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# Political Representation in the European Union

*A Multi-Channel Approach*

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ACTA  
UNIVERSITATIS  
UPSALIENSIS  
UPPSALA  
2015

ISSN 1652-9030  
ISBN 978-91-554-9412-4  
urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-267106

Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Auditorium Minus, Gustavianum, Akademigatan 3, Uppsala, Thursday, 14 January 2016 at 13:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in Swedish. Faculty examiner: Associate Professor Hans Agné (Stockholm University, Department of Political Science).

### **Abstract**

Mårtensson, M. 2015. Political Representation in the European Union. A Multi-Channel Approach. *Digital Comprehensive Summaries of Uppsala Dissertations from the Faculty of Social Sciences* 120. 70 pp. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. ISBN 978-91-554-9412-4.

The European Union (EU) is the most far-reaching attempt yet undertaken to institutionalize democratic policy-making beyond the nation-state. To what extent, and in what ways, do various channels of representation contribute towards the realization of this aim? This dissertation takes stock of current research on the EU's system of representation, and seeks to expand its agenda so that this central question can be properly addressed. In contrast to prior empirical work in the field, the dissertation employs research designs that incorporate several forms of representation into a unified evaluative framework. This multi-channel approach to political representation paves the way for a systematic comparison of how different forms of representation (electoral, territorial and corporate) perform in the EU context. It also makes possible an empirical assessment of a key proposition in current representation theory: that elections, in large and heterogeneous political systems, are outperformed by other forms of representation.

The three articles in the dissertation draw on existing cross-country data, interviews with policy-makers and a new dataset collected by the author. They scrutinize representation in three principal channels: electoral representation in the European Parliament, government representation in the preparatory bodies of the Council of Ministers, and representation through organized interests that seek to influence EU policy. The first article examines the balance of power that has emerged between these three channels of representation in the EU's legislative process, and how the current balance is likely to affect the Union's legitimacy. The second article investigates how different channels of representation perform in terms of providing linkage between Brussels-based representatives and their domestic principals. The third article examines the extent to which different channels of representation contribute to the coordination of EU policy-making domestically, at the European level, and across the two levels of government.

Finally, this dissertation makes a methodological contribution by applying social network analysis (SNA) to classic problems of representation within and across different channels of representation. This approach is novel to the field. Researchers should be able to exploit SNA and relational data fruitfully in the future, in the study of representational relationships in the EU and numerous other contexts.

*Keywords:* political representation, EU, multi-channel approach, European Parliament, Council of Ministers, interest representation, linkage, Services Directive, social-network analysis, coordination

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ISSN 1652-9030

ISBN 978-91-554-9412-4

urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-267106 (<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-267106>)

# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my three excellent supervisors for their continuous support for my work on this dissertation. Christer Karlsson's patience, ability to motivate, and extensive knowledge of European politics have been a great help throughout all the stages of my work on this thesis. I cannot imagine having had a better advisor and mentor during this project. Sverker Gustavsson's enthusiasm, sharp analysis of European politics, and ability to identify what is essential in an academic text have been invaluable to me. Torsten Svensson's craftsmanship in matters academic has raised the quality of my empirical analysis and supplied me with tools for my future work.

Over the years I have received helpful comments and good advice from many people at the Department of Government, Uppsala University. My first-year teachers Jörgen Hermansson, Mats Lundström and Jan Teorell commented on several early drafts and plans, as did fellow doctoral students Lisa Ekevärn, Hanna Hellquist, Aaron Maltais and Katrin Uba. Colleagues and friends from the department's seminar on European politics commented on several versions of the articles contained herein. In addition to Christer and Sverker, they include Karl-Göran Algotsson, Gelu Calacean, Karin Leijon, Björn Lindberg, Anna Michalski, Ludvig Norman, Charles Parker, Thomas Persson and Helena Wockelberg. I also received great advice from Hanna Bäck and Sven Oskarsson, in the department's research seminar. Christopher Ansell provided insightful comments on drafts for Article II and Article III. My deepest thanks to Paula Blomqvist, Kalle Lindgren, Johanna Söderström, Jonas Tallberg and Anders Westholm, who read and commented on the entire manuscript. Thanks also to Jessica Giandomenico for valuable practical advice. Finally, discussions in the department's lunchroom have been a source of both energy and good advice. In addition to the people mentioned above, Per Adman, Shirin Ahlbäck Öberg, Christina Bergqvist, Hans Blomqvist, Carina Gunnarsson, Jenny Jansson, Viviana Stechina and PerOla Öberg have contributed to the good atmosphere that is always found there.

I would like to thank Ron Holzhaecker for commenting on several versions of Article I, for organizing the ERC-CONNEX graduate-student network, and for putting together a dynamic mix of young and senior researchers. Tobias Auberger, Caspar van den Berg, Patrick Bijmans, Tannelie Blom, Laszlo Bruszt, Cathrine de Vries, Gary Marks, Jacques Thomassen, Frans

van Waarden, Maarten P. Vink and other participants in the ERC-CONNEX network provided me with helpful comments on various drafts.

Peter Mayers proofread the entire manuscript with rigor and care, and helped touch up the text by removing Swedo-English formulations and sparing the reader various tangles and ambiguities.

Financial support was provided by the Swedish Network for European Studies in Political Science, the Borbos E. Hansson Foundation and the ECPR Mobility Fund. This support enabled me to participate in the Oslo Summer School in Comparative Social Science Studies, and in the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis.

I would also like to thank the many people with whom I have worked parallel to my toils on this thesis – that is, in my role as coordinator of the Swedish Network for European Studies in Political Science, and as the editorial secretary of its annual yearbook, *Europaperspektiv*. My predecessor, Jörgen Ödalen, taught me the job with all its varied tasks. Editorial work in the company of Thomas Persson, Lars Oxelheim, Antonina Bakardjieva Engelbrekt and Ulf Bernitz was highly stimulating, and involved many interesting discussions about current developments in European affairs. I would like as well to express my gratitude to our publisher, Torbjörn Santérus, and to our moderator, Cecilia Garne. Their professionalism, warmth and sense of humor made the work enjoyable even in the face of tough deadlines. Åsa Viksten Strömbom's expertise was invaluable to me when organizing the SNES annual conference in Uppsala in 2011. Finally, Åsa Constanda, Annika Kollstedt, Jasmine Akter, Boel Kiregård, Per Åsberg, and Göran Wiman have helped me with a multitude of things, from administrative and economic matters to external communications.

Finally, I must thank my friends and family for all the good times, and for putting up with me during periods of hard work. Linn, fellow Telemark skier and good friend with whom I've travelled near and far, her good-spirited husband Fredrik, and their kids Anja, Carl and Axel. Emma and Pelle – fellow travellers, music lovers and master vegetarian chefs – and their kids Stella, Alba and Blanka. Madeleine, Åsa, Emilie and Greger, whose good friendship goes way back. My extended family: Åsa and Stefan, the bright and philosophical Leia, little Billie, Karen, Steen and the artistic Ida, who all shared great moments with me. My brother Manne, whose wisdom on life inspires me. Uffe, my fabulous canine friend. My parents Gun-Britt and Arne, who are always there for me, and whose love and care for their grandchildren knows no bounds. And closest to me: Kåre, Karla and Hanne. You light up my life with music and dance, great food, curious questions, interesting thoughts, and a sense of justice and fairness that gives hope for the future.

*Uppsala, November 2015*

# List of Articles

This thesis is based on the following articles, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I Mårtensson, M. 2007. “Mixed Representation and Legitimacy in the European Union.” *Journal of European Integration* 29(3): 285–302.\*
- II Mårtensson, M. 2016. “Linkage in the EU’s Mixed System of Representation: Bottom-Up or Top-Down?” Working Paper, Department of Government, Uppsala University.
- III Mårtensson, M. 2016. “How are the EU’s Three Channels of Representation Coordinated? Evidence from a Crucial Case.” Working Paper, Department of Government, Uppsala University.

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# Introduction: A Multi-Channel Approach to Representation in the European Union

Elections, parties and parliaments have long been seen as irreplaceable instruments of representation in polities that aspire to be democratic. However, in the case of politics in the European Union (EU), this standard view faces an extraordinary challenge. European laws now extend into policy areas ranging from market integration and the euro to employment and immigration. Referendums, mass surveys and protests in the streets all indicate that citizens have strong and well-structured preferences on European integration (Imig 2004, 232; Mair 2007; Marks and Hooghe 2008; Kriesi 2008).

Yet, turnout in elections to the European Parliament (EP) has dwindled, from 62% in 1979 to an all-time low of 42.6% in 2014. Moreover, these elections seem to have retained their ‘second-order’ status – being fought out by national parties on the basis of national rather than European issues. Most elections at the national level, too, fail to engage citizens on EU matters. Half a century after its inception, the EU was famously characterized as a ‘sleeping giant’ in the national political arena (van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). A double ‘electoral *disconnection*’ (Hix 2005) thus appears to plague EU politics. However, alternative forms of representation seem to thrive at the European level. The EP and the Council of Ministers coexist with a myriad of new forms of governance run by bureaucrats, experts and organized interests.

The EU is the most far-reaching attempt yet undertaken to institutionalize democratic policy-making beyond the nation-state. The central question posed in this dissertation is to what extent, and in what ways, various channels of representation contribute towards the realization of this aim. I take stock of current research on the EU’s system of representation, and seek to expand its agenda so that this matter can be properly addressed. I start from two basic assumptions conspicuously absent from most prior work in the field. The first is that debates about political representation in the EU system restate universal dilemmas of representative democracy that have been debated for centuries. I therefore begin with a look at some of the classic debates, and make a serious attempt to bring their main lessons into the debate on representation in the EU. My second assumption is that all modern forms of government are rooted in multiple forms of representation (cf. Schmitter 1996). Admittedly, the struggle to strike an appropriate balance between

member-state interests and popular representation takes a distinctive shape in the case of the EU, which started out as an international alliance among established democracies. The basic problem here, however – of how the powers of the central government and of representative assemblies are to be balanced against those of sub-state territories and organized interests – remains a universal dilemma of representative democracy.

Until now, empirical research into representation in the EU system has been carried out on the basis of three rival approaches. According to the first, the EP is the key site of representation in the EU system. Most research using this approach therefore focuses on European elections and on lines of conflict and cooperation within the EP (e.g., Wessels and Katz 1999; Schmitt and Thomassen 1999; 2000; Steunenberg and Thomassen 2002; Hix and Føllesdal 2006; Hix 2008). A second approach views the EU ‘from home.’ It suggests that we should study the EU as the “next step” of democratic delegation from national electorates to policy-makers (Bergman 2000b; see also e.g., Andeweg 2000; Damgaard 2000; Lupia 2000; Raunio 2000; Blomgren 2003; Bergman and Blomgren 2005; Larue 2006). A third approach assumes that both national and European elections will remain ineffectual instruments of representation in EU politics. It suggests it is now time to rethink the EU’s representation system more thoroughly, and to be prepared to complement elections with alternative mechanisms of representation – or indeed even to substitute the latter for the former (e.g., Heritier 1999; Schmitter 2000; Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008; Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; Kohler-Koch 2010).

My main argument in this introduction will be that the rival assumptions made by the three approaches above are far too important not to be subjected to systematic empirical scrutiny. And taking on this task requires, in turn, a *multi-channel approach* to political representation. By this, I mean a research design that incorporates several forms of representation into a unified evaluative framework. We need to probe more deeply into the empirical realities of political representation in EU politics before recommending a specific course of action. The only reliable way of assessing contradictory claims about the *relative* democratic advantages of different forms of representation in a given empirical context is to compare the way they actually work. Where, why, to what extent and according to which criteria is a given form of representation outperformed by its alternatives? Multi-channel comparisons offer an important method for connecting key findings – theoretical as well as empirical – from several different strands of research, each of which has dealt with a single form of representation in isolation.

Accordingly, the three articles contained here examine three principal channels of representation within the EU: electoral representation in the EP; governmental representation in the preparatory bodies of the Council of Ministers; and representation through organized interests which are active at EU level. The first article explores the balance of power that has emerged

between these three forms of representation at EU level, and how the current balance is likely to impact on the Union's *legitimacy*. The second article examines how the *linkage* between EU-level representatives and their domestic principals – a key indicator of democratic quality – varies from one channel of representation to another. Finally, the third article asks what role different forms of representation play in *coordinating* European decisions, under the assumption that a role as key coordinator entails greater leverage over policy.

None of these central questions can be adequately addressed if each type of representation is studied in isolation. Thus, the empirical studies in the articles which follow reinforce the case made here for a multi-channel approach to studying representation in the EU system. They demonstrate how such an approach allows us to connect existing knowledge from several strands of empirical research (e.g., on new forms of governance, on the EP, or on the workings of the Council). What stands to be gained is a fuller picture of the EU's system of representation and a better understanding of how actors in its various channels interact.

This introduction proceeds as follows. The first section lays out the theoretical groundwork of the dissertation. It defines three vital functions that we commonly expect representation to serve in modern democracies: *linkage*, *coordination* and *legitimization*. To sort out what we know about their realization in the context of EU politics, the following section reviews prior research on the Union's main channels of representation. Having summarized a number of contradictions between the dominant approaches found in this research, I turn to the multi-channel approach taken here, and explain how it can help to move the field forward. Finally, I describe the articles to follow and call attention to the dissertation's main methodological contribution, which is to exploit the tools of social network analysis to assess representational relations in a finer-grained and more contextualized way than has been done hitherto. The conclusion summarizes the key results, and discusses what the study of multi-channel representation in the context of the EU can add to our general understanding of the phenomenon of political representation.

## The Democratic Value of Political Representation

As Philippe Schmitter (1996, 134) observed, all modern forms of government are rooted in multiple forms of representation. A variety of actors – among them parties, associations and territorial units – claim to 're-present' different constituencies, and they demand participation in the policy process on the latter's behalf. One of the basic and universal issues in modern politics therefore concerns what weight such claims should have relative to one another. Much in the basic structure of a polity (federal, unitary, pluralist,

corporative, etc.) actually hinges on such choices. The struggle to find appropriate trade-offs between different channels of representation undeniably takes a distinctive shape in the EU system, which started out as an international alliance among established democracies. Yet, my discussion will take its starting point in debates that concern representative systems more generally. I will focus on a few central functions that we expect representation to serve in modern democracies: linkage, coordination and legitimization. The idea behind this approach is to put some central problems of multi-channel political representation in perspective – before considering their specific nature in the EU system.

