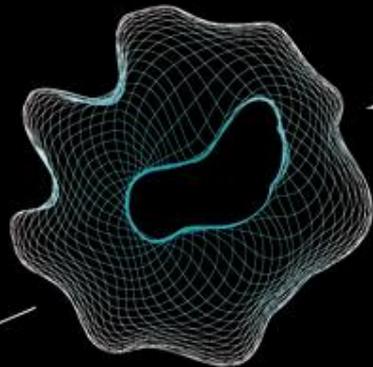


REPRESENTATION IN THE AGE OF GOVERNANCE

Bas Denters



James Mill (1773 – 1836)



Representation:
“The grand discovery of
modern times”

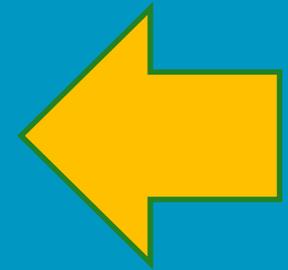
”

(James Mill, *Political Writings*, Cambridge UP,
Cambridge, 1992: pp. 19-20)

Lecture: what follows?

Democratic accountability in (normative) theory

- How is the DA system supposed to work?
- Macro: the system as a whole
- Micro: representatives and parties



Democratic accountability in practice:

- Macro-level challenges
 - Need for structural reforms
- Micro-level challenges
 - Need to rethink role representatives

Mark Bovens: Accountability



Mark Bovens

Actor: has an obligation to explain and justify its actions to principal

+

Forum: can pose questions and pass judgment and might impose sanctions

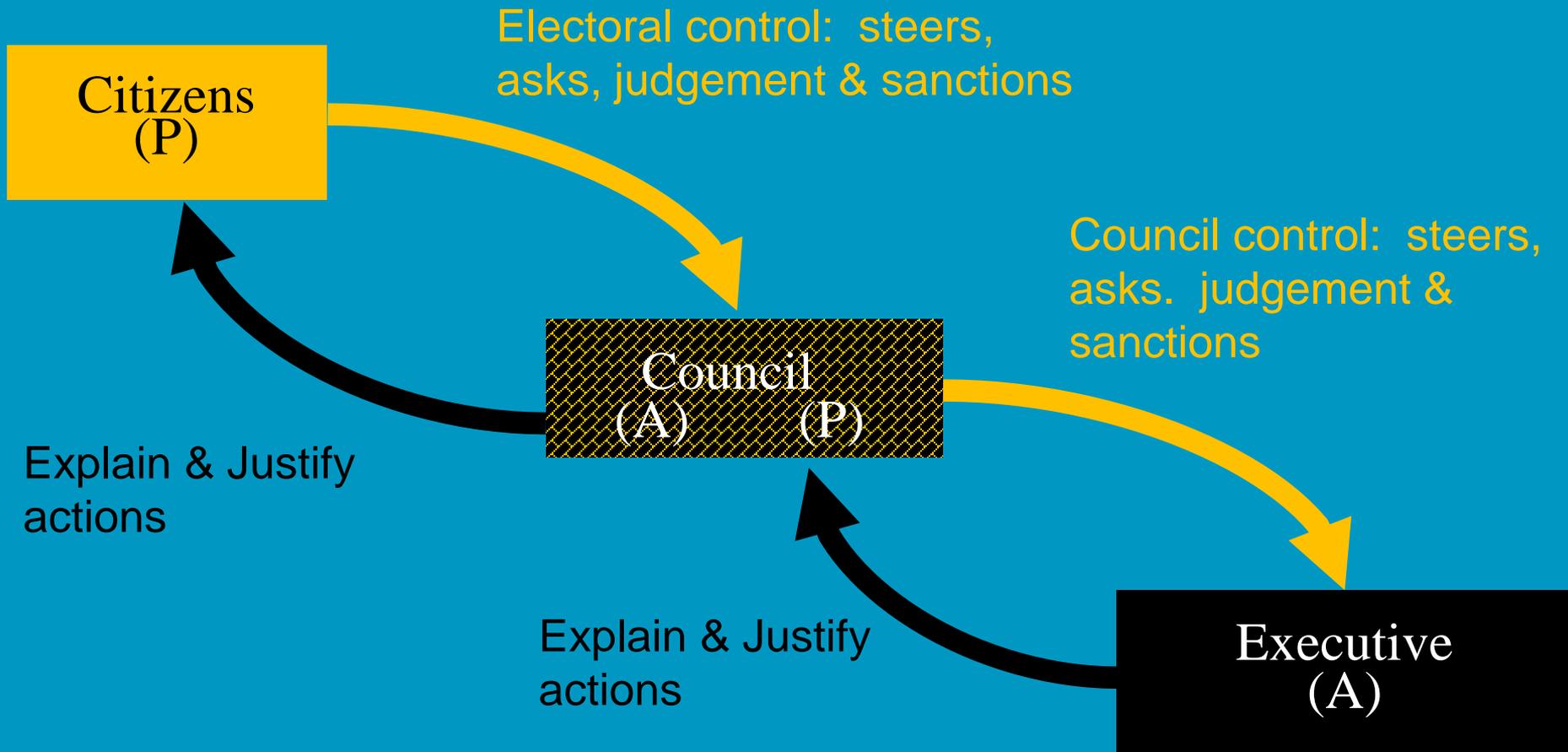
Actor = Agent (acts)

