defensible.

When states are capricious and political parties are vehicles for the interests of individual politicians political representation is difficult. In each of these cases voters may vote for candidates and/or parties, but the ties between voters and the representatives is weak and fragile. While this line of reasoning may suggest that no representation exists in a capricious state. Here a different type of political representation –selective representation – is the norm.

4. Political Representation in India

The Capricious State

In India, the state does indeed have a vast bureaucratic apparatus that implements the policies made by politicians – a bureaucracy that refers to itself as the "steel frame." In the implementation of the policies adopted by the state, however, not only are there leakages but also, more importantly, whether a citizen has access to state benefits depends on the whims of

the agents of the state they have to deal with. According to the Indian government's own estimates, less than half of all the resources allocated for the marginalized ever reach them.[x] Most of the leakage occurs within the arms of the state itself.[xi] What makes the situation worse is that when citizens take their concerns to the state for redress, they are often either ignored or dismissed. Agents of the state – particularly the bureaucrats –frequently mistreat them. Breman (1992) and Gupta (2008) offer a penetrating analysis of this situation.[xii] For many therefore, then, the state remains an important yet capricious actor in their life.

Many voters say that they seldom 'count' and that the state is not interested in addressing the issues they care about. Moreover, when they do contact the state, that interaction is fraught with hurdles. In the absence of resources, a language of favors is adopted. On the occasion when resources do flow from the state, they have to be shared with the state's functionaries as bribes. Most respondents reported that when they interacted with the state they were often treated disrespectfully and often summarily dismissed. They also complain of intimidation and coercion by the state's functionaries.[xiii] Many citizens of democratic India report that they have no control over the performance of school teachers; that they are openly intimidated in police stations; that they face rampant neglect in health centers; and that their petitions get put on the backburner in district offices. The state fails them on many counts.

Our evidence for the capriciousness of the state comes from a series of focus groups. One of the respondents in our focus groups stated this perspective quite succinctly: "No one listens, no one is interested. We stand there for hours on end, give up our daily wage, but get only five minutes of their time, and sometimes not even that. How does one keep doing it?" "*Gareeb admi ki kaun parva kartha hai*?" Or "Who cares about the poor?"[xiv] In almost all the neighborhoods and settlements, respondents wanted to know if we could relay their petitions to government officials and why newspapers did not write about them. In some of the

discussions the participants were very forthright in expressing their anger: “The government is shameless.” “We are the forgotten people.”

Even the middle classes feel the capriciousness of the state. A middle-class respondent remarked, “Having a contact or two is important and … when you do not have money, you need a godfather, or many godfathers to get things done and *when that is not the case, there is no difference between me, and the person who resides in the slum behind my neighborhood.*” Despite having access to state services many citizens lack the ability to improve the quality of services being delivered to them. One of them observed, “The government does many things for us, but we are not happy with the quality of the services in this area. We go with complaints to the administration, and sometimes things improve, but then some official gets transferred, and things go back to being bad again.” Another asserted, “Without money or some contact, who gets a job these days? The Municipal councilors, the members of the legislative assembly (MLA) and the members of national parliament (MP), no one will do much. They only promise us things. If you know them personally, things may be different. Knowing government officials is very helpful. They can make things happen. Some of them are even more powerful than the politicians.”

The Dynastic Party

Political parties in India are increasingly becoming vehicles for the advancement of individual politicians and their families. The top leadership in many parties comes from within a family or is determined *ad hoc* by the current leader. Consider the Congress Party, where the top leadership has stayed within the Nehru family, starting with Nehru himself and flowing to Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and now Rahul Gandhi.[xv] In the current Indian council of ministers a number of ministers are from political families within the Congress or its allies.