We should note, first of all, that some scholars see a fundamental tension between democracy and representation (see, e.g., Manin 1997; Pitkin 2004). This view has its merits. The practice of representation, with its origins in medieval times, began not as a democratic procedure but as a means for the king to summon knights and burgesses to gain their assent to taxes, and as a way to ensure the exchange of information between local communities and the royal court (Pitkin 1972, 244). In the wake of the English, American and French revolutions, this feudal practice was taken up and modified by the founding fathers of the first representative governments. Key figures in this process, such as James Madison in the US and Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès in France, considered representative government to be a form of government distinct from – and far preferable to – direct democracy (Manin 1997, 1–5).

Madison, the chief architect of the American constitution, argued that an important beneficial effect of delegating government “to a small number of citizens elected by the rest” would be to “refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations” (Madison et al. 1987, 126). In other words, Madison expected elected representatives to retain a degree of independence from the citizenry at large. This would enable them to temper and to refine the latter’s demands, rather than simply acceding to them and carrying them out.

In our own day, representative government is rarely championed in such overtly elitist terms. Nor is it often defended as something radically different from, and better than, direct democracy. The most widespread contemporary understanding appears to be that representative government is an indirect version of democracy – popular self-rule *by way of* elected representatives (cf. Manin 1997, 5). Representation is seen as an invention that makes democracy practicable in larger states (cf. Dahl 1989, 29). In the words of Pettit (2009, 61), the direct and indirect methods are just “rival proposals” for implementing the same democratic ideal: that of “giving *kratos* to the *demos*, power to the people.”

However, the crucial distinction between the two forms of government should not be glossed over. Citizens in representative democracies have

permanently set aside the option to govern themselves directly (cf. Madison et al. 1987, 373; Manin 1997, 2). A key question then becomes to what extent they can and should control their political representatives. This is a question that has no easy answer. Representatives have interests and agendas of their own, and citizens can only monitor their actions at a cost (Manin et al. 1999b, 29). Moreover, monitoring may be counterproductive if taken too far. If they are to manage many of the tasks for which they are elected, representatives must have some independent room for maneuver.

As Pitkin observes (1972, 163), “leadership, emergency action, action on issues of which the people know nothing are among the important realities of representation. They are not deviations from true representation, but its very essence.” It follows that representative rule is a form of government that institutionalizes a tension between popular influence ‘from below’ and rule by representatives ‘from above’ (cf. Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996; see also Eulau et al. 1959; Pitkin 1972; Manin 1997).

With this inescapable tension in mind, let us return to the expectations that nevertheless are placed on representation from a democratic viewpoint. The first and most important of these is the expectation that representatives will be responsive to the interests of those they represent (Pitkin 1972, 209–10; see also Dahl 1971, 1; Powell 2004, 273). Following Lawson (1980, 13–14), I will refer to this quality as *linkage*. Linkage requires a correspondence between the interests of the represented and the actions taken by their representatives. Such a correspondence can arise in a number of ways. Representatives may anticipate – or actively shape – the preferences of the represented ‘from above.’ Alternatively, actions taken by the representatives may be driven by demands voiced by the represented ‘from below’ (cf. Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996, 4–5; see also Eulau 1967, 51).

A second expectation is that representative institutions will *coordinate* the policy process in a fair manner. Representation is relied on to make democracy workable in large-scale political systems, without sacrificing the core principle of political equality among all citizens (cf. Dahl 1989, chs. 15 and 20).

Third and finally, representation is counted on to generate *legitimacy*: the conviction that political power is exercised on rightful grounds. Legitimacy is absolutely vital for democracy; a political system that lacks this quality cannot count on voluntary compliance with its decisions (cf. Beetham 1991; Beetham and Lord 1998; Scharpf 2007, 7).

The following three subsections will consider key scholarly arguments about the ways in which representation is of democratic value. The discussions on coordination and legitimacy, in particular, should start to illustrate the advantages of multi-channel thinking about political representation. They will make clear that central arguments about representation and democracy apply, in a variable manner, to the different forms of political representation. Later on, I shall cite the general lessons learned below to summarize advanc-

es and remaining gaps in our current understanding of representation in the EU system.

## Linkage

Modern democracies rely critically on representation as a means to connect citizens to those who govern on their behalf.<sup>1</sup> Works in political science often use the term *linkage* to denote a purposeful and systematic connection between the views or interests of citizens and the policies pursued by government leaders (for overviews, see Lawson 1980, 5–14; Kitschelt 2000).<sup>2</sup> A number of seminal empirical studies of representation have measured the quality of dyadic linkage between individual representatives and their constituencies (e.g., Miller and Stokes 1963; Converse and Pierce 1986; Hurley and Hill 2003).<sup>3</sup> Other central works have focused on the quality of collective linkage between party groups in parliament and their corresponding groups of voters (e.g., Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996; Schmitt and Thomassen 2000). Linkage has also been studied at the whole-system level, the object being to ascertain the degree to which a congruence of opinion obtains between the citizenry at large and the political leadership as a whole (e.g., Converse and Pierce 1986; Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996; Powell 2000). The key normative issue here is what must characterize the vertical connection between representatives and those they represent.

A particularly controversial normative question in connection with linkage is whether it should be generated ‘from above’ or ‘from below’ (cf. Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996, ch. 1; see also Lawson 1980, ch.1; Merkl 2005, 5). When representatives initiate policies that citizens then learn about and support, some amount of linkage is established from above. Alternatively, when it is the citizens who formulate and advocate certain policy proposals, and their representatives who subsequently endorse and act upon them, some amount of linkage has been established from below. These two basic types of linkage reflect the opposing sides of a famous normative debate in representation theory, known as the mandate/independence controversy (see Pitkin 1972, ch.7).

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<sup>1</sup> Several complementary mechanisms may enhance this connection (for example the mass media, mass opinion surveys, referenda and public protests), but my discussion will be limited to views on the representational relation itself.

<sup>2</sup> As Manin et al. (1999a, 4) note, theorists use quite different terms to refer to this quality. Dahl, for example, writes of ‘responsiveness,’ Riker of ‘responsibility’ and Downs of ‘reliability.’

<sup>3</sup> One notable example is the influential study by Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes (1963) on the workings of representation in the U.S. Congress. Miller and Stokes set out to explore the quality of the dyadic link between constituents and their representatives, basing their assessment on four measures (and the correlations between them): the constituents’ policy preferences; the representative’s perception of his/her constituents’ preferences; the representative’s own opinion; and the representative’s voting record.

Those on the ‘mandate side’ in this controversy argue that representatives’ independence must be minimized, and their role limited to that of restating – in as undistorted a manner as possible – the policy preferences of those they represent. The ‘independence side,’ in contrast, argues that the practice of representation has value in itself. One of its central merits, this side contends, is that it creates a sound division of labor in society. Representation isolates political decision-making to some degree from the twists and turns of public opinion, making it more likely to reflect the long-term interests of society. In the extreme version of the independence view, representatives are seen as experts with almost unlimited personal leverage over public policy. In the extreme version of the mandate view, by contrast, the role of representatives is to act as powerless messengers for those they represent (Pitkin 1972, ch. 7)

An additional aspect of this classic controversy lies in the conflicting concepts of *interest* that it involves (Pitkin 1972, 156–62). Extreme versions of the independence view, such as that famously articulated by Edmund Burke,<sup>4</sup> are built on the idea that there are *objective* interests in society; and that such interests can be discovered and represented without involving the citizens. The pure mandate view, in contrast, is based on the notion that interests are personal and *subjective*. Any given interest is always best articulated by the individual who holds it. In Pitkin’s words, “people, not interests, are reflected in politics” (Pitkin 1972, 174–189).

The widely accepted account of political representation advanced by Hanna F. Pitkin (1972) stakes out a common ground between the two normative poles of the mandate/independence controversy, recognizing that each has important merits. Pitkin’s portrayal was also groundbreaking in the sense that it moved beyond the previously dominant ‘formalistic’ view, according to which representation can be reduced to the formal acts that initiate and terminate it: i.e., authorization and accountability. Her account is ‘substantive’: it concerns the ongoing *activity* of representation, and what makes it meaningful and effective (1972, 12).

Pitkin found the pure mandate view to be problematic from a liberal standpoint, since it deprives representatives of the possibility of following their own conscience. It forces them to follow the instructions of the represented mechanically. But the pure independence view is unsatisfactory too, for it deprives the represented of all means of controlling their representa-

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<sup>4</sup> The following famous passage from Burke’s speech to the electors of Bristol in 1774 is often cited to illustrate his stance: “Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole—where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament” (as quoted in Pitkin 1972, 171).

tives beyond the act of authorization (e.g., election or appointment). Pitkin's solution was to define representation as an ongoing relationship that stays within boundaries which enable each of the two extremes to be avoided:

...representing here means acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner *responsive* to them. The representative must act *independently*; his actions must involve discretion and judgment; he must be the one who acts. The represented must also be (conceived as) *capable* of independent action and judgment, not merely being taken care of... The representative must act in such a way that there is no conflict, or if it occurs an *explanation* is called for. He must not find himself persistently at odds with the wishes of the represented without good reasons in terms of their interest, without a good explanation of why their wishes are not in accord with their interests (Pitkin 1972, 209).

On this understanding, representation works through a delicate balancing act, which serves to maintain the link between representatives and those they represent. The former must be independent in their judgment and actions, while staying responsive to the interests of the latter.

As we shall see, current academic debates about the various channels of representation in the EU restate the classic dividing lines regarding the value of linkage. There is the general question, inherited from the mandate/independence controversy, of whether linkage should primarily operate from above (through political leadership at the EU level), or from below (through popular influence and initiative). And there is the question of what weight 'subjective' citizen interests should be given as against 'objective' European interests, as identified by various political representatives in their visions of the common good.

## Coordination

As observed by Samuel Beer (1998, 25, quoted in Lijphart 1999, 258), "representative government must not only represent, it must also govern." Although much of the classic debate about representation centers on the issue of linkage, this quality is not judged to be enough to render representation democratic. For representation to be democratic, it must also be institutionalized in such a way that representatives remain *systematically and reliably* responsive to citizens while governing (cf. Powell 2004, 273–4). Accordingly, another great debate about political representation concerns its organizational aspect. How should the process of representation be organized so as to keep political representatives responsive to the interests of citizens over the long run?

Beer's words draw attention to the fact that political representation is practiced at two basic levels: First, at the individual level, where the key concern is the link between each representative and his or her constituency

(where the constituency generally only contains a segment of the population, such as a specific electoral district, members of a given group or political party, etc.). And second, representation is practiced at the societal level, where representatives must cooperate to produce a coherent body of laws that apply to society as a whole (cf. Pettit and Pettit 2009, 82). It is only at the system-wide level that political representatives – collected from all parts of society – may act together as “the representative and effective agent of the people,” or put differently, as “the political organization of the people” (Rawls 1999, 38 and 26 respectively, quoted in Pettit 2009, 64). It follows that democracy requires some amount of system-level coordination of the policy processes that political representatives are involved in.

But what degree of coordination is desirable, and how is it best achieved? A key debate on this theme has played out between advocates of pure party-electoral democracy and those who claim that democracy requires alternative channels of representation in addition to elections. This longstanding debate raises important questions about multi-channel representation. There is a broad consensus that free and fair elections are representative democracy’s most central institution – and its most irreplaceable coordination device (see, e.g., Pitkin 1972, 234–5; Manin 1997, 6–7; Powell 2004, 274). The disagreement rather concerns whether elections alone suffice as an institutional guarantee that citizens’ preferences will leave a mark on the policies that representatives negotiate and adopt. Is this goal better achieved in a representative system centered entirely on party-electoral politics, or in one where alternative channels of representation are found alongside it?

Let us first take a look at the normative model of representation that embodies most purely the idea of elections and political parties as strong and sufficient means of coordination in the system of representation. According to the influential thesis of *the responsible party* (APSA 1950), elections and political parties are forceful coordinating devices that promise to make the process of representation consistent and workable at both individual and societal levels. This model cuts across the competing ideals of the mandate/independence debate and brings the aspect of coordination to the fore. It is based on three key requirements: First, there must be two major political parties that compete intensely and that present contrasting policy programs to the voters. Second, voters must be able to identify and to vote for the party that suits their preferences best. Third, the parties must act cohesively in the legislature to promote their respective policy programs (APSA 1950; see also Converse and Pierce 1986, 499).

These elements are presumed to produce a tight, majoritarian system of representation. The party in government is directly mandated by a majority of the voters to carry out its program. Concentrating power in the hands of one cohesive winning party clarifies the locus of political responsibility and enhances electoral accountability. Thus, the doctrine of the responsible party introduces the intervening mechanism of competitive and cohesive political

parties, the explicit purpose of which is to enable citizens to control their representatives (Converse and Pierce 1986, 499–501).

The responsible party model was intended to articulate the mandate pole of the classic controversy: to demonstrate how systematic linkage from below between citizens and representatives can be ensured (Converse and Pierce 1986, 499). The responsibility of parties is to organize political conflict and to increase its intensity and visibility, thereby engaging citizens (Adman 1975, xxv). However, critics have argued that the two-party model is too reductive, and more likely to work *against* the formation of electoral mandates rooted in citizens' actual preferences. In the words of John A. Aldrich (1995, 11), "it is not obvious that the public would find its views as adequately articulated by exactly two opinions, no matter how clear and distinct." Similarly, Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996, 4) perceive the model as one in which "parties (i.e. party leaders) formulate programs and policies and try to sell them to voters at election time." In other words, the model has been seen as elitist and 'run from above.'

Other visions of representative democracy count on multiple channels of representation to ensure systematic linkage between citizens and their representatives. Pluralism, corporative democracy and consensus democracy are prominent examples of such a model. In the classic *pluralist* vision of representative democracy, active interest groups (rather than political parties) function as the main institutional safeguard of systematic linkage (cf. Held 2006, 158–65). The necessary degree of coordination among groups occurs spontaneously, and in a fully decentralized manner. To advance their interests, citizens join a large variety of groups which in turn form competing coalitions, and the outcome of the struggles among these groups determines the bulk of public policy. Crucially, competition and diversity ensure that no specific group – large or small – is able to prevail over other ones permanently. The role of elections is to "express the preferences of various competitive groups, rather than the wishes of a firm majority" (Held 2006, 163). Defined this way, the aim of representative democracy is government by multiple minorities – not majority rule (see also Dahl 2006 [1956], 133).

