This is a peer-reviewed, accepted author manuscript of the following chapter:
Judge, D 2024, Reimagining parliamentary representation. in D Judge & C Leston-Bandeira (eds), *Reimagining Parliament.* Bristol University Press, Bristol, pp. 48-64.
https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529227024.ch004

4. Reimagining parliamentary representation

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Introduction <2>

There is a simple, but profound, premise that underpins this chapter: a reimagining of 'parliamentary representation' requires a 'systemic view of representation'. In the words of one of the foremost theorists of representation, Hanna Pitkin (1967:221-2), 'what makes representation is the overall-structure and functioning of the system, and the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people'. Of necessity, therefore, reimagining parliamentary representation involves some notion of an interlocking of electoral modes with non-electoral modes of representation within a system of democratic parliamentarism. Such a reimagining also requires that the resultant paradoxes and contradictions attendant upon this conjunction need to be factored into the analysis. Without this interweaving, on the one hand, a reimagining of the electoral dimensions of representation alone might well be constricted to the narrow boundaries of a 'standard model of representation', whilst, on the other, a reimagining exclusively of the non-electoral dimensions runs the risk of theorising the institution of parliament out of existence. Before proceeding, therefore, some exposition of the 'standard model' is required, first, to outline its 'imagining' of representation; second, to identify the core principles that underpin that imagining; and third, to use those principles as a guide for a reimagining of parliamentary representation in the United Kingdom. Also, before proceeding further, it needs to be made clear from the outset that the focus here is upon a reimagining of parliament as a *collectivity*. This is both a distinct and specific focus in treating parliament as a collective representative institution, rather than as a set of dyadic representative relationships between individual MPs and individual constituencies, or as a bifurcated institution with one of its parts – the political executive (the government) – enmeshed in broader representational relationships of 'governance' (for the significance of this focus see Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2018; Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2021).

Orthodox imaginings: The standard account of democratic representation <2>

The concepts of representation and legitimation are umbilically connected in democratic parliamentary systems. The basic premise of such systems is that the decisional outputs of government – public policies – are treated as legitimate because the representatives responsible for

those decisions are themselves deemed to be legitimate. A comprehensive account of democratic legitimacy has, therefore, to explain why some individuals, in the absence of all other individuals, are believed to have the right to act on behalf of those who are not present at the point of decision.

'The standard account' of representative democracy sketches a basic analytical frame within which to explain this conundrum. In effect, however, there is no single comprehensive 'account' but rather iterations 'of a consolidated view of a model of political representation institutionalised in the course of the twentieth century across a number of constitutional democracies' (Castiglione and Warren, 2019:45). The advantage of such a consolidated view, for present purposes, is that it provides a basic frame within which to ground the analysis of political representation and from which to launch a consideration of alternative accounts and models.

Under a 'standard account', the legitimacy of political representation is contingent upon, variously, a set of procedural standards, or long-term, and systematic institutionalised arrangements which regulate the authorisation, responsiveness, and accountability of representatives. These procedures and arrangements are rooted in an 'electoral representative form' (Castiglione and Warren, 2019:21) characterised by: first, principal-agent relationships between represented and representatives encompassing processes of authorisation and accountability; second, formalised political decision-making structures including 'some sort of collegiate representative body in a more than advisory capacity', with the legislature most commonly identified with this role at state level (Pitkin, 1967:227;235); third, dynamic and dialectic election processes, which institutionalise the principles of inclusion and equality in voting rights, and enable electors to make prospective estimations of the potential performance of their representatives as well as retrospective assessments of actual performance; and, fourth, territorial constituencies with a residence-based franchise, serving to inhere historical claims of relative universality and equality into modern systems of political representation. These four defining elements of the 'standard account' come with concomitant normative assumptions.

First, principal-agent relationships assume two parallel processes of authorisation and accountability: one is a chain of authorisation from voter to representative, the other is a distinct, but complementary, chain of accountability from representative to voter. Underpinning such notions of representative chains is the normative claim that representatives should pursue the preferences of their voters. If they do so, then the interests of principal and agent should align. Representation comes to be seen, therefore, not only as the reflection and transmission of interests and demands held by a