Farooq Abdullah is the second generation of the political dynasty founded byhis father Sheikh Abdullah. (His son Omar is Chief Minister of J&K.) Prithviraj Chavan is from a well-known Maharashtra political family.Salman Khurshid's father was a minister in Indira Gandhi's government.Dayanidhi Maran is the son of Murasoli Maran, a minister in A.B.Vajpayee's government and is a close relative of M. Karunanidhi. Selja is the daughter of former Union Minister Choudhary Dalbir Singh. G.K.Vasan is the son of G.K.Moopanar.M.K.Azhagiri is the son of M. Karunanidhi. Parneet Kaur is the wife of former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.Ajay Maken is the nephew of noted Delhi leader, the late Lalit Maken. Bharatsinh Solanki is the son of former External Affairs Minister Madhavsinh Solanki.D.Purandeshwari is N.T. Rama Rao's daughter. Tushar Choudhary is the son of the former Gujarat Chief Minister Amarsinh Choudhary. Jyotiraditya Scindia is the son of Madhavrao Scindia. Sachin Pilot is the son of Rajesh Pilot. Jitin Prasada is the son of Jitendra Prasada.R.P.N.Singh is the son of former Union Minister C.P.N. Singh. Prateek Patil is the grandson of former Maharashtra Chief Minister Vasantdada Patil. Agatha Sangma is the daughter of former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno Sangma. D. Napoleon is the nephew of former state minister K.N. Nehru, who made him his personal assistant.

The focus on the Congress detracts attention from the fact that most, if not all, regional parties follow a similar pattern, where the top leadership remains within a single family. The state-level parties include the Akali Dal in Punjab; Shiv Sena in Maharashtra ; National Congress Party of Maharashtra; AI-ADMK (All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) and the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) in Tamil Nadu; the Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh; and the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa; and the Samajwadi Party of Uttar Pradesh.

Since the Indian state is capricious and political parties are vehicles for individual politicians ambitions, low levels of political representation and some evidence for selective representation are likely.

Whose Interests do Parties Represent?

In a national survey conducted in 2002 we asked respondents whether the first, second, and third parties in their area represented the interests of some citizens, all citizens or they did not know or could not say. The latter two responses were combined into one category – these were respondents who thought the parties represented no one since they could not identify whether a party represented particular interests (table 1).[xvi] Forty-one percent of the respondents do not think that the first party in their area represents no one interests; this number jumps to 50 percent for the second party, and to 64 percent for the third party. We combined the responses into a scale that reported whether respondents felt that citizens represent all interests to those who stated that parties represented no one. A third of all respondents believed that all three parties in their area do not represent the interests of anyone.

Table One
Whose Interest Does a Party Represent?

Party	All	Some	None
Party 1	34	25	41
Party 2	27	25	48
Party 3	17	19	64

Figures in Percentages; Data drawn from the 2002 State-Society Survey.

In the survey we also asked respondents whether the Member of Parliament (MP) and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) cared for the interests of some or all, or they did not know or could not say. Once again we combine the latter two responses to indicate whether the elected politicians cared for no one. Sixty-five percent of the respondents could

not identify whose interests the MP represented and over 40 percent of the respondents could not identify whom the MLAs cared for. We combined the responses to MPs and MLAs into one scale – and almost half (49 percent) of the respondents could not identify whose interests the elected politicians cared for.

Social Divisions and the Party System in India

Given the capricious nature of the state and the fact that parties have become centered on the interests of particular individuals social groups too should find political parties as not really representative of their interests.

Sociological arguments have been extremely popular in the study of Indian politics and it is commonplace to say that some social cleavage structures the party system. There are, however, few empirical tests of the links between social cleavages and the party system. Heath (2005) provides survey evidence that electoral volatility in India can be explained by the extent to which social cleavages are politicized and polarized by the party system. His cleavage polarization index attempts to measure the extent to which different political parties represent social cleavage. States in which parties can generate cross-cleavage support are therefore less polarized. To construct this index, Heath (2005, p. 189) examines "the relationship between caste-community and the cluster voted for, and use[s] an index of dissimilarity to measure the degree to which political competition is polarized along caste-community lines." Chandra et al (2008) construct a measure for whether or not a party claimed to be running on an ethnic platform.