*Corporative democracy* takes another tack. Its proponents argue that organized interests should be systematically involved in the formulation and/or implementation of public policy, together with the state (e.g., Cohen and Rogers 1995; Schmitter 1995). Unlike pluralism, interest-group corporatism counts on the state to take active part in negotiations among groups, and to moderate their demands with a view to the public interest (Hermansson 1993, 37; see also Lijphart 1999, 16). In further contrast to pluralism, corporatism requires a "few, large and strong" interest groups to negotiate with the state in each policy sector, rather than a multitude of organizations that counterbalance one another (Lijphart 1999, 16). In the corporative model, then, interest groups influence policy in a more coordinated (but not necessarily more effectual) manner than in the pluralist model. Corporative arrange-

ments are thought by their advocates to improve systematic linkage, notably by offering representation to intense interests that for various reasons are excluded from consideration in elections (see, e.g., Cohen and Rogers 1995, 43; Schmitter 1995).

A third influential model, *consensus democracy*, relies on multiple channels of representation (Lijphart 1999). Its core idea is power-sharing, as opposed to majority rule. The aim here – to “share, disperse and restrain power” (Lijphart 1999, 34) – is reflected in the recommendations made by proponents of this model for the design of representative institutions. The prototypical consensus democracy involves institutionalized representation of divergent territorial interests (through decentralization and a federal chamber) and organized interests (through corporative arrangements). In the electoral channel, advocates of this model rely on proportional representation to disperse power among multiple political parties (Lijphart 1999, ch. 3). Together with other power-sharing devices, these features are expected to produce a better correspondence between citizen and elite views than majoritarian democracy does (Lijphart 1999, 278–9 and 287–88).

As we saw above, Beer has pointed out that the first responsibility of representatives is to maintain strong links with those they represent. The second is to coordinate their activities with those of other representatives and to enact binding laws. In quite different ways, then, the responsible party model and its multi-channel alternatives (pluralism, corporatism and consensus democracy) promise to reduce the potential conflict between the two central responsibilities that political representatives bear.

From an empirical point of view, political systems across the world vary greatly with regard to the relative emphasis they place on parties, territorial units and organized interests as bases for democratic representation (e.g., Lijphart 1999; see also Daalder 1966; Bartolini 2005, 89–103 and 248–51). In addition to such variations across space, moreover, the importance of elections and parties relative to that of other bases for representation has varied across time.

Classic works on nation-building in Western democracies in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries showed how the role of political parties changed, from one of articulating concerns of specific territories or of narrow political elites to one of coordinating nationwide processes of electoral representation (e.g., Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 3–6; Schattschneider 1975, ch. 5; see also Caramani, 2004). Gradually, national party organizations reached down from society’s elites to the mass of ordinary people. In ever wider circles, they connected the new political center to local communities. In competition or cooperation with representatives of local communities and organized interests, party representatives and their organizations took the lead and “expanded in search of support all over national territories” (Caramani 2004, 293).

A significant insight from the extensive literature on these developments in national politics is that the extent to which party-based representation could assert itself at the new level of government, and absorb or overshadow traditional cleavages based on organized interests or territorial identities, varied greatly from one nation-state to another. Some states, for example, remained federalized or pillarized.

What path is the EU following in this regard? Is its process of representation primarily driven by territorial identities, by EU-wide party competition or by organized interests? As we shall see, the leading approaches to the study of EU politics turn up divergent empirical findings about where we stand, and conflicting normative recommendations as to which road should be taken. In one influential view, member-state governments – indirectly mandated by their respective national electorates – are and should remain the key instruments of representation and coordination in the EU system (e.g., Moravcsik 2008). A second and third paradigm, in contrast, attribute this role to political parties and European elections (e.g., Hix 2008), or to governance networks and organized interests (e.g., Kohler-Koch 2010). I will return to these three different views below.

## Legitimacy

As Hayward (2009, 111) notes, there is no necessary link between representation and legitimacy. Practices of political representation do not have to be democratic, as can be seen from their historical origins in feudal society and from many of their manifestations in contemporary political life. Nor does representation necessarily work to enhance popular support for a given political regime. As the mandate/independence controversy suggests, representatives may make decisions that conflict with popular views, and in the process drastically reduce their own popularity. Nevertheless, representation is commonly considered to lie at the heart of modern democracy. Contemporary democracies, with their great numbers of citizens, are thought to be unworkable without representation. In the words of Dahl, combining representation with democracy means that “popular government need no longer be confined to small states but ... [can] be extended almost indefinitely to vast numbers of persons” (Dahl 1989, 30).

Legitimacy is a concept with many meanings, but two broad understandings of the term play a central role in discussions of representation and democracy. The first is the notion that a representative regime is legitimate to the extent that it meets certain absolute criteria for democracy. I will refer to this type of legitimacy as *formal legitimacy* (Weiler 1991, 2466–74; see also Karlsson 2001, 107–8). Formal criteria for assessing legitimacy may be drawn from different models of democracy. For each given regime, the outcome is likely to vary according to which model of democracy one chooses as a baseline for evaluation (see, e.g., Hayward 2009 on the contrasting de-

mands placed on representation in aggregative and deliberative models of democracy).

A second and contrasting understanding is that a representative regime is legitimate to the extent it is perceived as rightful by its citizens. Mass surveys provide one possible method for measuring legitimacy in this sense – i.e., in terms of the popular support enjoyed by a given regime. This level of popular support is then often compared with that enjoyed by other regimes, yielding a relative measure of legitimacy. I will refer to this type of legitimacy as *social legitimacy* (Weiler 1991, 2466–74; see also Karlsson 2001, 107–8). Using a different analytical framework, Lord and Beetham (2001, 444) identify what I shall take to be two central sources of social legitimacy for a modern democracy: “its *performance* in meeting the needs and values of citizens”; and the sense of shared *identity* found among its citizens, “without which the legitimacy of the unit will be questioned, however impeccable its procedures” (emphasis added).

Both kinds of legitimacy considered here – formal and social – are worth considering more closely from a multi-channel perspective. Do different channels of representation make distinct contributions to legitimacy? Or are their contributions quite similar – indeed, perhaps substitutable for one another?

Advocates of pure party-electoral representation insist that the vote is the most effective expression of political equality and therefore the best way to achieve legitimacy. They consider the key formal criterion for legitimacy to be ‘one person, one vote,’ and they view alternative channels of representation mainly as distortions from this ideal. In particular, they see organized interests as serving small and selective constituencies, and thus as incapable of reflecting more general societal interests (see, e.g., Schattschneider 1975, 30–36). And indeed, empirical research appears to confirm that the vote, although far from achieving perfect political equality, is the form of representation which best reflects the views of the general public (see, e.g., Verba et al. 1995, ch. 7; Lijphart 2008, ch. 15).

As noted above, however, the case for pure party-electoral representation has not gone unchallenged. Advocates of corporative democracy, for example, argue that organized interests can make a positive contribution to legitimacy; that they may redress rather than reinforce political inequalities, if their influence is properly regulated (Cohen and Rogers 1995; Schmitter 2000). Some models of democracy involving organized interests even suggest that such a capacity for redress could evolve from below, without state intervention (see, e.g., Hirst 1995). Representation via organized interests is also defended as legitimate on the grounds that it strengthens the performance of democracy, in terms of meeting citizens’ needs. Organized interests are thought to bring expertise into the policy process, thereby improving the quality of decisions and facilitating their implementation (see, e.g., Cohen and Rogers 1995, 42–46). According to this last view, political

parties and organized interests are complementary rather than competing channels of representation.

Arguments in favor of territorial representation follow a dual track when highlighting its contributions to legitimacy. When territorial sub-units are given representation within a democracy, this is generally justified with reference to their distinct interests and their associated demands for self-government (Dahl 1989, 197–209; Russel 2001). In the terms set out above, territorial representation is expected to generate social legitimacy by recognizing the distinct *identities* of the sub-units alongside their search for a shared identity (cf. Pescatore 1982, as cited in Weiler 2001, 54). A second argument in favor of territorial representation is that it enhances policy *performance* (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 27–28; Heller 2007, 245–47).

An historical example illustrating both of these arguments for territorial representation is the ‘great compromise’ reached at the American Constitutional Convention in 1787, whereby it was agreed that the people would be represented in the House on the basis of population, while the states would be represented equally in the Senate, irrespective of population size. In the *Federalist Papers*, Madison wrote that:

The equality of representation in the senate is ... the result of compromise between the opposite pretensions of the large and the small States ... If indeed it be right that among a people thoroughly incorporated into one nation, every district ought to have a *proportional* share in the government; and that among independent and sovereign states bound together by a simple league, the parties however unequal in size, ought to have an *equal* share in the common councils, it does not appear to be without some reason, that in a compound republic, partaking both of the national and the federal character, the government ought to be founded on a mixture of the principles of proportional and equal representation (Madison et al. 1987, 365).

Madison’s argument was that the states had interests distinct from those of the people at large, and so deserved representation in their own right (cf. Tsebelis and Money 1997, 28). He also expected territorial representation to enhance the performance of the representation system, in two ways. On the one hand, the Senate would function as an “additional impediment against ... improper acts of legislation”; on the other, it would enhance political stability by acting as a countervailing force to sudden shifts in the preferences of the House (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 27–29).

In sum, arguments regarding the legitimizing role of representation tend to differ, depending on which form of representation is considered. Different forms of representation are thought to legitimize democracy in different ways.

Taken together, the central debates on linkage, coordination and legitimacy reviewed above illustrate the basic rationale for a multi-channel approach to political representation. They suggest that a systematic exploration of

similarities and differences between the main forms of representation can pave the way for a finer-grained understanding of what representation contributes to democracy and its legitimization. Starting from such a multi-channel perspective, I will now move on to summarize the current state of research regarding representation in the EU system. As we shall see, the distinctiveness of the EU's system of representation has spurred much valuable empirical research, as well as intense scholarly debate about representation. These have often centered on the democratic merits and drawbacks of different channels of representation – what we might call the dilemmas of multi-channel representation.

## Prior Approaches to Political Representation in the EU

Prior research on representation in the EU system is extensive. The key contributions are so varied in terms of their theoretical motivations and empirical foci that an exhaustive overview necessarily falls outside the scope of this introduction. I will attempt here just to provide a broad overview of three central approaches that deal with aspects of representation in the EU system. As we shall see, the differences between these approaches are substantial, and a number of important research gaps result from the general lack of communication between them.

A first collection of empirical works on EU-level representation make up what I will refer to here as the *electoral approach*. Its general focus is on the capacity of the European Parliament to produce linkage and coordination through European elections and through European and national political parties. The second line of research to be considered contrasts sharply with the electoral approach, but nonetheless raises crucial questions about the EU's system of representation. This is the *governance approach*, which focuses primarily on organized interests as possible agents of linkage and coordination in the EU system. A third strand of research – the *delegation-and-accountability approach* – views the EU 'from home,' and proposes to study it as the 'next step' of democratic delegation from national electorates to policy-makers.

It must be admitted at the outset that each of the approaches identified here contains a large and diverse collection of research. In light of this, the central aim of this overview is to set out the essential shared elements within each perspective. I will rely on a diversity of sources in each case, rather than any single scholar's writings. The brief summary following my overview leaves out most of the empirical findings reported. Its purpose is to identify central similarities and differences between the three approaches in how they view linkage, coordination and legitimacy as problems of representation in the EU system.

## The Electoral Approach: The European Parliament as the Default Site for Political Representation

Research on the European Parliament (EP), on European elections and on the role of political parties as agents of representation in EU politics has made remarkable progress over the last decade and a half. This is due in much to a body of research which I shall call the *electoral approach*. Drawing on the comparative method and on prior research on legislatures and elections at the national level, this line of work has produced a vast array of empirical studies on the electoral channel of representation within the EU. It takes a parliament-centered perspective on representation, regarding the EP as the key institution – more or less by default – for participation and representation at the EU level (Wessels and Katz 1999, 6; see also, e.g., Schmitt and Thomassen 1999; 2000; Steunenberg and Thomassen 2002; Hix et al. 2007). In line with this, scholars who take this approach pay close attention to the key actors within the EP: i.e., the EP party groups and the national party delegations that cooperate within them. Such researchers see European elections as the key avenue for representation in the EU system (see, e.g., Hix and Lord 1997; Lord 2006; Hix 2008).<sup>5</sup>

Parliaments are generally expected to perform three main functions: representing citizens, passing legislation and overseeing the executive (Steunenberg and Thomassen 2002, 9). The electoral approach scrutinizes the EP from each of these three perspectives. One general conclusion it reaches is that, whereas the EP's powers as co-legislator with the Council have grown remarkably, and while its ability to oversee the operations of the Union's executive organs (particularly the Commission) has increased too, its capacity to represent citizens' interests in the supranational policy process is not much greater than it was (see, e.g., Hix et al. 2007, 26–9). However, the EU system has a second channel for electoral representation. Voting on EU issues in domestic elections could give citizens an opportunity to exert indirect control over EU policy through their national parliaments and governments. The national governments, in turn, reach into the Council of Ministers and the European Council.

In my brief review here, therefore, I focus on two sets of empirical findings generated by the electoral approach. One concerns the EP's representation function as it operates through European elections. The other relates to domestic elections as a complementary route to representation on EU issues.

A particularly troubling development regarding the first function has been the low and falling turnout in EP elections (from 62% in 1979 to 43 % in

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<sup>5</sup> A limited number of recent studies have extended this party-oriented research agenda beyond the EP, and tried to establish the extent to which parties structure cooperation in the Council or the Commission (see the overview in Hix 2008). All in all, the approach discussed here is perhaps just as 'party-oriented' as it is 'electoral' in its focus. It contrasts on both points with the alternative approaches reviewed.

2009). Empirical research into the underlying reasons for this has suggested that European elections function as “second-order national” elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Marsh and Franklin 1996; Schmitt 2005; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). They are ‘national’ in the sense that they are mainly fought out by national parties on national rather than European political issues. This implies that voters’ views on EU issues have little impact on their voting choice in European elections. Such elections are also ‘second-order’ in relation to national general elections: voters have much less at stake in them, since they cannot result in a change of government. The low salience of EU politics also appears to affect the quality of representational links between MEPs and voters between elections. National parties leave MEPs relatively unsupervised in their legislative work, thus neglecting their own role as intermediaries between MEPs and voters (Raunio 2000, 218; see also Hix and Lord 1997, 129–30). There is little research on relations between MEPs and their national parties, but a pioneering study by Raunio (2000, 221) suggested that national parties “pay attention to the EP mainly when nationally important matters enter the legislative agenda. Even on such issues it is still better to speak of consultation rather than control.”