principal, but also as a means by which democratic legitimacy can be ascertained and assessed in terms of the degree of responsiveness of the representative towards their constituency and the congruence of 'interests' (broadly conceived in terms of policy positions, issue priorities or ideological preferences) between the represented and representatives. Second, if democratic parliamentarism has 'systematic responsiveness' embedded at its core, then a basic prerequisite is regular elections, which are deemed to be 'genuine', 'free' and 'regular'; and which serve, through equal voting rights, both as 'a simple means and measure of political equality' (Castiglione and Warren, 2006:1) as well as 'the main institutional mechanisms through which political representation guarantees inclusion' (Castiglione, 2020:31). Third, and inextricably bound to these electoral dimensions, is the identification of territorially defined constituencies as the basis of elections. Historically, in the development of democratic representation, 'the tendential equalization of constituencies' provided 'a basis for political equality' (Castiglione, 2015:12). Fourth, and finally, the 'problem of unity' – of how to reconcile the interests of diverse citizens and constituencies with the collective interests of the wider polity – is addressed by invoking the deliberative 'centrality of parliament' as 'the key institutional way in which representation could be made to work democratically' (Castiglione, 2015:15, see also Pitkin, 1967:217,227).

In providing empirical and normative 'imaginings' of how absent citizens are made present in political decision-making, and how the decision-makers and their outputs are legitimated, the 'standard account' serves, as outlined in the preceding paragraph, to reveal how principles of inclusion, equality, responsiveness/congruence, and unity/collectivity – or what Urbinati (2010:83) terms a 'presumption of generality' – are institutionalised in democratic parliamentarism. Equally, however, the 'standard account' also serves to 'problematise' those practical experiences and conventional conceptions (Castiglione and Warren, 2019:22). Inhered within the standard account are complexities, incongruities and paradoxes which have prompted other 'imaginings' or 'recalibrations' of the principles and institutional modes of representation.

Problematising the standard account: challenges and developments <2>

Before outlining suggestions for a '*re*-imagining' of parliamentary representation in the UK, some understanding of the problematisations associated with the standard account – and in turn identification of existing ideational and institutional responses to incongruity and paradox within that account – will help to identify potential analytical trajectories for further '*re*-imagining'. How these trajectories are determined by the intersection of the principles and problematisations of the standard account will be examined in the following section.

Inclusion/exclusion <3>

One 'problematised' issue of the standard account is the relationship between the constitutional design of democratic parliamentarism (particularly its prioritisation of electoral representation) and patterns of political inclusion and exclusion. While elections have traditionally been identified as 'the starting point' of political representation, there is now more explicit recognition of an inclusion-exclusion paradox wherein citizens are simultaneously linked and separated from decision-makers (Urbinati, 2006:4; Urbinati, 2011:24). The punctuated participation of citizens in the electoral process is both decisive in legitimising the decision-making process and its policy outputs, and equally decisive in their *self-exclusion* from the formal representative process thereafter.

A second 'problematised' issue, linked to the first, arises from the premise that political representation constitutes, in essence, a principal-agent relationship. In treating this as a primarily dyadic relationship – where an individual constituent is represented by an individual representative – the standard account and simple agency theories fail to capture the mediated nature of the relationship between constituent, constituency, and representative. A systemic perspective on the other hand leads to an awareness that citizens are represented by their elected representatives in the legislature, but this is only part of a larger representative system wherein 'each citizen is represented throughout the system by nonelected, non-legislative representatives in parties, interest groups, nongovernmental organizations, the media, [and citizens informally representing other citizens]' (Mansbridge, 2011:628; Mansbridge, 2020:18). In which case, attention needs to be paid not only to the process of election but also to 'between-election' modes of representation. An understanding of political representation thus spills out beyond electoral processes to incorporate non-electoral processes and institutions of representation.

Equality <3>

A third 'problematised' issue is the assumption, noted above, that electoral representation provides a simple egalitarianism, an equal standing of citizens in the decision-making process. What the practice of representation in democratic parliamentarism reveals however is that 'the notion of formal political equality might not suffice to guarantee the equal consideration of different interests in parliament' (Elässer and Schäfer, 2022:1363). The extent of this insufficiency has been particularly exposed in numerous theoretical and empirical analyses of the relationship between political equality and descriptive representation. Descriptive representation provides for a more dynamic understanding of legitimation than that provided by standard electoral accounts. It does so through

invocation of the notion of 'social proximity' between representatives and represented to explain and examine how the rightfulness and efficacy of the former to 'act for' the latter is justified and measured by the degree to which the former also 'stands for' the latter (in terms of correspondence of social characteristics and shared experiences). In this sense, descriptive representation is seen to be of vital importance in fostering democratic legitimacy: both normatively and substantively.

