



<http://www.diva-portal.org>

Postprint

This is the accepted version of a paper published in *Representation: Journal of Representative Democracy*. This paper has been peer-reviewed but does not include the final publisher proof-corrections or journal pagination.

Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Stæhr Harder, M M. (2020)

Pitkin's Second Way: Freeing Representation Theory from Identity
Representation: Journal of Representative Democracy, 56(1): 1-12

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2019.1636853>

Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-87361>

Pitkin's Second Way: Freeing Representation Theory from Identity

By Mette Marie Staehr Harder

REPRESENTATION, 2020, VOL. 56, NO. 1, 1–12,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2019.1636853>

ABSTRACT

Within the last decade, sociologists as well as scholars of political culture and elections have come to conclusions that should warn us about studying political interests as something that is linked to the identity of people in a group. Yet, despite innovation within representation theory concerning the way in which we are to approach and study identity groups, representation theorists, for the most part, continue to conceive of interest as something that is linked to identity. This paper offers an alternative route. Reopening Pitkin's classical approach to representation points out that her concept of substantively acting for is a dual one. Hence, it consists of acting for interests that are attached to the identity of specific people on the one hand (what I term 'Pitkin's first way') and interests that exist unattached of peoples' identity on the other (what I term 'Pitkin's second way'). By reclaiming this much forgotten second way and readjusting it so that it is capable of incorporating the important innovations of recent representation theory and the twenty-first century, the paper creates an opportunity for representation theorists and political actors alike, to create new distance between identity and interests.

KEYWORDS Substantive representation; identity; group interests; unattached interests.

Introduction

On 15 August 2018, USA Today's front page featured a story on President Trump referring to a former aide as a 'dog'. The former aide was a young man of colour and one of the few African-Americans to have served in Trump's West Wing. As the article points out, the tweet was merely the latest in a row of heated tweets directed towards people of colour. Within the article, the journalist's sources speculated that Trump's tweets had the potential to affect 'the African-American

vote' in the coming Midterm election as well as the President's approval rate among African-Americans, which was already very low.

The reason I introduce this article is that it represents a case of how society and representation theorists do commonly think about political interests and representation, as something that is attached to the identity of a certain group.¹ Accordingly, the newspaper article assumes that the group of Afro-Americans will be particularly (and perhaps even equally) outraged by the President's racist name-calling. This might be the case. Yet, one cannot help to wonder if there are other groups of people, who might be just as outraged by the remarks, e.g. people – of all races – who do generally not approve of presidents (or anyone for that matter) who call out other people in racist manners. Would not their vote be affected by the wordings of the President come November? Quite surely it would. Yet, when we conceive of interests as something tightly connected to the identity of a particular group of people, we risk missing the people who are just as outraged by the remarks of the president – but are not black.

Tendencies that have been described by sociologists and political scientists alike, should warn us about applying this ordinary way of looking too extensively at political groups' interests as phenomena that are initially connected to a specific group identity. Accordingly, though Phillips's (1995) call for a greater focus on the interconnection between identity and representation has been one of the most important additions to recent representation theory, could it be that we have gotten too caught up in the connection between the two, and that a lessor focus on identity could be liberating and needed?

For more than a decade, sociologists and scholars of political culture have described a development in which people today – unlike a few decades ago – do not 'automatically' identify with a particular group. For example, as pointed out by Beck, people in the postmodern Western society do not automatically belong to a predetermined class, ethnic or even gender group. Instead, they construct their own identity (Beck, 2002). Developments like this have had the implication that today people feel solidarity or empathy with those with whom they agree, not those that share the same gender, age, socioeconomic status, etc. (see Welzel & Inglehart, 2014). Beck describes this as a transition from externally imposed solidarity to an internally chosen one (Beck, 2002), whereas Welzel and Inglehart characterises it like, Familiarity, belongingness, and likeness with others become less important, while mutually agreed interests and empathy with the situation of others become more important factors in creating a sense of solidarity with the situation of others (Welzel and Inglehart,