Where the complementary route to representation offered by domestic elections is concerned, the findings are equally troubling. The general view among scholars has long been that the impact of EU politics on domestic party systems is very limited (see, e.g., Mair 2000; van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). Large mainstream parties rarely fight out general elections over EU issues. As far as EU politics goes, then, national elections mostly leave voter preferences unrepresented. This is somewhat surprising, given that a host of studies have found that citizens hold meaningful and structured preferences on EU issues (e.g., Hix and Lord 1997; Schmitt and Thomassen 2000; Gabel and Anderson 2004; van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). But change may be under way: a number of recent studies suggest that EU issue voting has become more common in national elections, at least in some countries and for some parties (e.g., Evans 2002; Tillman 2004; de Vries 2010; Down and Wilson 2010).<sup>6</sup>

A much-cited study by van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) has proposed that both electoral routes to EU-level representation (i.e., both national and European elections) are blocked by the same essential mechanism: a division of voter opinion on EU politics along pro- and anti-integration lines – a division that cross-cuts the conventional left/right divide that national party systems largely revolve around (see also Hix 1999; and for alternative views, Steenbergen and Marks 2004). In consequence, the two authors contend,

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<sup>6</sup> To use the well-known metaphor employed by van der Eijk and Franklin (2004): the ‘sleeping giant’ of EU politics may be about to awaken in the national electoral arena. This would mean voters and parties break loose from the dominant left/right cleavage in order to express their views on European integration.

most voters can only use elections to communicate their EU preferences at the considerable cost of disregarding their left/right preferences. A related problem, noted by several observers, is that mainstream national parties tend to strategically downplay the division between pro- and anti-integration views, in order to avoid the disruptive effects it could have on their internal unity and electoral fortunes (e.g., Mair 2000; 2007; van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; and the overview in Ladrech 2009).

Many researchers have responded to this double ‘electoral disconnection’<sup>7</sup> in EU politics by arguing that the EP’s representation function must be improved: there should be genuine EU-parties and a separate party system at the EU level (e.g., Andeweg 1995; Franklin and van der Eijk 1996, 10; Marsh and Wessels 1997; Hix et al. 2007, 219). The underlying argument is that only Union-wide parties can shift the focus in EP elections to European instead of national issues. Most empirical studies to date, however, have indicated that such a scenario is fairly distant. MEPs are still nominated for election by more than 180 different national parties (Mudde 2015), and it is only in the post-election phase that they re-align into EU-wide party groups. Studies based on roll-call votes do show these groups have become more cohesive since the early 1990s. In fact, the internal cohesion of EP party groups has not declined even in the face of successive enlargements, which have made the EU much more heterogeneous in political, cultural and economic terms (Hix and Noury 2009). Crucially, however, the national party delegations remain the most cohesive aggregate actors in the EP (see, e.g., Kreppel 2002; Faas 2003; ch. 8; Hix et al. 2007, ch. 7). MEPs are likely, when conflicts arise between their national party delegation and their EP party group, to vote with the former (Faas 2003; see also Lord 2006). In sum, there is no general agreement as to whether EP party groups are best understood as embryonic parties in a developing European party system (cf. Hix et al. 2007), or as “a series of mechanisms that do little more than coordinate national party adaptations to Europe” (Lord 2006, 16).

To sum up, the electoral approach has generated at least two overarching conclusions about representation in the EU system. The first is that electoral representation in the EU polity mainly works through national parties pursuing domestic agendas. For this reason, electoral linkage appears to occur sporadically, where and when national parties are convinced they can benefit domestically from making EU issues visible. The second conclusion is that the key long-term question regarding representation in the Union is whether genuine European parties can emerge. On this point scholarly opinions diverge. Could such parties improve the EP’s representative functioning in a

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<sup>7</sup> Mayhew (1974) famously described the ‘electoral connection’ between voters and their representatives in the American context. He argued that most political actions taken by members of Congress could be explained in terms of their desire for re-election. In the EU context, Hix et al. (2007, 26) argue it is more appropriate to speak of an ‘electoral disconnection,’ for reasons I shall return to below.

lasting way, or would they be destined to fall apart as soon as political competition intensified (see Bartolini 2006 vs. Hix 2006)?

## The Governance Approach: Organized Interests in the Place of Parliament?

Whereas the electoral approach is comparative in outlook and focuses on similarities between the EU and national political systems, the governance approach emphasizes the unique or *sui generis* aspects of the EU polity (Hix 1998, 39; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006, 33). The EU is not seen as a parliamentary regime in the making, but as a “multi-level, non-hierarchical, deliberative and apolitical” governance system (Hix 1998, 54). This governance system is largely constituted by, and transformed through, public-private networks that form around specific policy issues. These networks involve both domestic and EU-level actors: Commission bureaucrats, national and EU-level regulatory agencies, national and sub-national government officials, and spokespersons for organized interests and corporative bodies of varying coverage (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006, 34). Supranational institutions – most notably the Commission – are seen as playing a crucial coordinating role in the EU policy process, but their relationship to other network participants is not conceived as hierarchical. Unlike the traditional domestic state bureaucracy, then, the EU is not thought to have a single institution or set of institutions that could be identified as a power center or ‘government’ (see, e.g., Marks et al. 1996, 356–73).

This polycentric view of the Union naturally de-emphasizes its formal channels of representation: the EP and the Council. Early governance scholars went even further in this direction, conceiving the EU as an apolitical system in which widely valued policy outputs – as opposed to democratic procedures – were the key to popular acceptance (see further Hix 1998; Jachtenfuchs 2001). It was not until the debate on the democratic deficit took center stage, in the mid-1990s, that governance scholars began taking a strong interest in questions of input legitimacy in the context of EU politics (Finke 2007, 4). Such researchers have then tended to make two key assumptions: (a) that the ongoing attempt to parliamentarize the EU has shown itself futile as a means for improving the connection between citizens and elites in EU politics; and (b) that civil-society and/or interest-group participation in the EU policy process would contribute positively to bringing such a connection about (Magnet 2006, 26f; Finke 2007; Greenwood 2007).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The concept of civil society has been given a variety of meanings in this context, but it often refers to organizations that are independent in relation both to formal political institutions and to the market, and which may thus act as intermediaries between them and the citizenry (cf. Smismans 2006, 8).

In other words, governance scholars set out to explore the various modes of civil-society *participation* at work in the EU's policy process (rather than its formal routes to *representation*) as a solution to the democratic deficit. This effort has arguably brought with it a distinct perspective on the EU's representative institutions (cf. Kohler-Koch 2010).<sup>9</sup> Kohler-Koch (2010, 106), herself a leading governance scholar, envisages the representative function of civil-society organizations as follows:

CSOs are reaching out from the grass roots to remote Brussels and thus bring people's interests into the decision-making process. As a partner in governance they are expected to voice the diversity of interests and views and to bring the knowledge and down-to-earth experience of citizens into the policymaking process. In other words, they are expected to contribute both to input and output legitimacy.

Kohler-Koch further distinguishes between two broad lines of inquiry within the governance approach that apply different normative criteria to civil-society (and interest-group) input into the EU policy process. A first line of research is founded in the ideal of liberal democracy and pluralism, and primarily investigates "the representativeness of the organizations," and whether there is "an overall balanced presence of societal interests" in the policy process (Kohler-Koch 2010, 107). Another line of study starts out from the alternative ideal of deliberative democracy, and looks into civil-society participation as a means of enhancing the quality of public discourse. The participation of civil society, then, is assessed according to "the diversity of views offered in the public arena, the quality of the deliberative discourse and the publicity it receives" (Kohler-Koch 2010, 107–8). In this view, representation "is not a role conferred on actors but emanates from discourse" (Kohler-Koch 2010, 107).

Scholars from both sides of this normative divide tend to view civil-society participation as a *complement* to the formal channels of representation offered by the EP and the Council (e.g., Habermas 2001; Wessels 2004; see also Armstrong 2006, 48–9; Greenwood 2007). However, alternative and more radical visions have also been put forward – of the EU as a political system in which civil-society and/or interest groups in part *take over* the EP's role as the key instrument for participation and representation (e.g., Cohen and Sabel 1997; Héritier 1999; Schmitter 2000; see also Armstrong 2006, 59–63; Greenwood 2007, 341–2).

Let us now turn to the empirical record of civil-society organizations and interest groups as instruments of representation in the context of EU politics. Reviewing the current scholarly literature on organized interests in the EU

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<sup>9</sup> Governance may be understood as "a process and a state whereby public and private actors engage in the intentional regulation of societal relationships and conflicts" (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006, 28).

system, Greenwood (2007, 342) points out two features “which seasoned observers of the role of groups in political systems seem to find most distinctive about the EU.” The first is the striking level of institutionalization of interest representation at the EU level.

Interest groups are systematically involved in the EU policy process, both through formal procedures (e.g., consultations and committees) and through informal contacts. There is relative agreement that interest intermediation at the EU level follows some kind of pluralist pattern, with several competing interest organizations in each policy area, rather than a small number of broadly encompassing ones (Eising 2008, 7).<sup>10</sup> Yet, the Union is far from meeting the pluralist ideal of balanced representation. In numerical terms, at least, business interests are strongly overrepresented in relation to general interests (e.g., environmental and consumer groups), making up about 80% of European-level organizations which are registered with the Commission (Eising 2008, 9).

The Commission has sought to redress such inequalities, using around 1% of the EU’s annual budget to support non-business associations at the European level (Greenwood 2007, 342–7). When conducting consultations, Commission officials also consistently favor Union-wide organizations over national ones. They do this in the hope that the demands made by such organizations will be more representative of the larger European public (Greenwood 2007, 346). Yet despite the use of such strategies, and despite an increasing resort to new instruments (such as online consultations) that reach a wider range of stakeholders, the basic inequalities in the system appear to persist (see, e.g., Persson 2007).

A second distinctive feature pointed out by Greenwood is the confederal nature of most EU-level interest groups. Around 1,500 interest groups have been formed at the EU level (Greenwood 2007, 342); nearly all of them, however, are umbrella organizations composed of national groups (Wessels 2004, 203). This means they lack direct members. When EU-wide associations take part in consultations, it tends to be through their professional staff; and grassroots members of the national affiliate organizations are seldom aware of such proceedings (see further Maignette 2006). This naturally reduces the capacity of the umbrella organizations to promote linkage between citizens and EU institutions.

A paradoxical consequence of the Commission’s strategy to favor more broadly representative EU-level umbrellas over national groups may have been to render EU-level interest intermediation more elitist (Greenwood 2007, 347). This concern is reflected in Kohler-Koch’s (2010) assertion that the language of ‘involvement’ and ‘participation’ employed by EU officials

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<sup>10</sup> A number of studies, however, have found quasi-corporatist practices in specific policy areas – notably that of social policy (Eising 2008, 7; see also e.g., Falkner 1998).

gives an artificial impression of grassroots contact, paving the way for ‘astroturf representation.’

In sum, the solutions advanced by governance scholars run into similar obstacles as those that rely on parties, elections and parliaments. Linkage requires systematic responsiveness – if only indirectly – to the citizens at large. The biased nature of the Union’s system of interest intermediation undermines its capacity to deliver this democratic value. Moreover, the confederal nature of most EU-level interest organizations appears to leave them cut off from their grassroots. The losses in linkage that follow from the Commission’s attempts to improve coordination through umbrella organizations are perhaps telling of a more general problem. The larger the political system, the greater the challenge of combining linkage to the wider public with efficient top-level coordination.

### The Delegation-and-Accountability Approach: A Union Run by Brussels-based Agents with Domestic Principals

Let us turn now to a third perspective, which contrasts sharply with both lines of research reviewed above. The *delegation-and-accountability approach* proposes to study the EU as the “next step” of democratic delegation from national electorates to policy-makers (Bergman 2000a).

We should note, first of all, that a large and diverse collection of approaches share a basic view of the EU’s powers as *delegated* from the member states, or from actors within them. Viewing the Union’s powers as delegated implies that the EU should not be studied as an independent political system. Rather, the EU is a supranational political arena that draws its authority from the member states. In other words, the Union remains connected to the national political arena, and it depends largely on national democratic processes for its legitimization (cf. Scharpf 1999; Bergman and Blomgren 2005; 2007; Majone 2001). Beyond this basic assumption, however, views on delegation to the EU diverge sharply.

Most of the empirical works center on delegation to *non-representative* EU institutions – such as the Commission, the European Court of Justice, or the European Central Bank – all of which enjoy an independent position in relation to the governments of the member states (e.g., Pollack 1997; Garrett et al. 1998; Tallberg 2002; Thatcher and Stone Sweet 2002; Elgie 2002). Accordingly, several influential normative approaches assume that delegation to the EU follows a *non-democratic* logic as a *de facto* matter (Majone 2001), or that it must do so because it lacks the preconditions to be democratized (e.g., Scharpf 1999; 2007). Like delegation to central banks and regulatory agencies, therefore, much delegation to the EU must be assessed on efficiency criteria alone.

In contrast, scholars who take the delegation-and-accountability approach are concerned with political representation as a *democratic* form of delegation. They assume that delegation is successful to the extent that it enables popular control over European decisions ‘from below,’ at both national and supranational levels (cf. Bergman 2000b, 4–5). The delegation-and-accountability approach forms part of a growing body of work in political science that studies problems of democratic control using principal-agent analysis (see, e.g., Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Strøm et al. 2003a; and the overview in Miller 2005). It envisages the process of representation at work in EU politics as one or several vertical *chains of delegation*. It is the citizens, enclosed in their respective member states, who are the ultimate principals. They delegate authority to elected representatives who act as their agents in the legislative process, while delegating some tasks further to others (e.g., Bergman 2000b; Lupia 2000; Blomgren 2003; Bergman and Blomgren 2005; Larue 2006).

The chain of delegation in an ideal-type parliamentary democracy is defined as follows: Voters – Parliament – Government – Prime Minister – Ministers – Civil Servants. Accountability relationships run in the opposite direction, with voters holding parliament to account, parliament holding the government to account, and so on (Strøm 2000, 267). As an empirical matter, however, chains of delegation take quite different shapes in different political systems (see, e.g., Lupia and McCubbins 2000, 304–5). For example, presidential systems of the U.S. type link voters to their political representatives through several different kinds of election (for president, for the upper chamber and for the lower chamber, respectively); thus, they clearly deviate from “the single chain of command” characteristic of the ideal-type parliamentary system (Strøm 2000, 268–70). Moreover, political parties play a more central role in some political systems than in others, and this too is likely to have consequences for the shape that delegation takes. Where they are influential, parties coordinate the various steps in the chain of delegation. They structure elections, the legislative process and the formation of governments; however, their capacity to control later stages of the chain – the daily work of the executive and of civil servants – is less pronounced (Müller 2000).

