Example Turnitin Report

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Within this essay, then, I will be focusing on two types of non-elective forms of representation. The first will be descriptive representation, whereby quotas would be used to ensure the legislative body is made up of a variety of people from differing ‘groups’ reflecting society as a whole. Secondly, I will look at non-governmental organisations both nationally and internationally. These often act as voices (through lobbying and other means) for groups who have not necessarily asked them to. Within each section, I will further define and explain how each form would work, before considering whether it is a desirable and legitimate form of representation. Finally, I will conclude that whilst descriptive representation seems desirable on first glance, it is not universally acting as representatives, however, seems appealing, and contexts, as outlined by Saward (2009) and MacDonald (2008).

I will first consider the notion of descriptive, or ‘mirror’, representation. This form of representation sees representatives who are “in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent” (Mansbridge, 1999: 629). For example, black MPs would represent black citizens, disabled citizens would be represented by disabled MPs and so on. This idea is based on the assumption that visible characteristics such as gender or skin colour can imply understanding of the benefits and the concerns of such a group. Non-visible characteristics are similarly able to provide this understanding, through the sharing of past experiences. Advocates of this form of representation would hold that current students should speak for current students, and that teachers ought to offer the views of teachers, to give a couple of examples. The idea is that these shared experiences, beliefs or understandings give members of the group a superiority in
of the role. Currently, most candidates who run for election choose law making as their career and have spent time training for this sector. Voters’ decisions are likely to be at least partly affected by the ability and experience of the candidates (Mansbridge 1999: 631).

Whilst it may be desirable to have a representative from your ‘group’ and with similar interests, it seems a little foolish to prioritise this above someone who has trained in the field.

However, what see charge of essential identities to particular try to do. Although there may be some issues which certain groups may be in completely in agreement about, this is highly unlikely. The majority of women, for example, would be against the aforementioned Tampon Tax, but it is probable that a small proportion may support of the tax, perhaps because it may encourage women to use reusable sanitary products which would reduce waste. There is no ‘female’, ‘white’ or ‘Christian’ interest which can be represented. Another example is that the Christian Church teaches that killing is wrong, leading many Christians to oppose euthanasia. There are others, however, who support the act in the interest of minimising suffering. If the legislative body had a number of Christians, mirroring the number living in society, this would not necessarily mean every voice would be heard. All those in the decision making panel may be against the act, and this would not be a fair representation of every Christians view living in that constituency.

Group interests do not always exist, and it would be very difficult to place people into groups where each member agrees on every single potential policy decision with one member representing each group. Fundamentally, interests are all irreducible to individual values, based on individual experiences and understanding of the world and their resulting
which should lead to the voices of disadvantaged groups being heard. This is not necessarily
the case, though, if they are not actually fully aware of the issues, as is sometimes the
situation in reality. Elective forms of representation use the mechanisms of authorization
and accountability to ensure that these are legitimate forms. Mosley and Grogan (2012: 841)
state that regardless of whether NGO representatives are appointed or self-authorized
there are issues of accountability. This is because they are, more often than not, not
authorized through election, which implies that they are not formally accountable to those
whom they are representing. Elective forms of representation, conversely, provide
“systematic opportunities for accountability around responsiveness” (2012: 843).

Authorization is defined in
2008:171), and therefore
dresses those with either
power through representation, or on
hand, looks at those who already have political power, and how they act. Thus, it involves
institutional arrangements that follow or could terminate representation. It is obvious how
these mechanisms work within elective forms of representation. By casting a vote for a
representative, an individual gives him or her authorization to act on their behalf. If this
representative fails to deliver what was expected, they can be held accountable, and in the
next election may not be chosen to continue representing. Clearly, in non-elective
representation like NGOs this is much more difficult. Indeed, critics of NGOs having such
power argue that the organisations “have a lack of democratic legitimacy compared to
governments based on fair and free elections,” (Wahl 1998: 2). Some suggest that the only
‘Confirming’ criteria are rooted within two main questions. The first simply considers whether the representative claims can be tested. If there is a specific constituency which the claim refers to, and who can verify the potential success of the claim then such ideas are far more likely to be taken seriously within global politics. Similarly, is the claim acceptable? Ultimately, confirming criteria are based upon whether there is a “clear and reasonably bounded sense of constituency” (Saward, 2009: 18), and whether or not this constituency will respond – and respond well – to the claims made by those supposedly representing them. If there is scope for public consideration and contemplation by beneficiaries and members then such circumstances will make representative claims more acceptable.

Finally, Saward puts forward the notion of ‘untaintedness’ compared to elected representation as a comparison to non-elective forms. It asks, therefore, whether a claim is acceptable for the reason that it is untainted by formal election processes, or by “virtue of disconnection from a state apparatus” (Saward 2009: 19). States are bound and limited by certain commands and imperatives that prevent them from always acting in the interests of their population. However, “democracy is not just about deliberation within established forums” (Saward 2009: 20) and therefore NGOs and non-elective forms of representation can therefore achieve outcomes which elected representatives could perhaps not due to certain state systematic restrictions.

These criteria, combined with MacDonald’s (2002) proposals regarding the use of authorization and accountability mechanisms in non-elective forms of representation show how NGOs could be considered legitimate and desirable. There are some flaws in this practice. Nevertheless, it does seem possible to incorporate some forms of evaluation into whether NGOs are representing well, as mentioned above. NGOs require “trust, credibility,
certainly help overcome these. Provided stakeholders have plenty of opportunity to offer their thoughts on the management, aims and actions of the NGO they are a member of, who which claims to represent them, then this would appear to be both a desirable and legitimate form of representation to work alongside elective forms. No representation will ever be perfect, but elective forms work to ensure law making is done by those trained in the matter, and this non-elective form can help shape their views, therefore incorporating both the majority and disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

Reference List


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