Forum = Principal

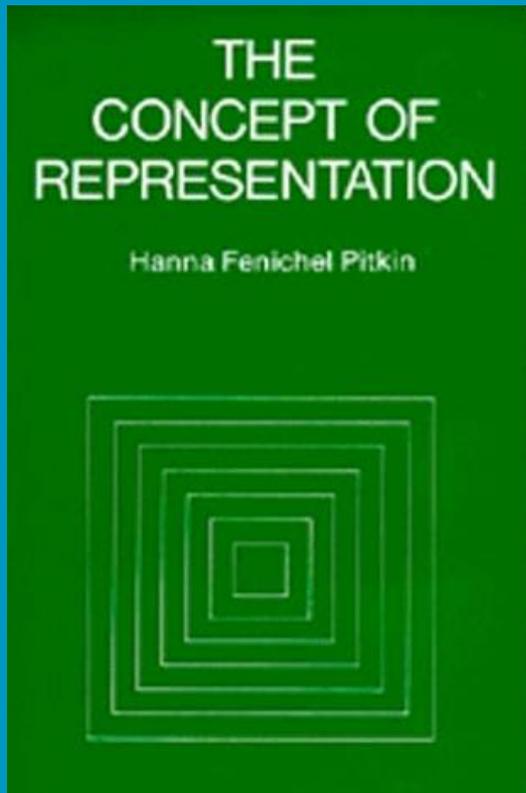
Democratic accountability

- Forum: citizens (demos) directly or indirectly via representatives
- Forum: steers / commands

Indirect Democratic Control



Models of representation



How should representatives behave?

- Representativeness
- Trustee theory (Burke) and Responsiveness
- Party Model (Schumpeter)



James Mill (1773 – 1836)

Identity of interest:

The benefits of the representative system are lost, in all cases in which the interests of the choosing body are not the same with those of the community

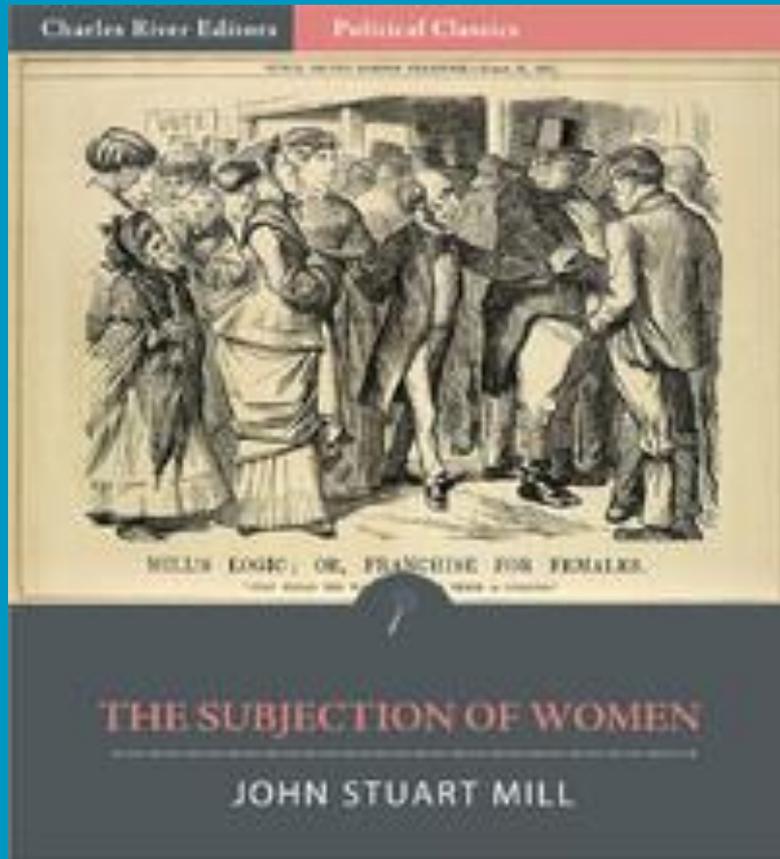
(James Mill, Political Writings, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1992: pp. 19-20)