Indeed, descriptive representation has become one of the key conceptual tools for contesting structural inequalities (see Brown, 2020; Celis and Erzeel, 2020). Yet, a foregrounding of the descriptive dimension in recent imaginings of political representation has brought in its wake 'problematisations' of how exactly does the conceptualisation and operationalisation of descriptive representation address political inequality; and what criteria are to be used in determining which groups have a legitimate case for descriptive representation? Even if the basic criterion – the existence of identified patterns of structured inequality associated with group membership – is invoked in answer to these questions; contingency has been built into its deployment. This conditionality can be observed in the prioritisation of the claims of some groups above the claims of other groups for the redress of the inequalities confronting them. Stated at its starkest, the group claims of women and minority ethnic people have attracted far more attention than the claims of specific socio-economic groups – the poor or the working class – or groups related to ability/disability.

Beyond questions about the criteria to be used for determining which groups merit descriptive representation, the question of 'what' is being represented substantively is also problematic. One problem is that an answer might spring the trap of 'essentialism' – the assumption that members of a marginalised group by virtue of their membership have unified interests, perspectives, or 'issues' that can be represented. Certainly, this assumption has long been critiqued, contested, even repudiated, but, significantly, it has not been resolved (see Phillips, 2020:180-1). Such critiques have prompted, however, a move beyond single-axis conceptions of group identities, experiences, and interests – where heterogeneity of interest is conceived and analysed within the confines of a specific marginalised group – to conceptions and analyses of multiple axes of inequalities which recognise the 'intersectionality' of cross-cutting identities, experiences and interests (see, for example, Gershon et al, 2019; Reingold, 2022; Montoya et al, 2022). As a result, simple questions posed in the initial conceptualisation of descriptive representation become problematised and lead to more difficult, 'messy', and 'more nuanced' questions about 'complex intersections of multiple axes of identity and power as they relate to political representation and our ability to understand it' (Reingold, 2022:296).

Responsiveness/reflexivity <3>

One of the key characteristics of the standard account is that representation, conceived as a principal-agent relationship, is intrinsically a process of responsiveness. In this account, a legitimate decision-making process is one in which policies made and authorised by elected representatives closely track the interests and preferences of those they represent. Responsiveness is taken, therefore, as an indicator of legitimate representation. Equally, the standard principal-agent account also assumes that political representation provides for elected representatives to be held ultimately responsible and accountable for their actions to the represented. This simple formulation is, however, problematic.

When treated as a simple, dyadic, one-to-one, relationship between individual citizen and an individual elected representative, then determining the flow of causality of responsiveness – from the later to the former – is relatively unproblematic. However, when responsiveness is conceived as a many-to-one relationship (multiple citizens to one representative), or a many-to-many relationship (multiple citizens to multiple representatives), then determining causality becomes more opaque and more problematic. Equally, further problematisation arises from the assumption that responsiveness is a unidirectional process. In the context of contemporary governance, however, responsiveness is effectively a process of multidirectional interactions between elected representatives and citizens. It is a systemic, complex, multi-directional and cyclic process and extends well beyond ideas of a simple chain of electoral responsibility/accountability to include more expansive notions of 'reflexive' responsiveness.

A detailed consideration of 'reflexivity' extends beyond the immediate focus of the present chapter. Instead, a more immediate concern is to discover the potentiality of 'reflexivity' to address some of the problematisation identified above. The key to discovery is to recognise that 'reflexivity' not only allows for mediated representation – through the interactions of political parties, organised groups and social movements with and alongside electoral modes and institutions – but also complements mediation through rooting responsiveness in open and ongoing contestation. In this sense, reflexivity is of importance to a procedural understanding of representation by identifying a dynamic relationship between representatives and represented which 'entails the possibility of sustained deliberation, negotiation and contestation that … demand[s] responsiveness of those governing, not only through elections but also in-between election dates' (König and Siewert, 2021:693).

Unity and the 'presumption of generality' <3>

Within the institutional frame of democratic parliamentarism there is, as noted, above 'the presumption of generality'. Indeed, Urbinati (2010:83), the author of that phrase, is certain that such a presumption 'is essential to the moral legitimacy of political decisions' in representative democracies. There is no presumption, however, that there is an absence of political divisions, or that parties, groups and movements will not seek to promote their partisan and partial interests; rather there is an expectation that these divisions can be reconciled within an articulation of a collective interest. Indeed, what 'grounds' the representative process in democratic parliamentarism is an assumption of unity. In embodying the idea 'that an elected body of responsible citizens is there to legislate in the name of all' (Eriksen and Fossum, 2012:328) elected assemblies have come to enjoy a special status. A status derived from the capacity 'of giving [a] community a single voice and acting on its behalf as though it were a single agent' (Brito Vieira and Runciman, 2008:134). A central tenet of conventional understandings of parliamentary representation, therefore, is this fusion of diversity and unity in the legislature.