What EU membership implies, according to the delegation-and-accountability approach, is that various actors in the domestic chain of delegation now ‘double’ as principals of EU-level representatives. Some domestic actors also participate directly in EU negotiations as agents. For example, the national electorate now acts as a principal in relation to members of the European Parliament as well as in relation to members of the national parliament. Similarly, the government (collectively) is no longer just a principal in relation to each minister as he or she acts domestically; it must also act as a principal in relation to each minister as he or she engages in policy-making in the Council of Ministers (Andeweg 2000). In other words, the domestic

process of representation has become intertwined with that of the EU (Bergman 2000a, 415). Empirical studies typically single out one or a few links in the delegation chain for examination.

A pioneering work edited by Bergman and Damgaard (2000) focused on domestic delegation-and-accountability relationships in the five Nordic democracies following the accession of some of them to the EU. It suggested that EU membership had transformed such relationships thoroughly. One general expectation among scholars has been that European integration would reduce the capacity of national parliaments to hold governments to account, not least because the latter take European decisions behind closed doors (see, e.g., Weale 1997, as quoted in Bergman 2000b, 1). However, parliaments in the Nordic member states responded to this threat by inventing a number of new oversight instruments vis-à-vis their governments. Most notably, the establishment of European-affairs committees increased the capacity of national parliaments to confer with and to supervise their governments. Moreover, Nordic parliaments worked to develop sources of information on European matters that were independent of those used by their governments, and to make better use of their specialized standing legislative committees to this end (Damgaard 2000, 157–60).

Later studies that have included a larger number of member states have reached similar findings: the countermeasures taken by national legislators have enhanced the ability of parliaments to hold their governments to account. However, it is still debated whether the overall effect of European integration has been to strengthen or to weaken national parliaments as instruments of popular control (see the overviews in Goetz and Meyer-Sahling 2008; Raunio 2009).

Further along the delegation chain, EU membership appears to have reshuffled power relations *within* governments, to the advantage of ministers who are more involved in European affairs (Damgaard 2000, 163; Strøm et al. 2003b, 736). Most notably, chief executives – particularly prime ministers – have been empowered in relation to portfolio ministers, as a result of their more intense involvement in European affairs (see also Bäck et al. 2009; Johansson and Tallberg 2010). In the last step of the domestic chain of delegation, finally, the government delegates authority to civil servants who implement policy. The Nordic study found that EU membership has made civil servants more autonomous and their expertise more indispensable. A “new EU class of national civil servants” is now responsible for coordinating European issues across different ministries, as well as with civil society (Damgaard 2000, 165).

Two further links then connect actors in the domestic chain of delegation to agents at the EU level. One goes from national parties to the EP. The available evidence suggests that this link is relatively weak. MEPs appear to be left quite unsupervised by their national party, except when the EU addresses issues which are of great importance nationally (Raunio 2000; see

also Mühlböck 2012). Nevertheless, MEPs are found to experience ‘cross-pressure’ between national and European interests, between representing their national party in the EP and acting as ‘EU ambassadors’ whose task it is to explain European perspectives domestically (Blomgren 2003; see also Hix 2002).

The second link to the EU level goes through the national government to the Council of Ministers and its surrounding negotiating structures. Little research has been done on this link within the delegation-and-accountability approach. However, a pioneering study has explored delegation from national government offices in France and Sweden to each country’s permanent representation in Brussels. The results suggest that, just like their counterparts in the EP, civil servants who represent their home government in preparatory negotiations in Brussels experience considerable cross-pressure. Situated between national and European demands, they at times find themselves representing European interests in their home capital, rather than the other way round (Larue 2006, 332–3). Judging from the available evidence, then, both European routes of representation function according to a logic of compromise and mediation, rather than one of forthright delegation by domestic principals ‘from below.’

In sum, the delegation-and-accountability approach regards vertical linkage between domestic principals (ultimately the national electorate) and national and supranational policy-makers to be the key problem of representation in EU politics. Unlike the governance and electoral approaches, it pays considerable attention to how European issues are handled domestically – in the various steps of the domestic process of representation.

This perspective opens up a different range of solutions. It draws particular attention to the possibility of redesigning formal institutions (e.g., European-affairs committees) and rules in such a way as to empower domestic principals in relation to the representatives (agents) who act on their behalf at the European level. Moreover, it suggests that linkage can be improved by measures which provide domestic principals with independent information on European affairs. In other words, the solutions proffered serve to generate linkage from below.

A critique that can be made of the delegation-and-accountability approach is that it provides little means for examining problems of coordination at the European level. Indeed, a maximal linkage to domestic principals would appear to complicate the game of horizontal cooperation and compromise that EU-level representatives must engage in to produce European laws.

## Summing Up: Separate Worlds? Shared Concerns?

A first important observation we can make from the above account is that leading scholars of European integration emphasize radically different sets

of actors, mechanisms and institutions as instruments of representation in the EU system.

What unites scholars who take the electoral approach is their singular focus on (national and European) elections as mechanisms of representation in EU politics. The EP, in this view, is the main representative institution in the EU system, and political parties are central actors in the process of representation.

In contrast to this, researchers who champion the governance approach envisage representation as a process which takes place within a multitude of public-private networks that stretch across the (thereby dissolved) boundary between national politics and EU-level politics. Organized interests, in this view, are key actors that bring citizens' interests into the EU policy process, and improve the quality of the deliberations involved. In other words, the interest organization is a key actor, the network is the central institution, and deliberation and lobbying are the main mechanisms on which we should rely to improve representation in EU politics.

Those preferring the delegation-and-accountability approach, finally, see representation as starting from and ending in the national political arena. Society's input, as they see it, comes ultimately from each national electorate, and travels through parallel chains of delegation to EU-level representatives in the Council and the EP. Chains of accountability run in the opposite direction. Here too, the stress is on the national political arena as the place where leaders are held accountable for their policies at the European level – by domestically elected representatives who are responsible to each national electorate.

How, then, does each approach propose to solve the classic problems of representation discussed above – of how to generate linkage, coordination and legitimacy? Asking this question helps to clarify a number of further differences between the approaches:

- The three approaches view the vital issue of *linkage* in the EU system – the alleged gap between citizens and elites that lies at heart of the debate on the democratic deficit – in radically different ways. Above all, they count on different sets of actors to connect citizens with policy-makers and to improve linkage within the EU system.

Whereas the electoral approach mainly focuses on MEPs and on national political parties as intermediaries between citizens and EU policy-makers, the governance approach largely counts on organized interests to take on this role. The delegation-and-accountability approach, in contrast, regards the national representation system (its chain or chains of delegation) as the vital link between citizens and European decision-making. Further links extend to EU-level policy-makers – and not only from national parties to MEPs, but also from national government offices to the Council. Domestic actors (principals)

delegate authority to EU-level representatives and hold them accountable for their political actions.

- Furthermore, the three approaches view the problem of *coordination* differently. Again, the electoral approach looks to political parties as the key coordinating device in EU politics, and to the EP as the ultimate site for coordinated European decision-making. The governance approach, by contrast, ascribes less importance to centralized coordination at the EU level. Conceiving the Union as a polycentric political system, it provides a framework for studying processes of coordination within separate governance networks. It thus leaves the issue of system-level coordination largely unexplored. Finally, the delegation-and-accountability approach, while well-suited to the study of (vertical) linkage problems, appears less able to capture problems of (horizontal) coordination. To employ the language used by champions of this approach, it has made a crucial contribution to our understanding of representational relationships *between principals and agents* at different political levels, but it has not been devised to study problems of coordination *among agents* at the same political level (e.g., EU-level political representatives).
- The three approaches also view the Union's alleged *legitimacy* crisis from radically different vantage points, and so propose very different solutions to it. As we have seen, the electoral approach proceeds on the assumption that the EU's legitimacy hinges primarily on its likeness to a national parliamentary democracy. One long-term solution proposed by adherents of this viewpoint is to empower the EP, in the hope that so doing will give rise to a genuinely European party system that engages citizens and permeates all political institutions at the EU level.

The governance approach, on the other hand, rejects this vision outright, instead regarding the EU as a *sui generis* polity that needs different representative institutions than those found at the national level. A more promising way to improve the Union's legitimacy, in this view, would be to rely on organized interests.

The delegation-and-accountability approach, finally, takes yet another position on this question. It emphasizes the interconnection between domestic and European processes of representation, and argues that the key to a more legitimate Union lies in tightening the domestic chain of delegation at work when governments act in EU politics, as well as in strengthening the chain of delegation that connects citizens to the EP.

The three approaches share, however, some concerns about the way linkage works in the EU's system of representation. They worry that EU policy-makers – whether government representatives, party actors or interest-group

spokespersons – operate at too great a distance from citizens, and with too little awareness of their interests.

Adherents of the electoral approach note an ‘electoral disconnection’ in EU politics. Governance scholars fear that organized interests can only provide ‘astroturf’ representation at the European level. Scholars taking the delegation-and-accountability approach find that ‘cross-pressures’ – from domestic interests on the one hand and European interests on the other – may block vital steps in the chains of delegation that ought to link citizens to their EU-level representatives.

Each approach, clearly, draws attention to central problems of representation and contributes significantly to our understanding of these problems in the EU context. At the same time, a number of central questions about representation in the EU have been left unexplored – seemingly because they fall *in between* the foci of the respective dominant approaches, or because they cannot be analyzed well by any of them. In the sections that follow, I identify several important gaps of this kind, and argue that a multi-channel approach to representation is well-suited to addressing them.

## How a Multi-Channel Approach to Political Representation Can Help Fill in the Gaps

Let us return to the multi-channel perspective on political representation for which I called in the introduction. What can it contribute to the fragmented research landscape described above? This section aims to explain how a multi-channel approach to the study of representation can complement prior advances in the field, and connect them up in ways leading to important further insights.

Clearly, a mix of representation mechanisms is at work in the EU system. Yet, the academic understanding of that *mix*, and of its consequences, remains quite limited. A division of labor appears to have established itself between three prominent lines of research. To be sure, each approach has yielded crucial insights into processes of representation in EU politics. However, each approach also focuses on one specific set of institutions, actors and mechanisms, and studies it in relative isolation from the results generated by alternative approaches.

In fact, it seems the division of analytical labor has been taken so far as to prevent a proper overall understanding of how the EU’s system of representation works. The larger picture is missing. What is required is a framework for empirical research that pulls together knowledge from different strands

of research, and helps subject critical hypotheses about representation to testing across different channels.<sup>11</sup>

Prior theory offers a good starting point for such an empirical project. A groundbreaking shift toward multi-channel theorizing about representation in the EU can be found in the works of Stefano Bartolini (1998; 1999; 2005; 2006). Two of his core ideas serve as a point of departure for this dissertation. The first is the notion that *three structures of representation* have served as “main avenues of conflict and management” in national politics: the electoral channel, the territorial channel and the corporate channel (Bartolini 2005, 248). The central role these forms of representation have played domestically makes it relevant to study how European integration affects their way of functioning at the national level, as well as at the European level (Bartolini 2005, chs. 2 and 5–6 respectively). This argument provides a basic rationale for a multi-channel approach. If representation generally works through multiple channels, then theories and empirical methods which extend across different channels of representation will certainly help to improve the state of our knowledge.

A second core idea in Bartolini’s works is that different channels of representation work as competing routes to political power. If all societal conflicts could be fully expressed as differences among territorial units, there would be no need for system-wide elections or interest groups. Alternatively, if all conflicts were system-wide and ideological in nature, there would be no room for conflicts based on territory or organized interests. This implies that any representative system will have to strike some kind of balance between the basic forms of representation (Bartolini 2005, 250–1). This latter argument has its intellectual roots in Stein Rokkan’s portrayal of modern democracy as a tug-of-war between “two channels of decision-making”: the one used by electoral majorities, the other by corporate groups (Rokkan 1999, 261–73). In Rokkan’s oft-cited words, “votes count, but resources decide” (Rokkan 1975). This, of course, is yet another prominent proposition that

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<sup>11</sup> One might perhaps object to this argument, on the grounds that a number of comparative approaches have helped to make sense of the great variety of actors and institutions that the EU system contains, and to clarify their interrelationships besides. A prominent example of this can be seen in Ernest Haas’ ([1958] 2004) original formulation of the neo-functional approach, which targeted the role of political parties, trade associations, trade unions and member-state governments in pushing European integration forward. Another example can be seen in the many works that apply federal theory to the EU (see, e.g., Nicolaidis and Howse 2001; Trechsel 2006). The federal perspective, notably, has led scholars to consider the relationship between EU-level institutions and the member states, and to examine various ‘checks and balances’ among institutions at the EU level. These approaches are comprehensive, comparative and empirically oriented. However, their main objective has not been to make sense of the mechanisms of political representation at play in the EU system. Each of them touches upon issues that are relevant from the standpoint of political representation. It would seem difficult, however, to build a thorough understanding of representation in the EU system upon them.

only can be assessed empirically if one takes a multi-channel approach to political representation.

My aim in this dissertation is to develop such an empirical approach and to subject rival assumptions made about multi-channel representation in the EU to systematic scrutiny. For example: Do government actors dominate the EU's process of representation, as proposed by liberal intergovernmentalism? Are organized interests better able to provide linkage 'from below' in the EU context than are political parties, such as certain governance scholars consider the case? To answer such questions requires research designs that incorporate several forms of representation into a unified evaluative framework. Multi-channel comparisons also offer an important method for connecting key findings – theoretical as well as empirical – from several different strands of research, each of which has dealt with a single form of representation in isolation.

## The Articles: Aims, Delimitations and Key Findings

The overall approach taken in this dissertation is empirical and comparative. The aim is to assess to what extent, and how, different forms of representation contribute to democratic policy-making in the EU. My specific focus in Article II is on representational linkages within the Union's main channels of representation between domestic principals and EU-level representatives. In Article I and Article III, I probe more deeply into the question of a possibly necessary trade-off between different forms of representation in EU politics. In all three of the articles, I seek out new ways to test propositions about the EU's various forms of representation empirically.