Implications:

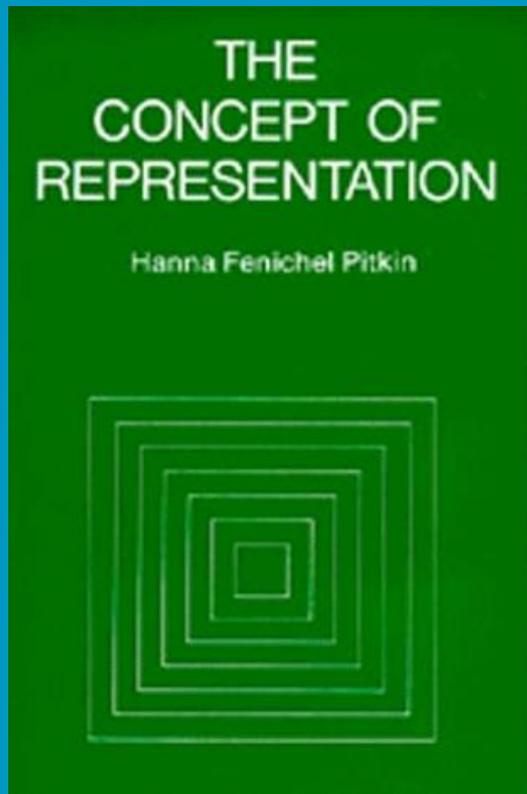
- Proportional representation of interests
- Representatives should serve own interests

JS Mill: Women Suffrage



Equal voting rights
and PR electoral
system will secure
identity of interests

Models of representation



- Trustee theory (Burke):
what representatives do,
style and focus

Edmund Burke (1730-1797)



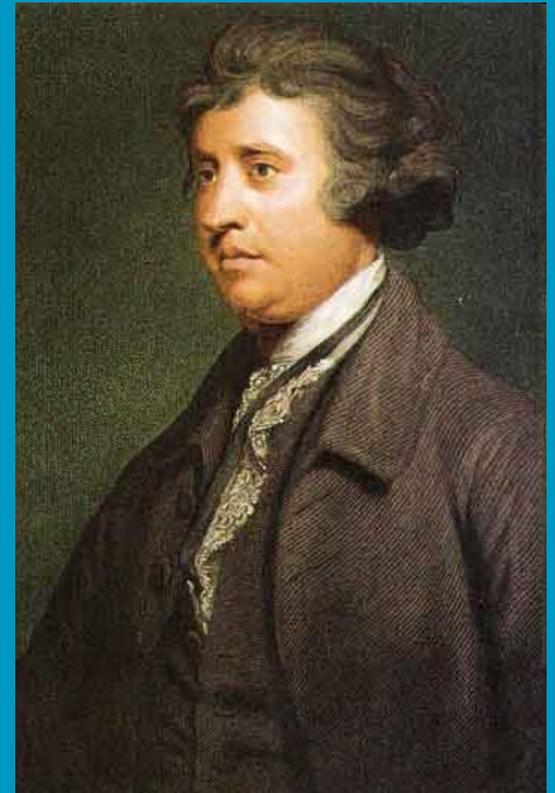
“Parliament is **not a congress of ambassadors** from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a *deliberative assembly*”

Style: not delegate, but a trustee who participates in a free reasonable debate

Edmund Burke (1730-1797)

“ a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole; where, **not local purposes**, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the **general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole**”