To create a measure for the extent to which a party has a clear social base, Jensensius, Suryanarayan and I (2009) derived an algorithm to determine the extent of a party's dependence on a specific group and then examined survey data from six national elections: 1967, 1971, 1979, 1996, 1999, and 2004. The first three were surveys conducted by the

Center for the Study of Developing Societies and the latter three were part of the National Election Studies that was pioneered by Lokniti in 1996.

For each election we crosstabulated for which party a respondent voted in each of the 15 states by Hindu caste groups, social class, urban-rural and religion. The key groups we then considered were: Hindu upper castes; scheduled castes; Hindu other backward castes; Muslims; other religious denominations; scheduled tribes; a class category; and whether a respondent lived in an urban or a rural area. We coded parties according to the following two indicators of having a clear social base:

1. The party gets more than 50 percent of votes from a specific group without any other party getting more than 25 percent of votes from the same group. This criterion ensures that the party under consideration is clearly preferred by a particular social group.
2. The party has a maximum of two support groups, as defined in (1). This criterion ensures that the party is indeed preferred by a few caste groups and is not the preference of all groups in society (which would make it a catch-all party)

If a party fulfilled the two criteria, we classified it as a cleavage-based party; otherwise we categorized it as a catchall party. In almost 60 percent of our cases, the party did not have a social base; in 30 percent of the cases, one party had a clearly defined social base; and in 10 percent of the cases two parties had a clear social base. These data show that in most of India political parties are not tied to social groups. If we exclude the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party and the dalit-supported Bahujan Samaj Party, the proportion of parties that can reliably depend on a social cleavage drops precipitously.

Why Do People Go to Vote?

If neither the parties nor the politicians are representative, we're left to ask why Indians go to

vote. The capriciousness of the bureaucracy, police, and politicians (without recourse to any redress) leads voters to use the language of political rights to explain why they vote. Voters, who face the capriciousness of the state, *pace* Skinner (1997) and Petit (2002), are more likely to stress their political rights when they can. Skinner (1997) asserts that freedom is properly understood as freedom from the "whims" of the rulers. He states, "Our rulers may choose not to exercise these powers, or may exercise them only with the tenderest regard for your individual liberties. So you may in practice continue to enjoy the full range of your civil rights. The very fact, however, that your rulers possess such arbitrary powers means that the continued enjoyment of your civil liberty remains at all times dependent on their goodwill" (70). Petit (2002) broadly agrees with this assertion when he states, "Domination is subjection to an arbitrary power of interference on the part of another—a dominus or master—even another who chooses not actually to exercise that power… freedom, I maintained, should be defined as non domination" (340).[xvii]

In India, voters invoke rights while voting because elections mark a sharp departure from this state of affairs. Elections are one of the few occasions when the state is not whimsical. The state takes seriously its obligation to extend a right, the right to vote, to all the citizens. Moreover, at the time of elections, the state turns up on the doorstep of the marginalized, in sharp contrast to the usual state of affairs. When the people find themselves needed by the State to legitimize its work through voting, they are keen to exercise this right.[xviii] In focus groups we presented those present with a question: What if nothing changes over the next two elections in terms of your material conditions, would you still continue to vote? In a large number of cases the answer was an unequivocal "Yes." As a poor villager in Azamgarh put it, "I am because I vote on Election Day, otherwise, what is my stature in this society?" Another participant said, "Election is the one event which ties us to the government. Politicians, people like you, journalists everyone comes looking for us. If we did

not vote, there will be no elections and we will be left for dead."

What do Voters Want?

As voters in India face a capricious state and politicians who seek to look after themselves first, voters seek honesty from their political leaders and bureaucrats and not the standard bundle of economic and/or private goods. In the 2002 survey we asked respondents what they expected from politicians, officials and parties. This was an open-ended question. I recoded the open-ended answers into five broad categories – those asking for public services/goods, private goods, integrity, and other unclassifiable requests and those who said they did not know (figure 1). What we find is that a large plurality of respondents looked for honesty in their politicians and bureaucrats.