If parliamentary representation is thus identified as a process of unification, it also, simultaneously, problematises how such unity is to be achieved. As a process of fusion, the common interest – collective unity – has to be constructed and is not pre-given. Elected representatives through 'sustained deliberation, negotiation and contestation' in the legislature have both to identify and articulate a collective will and, importantly, subject that articulation to 'trial by discussion' in the legislature (Manin, 1997:191). In a context where discursive competition is framed exclusively in terms of 'autonomous deliberation', where parliamentary representatives act independently from extra-parliamentary mandates and from extra-parliamentary control, then the creation of unity out of diversity is relatively unproblematic. However, in the contemporary context of organised political parties – especially where parties see themselves beholden to their own hard-core electoral 'base' – such a view might be considered somewhat naïve. In its starkest formulation, the allegation may be made that party representation is inimical to the articulation of a cohesive national interest. If this is a problematic issue for contemporary imagining of parliamentary representation, then any future reimagining will also have to address this 'problematisation'.

Reimagining parliamentary representation <2>

The preceding sections serve as a prologue to reimagining: first, in identifying the principles to guide the process of reimagining; second, in explaining and justifying their selection; and third, and importantly, in raising issues of problematisation associated with these principles. The word

'problematise' is used advisably here: 'to view, interpret, or analyse (an issue …) as a problem or system of problems to be solved' (OED, 2022). If reimagining is a response to problems of current conceptions and practices of parliamentary representation, then it also needs to offer solutions to those problems.

If solutions are to be found in the following discussion, then they will stem from a recognition that answers will necessarily be complex. There are no simple answers: no simple reimaginings. Instead, there will be a search for answers which acknowledge that: parliamentary representation is nested elementally within a wider representational system; the principles underpinning 'the electoral representative form' are necessarily interlinked; and an expansive process of reimagining will situate the institution of parliament and its elected members as nodal points within intricate and mutating networks of electoral and non-electoral modes of representation. Let the search commence!

'Electoral representative form': principles of equality and inclusion <3>

Political equality, as a condition of legitimacy in democratic parliamentary systems, is institutionalised in electoral institutions and processes and captured in the dictum 'one person, one vote, one value'. The universal franchise provides, in principle, for basic formal political equality through free and fair elections. But as Dahl (2005:195) makes clear: 'If equality in voting is to be implemented, then clearly, …[t]o be free means that citizens can go to the polls without fear of reprisal; and if they are to be fair, then all votes must be counted as equal'. Moreover, as noted above, the equality of voting power also has as its corollary the more expansive notion of institutionalised inclusion of electors in the representative process.

If the principles of equality and inclusion are to serve as markers for a reimagining of electoral representation, then the UK's current electoral system provides little inspiration for such re-envisaging. By most metrics the UK's current electoral system is deficient in securing voter equality or citizen inclusion in the parliamentary representative process. To take the example of the UK's 2019 general election, the simple plurality (first-past-the-post) electoral system, in the context of the UK's multi-party system, displayed both unequal and exclusionary outcomes. There were manifest inequalities in the share of Westminster seats and a party's national vote share: with the average number of votes needed to elect one MP ranging from 38,264 for the Conservative party; 50,837 for Labour; 336,038 for Liberal Democrats; through to 866,435 for the Green party (McInnes, 2020). The Conservative party, with 44 per cent of the vote, secured 56 per cent of seats at Westminster and a majority of 81 seats over opposition parties. Yet, a majority of voters in the UK secured neither a party

candidate of their choice in their own constituency, nor a party in government at the national level. In effect, some estimated 14.5 million voters (45 per cent of all voters) ended up casting their vote for candidates who were not elected (Garland et al, 2020:6).

Discriminatory, exclusionary, outcomes were also evident in the degree to which representatives were 'socially proximate' to the people they represented. While record numbers of women and minority ethnic MPs were elected in the 2019 general election these groups remained proportionately under-represented in the Commons. At that election 220 women became MPs (and by the end of 2022 a further five women had been elected at by-elections). Yet, set against this record, women still accounted for only 35 per cent of MPs although constituting 51 per cent of the UK's population; only 559 women had been elected since 1918, and it has been estimated that it will take a further 45 years for gender parity to be reached in the Commons (Garland et al, 2020:16). Similarly, a record number of minority ethnic MPs were elected in 2019 (10 per cent of all MPs, n.65), but still short of the 85 MPs that would have been needed to reflect the 13 per cent of the UK's adult population from a minority ethnic background. LGBT+ people fared rather better, with the return of 46 LGBT+ MPs (7 per cent of all MPs in 2019) serving as a positive inclusionary symbol for the 3.4 per cent of the UK population who do not consider themselves to be straight or heterosexual.