2017, p. 303). Yet, the potential groundbreaking consequences that the lesser importance of identity and greater importance of mutually agreed interests and empathy with the situation of others could have for representation theory have not occurred. Hence, within representation theory today, scholars of substantive representation have come to question the idea of solid groups having solid interests that are up for measuring. Accordingly, while holding on to the idea of a relationship between citizens' interests and their identity, scholars have formulated new thoughts on how to conceive of representation of identity groups that apply notions of constructivist claim-making (e.g. Celis, Childs, Kantola, & Krook, 2014; Saward, 2006, 2010; Squires, 2008). Another approach is to conceptualise of group interest formation as a complex and dynamic process that can only be accurately understood through the lens of intersectionality (Celis & Mügge, 2018; Severs, Celis, & Erzeel, 2016). Consequently, recognising empirical and theoretical problems concerning the idea of straight forward relations between identity and interests these scholars have sought important new routes to study substantive representation. Yet, thus far no approaches have ceased to emphasise the relation between identity and interest ownership when studying substantive representation.

Recognising the important changes in society, this paper formulates a theoretical approach which will allow scholars to study substantive representation as something that does not depend on identity. This approach reopens Pitkin's classical account of substantively acting for, and it argues that though it is not very recognised, Pitkin's concept of interest representation is actually a dual one: One part of it concerns acting for interests that belong to a group (the interest is attached to this group). This is the way in which society, and representation theories today, conceive of representation, and it is the way in which we normally think of Pitkin's notion of substantively acting for. Yet, another part of Pitkin's concept is acting for interests that do not belong to any group. Pitkin refers to these interests as 'unattached', and she sets forth an ideal typical account of this type of representation based on an interpretation of Edmund Burke. As I show below, a revitalisation of this part of Pitkin's notion of substantively acting for – which I term her second way – could bring a much needed new way of thinking about interest representation in the twenty-first century, because it provides for a theoretical opportunity to part identity from interests. Accordingly, as I argue below, this second way provides researchers with tools that are more capable of capturing the tendencies described by sociologists and scholars of political culture. Moreover – and at least as important – by removing identity as a barrier for participation, it allows for more inclusive political practices.

Below, the first section sets out to describe the role of Pitkin's, 1967 book in today's research on representation as well as the way in which researchers of the so-called Constructivist turn have

importantly parted from parts of the framework developed by Pitkin. The second section interprets Pitkin's take on political interests. In this section, I argue that though it is often not realised, Pitkin's concept of interests – as well as her concept of representatives acting for those interests – is actually a dual concept which one may think of as acting for attached interests on the one hand (what I refer to 'Pitkin's first way') and acting for unattached interests on the other (what I refer to as 'Pitkin's second way'). In section three, I assess what we may gain from Pitkin's second way and point to some of her 1967 findings, from which I believe we need to part. Finally, in section four, I sum up the argument of the paper and discuss how the re-claiming of Pitkin's second way will help researchers shed the automatic assumptions of specific relationships between identity and interest. Accordingly, this section sets forth research questions to be explored empirically in future research.

State of the Art: Pitkin and Representation Theory Today

It is safe to say that the work of few modern scholars have meant so much for present research on political representation as Hanna Pitkin's 'The Concept of Representation' (Pitkin, 1967). Here Pitkin sums up representation as being a matter of 'the making present of something which is nevertheless not literally present' (Pitkin, 1967, p. 144). Most notably her important distinction between representation as 'standing for something or someone' ('darstellen'), or as a matter of 'acting for something or someone' ('vertreten') (Pitkin, 1967, p. 59) has affected the way in which scholars today think of representation as being a matter of either resembling the represented (so-called 'descriptive representation') or of furthering that person's interests (so-called 'substantive representation'). Especially, these concepts are applied in the extensive and innovative empirical research on representation of women, which apply the theoretically concepts developed by Pitkin, when investigating why a rise in so-called women's descriptive representation does not automatically give rise in what is labelled women's substantive representation (Celis, Childs, Kantola, & Krook, 2008; Celis & Mazur, 2012; Childs & Lovenduski, 2013; Dahlerup, 2014; TaylorRobinson & Escobar-Lemmon, 2014). In sum – and as pointed out by Runciman – still today Pitkin's framework is the standard English-language account of the idea of representation (Runciman, 2007, p. 93). However, it is safe to say that Pitkin's account of representation has not gone by uncriticized. Here, I will concentrate on the important critique – or developments of the framework put forth by Pitkin – which scholars within the Constructivist turn have articulated.