(Figure 1 about here)

Does Bureaucratic Performance Really Matter?

To assess whether bureaucratic performance makes a difference I created a composite index of political representation. In this index I standardized the responses to the three questions on whose interests were represented by political parties and whose interests the Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly represented, generated z scores and then added them to create a composite index that was a scale going from low values (for whom from those for whom the political system represented no one) to high (for those who thought that the political system was representative of all). Positive and higher numbers suggest more political representation and negative numbers mean less representation.

In the survey in 2002 respondents had been asked what proportion of bureaucrats – all, some, or none - in their area had the qualities they expected of bureaucrats (most, as figure 1 tells us wanted honest bureaucrats). In Figure 2, I report the average score on the index of political representation for the various proportions of bureaucrats who had the

qualities that respondents desired. We find a dramatic difference. Those respondents for whom all the bureaucrats had the desired qualities the political system were far more representative whereas those respondents who did not see any bureaucrat as having the qualities they desired the political system too was less representative.

(Figure 2 about here)

Dynastic Parties and Political Representation

To assess whether dynastic parties makes a difference to political representation I examined the relationship between the kind of party system and whether politicians were seen as representative or not. For the 2002 survey we identified the location in which respondents were interviewed and then assessed whether the parties in those locales were either national parties or regional parties. We use national and regional as proxies for dynastic parties since at the state and local level all the major regional parties are clearly dynastic – whereas the national parties such as the BJP and the Communists are less dynastic (Congress - the only national party that is dynastic nationally - is less dynastic at the state level compared to the state parties). We then created three categories – locales in which national parties competed, those in which a national party competed with a regional party and those where only regional parties competed. In Figure 3, I report proportion of respondents who said that their representatives did not care by these three categories and found that respondents who were located in areas where regional parties competed were more likely to say that their representatives did not represent the interests of anyone.

(Figure 3 about here)

5. Caveats and Implications

The nature of the state and the organization of political parties can have a significant impact on the political representative developing a sympathetic relationship with her voters. In

nation-states where regular elections are accompanied by arbitrary policy implementation, representation dissolves into formal authorization and accountability only. If, however, one takes a more substantive view of authorization and accountability by asking a simple question of why citizens vote they way they do, the relationship of political representation and polyarchy is severed and electoral democracy dissolves into Schumpeterian elite competition.

What about Stand In Representation?

One objection to this line of reasoning is that while advocacy may be difficult without an institutionalized relationship between a voter and a representative, stand-in representation is indeed plausible. Stand-in representation can be found when a voter votes for someone who is like her without regard for that person's policies (Williams, 1998). Stand-in representation is common to capricious states especially if the if capriciousness is directed towards a particular group because the group would rather have someone like them as their representative. Often, this kind of systematic discrimination is not really capricious because a clear bias marks both the institutions of the state and the political process that favors one group over another. The archetypical case of this is the US, where African American living in the South faced clear discrimination. Political institutions were structured to ensure that bias was sustained. Representative politics in the South was centered on maintaining white control (Key, 1957).

There are other possibilities, however, one of which is that capriciousness is completely random. If the state is capricious randomly, stand-in representation will be rare. But, practically speaking, no state undertakes actions that are completely random. More commonly, elements of bias and random capriciousness coexist. In these situations a group can elect a stand-in representative but won't change the situation on the ground. While social bias may ensure the election of candidate of group that is discriminated against, the

representative, once elected, finds it difficult to persist as an advocate for her group and the representative nature of the relationship eventually collapses.