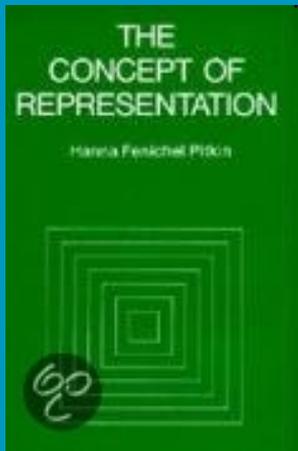
Focus: not special interest (e.g. local) but common good



Pitkin: Responsiveness



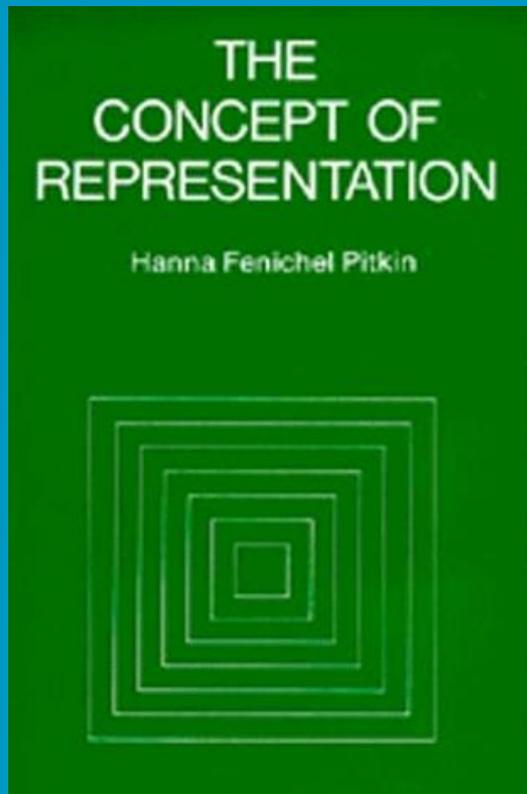
- Not always implies that MP should "actually and literally act in response to the principal's wishes" (155). However, "the **principal's wishes must be potentially there and potentially relevant**" (155).
- In case conflict: "The representative [...] owes the represented "a **good explanation** of why their wishes are not in accord with their interest" (209-210).



If not?

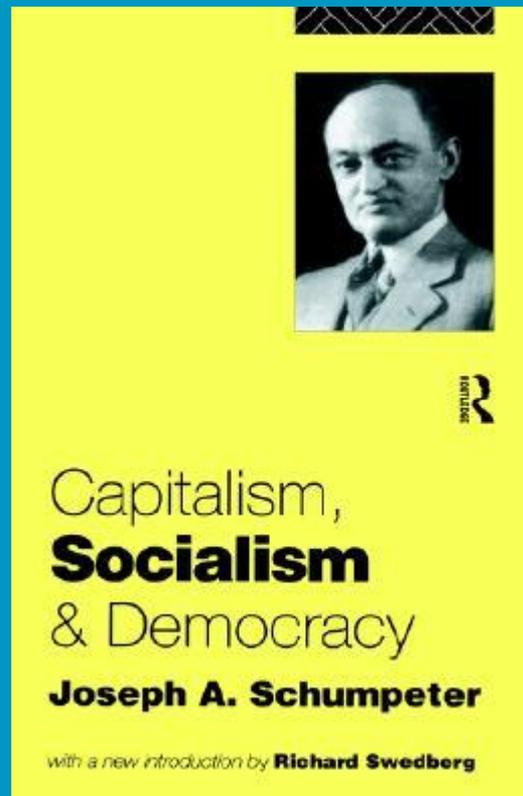
Elections to throw the rascals out!

Models of representation



- Party Model (Schumpeter; Downs): formulate party program, campaign and implement program