Describing Pitkin's classical way of thinking about representation as a situation in which a representative functions as a delegate or trustee for his constituency – to be controlled by these at a later point in time – as promissory representation, Mansbridge points out that representation is not

always best described this way. In fact, she reveals that this type of acting for, which assumes forward-looking intentionality, is merely one of several types of representation (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 516). Thus, besides this type of representation, representation may also involve that the representatives look within for guidance to action (gyroscopic representation), represent people who share their interests but are not part of their constituency (surrogate representation) or act in a certain way because they believe that their constituencies will agree with their action at the time of a future election (anticipatory representation) (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 515). Also, in 2006 Saward very importantly started from Pitkin's conceptual framework, when he formulated his approach to conceiving of representation as claim-making. Accordingly, Pitkin's framework, he pointed out, leaves out the most important part of the representation, because it treats the represented and their interests as a given. Instead of doing so, Saward advocated that political figures (or political parties or other groups, for example) make representations of their constituencies, their countries, themselves. Crucially, these representations are an unavoidable part of a 'substantive acting for', and any theory of political representation must take them on board (Saward, 2006, p. 301). Hence, stressing the performative side of political representation Saward (among others) brought terms like 'maker', 'subject', 'object' and 'audience' into representation theory and called for scholars to focus on the way in which the central actors and actions are constructed through the representative processes of claim-making (Saward, 2006). In the past years, Mansbridge and Saward's points have been developed and refined. For example, Saward's point that political representation – unlike in Pitkin's version – does not only occur within the realms of parliamentary and electoral institutions, has been advanced even further (Celis et al., 2014; Squires, 2008). Other important developments are the way in which Severs brings back Pitkin's demand for potential responsiveness to the area of conceiving of representation as claim making (Severs, 2010) as well as the way in which Tanasescu urges us to give up on the idea of representation as something that has to do with interests. Hence, in order to better understand the representation of non-humans, she urges scholars to approach representation as subject-formation only (Tanasescu, 2014).

Considering the degree to which Pitkin's framework for how to conceive of representation has been applied within representation theory, it is remarkable how little attention her conceptualisation of substantively acting for unattached interests has received. When turning to describe this concept – as well as the centrality I believe that 'the nature of an interest' plays in Pitkin's way of thinking about substantively acting for – I will also discuss the way in which researchers have applied and interpreted Pitkin's thought on this.

Pitkin's Second Way; Acting for Unattached Interests

It is generally agreed upon within the field of representation that for an action of representation to qualify as a case of substantive representation in Pitkin's view, it needs to be at least potentially responsive to the person represented within the action in question (Disch, 2011; Runciman, 2007; Severs, 2010 see also Pitkin (1967) 155). Pitkin's analysis of this type of representation centres on the so-called mandate-interdependence dispute, which concerns the question of whether a representative ought to act as his constituency would prefer him to (the mandate perspective) or as he himself believes is the best way to act on their behalf (interdependent perspective). To Pitkin, the position of a writer within this classical debate, as well as his take on representation as acting for in general, depends on his 'metapolitics' which can be summarised³ as his views on three questions of which the answers will always be interrelated:

(1) The nature of interests (are interests perceived as unattached and objective or as attached and subjective?) (Pitkin, 1967, p. 210).

(2) The nature of the issues (are issues perceived as questions of fact or of value?) (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 209–210).

(3) The capacities of representatives and constituents (is it the representative or the represented who is the most capable of understanding the interest and the issues at hand?)(Pitkin, 1967, pp. 210–11).

In Pitkin's view, substantive representation is about representation of interests,⁴ and the question of an interests' nature is very important for a writer's overall metapolitics (Pitkin, 1967, p. 146, 167, 209–11). Here, I want to stress the part of this question that concerns whether the writer thinks of an interest as existing in attached or unattached form. An interest is conceived of as attached when we think of it as being the interest of someone or somebody, and Pitkin points out that the attached form is the most common way to think about interests⁶ (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 198–190). When writers apply the genitive case to describe interests – as we do when we talk of 'women's interests' or 'the interests of farmers' – they think of interests as something that appears in attached form; something that is owned by the ones who have it. Another characteristic is that when viewed this way, interests are linked to one or more individuals and it is assumed that interest owners will want to further their interests in a rational and egoistic manner (Pitkin, 1967, p. 193). To illustrate the concept of attached interests (and the position of 'the mandate perspective' in the mandate-independence dispute,

which it gives rise to) Pitkin draws mainly on Madison's writings as well as those of the British Utilitarians.