The starkest exclusionary electoral outcomes, however, were to be found for people with a disability. After the 2019 election only five MPs (one per cent) were self-declared disabled (though some disabled people in the Commons may have chosen not to declare their disability for fear of political discrimination (see Hensman and Schendel-Wilson 2022:44)); yet some 14.6 million people, 22 per cent of the UK's population, have a reported disability. For this 'representation gap' to be closed would have needed 143 self-declared disabled MPs to be returned to Westminster in 2019. Similarly, there is a significant representation gap when it comes to social class, or more particularly the working-class. An estimated 34 per cent of the UK workforce are classified as working class, yet only 13 per cent of Labour MPs and one per cent of Conservative MPs had identifiable prior working class occupational status before entering parliament in 2019. More especially, very few MPs had directly experienced long-term unemployment, and even fewer had endured sustained poverty. Such under-representation, as comparative research demonstrates, matters to the extent that 'differential representation [in legislatures] is always in disfavor of the poor' (Giger et al, 2012:57; see Elsässer and Schäfer, 2022:1377).

Reimagining parliamentary representation

If the current first-past-the-post electoral system is merciless in its disproportionality and its distortions of voter's choices and diversity, then it would be appropriate to consider other 'electoral representative forms' when reimagining parliamentary representation in the UK. In particular, a new look at parliamentary representation might well be advised to start from Kedar et al's (2016:677) analysis of numerous empirical studies and their conclusion that 'democracies with proportional representation are characterized by better representation compared with majoritarian democracies'. The established benefits of PR, listed by Kedar et al (2016:677), are that it: 'allows diverse voices and interests to be heard and considered in parliament, government, and the policymaking process'; 'enables better representation of minority groups as well as women'; provides 'better ideological congruence between the government and voters in comparison to majoritarian systems'; and allocates parliamentary seats '(more or less) proportionately to the votes obtained by the different parties'.

There are of course many systems of proportional representation: some of which are currently used in the parliaments and assemblies of the devolved nations of the UK (Single Transferable Vote for the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Additional Member System for the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments); and many of which are used in Westminster-derived parliaments in Commonwealth countries. Exactly which system should be adopted in a reimagined 'electoral representative form' is not for recommendation here. Nor for that matter should the choice of a new electoral system be left to elected representatives alone (even if that choice is then subject to confirmation by MPs and ultimately referendum). Crucially, and in preface to the consideration of responsiveness in a reimagined representative system (see below), campaigning groups have already argued, that the choice of a new system should ideally be determined by a citizen-led, open and inclusive deliberative process. It would be incumbent upon elected representatives in the UK parliament to be both engaged with this process and responsive to its outcomes.

A reimagining of formal electoral rules alone, however, would be insufficient to secure greater equality and inclusiveness in the representative process. The conceptualisation of equality needs to be broadened beyond 'equal opportunity' or 'competitive equality' to encompass 'equality of result' (see IDEA, 2022). The latter would require positive actions, including compensatory measures, to challenge those structural barriers which perpetuate representational inequalities. The neutralisation of inequalities which restrict the political presence of marginalised groups thus provides a powerful justification for positive, affirmative, action, and has provided the underpinning logic for the rapid introduction of group-based electoral quotas throughout the world. However, the practical

effectiveness of quotas differs markedly across countries; but, as a general proposition, quotas are often seen to have the greatest impact in PR systems, especially those combining closed party lists and high district magnitudes. Moreover, effectiveness is often linked to the specific type of quota and the political context in which they were introduced.

In essence, quotas are designed to 'jump-start' group representation. There are three main types of electoral quotas; reserved seats, candidate/legislative quotas and political party quotas (see IDEA 2022). Given the problems and critiques of reserved seats and legislative quotas, perhaps the most appropriate 'jumping off' point when making the argument for the future deployment of quotas in the UK is to analyse the merits of party quotas. The unalloyed merit of party quotas is that they serve to increase the numbers of women candidates and elected representatives. The Labour party's use of all-women shortlists since 1997, culminated, at the 2019 general election, with the party having both the highest number of female candidates (n.335, 53 per cent of all Labour candidates) and the highest number of female MPs (n.204, 51 per cent of all Labour MPs) of any party in any general election. In short, the 'equality guarantee', offered in the Labour party's use of all-women shortlists, worked.