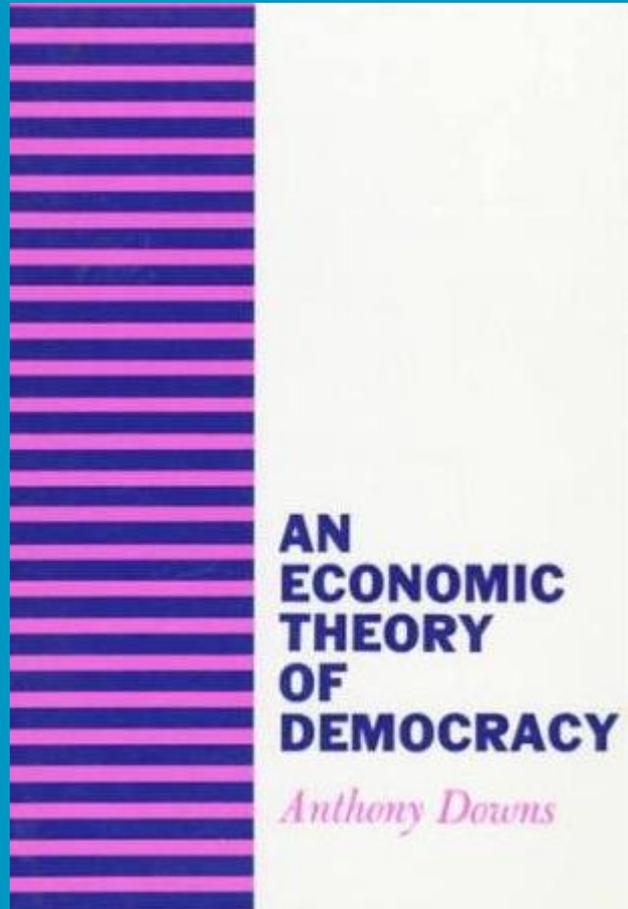
Schumpeter: electoral competition



“The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at *political decisions* in which individuals acquire the *power to decide* by means of a *competitive struggle for the people’s vote*”.

ELECTORAL (PARTY)
COMPETITION

Electoral competition



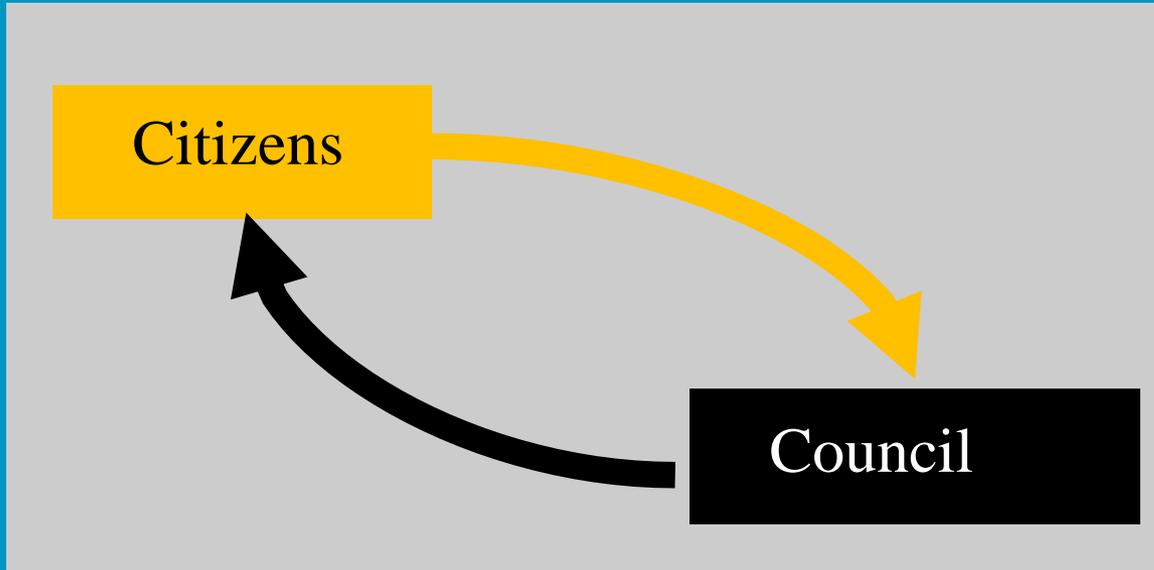
Parties present themselves with different programmes

Citizens vote rationally

1. Have policy preferences
2. Are aware of the programs of parties (first bullet)
3. Vote for the party closest to their own preference
4. If 1-3: election is expression of voter preference