To Pitkin, interests may however also be viewed very differently: as something people do not own, but do merely participate in. Abstractions – like 'world peace', 'union solidarity', or 'truth' – are examples of such unattached interests and these too may be thought of as represented substantively within the political sphere; To be sure, representing need not necessarily be of a person or persons; abstractions, too, can be represented in the substantive sense of acting for them ... through activity, speaking and voting in Parliament (Pitkin, 1967, p. 154).

As an ideal typical example of acting for unattached interests, Pitkin relies on the example of Burke. To Burke – Pitkin tells us – interests are objective, broad, relatively fixed and few in number: These interests are largely economical and are associated with particular localities whose livelihood they characterise, and whose over-all prosperity they involve (Pitkin, 1967, p. 174). Still, these interests do not exist independently of people, but the relationship between the interest and the people being represented through this interest is very different from how we normally conceive of this relationship. Accordingly, these people do not possess the interest, they participate in this: To a very great extent, these interests are conceived of as unattached; it is not the interest of farmers but the agricultural interest ... A locality 'partakes of' or 'participate in' such an interest; the locality does not 'have' the interest (Pitkin, 1967, p. 174). As it is evident here, this way of thinking about the relationship between people and interests is radically different from how we conceive of this today. Hence, unlike theorists today, Burke almost never speaks of an individual's interest, or of the interest of a group (Pitkin, 1967, p. 174). Nevertheless, Pitkin stresses that in the eyes of Burke, people are important for the substantive representation carried out in parliament. This is so because it is a prerequisite for good substantive representation that the 'feelings', 'sentiments' or 'desires' (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 183, 188) of all people of the nation are represented in parliament. According to Pitkin, this almost democratic element in Burke's writings is evident in his thoughts about virtual representation. To Burke, virtual representation is a communion of interests and sympathy in feelings and desires and to be virtually represented is to be so 'in essence or effect, although not formally or actually' (Pitkin, 1967, p. 175). Hence, citizens in the postmodern era, like Burke, stress the importance of sharing feelings and sentiments, yet to Burke, people who participate in the same interest will automatically share feelings. Accordingly, he famously claims, it is not necessary for the people of Birmingham to send a representative to parliament, because their feelings are already represented by the representative elected in Bristol, which – like Birmingham – participates in the

trading interest. In fact, to Burke, the question concerning the representation of feelings is so important that he lets it be the determinant of whether or not an area needs to be actually represented. Thus, if a disfranchised group has serious substantive grievances that are not represented in parliament, this area needs an actual representative. As examples, he sets forth the Irish Catholics and the American colonies (Pitkin, 1967, p. 178).

Pitkin's thorough analysis of Burke illustrates the importance she assigns to a scholar's take on the nature of interests as well as the way in which the elements in a writer's Metapolitics is interrelated. Consequently, in her interpretation of Burke it is because of the nature of interests that Burke may resonate as he does judging the capabilities of the representative and the represented concerning understanding the true interest of the nation. Accordingly, Pitkin explains, in Burke's view it is because interests are unattached and objective and because representatives are in a unique position to discover these (they have a higher moral character, and have the opportunity to take part in the parliamentary process of deliberation) that Burke applies the interdependence perspective in the mandate-interdependence debate. Conversely, following the opposite ideal typical position of the notion of 'substantively acting for' – as put forward by Madison and the British Utilitarians – it is the attached nature of interests which makes interests subjective and always best understood by their owners (Pitkin, 1967, p. 159, 192).⁷ In Table 1 I have summed up Pitkin's two ideal typical examples of substantive representation (or 'substantively acting for' in Pitkin's terms) and the way in which the nature of an interest is interlinked to the rest of an author's theory of substantive representation.