Two basic choices have delimited the work undertaken. The first is to focus on the EU's main channels of representation: electoral representation in the EP; territorial representation in the Council; and corporate representation through organized interests that reach into the EU policy process. It would have been nearly an impossible undertaking to include the full variety of representative forms that operate at the EU level.<sup>12</sup> My second choice is to focus on the capacity of these channels to deliver three key democratic values: linkage, coordination and legitimacy. As noted, these are values that hold a particularly central place in classic debates about political representation and its relationship to democracy.<sup>13</sup>

I might also point out that *non-representative* institutions are left out of the analysis throughout. Representative and non-representative institutions

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<sup>12</sup> Notably committees, stakeholder consultations, citizen panels, the constitutional convention, intergovernmental conferences and inter-parliamentary conferences.

<sup>13</sup> Representation practices may also be judged against other important criteria, such as their capacity to encourage deliberation (e.g., Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008) or to emancipate disadvantaged groups in society (e.g., Phillips 1995).

coexist in the EU system, much as they do in established democracies. The European Central Bank and the European Court of Justice are examples of non-representative bodies with equivalents at the national level. However, the dividing line between the two categories is not always obvious. In the EU context, the role of the Commission seems particularly ambiguous in this regard. The Commission and the member states (the latter operating primarily through the Council and the European Council) are conventionally seen as forming a dual executive in the EU system (Hix 2005, 27). They share the power to set the policy agenda and to implement EU policy. But does the Commission have a representative function?

At least two different arguments could be marshaled in support of the idea that the Commission is a representative institution. First, each Commissioner is nominated by his/her member state; on this basis one could claim that the Commission is an intergovernmental institution designed to represent the member states (cf. Moravcsik 1993). This idea lacks any formal basis in the Treaty, however, and it also lacks sufficient empirical support. While the Treaty states that citizens are directly represented in the EP, and indirectly represented in the Council and the European Council (TEU, Article 10), it declares that “the Commission shall be completely independent...the members of the Commission shall neither seek nor take instructions from any Government or other institution, body, office or entity” (TEU, Article 17(3)).

Empirical research suggests, furthermore, that Commission officials have preferences that differ markedly from those of the member states (Hooghe 2005). A full-blown intergovernmentalist interpretation here is further undermined by the fact that the Commission’s capacity for independent action appears to vary significantly over time and across issue areas, and without depending purely on the leeway it is granted by the member states. Moreover, other factors – such as the Commission’s access to strategic information and its ability to form alliances with the European Court of Justice and/or organized interests – appear to matter as well (Pollack 1997; 1998; Schmidt 1998; 2000; Tallberg 2000; 2009).

Alternatively, one could argue that the Commission functions like a supranational government that pursues its own agenda, while ultimately remaining responsible to the EP (cf. Hix 2005, 70). Like governments in parliamentary systems, then, the Commission is subject to approval by the EP at the beginning of each parliamentary term, and it can be forced to resign through a parliamentary motion of censure.

Upon closer inspection, however, this argument proves no more compelling than the first. Even after the treaty revision of 2009, namely, European voters lack the ability to “throw out” the Commission in the way that voters in a conventional parliamentary democracy can throw out their government. The main reason for this is that, in the case of the EU, the heads of state and government (the European Council) retain the right to nominate the Com-

mission President. It is only on this basis that the European Parliament then elects the President.

The most reasonable conclusion here, in my view, is that the Commission still lacks a representative relationship to European citizens. It would seem more accurate to describe it as a bureaucracy that operates under a number of constraints, including the preferences voiced by the EP and by the member states.

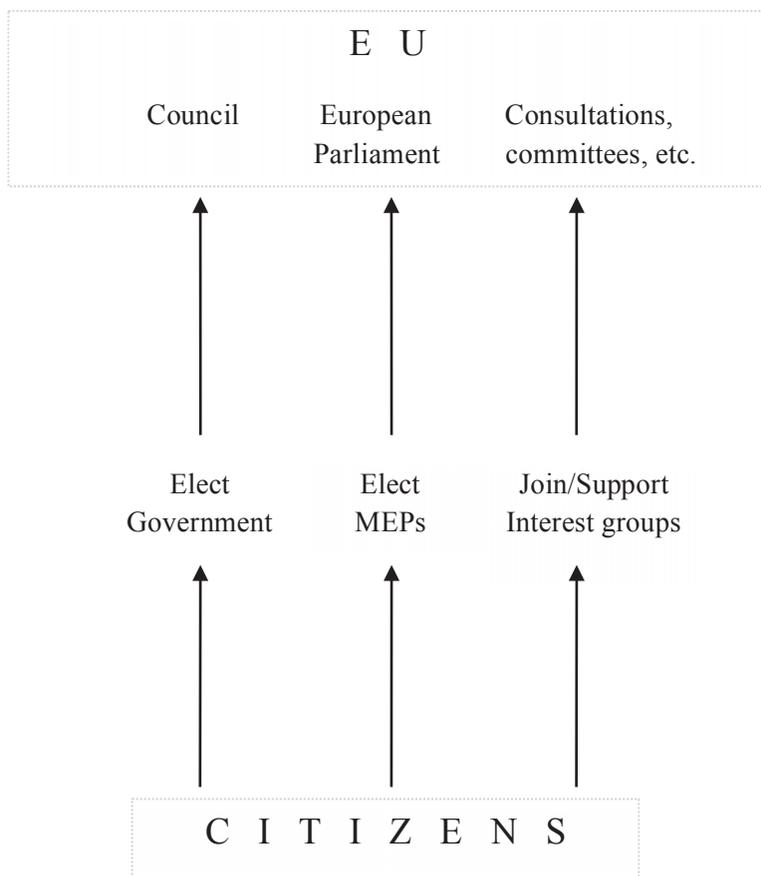
Within the general boundaries set out here, then, my task in this dissertation is to investigate how the three forms of representation reviewed above contribute to linkage, coordination and legitimacy in the EU context.

## Article I: Assessing the Balance of Power which the EU Strikes Between Different Channels of Representation

The first article, *Mixed Representation and Legitimacy in the European Union*, connects up directly with the longstanding debate on the democratic deficit. Many observers contend, namely, that the European policy process exhibits a far-reaching democratic deficit, and that a legitimacy crisis for the Union has been the result (see, e.g., Weiler 1991, 2466; Karlsson 2001). A key claim made in this debate is that the legitimacy crisis is rooted in the EP's lack of powers (see, e.g., Hix 2008). The main point of reference for this argument is parliamentary democracy at the national level, which is seen as a form of government where elections, parties and parliaments carry greater weight than do alternative instruments of political representation (Coultrap 1999; see also Weiler 1991, 2466–7; Mair 2005, 17). The EU is found to deviate from this established norm. It strikes a different balance: organized interests and representatives of the member states are 'empowered' at the EP's expense. In sum, the position of the latter within the Union's system of representation is assumed to be uniquely weak.

The purpose of the article is to establish a comparative framework for testing this central assumption. To what extent does the balance which the EU strikes – between electoral, territorial and corporate representation – stand out as unique when compared with that struck by national democracies? Is the EU's distinctiveness in this regard of such a magnitude as to be likely to carry consequences for its legitimacy?

Several prior studies of the Union's 'institutional balance' have been done. They have focused, however, on power relations within the legislative trio of Council-Parliament-Commission (see, e.g., Tsebelis and Garrett 2000; Cram 2002; Stokman and Thomson 2004). The two questions above, which relate specifically to the system of representation, have not been thoroughly addressed. A stringent focus on relationships within the system of representation calls for different delimitations. First, the Commission should fall



*Figure 1.* Main Channels of Representation in the EU

outside the remit of such an analysis, since it is an appointed bureaucracy rather than a representative institution. Second, organized interests should be included in the analysis, because they provide a potential source of representation alongside the EP and the Council. I have argued both points in greater depth above.

Figure 1 illustrates the approach taken in Article I. The units of analysis are the three main channels of representation within the Union; the question being examined is the balance of power between them.

In further contrast to the approach taken in most prior studies of the Union's institutional balance, the assessment made in Article I is country-comparative. Applying the comparative method to the EU has become standard procedure, and requires no special justification (cf. Hix 1994; Marks 1997; Zweifel 2002). My motive for this choice of method is entirely instrumental. Studying the EU as one polity among others is the most reliable way of ascertaining whether or not it is unique. Moreover, national de-

mocracies supply a relevant point of comparison when the aim is to assess the EU's democratic qualities. The former face policy challenges similar to those faced by the Union, and they are generally assumed to approximate current standards for representative democracy.

The main task at hand in Article I, then, is to furnish a cross-country comparative framework that can be used to assess the 'uniqueness' of the EU's system of representation with regard to: (1) *the trade-off between territorial and electoral representation in the policy process*; and (2) *the weight of interest-based representation in the policy process*.

To this end, I use established comparative indicators and a selection of existing data that can be extended to include the EU. To assess the balance between electoral and territorial representation at the European level, I draw on the longstanding tradition of research on the balance of power between upper and lower houses in bicameral systems (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 15–43; Lijphart 1999). I extend existing indicators to the EU, and draw comparative conclusions accordingly.

Following Lijphart (1999), I focus on two features when comparing the EU with national systems. First, I assess the degree of *symmetry* between the EP and the Council of Ministers, in terms of formal powers and democratic legitimacy. Second, I estimate the degree of *incongruence* between these two 'chambers,' using the Gini index of inequality – a summary measure that reflects the degree to which territorial representation takes precedence over electoral representation in the upper chamber. The power of an upper chamber, Lijphart assumes, increases to the extent that said chamber is explicitly designed to over-represent minorities or smaller territorial units in the political system. His underlying reasoning is that the potential for diverging preferences and political conflict between chambers increases when they differ in composition.

I therefore calculate this measure for the EU, and find that the Gini index for the Council of Ministers when it acts under QMV (qualified-majority voting) is somewhat lower than it is for the German Bundesrat. Moreover, inequality of representation within the Council of Ministers is considerably lower than it is in the US Senate or the Swiss Council of States. When the Council of Ministers acts under unanimity, however, the Union's upper chamber grants citizens of the smaller member states a unique degree of over-representation, in terms of both seats and votes. In sum, the EU ascribes great importance to conflicts of interest that are structured along territorial lines. This is a trait, however, which it shares with several federal states.

To assess the weight of interest-based representation in policy-making at the EU level, I have used comparative data on the associative power of union and employer peak organizations as a proxy for the general importance of interest-based representation in political systems (cf. Lijphart 1999). If they are to play an important formal role in policy-making, interest organizations must mobilize enough power to access negotiations at the top level of the

political system (Compston 2002, 1). Franz Traxler and his co-authors (2001, 76) have developed the most recent and comprehensive empirical measure of this capacity (cf. Kenworthy 2003, 16). Their data cover union and employer peak organizations in twenty OECD countries.

In my first article, then, I compare the EU with the twenty national systems studied by Traxler and his co-authors. I conclude that EU-level peak organizations are excluded from several policy areas and activities where the vast majority of their national counterparts can count on involvement. Most notably, the former do not take part in any implementation of European agreements – a task left to affiliate organizations and/or to national governments. It bears noting, however, that unions and employer organizations at the EU level have an unusual right: to propose laws on a collective basis. Among the Union's member states, only Belgium grants such extensive and independent legislative powers to the social partners (Dølvik and Visser 2001, 30).

Compared with their national counterparts, then, organized interests at the European level do not seem exceptionally powerful in terms of their capacity to act collectively to influence policy. If we use national systems as our yardstick, we find that organized interests at the European level have an intermediate collective capacity to influence policy, not an exceptional one.

To sum up, the trade-off the EU strikes between its main channels for political representation is largely comparable to that struck in national political systems. In Article I, I connect these empirical results to the debate on the EU's legitimacy, and reach a tentative conclusion on the relationship between the EU's particular mix of representational channels and its legitimacy as a political regime. Finding ways to strike the proper balance between different channels of representation at the European level stands out as a future challenge for both researchers and political actors.

## Articles II and III: Investigating Linkage and Coordination in the EU's Mixed System of Representation

In the second and third articles, I examine how mechanisms of linkage and coordination work within and across the EU's main channels of representation.

Article II addresses the much-debated question of whether linkage in the EU's system of representation works 'from above' or 'from below.' The standard empirical assessment has been that European integration is an elite-driven process (e.g., Lindberg and Scheingold 1970, ch. 8; Wessels 1995; Gabel and Sheve 2007; Hellström 2008). However, a number of studies question this picture, on the basis of findings that voters influence elites'

views on European integration to a quite substantial degree (Schmitt and Thomassen 2000; Carrubba 2001; Steenbergen et al. 2007).

Quite naturally, the dominant empirical material in the field consists of large-N data sets with information on voter and elite opinion across the EU. However, scholars taking this approach have reached conflicting results. Article II adds a multi-channel perspective to this debate, and presents new and detailed empirical evidence that paves the way for more nuanced conclusions. Do different channels of representation provide different types of linkage? Are representatives in some channels more responsive to mandates ‘from below’ than are representatives in others? And if so, why?

In Article III, my object is to examine how the EU’s mixed system of representation is coordinated. I consider the merits of liberal intergovernmentalism – one of the grand theories of European integration – as against those of two challengers of growing importance. According to liberal intergovernmentalism, national governments monopolize coordination across the divide between domestic and EU politics (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). Scholars inspired by federalist theory offer a second and alternative perspective, which is that political parties and organized interests based at the national level reach across the boundary between Europe and ‘home,’ thereby contributing to coordination alongside national governments (e.g., Sbragia 1993; Börzel and Hosli 2003). Finally, advocates of an emerging partisan theory of EU politics hold that coordination is supplied first and foremost by party actors that are based at the European level and motivated by pan-European loyalties (Hix 2008).

These conflicting propositions are difficult to assess on the basis of existing research. Research on coordination in the EU’s system of representation has an important lacuna, namely, in that few studies look into coordination between actors located in different channels of representation or at different levels of government (cf. Kreppel 2011; see also, for rare exceptions to this rule, Beyers and Kerremans 2004; Lindgren and Persson 2008; Treib 2010; Thomson et al. 2012). Existing works have focused mainly on patterns of cooperation within the EP or the Council, which they have treated largely as isolated entities (see the overviews in Mattila 2009 and Hix 2008). Article III aims to move the debate on coordination forward, through a close examination of the actual patterns of communication between actors within the Union’s main channels of representation. Do these patterns conform to any of the theories? And if so, which one?