While gender electoral quotas have been at the centre of most advocacy for, and analyses of, descriptive representation the claims of other under-represented groups – ethnic and racial minorities, disabled, LGBT+, and working class – for 'equality guarantees' through quotas have been amplified in recent years. And, simultaneously, the case for the introduction of youth quotas has gained increased traction. But the creation of separate, single-axis, quotas for under-represented groups generates complex, and possibly insurmountable, problems of co-ordination and implementation. In which case, a reimagining would have to work within an intersectional frame, to address the multiform intersections of gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, class and age, and to investigate the potentialities of 'nested quotas' (see Phillips 2020:184). A reimagining of the 'electoral representative form' thus extends beyond formal electoral institutions and rules; to incorporate a reenvisaging of the 'supply-side' provision of candidates and representatives via political parties.

A further extension of reimagining is also needed to address the broader issue, flagged above by Dahl, that equality in voting can be achieved only in the absence of 'fear of reprisal'. While Dahl's focus was upon voters, his caution also applies forcefully to candidates and elected representatives. Indeed, there is compelling evidence in the UK that the daily abuse, harassment and intimidation suffered by women inhibits them from seeking and reaching elected office. At the 2019 general election, women candidates were significantly more likely to suffer abuse both online and offline than men, and to be

'very concerned' and 'very fearful' when campaigning (Collignon et al, 2022:35-7). Indeed, as Collignon and Rüdig (2021:443) conclude, the abuse suffered by women candidates 'impacts the representation of women because it makes it more difficult for them to get elected by forcing them to modify their campaign behaviour in meaningful ways'. Ultimately, therefore, harassment, abuse and intimidation serve to constrain gender equality in representation, both through women's self-limitation of behaviour and self-exclusion from participation. These constraints especially impact Black, Asian and minority ethnic women. Any future reimagining of representation would need both to address these constraints, and to treat them as systemic problems.

Responsiveness: non-electoral representation <3>

Parliamentary representation entails a dynamic relationship between represented and representatives; but, as noted above, this dynamic representational relationship is not confined exclusively to elections. From a systemic perspective, political representation extends beyond electoral processes and institutions to encompass nonelectoral processes, and 'informal' or 'self-authorised' modes of representation capable of representing citizens and effecting responsiveness from their representatives.

Adopting a systemic perspective and incorporating nonelectoral modes and associated claims-making approaches into a reimagining of parliamentary representation, whilst necessary, is also problematic and runs the risks of generating something tantamount to a conceptual black hole into which all existing ideas about political representation might be sucked. To avoid this fate, therefore, the following discussion will focus exclusively on the responsiveness dynamic between electoral modes and nonelectoral modes of representation.

Claims to represent 'the *interests* of a *specified group*' (Saward, 2010:95 original emphasis) are a key characteristic of nonelectoral representation. These claims are advanced by a wide range of non-statal groups, such as interest groups, social movements, civil society organisations, or nongovernmental organisations (both national and international) as well as by critical actors. And the view that 'representative democracy is all about elections', has long been challenged in the UK in the extent to which other nonelectoral models, modes, and experiments – pluralist, neo-corporatist, and network governance to name but a few – have featured in the post-war period. But these modes and models have pivoted primarily around the mediated relationship between groups and the *executive* rather than between groups and *parliament*. What needs to be reimagined, therefore, is how these groups

may be incorporated, or, more accurately, be 'institutionalised', into an encompassing system of *parliamentary* responsiveness.

Indeed, in many respects, this call for an institutionalised interconnection of parliamentary and nonelectoral modes of representation is the obverse of mounting calls for democratic innovation, particularly for the institutionalisation of democratic mini-publics or sortitioned citizen panels into existing systems of representative democracy (see chapter 5). The key question to be addressed here, however, is the extent to which such innovations, as modes of representation, are compatible with, or fundamentally challenge, parliamentary representation. If it is the latter, then a reimagining would undermine the electoral foundations of parliamentary representation and so detach legitimation from electoral processes and the institutional form of a representative parliament. What would be created would be a new 'nonelectoral institutional form' and one based upon alternative principles of legitimation.

At its furthest extreme, a reimagining of representation in accordance with theories of deliberation and sortition – in its 'open democracy' variant – is meant to be 'not just an improved, more participatory, or differently representative version of representative democracy but a different paradigm altogether', and to constitute 'a radical break from electoral representation' (Landemore, 2021:71, 76). The central institutional feature of this new democracy would not be parliament but 'an open mini-public' as 'an all-purpose, randomly selected body open to the input of the larger public via citizen initiatives and rights of referral as well as a permanent online crowdsourcing and deliberative platform, and ultimately connected to a demos-wide referendum on central issues' (Landemore, 2020:218). In contrast with electoral representation, the representative base would be 'lottocratic' or 'self-selected' in nature. Clearly, 'open democracy' is distinctly, and intentionally, different, therefore, from electoral parliamentary modes of representation. Less radically, but still radically, advocates of 'liquid democracy' – premised on vote delegation, proxy voting, and voters having the capacity to choose different representatives for different issues – do not rule out the possibility that such a system might be 'a potential complement' to existing forms of democratic representation, and capable of being integrated into existing democratic systems (Valsangiacomo, 2021:2). But the word 'potential' does some 'heavy lifting' in such a presumption.