It should be noticed that Pitkin's description of substantively acting for an abstraction (which is an example of an unattached interests) is a little unclear at one point in her 1967 text (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 154–155). Here she defines abstractions in terms of something that may exist completely freely of people. Accordingly, if one is to take Pitkin on her word here, it must logically follow that one cannot conceive of abstractions as something that can be substantively represented, because the premise of this type of activity – that it is potentially responsive to the represented – is not met. In other words, it appears that there are no people on the other end of the abstraction being articulated by a representative. It seems that Runciman does in fact take Pitkin on her word and concludes that Pitkin did not believe that the typical abstraction could be substantively represented in a political context, because it does not meet the demand of potential responsiveness (what he names in very precise terms 'the non-objective criterion') (Runciman, 2007, p. 97). Yet doing so, he appears to overlook the places where Pitkin explicitly states that it can (Pitkin, 1967, p. 154, 156, 210, as well as

the book's chapter eight) and the place in the text in which she points out that the question of whether or not abstractions may be represented substantively depends on the concrete situation in question (Pitkin, 1967, p. 155). Thus, as Pitkin explains, we may distinguish between two types of situation in which an abstraction is articulated in parliament: one is the incident in which an abstraction does not have any people on the other end that may potentially react to the articulation. In this case, we may not say that the abstraction is represented. On the other hand, the situation is another when there are people on the other end or as Pitkin writes; 'If we think of the abstraction as acting through its representatives, present in his activity, animating and directing what he does, then we will speak of representation' (Pitkin, 1967, p. 155).

Table 1: Pitkin's Ideal Typical notions of Interests and the Types of Substantive Representation they each generate

	<i>Acting for attached interests (Madison)</i>	<i>Acting for unattached interests (Burke)</i>
Nature of interests:	Interests are attached to a group or a faction of individuals Interests are what the interest owners think they are (subjective)	Interests are unattached. Individuals participate in an interest Interests exist 'out there' to be discovered (objective)
Nature of issues:	Opinions on issues are seen as a matter of personal priority	Opinions on issues are seen as a matter of (moral) fact
Capacities of constituency to know interests:	High	Low
Capacities of representatives to know interests:	Low	High
Classical view of the representative-constituency relationship:	Mandate perspective	Interdependence perspective

Source: Author

Pitkin's Second Way Re-Considered

Gains from Pitkin's Second Way

Normally, following what I term Pitkin's first way, researchers who study representation and elections focus on the representation of interests that are attached to somebody. In fact, when using this way of thinking about interest representation, this ownership is the only thing that initially defines an attached interest. As examples, we may think of workers' interests, interest of women, interests of indigenous people, etc. However, such interests may also be conceived of as unattached interests: getting a salary one can live off, gender equality and preserving indigenous cultures. Depending on the concrete formulations, the essence of these could be the same, but in the unattached form the interest owners disappear (or they become much more distant, depending on the concrete example). Pitkin's ideal typical notions of interests and the types of substantive representation they each generate. Acting for attached interests (Madison) Acting for unattached interests (Burke) Nature of interests Interests are attached to a group or a faction of individuals Interests are what the interest owners think they are (subjective) Interests are unattached. Individuals participate in an interest Interests exist 'out there' to be discovered (objective) Nature of issues Opinions on issues are seen as a matter of personal priority Opinions on issues are seen as a matter of (moral) fact Capacities of constituency to know interests High Low Capacities of representatives to know interests Low High Classical view of the representative-constituency relationship Mandate perspective Interdependence perspective.

In a time in which group identities are unpredictable, ever-changing and not nearly as important to citizens as they used to be, political scientists are in need of ways to conceive of interests without initially linking these to identities. Pitkin's second way of acting for unattached interests allows for this. Consequently, it has the advantage that scholars are not obliged to define an interest owner. Instead, scholars are to set up the content of the interest they want to investigate. As I explain below, this may be done through methods of very different ontological and epistemological approaches. Subsequently, by bypassing the initial step in which group identities are discovered, constructed or assumed, Pitkin's second way provides for a means to bring a much-needed distance between identity and interests representation into representation theory.

Likewise – but definitely not of less importance – if applied more broadly, Pitkin's second way could have consequences for political mobilisation and representation in society. Accordingly, since the paradigm of attached interests assumes that a person will act egoistically in order to promote his/her own interest, once an attached interest has been formulated, we have simultaneously