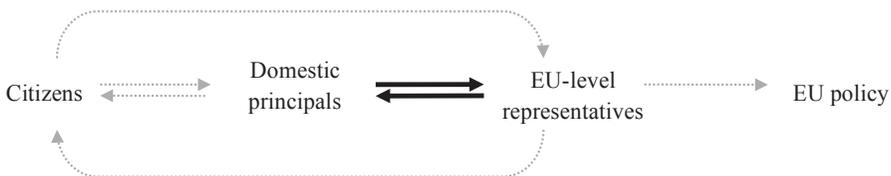
Adjudicating between the conflicting scholarly perspectives on linkage and coordination requires closer scrutiny of the mechanisms involved. A central idea behind Article II and Article III therefore is that the existing large-N studies in these fields should be complemented with small-N studies of the relations that connect different types of Brussels-based representatives to one another and to domestic actors. Small-N studies can help lay bare the causal mechanisms involved in establishing linkages between Brussels-based

representatives and their domestic constituents, ‘from above’ or ‘from below.’ They can also uncover important mechanisms of coordination that connect actors coming from different channels of representation. There is a growing appreciation among social scientists of the advantages of combining large-N and small-N research strategies for sustaining causal claims (see, e.g., Hedström and Swedberg 1998; Gerring 2004). In the area considered here, a combined strategy of this kind will doubtless help to establish which theories have a firmer empirical footing.

With these important issues in mind, Articles II and III are based on a detailed case study of patterns of communication between Brussels-based representatives and domestic principals. Both articles zero in on the links between Brussels-based representatives and their home organizations. My data on these links is based on a detailed survey and on in-depth interviews with policy-makers. Table A1 in the Appendix shows how the final sample of respondents was distributed across the EU’s three channels of representation and its two levels of government.

The links between Brussels-based representatives and their domestic principals have received relatively little attention in prior research, but existing works suggests that they merit closer analysis (see e.g., Raunio 2000; Kassim 2000; Kassim et al. 2001; Blomgren 2003; Larue 2006; Poguntke et al. 2007). The reason is that representation in the EU works through a long chain of delegation in which domestic elites are key actors. Their behavior is of crucial importance for the process of representation as a whole.

Within each of the Union’s main channels of representation, domestic elites function as intermediaries – gatekeepers, if you will – between citizens and their representatives in the EU policy process. If they are to forge connections across the domestic-EU divide, national elites must maintain both ‘downward’ links to citizens and ‘upward’ links to representatives at the EU level. Figure 2 below illustrates the place of domestic-EU links within the overall process of representation in the Union. The targeted relationship is indicated in solid black.



*Figure 2.* The process of representation in the EU. The representational relationship targeted by the case study is indicated in solid black.

I take my data on domestic-EU links from a single, strategically selected case. That is, I study in depth the relationship between Swedish EU-level representatives and their home organizations during one of the most contentious policy processes in EU history: the negotiations leading up to the Services Directive (2004–2006). The Services Directive is commonly portrayed as one of the most crucial EU measures ever taken, and its salience can be illustrated by the fact that the *Economist* magazine published 48 articles about this single piece of legislation (Selck et al. 2009). As I argue below, Sweden’s involvement in this process provides a favorable context for the comparative work to be carried out in Article II and Article III. It was a highly atypical case that maximized opportunities for representation ‘from below,’ and for coordination along national rather than EU-wide lines of division.

The purpose of the Services Directive was to open up the service sector for cross-border competition within the Union, and to unleash its growth potential thereby. According to the Commission, the service sector (including public administration) accounted for some 70% of GDP in the EU’s member states, and for a comparable proportion of jobs; yet it only accounted for about 20% of cross-border trade in the internal market. However, soon after the Commission launched its legislative draft in January 2004, it became clear that a number of its key components would be strongly challenged – among them the choice not to exempt public services and “services of general interest”(e.g., health care, childcare, water, electricity) from liberalization.

The most sharply contested paragraph in the draft was the one setting out the ‘country-of-origin principle,’ according to which service providers would only need to follow the regulations applying in their country of origin, and not those applying in the country where the service was to be provided (‘the host country’).

Trade unions in member states with more highly regulated labor markets protested vigorously against the latter provision, which they believed would lead to significant downward pressure on wages and workers’ rights in the service sector (‘a race to the bottom’). In March 2005, an estimated 100,000 people marched the streets of Brussels in a protest pulled together by the unions (Grossman and Woll 2011, 347). Then, a few days before the EP’s first reading of the draft directive in February 2006, around 30,000 protesters marched in Strasbourg in the hope of altering its content (Gajewska 2008, 111). It took three years and a near-complete revision of the Commission’s original draft before, in the final months of 2006, a much watered-down version of the directive could be adopted by the EP and the Council. The country-of-origin principle had by then been abandoned, and the scope of the directive considerably narrowed.

With its advanced public sector, unique labor-market model and strong trade unions, Sweden was one of the countries where the Commission’s ini-

tial proposal attracted early and particularly intense criticism (Rowland 2005; Miklin 2009). Under the influence of the Swedish trade unions, the Social Democratic government (a minority government supported by the Left Party and the Green Party) turned from cautiously positive to strongly critical toward the proposal within the space of two months (Miklin 2009, 955–6). Public debate on the issue grew intense, and an opinion poll in 2005 showed that 8 out of 10 Swedes opposed the country-of-origin principle (TCO 2005).

Due to this unusual public salience, we have reason to expect the Swedish polity to have handled the Services Directive differently from the vast majority of EU member states (although the directive also attracted substantial attention in other member states with highly regulated labor markets, notably Belgium, France and Denmark; see Hix 2009, 169, note 5).

Sweden also has some atypical institutional characteristics, comparatively speaking, as well as a public opinion which is rather cool toward European integration. These features should make the country conducive to representation ‘from below’ at the European level. Sweden joined the EU in 1995 as a “reluctant European” determined to put its national interests first, and this sentiment lingers on in its political institutions (Johansson 2003, 382–3; Aylott 2007, 182).

Swedish governments have been determined to achieve strong and centralized coordination of EU policy, for two reasons: in order to demonstrate their power to act in the face of the relative euroskepticism of Swedish voters; and in order to compensate for the small size of Sweden on the European stage (Ekengren and Sundelius 1997, 137; Mazey 2001). For the government as a collegiate body, this should translate into a capacity to control individual ministers and diplomats who act on its behalf at the European level (on the procedures put in place, see Hegeland and Mattsson 2000, 93–95).

Sweden’s political parties, moreover, are comparatively well-equipped to control their MEPs ‘from home.’ The principle of party representation finds strong and uniform acceptance in these parties (Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996, 63–4), the cohesiveness of which is pronounced (cf. Depauw and Martin 2009, 104f). Swedish parties have experienced internal divisions on European affairs, and are not always judged to be successful in extending existing control mechanisms upward to the European parliamentary arena (Mühlböck 2012, 614; see also Aylott 2007). However, the Swedish party delegations were among the most cohesive in the EP, in the time period considered here (Faas 2003, 855; see also Blomgren 2003, 271–2).

Finally, Sweden long ranked high on measures of corporatism (Lane and Ersson 1999, 228; Hall and Gingerich 2009). Even though Swedish corporatism is considered to be in decline, union and employer peak organizations in that country remain key actors in the formulation of labor market policy (Svensson and Öberg 2005). In sum, organized interests in Sweden have

demonstrated a considerable capacity to control their representatives in negotiations on domestic public policy. With such a track record, it would seem reasonable to expect them to be willing and able to control their Brussels-based representatives closely – at least on labor market issues of key domestic importance, such as the one considered here.

To sum up the above argument regarding the case selected, Sweden's involvement in the political battle over the Services Directive represents a deviant case of political representation in the EU system. This is not just because of the unusually high salience of this issue among the Swedish public and political elite, but also because of Sweden's institutional characteristics – which appear particularly conducive to representation from below at the European level.

Moreover, in addition to these factors (to which I will return below), I chose this case because it furnishes a favorable context for cross-channel comparisons of efforts at linkage and coordination in different channels of representation. With the Services Directive, all the main channels in the EU's process of representation – the parties, the government and the organized interests – were clearly 'in the game' from the start. It was evident from the extensive media coverage that central actors within each channel were working intensively, throughout the pre-negotiation process, to influence the outcome (cf. Selck et al. 2009, 468–9). Furthermore, all three channels in Sweden were operating in a context conditioned by an activated public opinion. This presumably put each of them under comparable pressures to generate domestic linkage, and to seek a central, coordinating role in the larger policy process. This similarity of condition paves the way for a focused comparison between the three channels, where differences in linkage and coordination capacities are likely to reflect fundamental differences in their ways of functioning.

My investigation into the process leading up to the Services Directive is focused on what I will term the *pre-negotiation phase* of the EU's ordinary legislative process (at the time termed the co-decision procedure).<sup>14</sup> Pre-negotiations begin when the Commission puts a legislative draft before the Council and the EP, at which point a multitude of actors – primarily in Brussels and in the capitals of the member states – start to engage in efforts to reshape it before a final legislative decision is made. The pre-negotiation phase continues until the EP and the Council are ready to issue their final legislative decisions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> What I refer to as the 'pre-negotiation phase' is preceded by a Commission-led phase of policy formulation, which results in a legislative draft. It is followed by formal legislative decision-making in the Council and in the EP, and then by policy implementation (and in some cases adjudication, by the European Court of Justice).

<sup>15</sup> Since the EU's ordinary legislative process can involve several readings by the Council and by the EP, pre-negotiations can be interrupted by formal decision-making, and then resumed again in anticipation of the next formal decision.

It is no exaggeration to say that pre-negotiations shape EU laws decisively. An estimated 78–85% of the Council’s legislative decisions are settled in its preparatory bodies at this stage, after which all that is required is formal adoption (without prior discussion) by the ministers (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 2006, 52–3). In the EP, the responsible parliamentary committee proposes amendments in the form of a report which is presented to the full plenary session in a “take it or leave it form” (Hix 2005, 93). These formal processes are lined with informal contacts and consultations where organized interests can play a central role (see, e.g., Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 2006, 27, 242–43; Eising 2007).

## Linkage: Expectations and Key Results

In Article II, I investigate the links between Swedish Brussels-based representatives and their domestic principals during the Services Directive pre-negotiations. The purpose is to try out competing hypotheses about the nature of such links within the EU’s principal channels of representation. Do these links work according to a logic of *European trusteeship* ‘from above’? Or according to a logic of *domestic delegation* ‘from below’? Or are they rather characterized by *dualism*, in the sense that they are shaped ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ reciprocally? In this latter case, neither side takes clear precedence when domestic principals and Brussels-based representatives decide on a course of action to be taken at the European level.

The extreme salience of the Services Directive, I argue, makes it a least likely case (Gerring 2007; see also Eckstein 1975) for the hypothesis that representational links in EU politics are either absent or one-sidedly run ‘from above’ (what I have labeled the European-trusteeship hypothesis). Both theoretical considerations and empirical observations support this claim.

According to prevailing theory, two critical factors work together to enhance the independence of representatives and to impede effective representation ‘from below.’ First, representatives are likely to have more policy-relevant information than do those they represent. Second, representatives are likely to have interests that diverge from those of the people they represent (cf. Pitkin 1972, 219–21; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, 25–6).

Empirical evidence from the American political context indicates that the impact of both factors is reduced when an issue becomes salient. Salient issues are found to deviate from non-salient issues, by making voters more aware of policy-relevant facts (Weaver 1991) and by altering representatives’ behavior, making them more attuned to the interests of those they represent (see, e.g., Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978). Raunio (2000, 221) observes a similar tendency in EU politics. He finds that national party organizations pay relatively little attention to their MEPs – *except* when they deal with issues that are domestically salient.

Taken together, these findings underpin my interpretation of the Services Directive as a least likely case for trusteeship in the EU's main channels of representation. If the trusteeship hypothesis is supported even in this highly salient case, we can expect the support for it to be all the greater in the case of everyday EU politics.

In Article II, my key finding is that, during the negotiations over the Services Directive, the electoral channel generated representation 'from above,' in accordance with the trusteeship hypothesis; whereas the territorial and corporate channels generated representation 'from below,' in accordance with the domestic-delegation hypothesis. In general, Swedish party organizations appear to have made relatively little effort to influence their representatives in the European Parliament. At the same time, Swedish MEPs were quite successful in influencing the positions taken by their party organizations back home in Stockholm.

When considering the overall results reported in Article II, we should take into account the fact that the three categories of Brussels-based representatives being compared have quite different formal obligations to their domestic principals. In the electoral channel, MEPs are elected on the basis of personal mandates, and they are formally independent. According to the EP's Rules of Procedure, members "shall not be bound by any instructions and shall not receive a binding mandate" (Chapter 1, Rule 2). In contrast to this, government officials generally act on the basis of explicit voting instructions from the Government Offices. Judging from the interview material analyzed in Article II, the Brussels-based representatives of Swedish interest organizations operate on the basis of looser negotiating mandates than do Swedish government officials.

It was nevertheless unexpected to find – in a context chosen because it would appear to minimize the prospects for observing a representation process run 'from above' – that MEPs retained a high degree of independence from their domestic principals, as compared with representatives in the other two channels of representation. Many commentators claim the EU suffers from a representation deficit (e.g., Anderson and Eliassen 1996; Hayward 1995; Hix and Føllesdahl 2005; Gustavsson et al. 2009; Bellamy 2010). The results presented in Article II suggest the need for a comprehensive discussion on how different channels of representation can help to reduce this deficit.

## Coordination: Expectations and Key Results

While Article II focuses on the dyadic bond between domestic principals and their 'own' EU-level representatives, Article III moves on to investigate the broader pattern of coordination between different categories of principals and of representatives across the domestic-EU divide.

As noted above, influential theories of EU politics make diverging claims about coordination in the EU's process of representation. In the current debate, a dividing line of growing importance runs between the liberal intergovernmentalist theory (cf. Moravcsik 1993), federal theory (cf. Egeberg 2001; Börzel and Hosli 2003), and an emerging partisan theory of EU politics (cf. Hix 2008; Katz 2001).

Based on the first theory, I formulate the *intergovernmentalist hypothesis* which states that national governments monopolize coordination across the domestic-EU divide. It predicts that the national government will act as a broker in the EU's process of representation, and as a gatekeeper between other domestic actors and the European level of government.

On the basis of the second type of theory, I formulate two alternative *federal hypotheses*. Following Riker (1975), I distinguish between peripheralized and centralized federalism. In both of these versions of federalism, coordination occurs domestically as well as at the European level, reflecting the circumstance that each level of government has its own sphere of competence. In peripheralized federalism, however, national politics prevails over European politics to some extent. This generates the prediction that the government, parties and organized interests all will have contacts across the domestic-EU divide, within their own channel of representation. However, the key coordinator in the representation process will be found at the national level, where the most crucial decisions are taken.