Ulterior Representation

Political representation as it is currently defined focuses on self-interest (Pitkin, 1967; Urbinati, 2000; Urbinati and Warren 2008). Political representation requires that *a* voter authorize *a* representative to act on her behalf, as she believes that the representative would be an advocate for her interests. Further, the very same voter can hold the representative accountable for her actions and remove her from office. A central concern of contemporary theorists of political representation, therefore, is the relationship between a voter and the representative and the extent to which they have a sympathetic relationship (either as a stand-in representative or as an advocate). In capricious states another type of political representation may be the norm – selective representation—in which most voters do not see their representatives as sympathetic to them but as advocates of the interests of voters who have characteristics that they do not have. In selective political representation parties and/or candidates have a sympathetic relationship to someone other than the voter. The voter, on the other hand, does not have such a sympathetic relationship with any representative. In capricious states political representation is representation of the other, not the self.

Implications

The argument presented above has clear implications. First, by placing the nature of the state at the center of the relationship between the represented and the representatives it suggests that the distinction between on liberal and illiberal democracy is mistaken and that bureaucracy not values separates representative and other democracies.

Figure 1

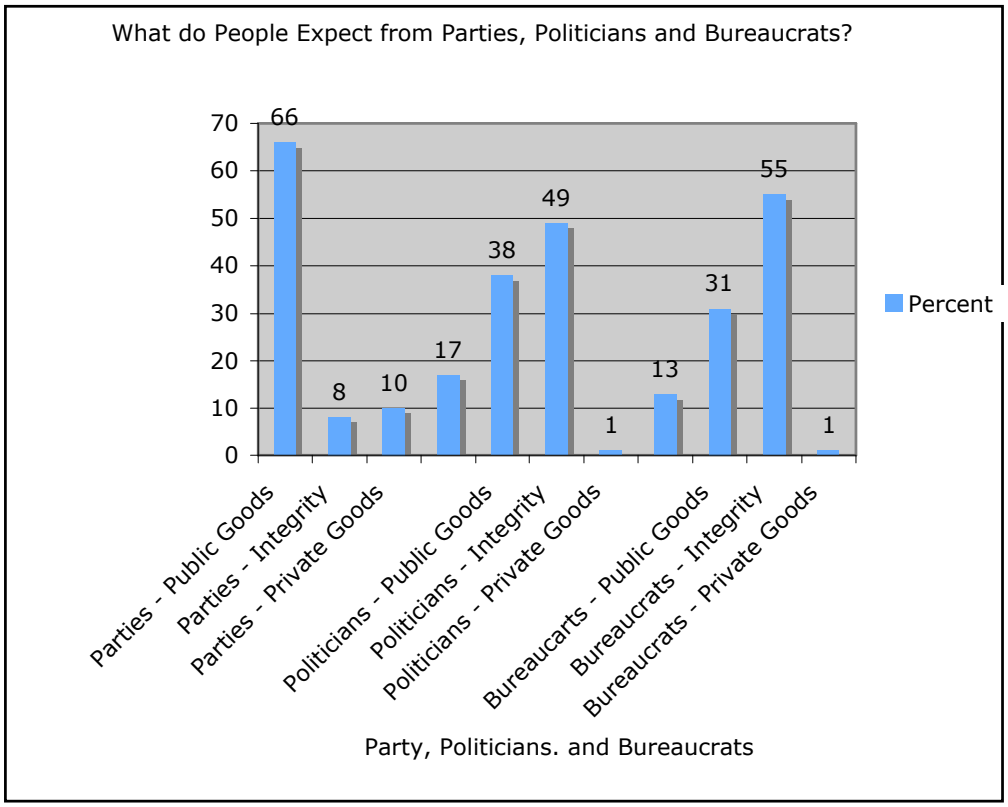

What do People Expect from Parties, Politicians and Bureaucrats?
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
66
8
10
17
38
49
1
13
31
55
1
Percent
Parties - Public Goods
Parties - Integrity
Parties - Private Goods
Politicians - Public Goods
Politicians - Integrity
Politicians - Private Goods
Bureaucarts - Public Goods
Bureaucrats - Integrity
Bureaucrats - Private Goods
Party, Politicians. and Bureaucrats