formulated a someone whom we consider to be ‘the natural’ person to promote this interest. In rare cases, other people may, of course, act in favour of this interest too (e.g. due to phenomena like Young’s ‘differentiated solidarity’ (Young, 2000)), but we would not expect them to. In fact, when we conceive of an interest in attached form, we may become suspicious or doubtful towards a person who claims to support this interest but does not share the identity to which the interest is attached. Hence, when conceived of in attached form, interests can be a very excluding thing. Moreover, in cases where we use a binary term to describe the interest, it is logically assumed that we would not expect someone connected to the opposite of that term to act for this interest. Considering the consequences of this logic in relation to the representation of women’s interests in parliaments all over the world, this becomes more than a theoretical problem of representation theorists merely. Lately, scholars within the field have stressed the importance of not overlooking representation in which ‘he acts for she’ (Celis et al., 2008; Celis & Erzeel, 2015; Childs & Krook, 2006). Yet, in most places, female representatives are by far the most active representatives of women’s’ interests (Childs & Krook, 2008; Wängnerud, 2009). One cannot help but wonder if it would make a difference for men’s likelihood to participate in these interests if we conceived of these in their unattached version instead. E.g. the interest of gender equality, in which women are not a priori framed as the key actors. Would it make male representatives more inclined to act, if they were not excluded by the mere definition of these interests? Would voters be more likely to expect them to? To suggest that this is in fact so is very much in line with Pitkin’s thoughts on the relationship between language and action. Hence, she introduces her 1967 book with her thoughts on this relation:

‘Since human beings are not merely political animals but also language-using animals, their behavior is shaped by their ideas. What they do and how they do it depends upon how they see themselves and their world, and this in turn depends upon the concepts through which they see. (Pitkin, 1967, p. 1.’

In a situation in which males are overrepresented in parliaments all over the world – and therefore important actors in the push towards greater gender equality – the implications of the use of these terms seems worth exploring by activists striving for a more gender equal society.

Adjustments of Pitkin’s Second Way

Having established how the second way of Pitkin may help researchers free themselves from the task of initially setting up shared characteristics of the people who participate in an interest, I have implicitly stripped Pitkin’s concept of unattached interests from several of the attributes, which

Pitkin found to be linked to this way of looking at interests within classical and modern representation theory. In this section, I make explicit some of the most important characteristics with which we need to part. First and foremost, we need to distance ourselves from the particular example of Burke and take with us only the way in which he thinks of interests as existing unattached to people. Thus, just as we today are capable of thinking of attached interests without applying the specifics of Madison and the British Utilitarians, which Pitkin uses to illustrate the phenomenon of attached interests, we need to let go of Burke's elitist and non-democratic ideas as well as his overall 'metapolitics'.

Secondly, it is important to point out that researchers may easily apply a much more dynamic and diverse notion of interests than the one put forward by Burke. For Burke, Pitkin tells us, the interests in which people participate are quite fixed and few in number. However, there is no reason why a researcher who conceives of interests as something that exists independently of specific people's identity should think of interests in this way. Hence, one could just as well think of interests as more complex and dynamic; e.g. while some interests may exist permanently; others may flourish and then fade away. Or the researcher may assume – or discover empirically – that some people participate in the same (or similar) interests year after year; whereas others move in and out of interests.

Thirdly, unlike Burke who was able to foresee which people would participate in which interests (he foresaw this on the basis of the major trade in the region in which people lived), I am not suggesting that we will automatically be able to say who will participate in which interests. Whether we as researchers believe ourselves to be capable of this depends on the way in which we approach interests at an ontological and epistemological level as well as the interlinked sub-question of whether or not we think of humans as behaving rationally and egoistically. Yet, as previously stated, the fact that we do not need to engage in this activity when applying the concept of unattached interest is what I find to be one of the greatest strengths of this way of thinking about interest representation. And finally fourth, I suggest that we move away from the tendency that Pitkin finds when studying writers who describe substantive representation; namely the tendency of a link between looking at interests as unattached on the one hand, and thinking of the content of an interest as an objective fact on the other. In conclusion, scholars applying the concept of unattached interests may just as well conceive of an unattached interest as something subjective (and apply methods of qualitative observation as suggested by Weldon (2002)) or as something constructed (and use the concepts and methods laid forth by Saward (2006) and Celis et al. (2014)).

While describing the ways in which Pitkin's concept of unattached interests should be altered, it is important to stress that though one is initially able to bypass the step of perceiving of a group of interest owners, this does not mean that there are no people on the other end. Hence, as described above, to Pitkin, representation can only be considered as acting for if there are people to whom the representatives are potential responsive. These are the people who (at a certain point in time) participate in an interest. An important research question might very well be to find out who these people are. Yet, as importantly pointed out by Mansbridge, these people need not necessarily be linked to a representative or a representative action in the spacious or timely manner which Pitkin initially assumed (Mansbridge, 2003).