Under centralized federalism, coordination also occurs at both levels of government; however, the ultimate power to coordinate the process of representation rests with actors based at the European level. European politics prevails over national politics to some extent. This generates the prediction that the government, political parties and organized interests all will have contacts across the domestic-EU divide, within their own channel of representation. However, the key coordinator will be found at the European level, where the most crucial decisions are taken.

Finally, from the emerging partisan theory of EU politics, I draw the *party-government hypothesis*, which predicts that MEPs will act as brokers in the EU's process of representation. This requires MEPs to reach across the domestic-EU divide and coordinate actors at both of the EU's levels of government. Such a scenario entails a prominent European party system, which subsumes national actors and issues into European lines of conflict.

Taken together, the four hypotheses constitute a rough scale running from minimal to maximal Europeanization of the representation process (i.e., from intergovernmental negotiation to a fully realized party democracy at the European level).

I argued above that the salience of the Services Directive, together with certain distinctive political and institutional conditions in Sweden, could be expected to favor the development of domestic control (representation 'from

below') in all three channels of representation. By the same token, the Services Directive offers an extraordinarily tough test for the proposition that MEPs have become brokers in the EU's system of representation, as the party-government hypothesis contends.

Using social network analysis, Article III analyzes patterns of coordination between Swedish principals and representatives during the Services Directive negotiations. What would support the party-government hypothesis is empirical evidence that MEPs mediate between other categories of actors in the EU's system of representation. Assuming political actors allocate their resources rationally so as to maximize their influence over policy, a widespread tendency among other actors to spend time and energy on MEPs would certainly seem to suggest that MEPs have – or at least are perceived to have – decisive influence over political outcomes. It would also indicate MEPs are well-placed to integrate domestic and European demands from all three channels of representation.

The key finding in Article III is that the Swedish principals and representatives who were involved in negotiations over the Services Directive interacted in a pattern that blends features predicted by the federal hypotheses and by the party-government hypothesis. Coordination took place both at the national and at the European level of government, as predicted by the federal hypotheses. At the national level, the Government Offices coordinated actors across the three channels of representation. Crucially, however, and in contrast to what the intergovernmentalist hypothesis predicts, the Government Offices did not monopolize contacts across the EU's two levels of government. Swedish organized interests and party organizations had their own contacts at the European level, and they were not dependent on the government to keep up with developments or to influence the policy process. At the European level, MEPs coordinated the Swedish actors, based on a diverse inflow of information from many actors. In this role, MEPs relied in particular on alliances with national interest organizations.

Taken together the findings in Article III suggest that practices of representation in EU politics have become quite Europeanized. My focus on Sweden's participation in negotiations over the Services Directive represents a strategic selection. This is a case which minimizes the likelihood that the party-government hypothesis will be confirmed. Surprisingly, some elements of the party-government model – the coordinating role of MEPs, and their alliances with domestic interest organizations – can nonetheless be identified in the data. Overall, therefore, the results in Article III lend fairly strong support to the claim that national governments are losing their status as brokers in the EU's process of representation, and that the trend is toward a greater influence for MEPs. They lend partial support to the federal hypotheses and the party-government hypothesis, while they appear to refute the intergovernmental hypothesis.

## Assessing Representational Relations: The Unrealized Potential of Social Network Analysis

One methodological contribution of this dissertation lies in its application of social network analysis (SNA) to classic problems of representation. SNA offers an innovative tool kit for the study of *relations* of all kinds (e.g., between individuals, between groups or between formal organizations). The primary analytical strength of SNA is that it enables the researcher to study individual relationships as part of a larger social structure. It is also a powerful method for studying larger sets of dyadic relationships and of personal networks ('ego networks') (see further Wasserman and Faust 1994, 41–3).

Although it is relatively new, SNA has been applied to a wide range of phenomena in the social sciences, notably the power structures underlying lobbying (Heinz et al. 1993), policy networks (Knoke et al. 1996) and market competition (Burt 1988). To the best of my knowledge, however, SNA has not been used previously to assess the strength and direction of links between political representatives and their principals, as is done in Article II. Nor has it been used to analyze problems of coordination between principals and representatives across different channels of representation and different levels of government, as is done in Article III.<sup>16</sup> This section highlights the main strengths of the method in relation to these central problems of representation. The limits and possible pitfalls of the method are considered further on.

The starting point for social network analysis is always a delimited 'network' – a system of relationships. Relations, not actor attributes, are the basic units of analysis. Typically, a data matrix with information on relations between all network participants<sup>17</sup> serves as the basis for a quantitative analysis of a network's structure (see, e.g., Scott 2000, chs. 1–3). The strength and direction of relations can be uncovered in such an analysis.

Unlike other methods and frameworks applied in representation research, SNA requires no prior assumptions about 'who governs whom' in a representational relationship. This can be a vital asset in representation research, where practices are often found to diverge from what we would expect on the basis of representatives' formal obligations. Representatives who have a formal obligation to act as delegates may actually behave more like trustees. Conversely, those formally granted the leeway to act independently may choose for various reasons to follow their principal's instructions strictly.

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<sup>16</sup> While the EU is often discussed as a multi-level political system, the best-known application of SNA to EU politics looks purely at coordination at the European level, without reference to issues of representation (see Beyers and Kerremans, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> In one-mode networks, 'participants' are all of the same kind: e.g., 'consumers.' They constitute a single set. However, SNA facilitates the analysis of two-mode networks as well – networks that contain two different sets of 'participants': e.g., 'consumers' and 'companies' (see further Wasserman and Faust 1994, 36–41).

With SNA it becomes possible to move beyond dichotomous classifications. The (net) *direction* of a representational relationship can be estimated empirically; it does not have to be assumed beforehand or inferred from actor attributes. For this reason, SNA can be used to test open-ended theories about who governs whom in representational relationships, in line with Heinz Eulau's vision of a new empirical approach to representation:

... a future empirical theory of democratic representation should not foreclose the problematics of status in the representational relationship by simply identifying, *ex definitione*, the representative with governor, ruler or elite, and the represented with governed rule or mass. Who governs whom in the representational relationship is an empirical question that cannot and should not be answered by definition (Eulau 1967, 51).

SNA can also be used to track indirect representational relationships in an open-ended fashion, as is done in Article III. SNA simplifies the assessment of *wide* patterns of coordination, across different channels of representation. Such patterns can be explored and explained using a variety of quantitative techniques.

In Article III, I use UCINET software (Borgatti et al. 2002) to draw and interpret *sociograms*. Sociograms are made up of *nodes* (representing actors) and *lines* (representing relations between actors). Attaching arrowheads to the lines may indicate the direction of a particular relation. Finally, numerical scores can be used to indicate the strength of the relation in question.

This methodological tool kit opens up a wealth of ways to explore representational relationships as part of a more general pattern of interaction in the system of representation as a whole. In such applications the analysis is *socio-centric*: representational relationships are studied within the context of other relationships that surround them, and relationships among all individuals or groups are mapped within a network. This moves the analysis to a higher level: the overall *structure* of the network is studied, with the aim of disclosing how it limits or empowers individual actors or groups in the political process (cf. Scott 2000, 72).

Applying SNA to these central problems of representation can hardly be considered a far-fetched approach. Hanna Pitkin's widely appreciated analysis in *The Concept of Representation* (1972) revolutionized research in the area by establishing that representation is a *relational* phenomenon. Her perspective overthrew a longstanding tradition of studying representation exclusively in terms of the formal acts that initiate and terminate it: *authorization* and *accountability*. Such a 'formalistic' analysis, she argued, cannot capture the expectations we usually place on representational relationships. Representation is an *ongoing relationship* – one that requires representatives to be in "a constant condition of responsiveness" (1972, 233). Moreover, Pitkin noted, it is "a large scale arrangement"; and what "makes it represen-

tation is not any one participant, but the overall functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people” (1972, 221–2). SNA has significant and largely unrecognized advantages as a method for studying representational relationships – dyadic as well as systemic ones.

## Conclusions

My primary aim in this dissertation is to add to our understanding of the processes of representation at work in EU politics. As Robert A. Dahl (1961) observed, one of the most important questions of political science is: who governs? But an equally central question immediately follows: how do they govern? The overarching question posed in this dissertation is of the “how” variety. To what extent, and how, do various forms of representation contribute to making EU policy-making democratic and legitimate?

In addressing this question I make three principal contributions. First, my theoretical discussion draws on research from several different fields, the better to shed light on mechanisms of representation in the EU. I bring theories of representation, European integration, nation-building and democratization to bear on problems faced by the EU’s system of representation today. Formulating hypotheses on the basis of prior research in these varied fields helps to highlight the fact that many of the Union’s problems in this area are universal rather than unique. As Simon Hix (1994) was among the first to observe, much can be gained by studying the EU in comparative perspective, on the basis of existing theories.

Second, the methodological approach I have developed to analyze linkage and coordination patterns is novel to the field. Social network analysis (SNA) has been extensively applied in works on lobbying, competition and policy networks, but to the best of my knowledge it has never been applied to the classic problems of “who governs whom” in a representational relationship, or “who coordinates” the system of representation. In Article II and Article III, I show that SNA and relational data open up new ways of addressing these two central questions. Researchers should be able to exploit SNA and relational data fruitfully in the future, in the further study of representational relationships.

Finally, and most importantly, the empirical analysis in my dissertation contributes new primary data concerning the mechanisms of representation at work in the EU’s three main channels of representation. I have argued in this introduction for the need for a multi-channel and empirical approach to the EU’s problems of representation, and the three articles that follow adopt such a perspective. Due to the broad scope of the area in terms of levels and channels, however, I have restricted my analysis in Article II and Article III to a single, strategically selected case. A challenge for the future will be to

explore linkage and coordination patterns across a wider range of policy areas and a larger number of member states.

Each of the three articles aims, from its particular angle, to help answer the question posed at the beginning of this introduction: namely, to what extent and in what ways do various channels of representation contribute to making EU policy-making democratic? I attempt in the articles to assess the capacity of the different channels to deliver three key democratic values: linkage, coordination and legitimacy. These three values, I would argue, hold a particularly central place in debates about political representation and its contribution to democracy.

In the first article, I address a key claim made in the debate on the EU's *legitimacy*: namely, that the Union differs crucially from national political systems on account of the particular balance it strikes between electoral, territorial and interest-based representation, and that the deficit of legitimacy from which it suffers arises mainly from this. I assess this proposition within a comparative framework, using a selection of existing data on democratic systems from around the world. My main finding is that, while the EU attributes great importance to territorial representation and to organized interests, the standing of the European Parliament within the Union's system of representation is not in fact uniquely weak, as compared with that of national parliaments. The root causes of the Union's legitimacy problems, it would appear, lie elsewhere than in a failure to empower the European Parliament.

The second and third articles examine how mechanisms of *linkage* and *coordination* work within and across the EU's main channels of representation. Using social network analysis, I study relations between Swedish representatives based in Brussels and their domestic principals during the controversial negotiations over the Services Directive. My finding in Article II is that the quality of linkage between Brussels-based representatives and their domestic principals varies, from one channel of representation to another. More specifically, MEPs were less influenced by their domestic principals than were Brussels-based government representatives and interest-group representatives. Representation in the electoral channel thus appears to work 'from above,' whereas representation in the territorial and corporate channels works 'from below.' This finding adds a new dimension to the standard empirical assessment that European integration is an elite-driven process.

In Article III, finally, I find that different forms of representation play quite different roles in coordinating the process of representation at the Union's two levels of government. The Swedish government, for instance, was an influential coordinator domestically, but MEPs coordinated Swedish actors at the European level. National party organizations – among the various actors involved in the Swedish subset of the EU's system of representation – were the least connected to developments at the European level. Their inability to act during negotiations over the Services Directive formed a stark con-

trast with the influential role played by MEPs, as well as with the active approach taken by national organized interests, which mobilized strongly both at home and in Brussels.

Taken together, the three articles suggest – in line with much prior research – that national party organizations hold the key to a more democratic and legitimate process of representation in the EU (cf. Mair 2000; 2007; van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; and the overview in Ladrech 2009). The EP is a powerful institution, and MEPs appear to have a considerable capacity to influence EU policy. However, as the comparative analysis in Article II highlights, the crucial link between MEPs and their domestic principals is much weaker than it could be. In the territorial and corporate channels of representation, by contrast, the relationship between Brussels-based representatives and their domestic principals is characterized by frequent communication and mutual responsiveness. Quite clearly, the large size of the EU polity does not rule out strong and well-functioning representational links.

At the time of writing, the European Union is facing greater challenges than ever before. Due among other things to the euro crisis, the war in Ukraine and the ongoing refugee crisis, the balance between national and supranational decision-making is being reconsidered day by day (rather than year by year, as it had been before). Article II and Article III are devoted to a study of one of the most divisive political issues faced by the Union prior to the outbreak of these recent crises. The deregulatory ambitions of the Services Directive draft served to activate a significant conflict of interests between different member states. Vital national interests were perceived to be at stake. It might be expected that, under conditions of this kind, national governments will seek to play a strong coordinating role in the EU policy process, and the political struggle will reflect ‘first-order’ domestic party politics rather than ‘second-order’ European party politics. However, if there is one central lesson to be learned from the case examined here – one of the rare instances where an EU issue was hotly debated in the domestic arena – it is not to take such an intergovernmental pattern for granted. An important task for researchers is to look beneath the surface, and to examine what actors are doing on the ground. Who is influencing the policy process, and how are they doing it?

I would like to stress, finally, that the multi-channel approach to political representation applied here is relevant beyond the EU context as well. Leading political theorists have claimed that recent developments, such as globalization and the spread of expert governance, have deprived elections of much of their capacity to link citizens and elites in national politics (see, e.g., Mansbridge 2003; 2004; Urbinati and Warren 2008; Warren and Castiglione 2004). These scholars seek out new forms of representation that can complement the electoral channel in the domestic arena. At the same time, researchers in the fields of EU studies and international relations continue to debate whether effective electoral representation at the regional

and global levels is a feasible goal, or whether alternative mechanisms of representation would serve democratic values better in such settings (see, e.g., Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008; Keohane 2006; Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; Saward 2011; for a critique see Bellamy and Castiglione 2011). These debates are growing ever more important. In an age when the most critical challenges – climate change, poverty, peace – are global in nature, it is more vital than ever to explore the limits and possibilities of democracy and representation beyond the nation-state.

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