Figure 2

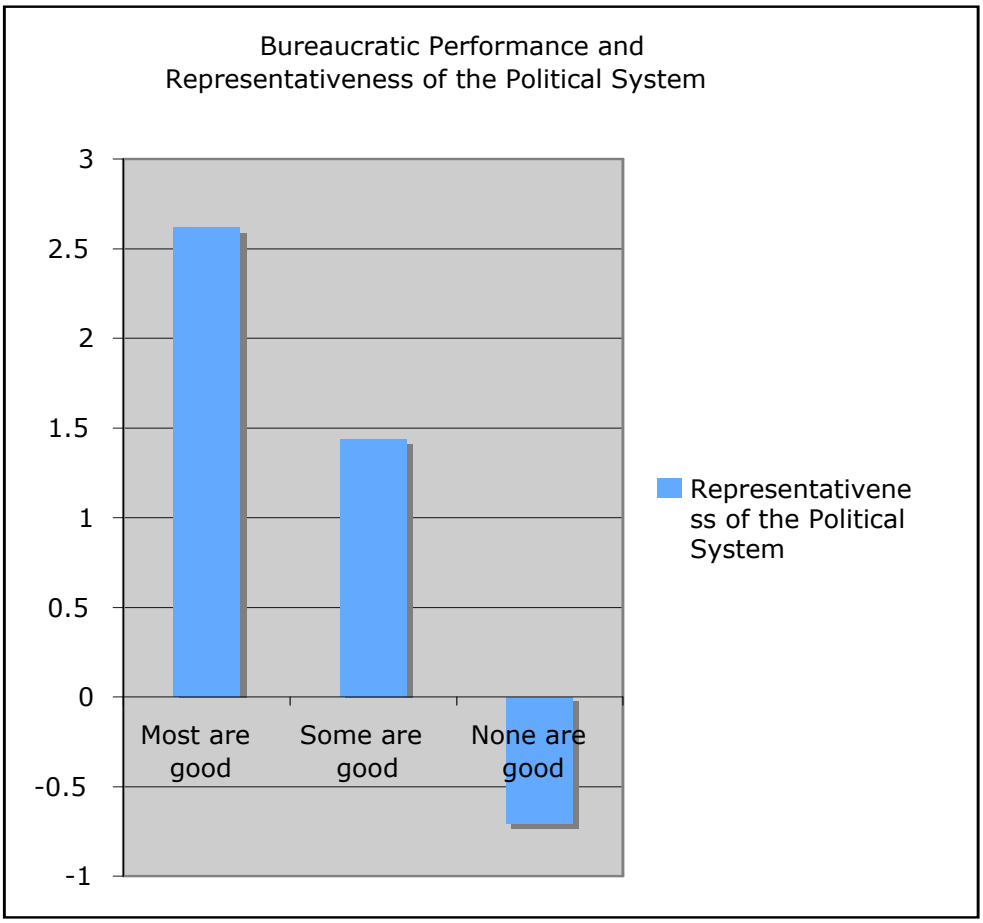
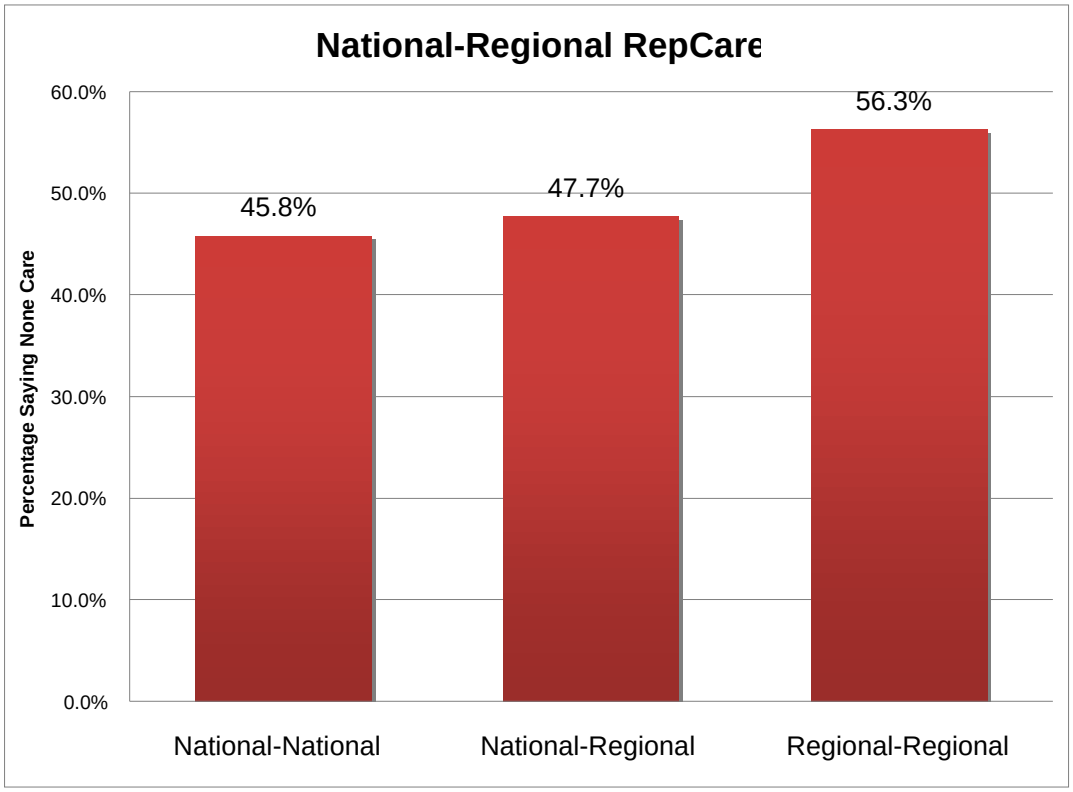