Conclusion and the Way Forward

In this paper, I have encouraged scholars to approach the question of interest representation through 'Pitkin's second way'. This approach involves conceiving of interests as something that appears in an unattached form, as something that does not belong to a particular group but something that people may participate in. I have laid forth how we need to part from most of the characteristics that Pitkin's ideal typical example of Burke holds in order to apply this way of thinking to the twenty-first century.

Moreover, I have suggested that because the concept of unattached interests does not set up an identity as barriers for political participation in the same way as attached interests do, this way of conceiving of interests provides for a more inclusive version of democracy. Furthermore, because concepts of unattached interests can be applied by scholars without the initial assumption of a group of people with similar characteristics, I have argued that Pitkin's second way provides a tool that may help representation theory move free of its interconnectedness to group identity. Consequently, by applying Pitkin's second way of unattached interests, representation theorists will be able to conceive of representation without starting with the concept of group identity, which – according to sociologists and scholars of political culture – has become increasingly less important to citizens in the postmodern society. Yet, for scholars who prefer to keep a focus on the interconnectedness of identity and representation, it provides yet another way to capture the fluctuating and unpredictable ways in which identities occur today. However, if applied in its intended, full version, which initially enables scholars to put identity on the shelf, the second way, which I have set up in this paper, will call for research questions on substantive representation to be reformulated and for new research questions to be developed. Take for example the field that

studies representation and women. How would scholars in this area approach studies of substantive and descriptive representation if they parted from the idea of attached interests? Would they look into the substantive representation of 'gender equality' on the one hand and of 'traditional gender roles' on the other? Furthermore, how would we conceive of descriptive representation of gender equality? Would we need to study this at a more narrow level, focusing on each issue? Would the constitutive approach be the only way forward? Would it be better to put forward new, abstract structures to replace identity as the scales on which we measure descriptive representation? Or would we only be able to study the representation of unattached interests such as gender equality in its substantive and symbolic form? Hopefully, future research will set out to explore such questions.

Notes

1. This paper applies a wide definition of identity. Hence, identity is understood as the characteristics of a person that are thought of as important. These characteristics could be nationality, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. By groups, I apply the mainstream way of thinking about these as described by Young (Young, 2000). Accordingly, groups are viewed as people who share certain characteristics or experiences (a substance) that set them apart from others. Moreover, there does not need to be a relation between these people (Young, 2000, p. 82, 87–98). In other words, in this paper a group is what Brubaker suggests we term 'a category' (Brubaker, 2002, pp. 169–170).
2. See also Frank's short summary of Pitkin's mandate-independence dilemma (Frank, 2011, pp. 404–402).
3. The three levels are my summary of Pitkin's thoughts on this. Pitkin herself defines the characteristics which determine the writer's position in slightly different ways throughout her text (see Pitkin, 1967, p. 146, 166–167, 210).
4. Accordingly, Pitkin's notion of acting for is similar to Plotke's notion of the ideal type of democratic representation, expressed as follows: the starting point in a democratic view of representation should be interest representation and sets out to describe how the represented and the representative are to act according to these interests (Plotke, 1997, pp. 32–33). Contrary to Pitkin though, to Plotke the concept of interest seems merely to consist of interests that are attached to somebody.

5. Others scholars have stressed other aspects of Pitkin's dual concept. E.g. Wellstead, Stedman, and Parkins (2003) who applies Pitkin's conceptual framework to analyse debates about local involvement in forest management distinguish between 'subjective interests' on the one hand and 'unattached objects' on the other (Wellstead et al., 2003, p. 5).
6. Moreover, when appearing in this form interests may be termed by a writer as 'wishes' or 'desires'.
7. It is important to point out that though Pitkin explains that this particular duality (objective unattached and subjective-attached) do most often come together (Pitkin, 1967, p. 161), she does not argue that these are always interlinked this way, since their exact correlation depends on the specific metapolitics of a writer (Pitkin, 1967, p. 146). For example, she refers to Marxism as an example in which interests are conceived of as attached (they are the workers' interests) as well as existing objectively (it is in the interest of the workers to control the means of production, whether they believe it to be or not). This duality of objective and attached interests may, however, create complications, she notes. Therefore, she states that most modern theories of interests introduce a subject element even though they approach interests in an objective manner (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 158–159).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributor

Mette Marie Staehr Harder is a Carlsberg Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University. Among others, her work has appeared in *Scandinavian Political Studies* and *Parliamentary Affairs*.