More pragmatically, one way to institutionalise sortition into democratic parliamentarism would be through 'hybrid bicameralism'. This institutional form would combine elections and sortition by having one elected and one randomly selected chamber. Proponents argue that such a scheme would

enhance legitimacy in the parliamentary system as a whole, as a sortition second chamber would 'instantiate political equality' and be 'presumptively responsive to people's interests' (Abizadeh, 2020:800), and have proffered elaborate schemes of 'intelligent institutional design' for the implementation of hybrid bicameralism and the institutionalisation of sortition in a parliamentary system (see Gastil and Olin Wright, 2018; Abizadeh, 2020; Sortition Foundation 2022).

Another way of connecting sortition with parliamentary representation – in a quasi-institutional form – is through the establishment of permanent deliberative mini-publics 'very tightly coupled with the representative system' (Curato et al, 2021:125). The 'Ostbelgien model', examined in chapter 5, provides a particularly striking example of this linkage. This model is of particular importance for the proponents of sortition as it is seen as a critical test of how such a quasi-institutional form would work 'in the wild'. Yet the model comes with its own problematisations. Obviously, this is not the place to examine these issues in detail other than to note that these issues are endemic in the use of mini-publics generally, and to highlight two specific problems.

The first concerns the extent to which mini-publics are conceived as decision-makers, as being 'consequential when it comes to affecting the content of collective decisions' (Dryzek, 2010:23); or are seen simply as a means of 'enhancing the responsiveness of the [extant] political system to the interests, views and policy objectives of the citizenry' (Lafont, 2017:97). Hence a central, perpetual, problem has been whether, and how, mini-publics should be connected to the 'main game' of 'central decision-making processes' in the polity (Goodin, 2012:806). In turn, the second problem is linked directly to this first problem. In essence, this is a problem of legitimation. Generally, if mini-publics are part of an institutional design for a legitimate political order based upon deliberative praxis, then rooting that order in the macro-deliberative system of parliamentary democracy, which privileges electoral representative institutions, generates fundamental conceptual and practical incongruities (see Judge 2014:136-47). In essence there is a 'legitimacy tension'. A tension which is apparent in institutional designs seeking to integrate mini-publics into statal policy making and confer upon them decisional power, and so to transition away from advisory or consultative status.

A related problem is that, if one of the legitimacy claims of mini-publics rests in their descriptive representativeness of society, then the processes by which members are selected are key to sustaining this claim. Hence, selection algorithms designed to optimise fairness in these processes are essential to bolster these legitimation claims (see Flanigan et al, 2021). Beyond their use in sortition processes, however, algorithms are of significance to a wider reimagining of representational responsiveness. If

a key dimension of political responsiveness is congruence – of aligning the activities of representatives to the preferences of the represented – then the accurate discovery of what these preferences are and how they are articulated in a dynamic, complex, multi-directional and cyclic relationship should be factored into a reimagining of parliamentary representation. 'Algorithmisation' – exemplified in artificial intelligence, data-mining and big-data analytics – provides opportunities for representatives to anticipate and align the preferences of the represented. Already notions of 'government by algorithm' and 'e-policy' initiatives – where big data and AI enable governments 'to undertake better assessments of the preferences of citizens' and make them 'more accountable to citizens and even transform the traditional governance model' (Pencheva et al, 2020) – are driving reimagining of public policy making. There is scope, therefore, for a cross-over from these initiatives into a reimagined sphere of parliamentary representation. Obviously, any 'algorithmisation' of the representative process would have to confront the many problematisations – not the least of which is regulation – associated with this idea; but, given the pace of technological advance, the merits and demerits of such digital innovation warrant urgent attention (see Cavaliere and Romeo, 2022:440-1).

Unity and the 'presumption of generality' <3>

There is, as noted earlier, a rudimentary consensus that the 'presumption of generality' provides one of the guiding principles of democratic parliamentarism. One of the 'most important features' of this representative system is, 'its capacity for resolving the conflicting claims of the parts [of the nation], on the basis of their common interest in the welfare of the whole' (Pitkin, 1967:217). This capacity is 'peculiar' in that it stems from the combination of the legitimation principles of election and from the legitimation principles of deliberation. It is also 'peculiar' when contrasted with the representative claims made by nonelectoral representatives to speak for the collective interest (see Judge, 2014:10-12;136-9).