Bureaucratic Performance and
Representativeness of the Political System
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
-0.5
-1
Most are good
Some are good
None are good
Representativeness of the Political System

Figure 3

Do Citizens Find Candidates from Regional or National Parties more Representative?



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[i] Political representation is not unique to any particular institutional arrangement and it can be found in almost any kind of political regime – democratic and non-democratic.
[ii] Electoral democracy has been a vibrant research area for almost half a century with multiple intellectual currents examining the various aspects of elections and electoral democracy – how it comes about, how is it sustained and whether there are preconditions – economic or social – that are likely to generate electoral democracy.
[iii] The general claim that political representation is tied to the nature of the state is not entirely new. Ankersmit (2002) in *Political Representation* attributes the withering of political representation to excessive bureaucratization of the modern nation state. This paper questions that claim by asserting exactly the opposite – that, in nation states where there is either no bureaucracy or there is a weak and ineffectual bureaucracy political representation is a direct casualty.

[iv] Mansbridge (2003) discusses four types of representation – promissory, anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogacy, each of these are different ways in which a sympathetic relationship can develop between a voter and her representative.
[v] Plotke (1997) notes that while accountability and authorization are useful concepts to distinguish democratic and authoritarian governments they are les helpful when we ask what a representative should be doing.
[vi] "The Polity scheme consists of six component measures that record key qualities of executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority, and political competition. It also records changes in the institutionalized qualities of governing authority. The Polity data include information only on the institutions of the central government and on political groups acting, or reacting, within the scope of that authority" (http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm)
[vii] Electoral rules do not allow all voices to be represented as electoral systems give some voices more prominence than others (though proportional representation with low thresholds allows the most diverse set of voices a seat at the legislature).
[viii] Critics of political parties as democratic institutions have often pointed to two dangers associated with parties. First, political parties become associated with particular segments of society and this particularization of parties tends to undermine either the representation of a national interest or in the extreme situation may make for a less democratic polity. The second danger is that parties become insular and vehicles for the advancement of the individual interests of those holding positions of power in these parties. When political parties are associated with individual interests rather than group interests they fail as representative institutions. The first criticism of parties is misplaced since political parties, are by definition supposed to represent only a part (for a robust defense of the partisan nature of parties see Sartori (1976) and Rosenblum, 2006)). The second criticism is spot on.