Winning party (coalition) committed and effected in implementing programme

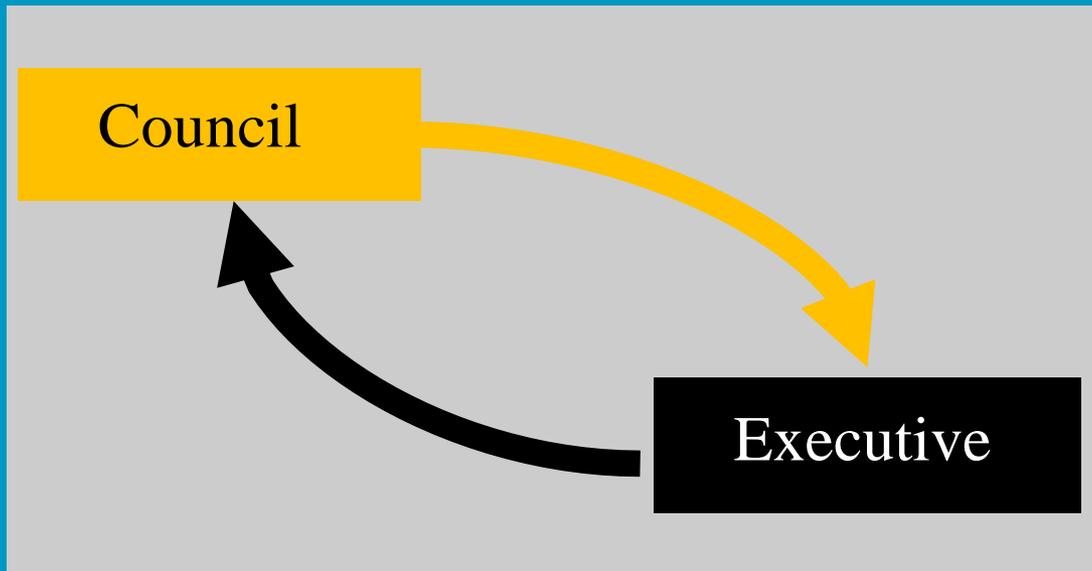
Problem 1: Electoral control



- Turnout campaigns
- Facilitate voting
- Non-synchronized elections

- Decline of turnout
- Crisis of political parties
- Nationalization of elections
- Demands for direct influence

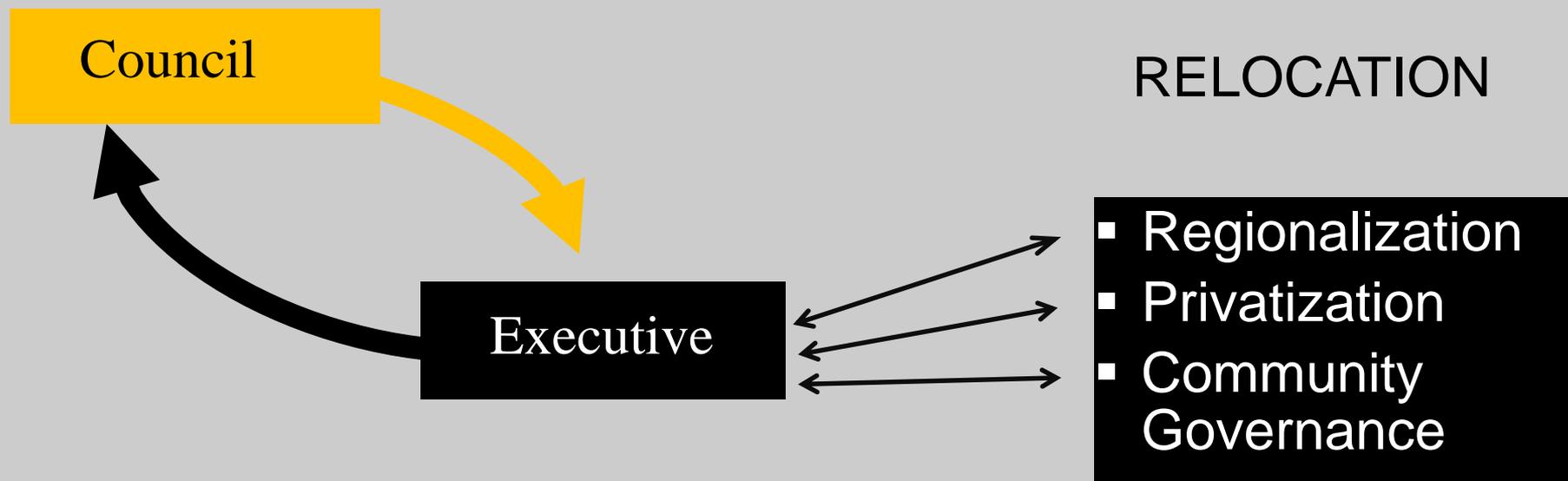
Problem II: Council control



- Increase formal powers council
- Professionalize councilors
- Train councilors
- Reduce their workload