If the 'presumption of generality' is to be realised within a reimagined institutional frame of democratic parliamentarism, then the 'peculiar' conjunction of the legitimation principles of election and deliberation needs not only to be recognised but also instantiated. Equally the problematisations of this conjunction need to be both acknowledged and addressed. A starting point would be to accept that 'to fulfil the promise to create unity out of diversity without eradicating the latter' requires an institutionalised process of 'sustained deliberation, negotiation and contestation' (König and Siewert, 2021:693). In other words, it requires reflexivity. And, as Knight and Johnson (2007:56) emphasise, parliaments, as democratic institutions, 'enable a level of reflexivity unavailable in other institutional forms' in allowing for the collective reconsideration and revisiting of the 'terms of ongoing

interactions' and inducing 'common or shared understandings of what is at issue in particular circumstances'. An increase in institutional inclusiveness and equality, prospected above in a reimagined 'electoral representative form', would be expected to boost such dynamic reflexivity.

Moreover, the principles of equality and inclusion could be further embedded in dynamic reflexivity at Westminster if, for instance, the pluri-national nature of the UK state, and the conflicting claims of its territorial 'parts', were reflected in a second chamber based upon the principle of election but structured around territorial difference of the nations and regions of the UK. Such a chamber would institutionalise reflexivity in the search for unity out of territorial diversity.

Beyond reform of the 'electoral representative form', further enhancement of dynamic reflexivity is promised in designs for the institutionalisation of nonelectoral representation (see above). Other institutional designs, many of which predate current 'democratic innovation', are on offer for the incorporation of nonelectoral voices into parliamentary deliberations. The creation of second or third parliamentary chambers selected in accordance with functional or associative notions of representation have reappeared throughout the past century: such as proposals for a 'House of Industry' or a 'Social Parliament' in the UK in the 1920s and 1930s, or further afield in the establishment of the European Union's Economic and Social Committee in 1957. The inclusion of more, and more diverse, voices in the deliberation of public policies, certainly fits with ideas of enhanced reflexivity, and also fits with established ideas that democratic parliamentarism is a system wherein 'everything has to be justified in debate' and subject to 'the trial of discussion' (Manin, 1997:191). Less certain, however, is the compatibility of institutionalising 'the interests of a specified group' (Saward's definition of nonelectoral representation) with ensuring that 'citizens have to see and understand that they have something in common that unifies them' (Urbinati, 2006:134). As Runciman (2007:113) notes: 'a scheme that prioritises variety over uniformity in political representation is not without its costs'. The way to minimise these costs is to recognise that democratic parliamentarism does so by allowing elected representatives to claim to represent the people 'as a whole', yet also provides institutionalised capacity for contestation of such a claim. Such a process of justification, and hence of legitimation, serves to differentiate collectively accountable (and collectively authorised) elected representatives and electoral representative institutions from 'self-authorised' nonelectoral representatives and institutions.

Conclusion <2>

In many ways what has been offered in this chapter has been 'bounded reimagining'. Bounded in multiple ways. First, in focusing upon parliament as a collectivity, rather than addressing narrow dyadic individual representative relationships or the broad representative relationships of governance focused upon the political executive. Second, in not prospecting the extremities of democratic innovation which offer alternative paradigms to, and radical breaks from, parliamentary representation. Third, in leaving uncoupled the interconnectedness of the specific dimensions of reimagining. Fourth, in not investigating how a systemic view of representation is nested ultimately for its success in far wider, and existential, systemic perspectives on the UK's polity, society and economy. Fifth, and finally, in tempering the positivity and dynamism of reimagining with the caution and pessimism entailed in 'problematising' the processes of renewal. But each of these boundaries, although in need of transgression in the future, have helped to map out the widest and elemental boundary – of a 'systemic view of representation' – within which reimagining of parliamentary representation needs to be conducted.

The starting point of this chapter was the claim that a reimagining of parliamentary representation requires a systemic view of representation. A reimagined UK parliament should serve, therefore, as a key nodal point in intricate networks of electoral and non-electoral representation. To reach this point requires aggregation of the constituent elements of reimagining outlined in this chapter: parliamentary representation needs to be more equal, inclusive, reflexive, and responsive; more digitally agile in its embrace of algorithms and artificial intelligence; and more accommodative to nonelectoral modes of representation. Such a process of aggregation, however, would not be a matter of simple addition – of mechanistically combining diverse elements together – but of prioritising distinct preferences (a choice would have to made, for example, between the various principles ascribed above to a reimagined second chamber – territorial, functional, electoral, or sortition). Nonetheless, reimagination of parliamentary representation would be systemic in scope, cumulative in approach, and expansive in its ambition.