ORCID Mette Marie Staehr Harder

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1182-514X>

References

Beck, Ulrich & Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. (2002). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: Sage.

Brubaker, R. (2002, August). Ethnicity without groups. *European Journal of Sociology*, 43, 163–189.

REPRESENTATION 11

Celis, K., Childs, S., Kantola, J., & Krook, M. L. (2008). Rethinking women's substantive representation. *Representation*, 44(2), 99–110.

Celis, K., Childs, S., Kantola, J., & Krook, M. L. (2014). Constituting women's interests through representative claims. *Politics & Gender*, 10(02), 149–174.

Celis, K., & Erzeel, S. (2015). Beyond the usual suspects: Non-left, male and non-feminist MPs and the substantive representation of women. *Government and Opposition*, 50(01), 45–64.

Celis, K., & Mazur, A. G. (2012). Hanna Pitkin's 'concept of representation' revisited: Introduction. *Politics & Gender*, 8, 508–512.

Celis, K., & Mügge, L. M. (2018). Whose equality? Measuring group representation. *Politics*, 38(2), 197–213.

Childs, S., & Krook, M. L. (2006). Gender and politics: The state of the art. *Politics*, 26(1), 18–28.

Childs, S., & Krook, M. L. (2008). Critical mass theory and women's political representation. *Political Studies*, 56(3), 725–736.

Childs, S., & Lovenduski, J. (2013). Political representation. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & L.

S. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of gender and Politics* (pp. 489–513). Oxford University Press.

Dahlerup, D. (2014). Representing women: Defining substantive representation of women. In M. C.

Escobar-Lemmon & M. M. Taylor-Robinson (Eds.), *Representation. The case of women* (pp. 58–78). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Disch, L. (2011). Toward a mobilization conception of democratic representation. *American Political Science Review*, 105(1), 100–114.

Frank, J. (2011). Standing for others: Reform and representation in Emerson's political thought. In D. S. Malachuk Alan Levine (Ed.), *A political companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (pp. 383–414). The University Press of Kentucky.

Mansbridge, J. (2003). Rethinking representation. *American Political Science Review*, 97(04), 515–528.

Phillips, A. (1995). *The politics of presence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Pitkin, H. (1967). *The concept of representation*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Plotke. (1997). Representation is democracy. In *Constellations*, 4(2), 19–34.

Runciman, D. (2007). The Paradox of political representation. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 15(1), 93–114.

Saward, M. (2006). The representative claim. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 5(3), 297–318.

Saward, M. (2010). *The representative claim*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Severs, E. (2010). Representation as claims-making. Quid responsiveness? *Representation*, 46(4), 411–423.

Severs, E., Celis, K., & Erzeel, S. (2016). Power, privilege and disadvantage: Intersectionality theory and political representation. *Politics*, 36(4), 346–354.

Squires, J. (2008). The constitutive representation of gender: Extra-parliamentary representations of gender relations. *Representation*, 44(2), 187–204.

Tanasescu, M. (2014). Rethinking representation: The challenge of non-humans. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 49(1), 40–53.

Taylor-Robinson, M. M., & Escobar-Lemmon, M. C. (2014). Dilemmas in the meaning and measurement of representation. In M. C. Escobar-Lemmon & M. M. Taylor-Robinson (Eds.), *Representation: The Case of Women* (pp. 1–18). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wängnerud, L. (2009). Women in parliaments: Descriptive and substantive representation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 51–69.

Weldon, L. S. (2002). Beyond bodies: Institutional sources of Representation for women in democratic policymaking. *The Journal of Politics*, 64(4), 1153–174.

Wellstead, A. M., Stedman, R. C., & Parkins, J. R. (2003). Understanding the concept of representation within the context of local forest management decision making. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 5(1), 1–11.

Welzel, C., & Inglehart R. (2014). Political culture. In D. Caramani (Ed.), *Comparative Politics* (3rd ed., pp. 284–301). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press