- Limited resources of councilors
- Increasing size of local government (stronger executive)

Problem III: Relocation of politics



- A new democratic deficit: transfer of power
- Problem of many hands: sharing power

How to steer and hold executive and partners outside town hall to account

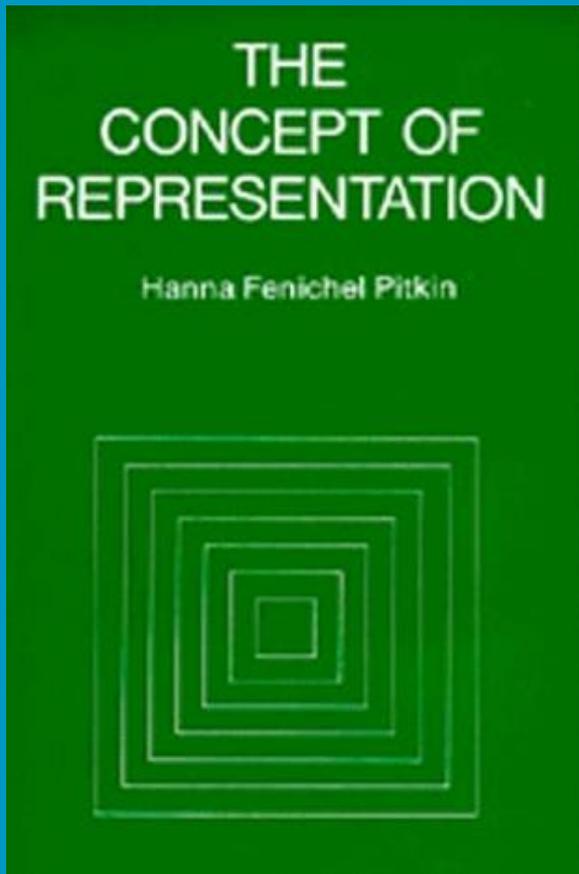
New forums and models needed



Democratic Order, Autonomy, and
Accountability JOHAN P. OLSEN

- Shift in governance: period of transition
- Looking for new democratic accountability mechanisms.
- Requires new fora: citizens and their representatives
- *“There is no guarantee that citizens or their elected representatives will be motivated and capable to live up to the roles prescribed for them as principals”.*

Representation: What do citizens want?



- Commissioned by Dutch Association of Municipalities (VNG)
- January 2012
- Internet panel: 500 respondents
- About 20 rating questions: “How important do you consider that councilors in your municipality...” (1= not at all 5= very)

Representativeness



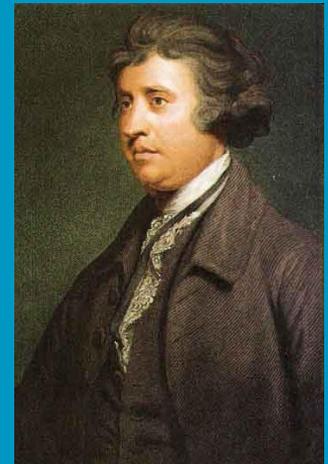
How important do you consider it that the council is a fair representation in terms of

- Age?
- Gender?
- Ethnic origin
- Social class?

Trustee

How important do think it is that councilors

- Are in touch with local public opinion?
- Have a keen eye on the general interest?
- Are competent?



Party Representative



How important do you consider it that councilors ...