[ix] There is some empirical support for these claims. Work done on the in the US shows that an autonomous bureaucracy can ensure the representative nature of the state where it is totally dominated by political system that need not follow (Meier and O'Toole, 2006).
[x] Why is this important? Weber noted that while the direct democracy is a type of rule, representative democracy is actually a form of legitimation of rule (Max Weber: Economy and Society Vol III p 941 Bedminster Press: New York 1969).

[xi] The reports of the Planning commission and the center for vigilance on corruption, both government bodies provide ample evidence.
[xii] See for example Shah and Mandava who document the daily struggles of street hawkers in and pavement dwellers in Delhi, who despite regularly bribing the police and municipality officials live in their fear.
[xiii] For the poor, unlike rural areas where the state is either not present or its presence is intermittent the state is present in urban areas. Yet, the marginalized in the urban areas observed that bureaucrats and elected representatives discriminated between the citizens on the basis of socio economic status. This discrimination manifested itself in how the officials interacted with them (made them wait for long hours) and often did not give due attention to their petitions.
[xiv] Corbridge et. al. (2005) confirm this finding when they state quite succinctly, the poor see the state when the state wants to see them
[xv] Manmohan Singh the current Prime Minister of India said in a rally held for the Uttar Pradesh elections that "Rahul Gandhi is your future. He is sweating it out for you. Only one chance is needed to make this state a new

Uttar Pradesh," Singh told an election rally, his first during the current assembly polls. "Let's make a new Uttar Pradesh, just like (late Prime Minister) Rajiv Gandhi dreamt of making a new India 20 years ago" (url=http://www.ibnlive.com/news/rahul-gandhi-is-ups-future-manmohan-singh/top/385944.html?xml&news=Rahul%20Gandhi%20is%20future%20of%20UP:%20PM&pubDate=Mon%2C+16+Apr+2007+01%3A06%3A10++0100&keyword=ibn_home)

[xvi] This is not a simple I do not know – for in a democracy where elections have been held for many years citizens should know whose interests parties and or elected representative care for – that they do not is a reflection on the fact that neither parties nor MP/MLA care for a range of people – and this is the poor etc. Among the educated and the middle classes etc the reaction to parties and politicians is generally negative but that does not mean that they do not know that politicians and parties represent particular interests – it is just that parties do not represent the interests they would like.

[xvii] The research on the poor across the world has generated evidence to suggest that resource shortage and domination may constrain but does not rule out political assertion. The poor exert their agency against the dominant classes as well as the state. In Weapons of the Weak, Scott (1985) shows that the poor and marginalized in Malaysian villages do not give into subjugation. In the absence of opportunity, they resort to passive or hidden forms of resistance against the dominant classes. They hold the dominant classes accountable for their behavior subscribing to a framework grounded in ideas of religion and traditional norms of reciprocity. Similarly, O' Brien and Li (2006) point out that the poor citizens in China try to hold the state accountable by turning to the rhetoric of the state, terming this behavior rightful resistance. In her work in El Salvador, Elizabeth Wood finds that close to one third of the poor peasants who admit to supporting the insurgency against the state do not cite material gains to explain their actions. Instead their participation is rooted in their desire to defy the violent state, exert their historical agency in the remaking of class relations and for the participation in the building of God's kingdom.

[xviii] Recent ethnographic research in India provides a different explanation for why people go to vote in India. Banerjee (2007) sees the vote as "sacred" largely because it possesses "both symbolic power, in expressing people's self-respect and self-worth, and instrumental power, in helping to ward off potential attacks by the state upon that self-worth" (1561). We agree with Banerjee that the poor do indeed vote to express their self-worth and that the vote does offer the poor some protection against the state. However, our research does not find that all social groups in India have similar motivations to vote.