- Take clear political positions
- Try to realize their party platform

Democratic watchdog

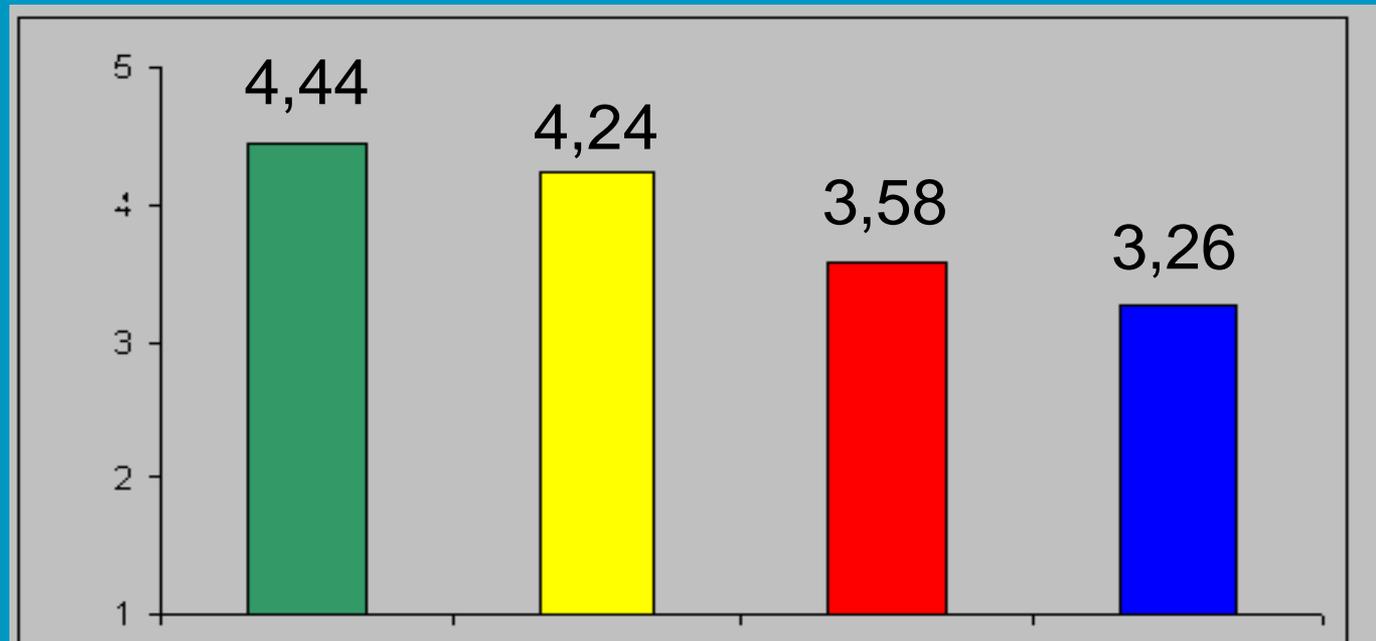
How important do you consider it that councilors ...

- Create new channels for citizen participation
- Control that administration is responsive
- Controls the democratic quality of decision making



Role of
council as a
meta-governor

What citizens consider important



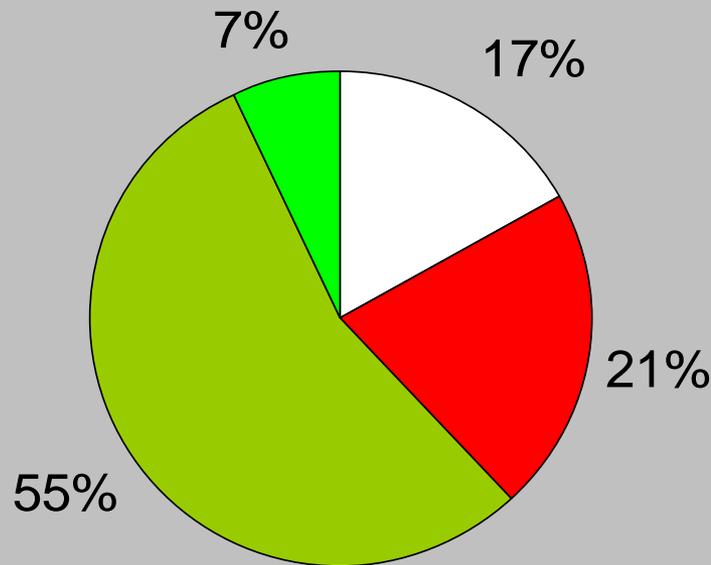
Trustee

Watchdog

Party delegate

Look-alike

Satisfaction with councilors



Good (8+)

Satisfactory (6/7)

Unsatisfactory (5-)

Don't know

Most important factor
Dissatisfaction with
democratic watchdog
function!

Council: strengthen role
in meta-governance

New forums and models needed



Democratic Order, Autonomy, and
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