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Reflections on the
Concept of Representation
and Its Application to China

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Abstract

This paper presents both a literature review on the issue of political representation and the preliminary framework of a sub-project on new political claims of representation in China. It is primarily concerned with portraying and typing diverse schools of thought in both a "Western" and a Chinese context, while the sub-project is part of the French-German Joint Cooperation Project "New Political Representative Claims: A Global View: France, Germany, Brazil, China, India".

The paper is organized as follows: (1) The concept of representation is examined by a brief review of the history of this concept, including the existence of two diverging strands of representation in "Western" discourses. (2) We then examine the meanings of representation, its definitions, and its peculiarities. Points (1) and (2) in particular are based on a literature review. (3) We discuss the issue of representation in a non-democratic, authoritarian setting in general and in China specifically in light of the fact that almost no literature on representation in authoritarian polities exists. (4) We outline the Chinese domestic discourse on political representation. (5) Finally, we clarify the distinction between political representation and participation on the one hand and elections as a specific feature of representation on the other. We then conclude with a summary of our preliminary findings.

Keywords

Representation, representation in an authoritarian context, representation in China, Chinese discourses on representation, participation, elections

1 GENERAL REMARKS

This paper presents both a literature review on the issue of political representation and the preliminary framework of a sub-project on new political claims of representation in China. It is primarily concerned with portraying and typing diverse schools of thought in both a “Western” and a Chinese context, while the sub-project is part of the French-German Joint Cooperation Project “New Political Representative Claims: A Global View: France, Germany, Brazil, China, India”.¹

The objectives of this sub-project are: (1) to comprehend, define and conceptualize representation both in a general sense and in an authoritarian context; (2) to trace specific types of representation in China and outline the particularities of formal and informal representation there; (3) to discuss current discourses on representation and representative claims in China; (4) to analyze both “Western” and “Chinese” theories of representation (such as “xieshang minzhu”, 协商民主, deliberative democracy);

and (5) to contribute to the general concept of political representation.

The paper is organized as follows: (1) The concept of representation is examined by a brief review of the history of this concept, including the existence of two diverging strands of representation in “Western” discourses. (2) We then examine the meanings of representation, its definitions, and its peculiarities. Points (1) and (2) in particular are based on a literature review. (3) We discuss the issue of representation in a non-democratic, authoritarian setting in general and in China specifically in light of the fact that almost no literature on representation in authoritarian polities exists. (4) We outline the Chinese domestic discourse on political representation. (5) Finally, we clarify the distinction between political representation and participation on the one hand and elections as a specific feature of representation on the other. We then conclude with a summary of our preliminary findings.

2 REPRESENTATION IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

In this section it is not our intention to re-analyze the entire history of the term “representation” and its various contents but rather to provide a brief overview, since some seminal works on the history of this concept already exist.²

The term representation goes back to the Latin words “repraesentatio” (visual representation) and “repraesentare”. These terms had several

1 This project is conducted by Brigitte Geißel (Goethe University Frankfurt), Yves Sintomer (Centre de Recherches Sociologiques et Politiques de Paris, and CRESPPA, Paris 8 University/CNRS, Institut Universitaire de France), Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal (Centre d’Etudes de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud, CNRS-EHESS, Paris), and Thomas Heberer (University of Duisburg-Essen). It is sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR) for the years 2016–2019.

2 On the original meaning of representation in a “Western” context see, for instance, Hasso Hofmann: Repräsentation.

Studien zur Wort- und Begriffsgeschichte von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert. Berlin (Duncker & Humblot) 1974; Hans-Martin Döring: Der Repräsentations-Begriff seit 1800 in Deutschland, England und den USA, untersucht anhand von Fachlexika. In: Gerhard Göhler (ed.): Institution – Macht – Repräsentation. Wofür politische Institutionen stehen und wie sie wirken. Baden-Baden (Nomos) 1997: 476–512; see also Gerhard Leibholz: Die Repräsentation in der Demokratie. Berlin, New York (Walter de Gruyter) 1973: 25–43; Yves Sintomer: The Meanings of Political Representation: Uses and Misuses of a Notion. In: *Raisons politiques*, 2013 (No. 50): 13–34; Torsten Schlee: *Muster der Repräsentation. Zur Krise und Permanenz einer semantischen Figur*. Wiesbaden (Springer VS) 2015.

meanings and did not simply stand for a distinct political term. Both terms were used in a rather broad sense signifying a wide range of meanings such as vivid reality, visual appearance, to make something present, something currently happening or a current doing, all related to the reality of an action and its outcome. In the late Roman period it referred to gatherings for a meeting or at an assembly. Later it was linked to Christian contexts such as the “representation” of Jesus Christ in the Holy Community or the representation of both God and the faithful by the Pope or the church. Starting in the 14th century, “representation” was used in the sense of a proxy (German: Stellvertreter) for others. Frequently, monarchs were conceived of in this sense as representatives of a community or political entity.

For the philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650), representation was linked to “ideas” by which the objective reality of a thing in terms of “representation of something” could be captured.³ For Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), in turn, the absolute ruler was regarded as one representing the people by means of a contract with the people, albeit he was a representative with neither accountability nor control.⁴ The difference between Descartes (as a “representative” of philosophy) and Hobbes (as a “representative” of political science) underscores two strands of understanding of “representation” in European intellectual history (these will be addressed below). In John Locke’s (1632–1704) view of representation, the election of representatives of the people is crucial, since the exer-

cise of public authority is carried out by elected representatives. The right of representation, however, should depend on the “proportion to the assistance, which [somebody] affords to the publick”.⁵

It was only during the French revolution (1789–99) that “representation” became a term more related to political representation of the people and of ideas.⁶

In a political sense, representation played a crucial role in the history of political ideas. Among others, Edmund Burke (1729–1797), James Madison (1750–1836) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) were among early authors who analyzed issues related to political representation. While Burke supported a “trustee” model of representatives in the sense that representatives act independently of their constituency and make decisions primarily on the basis of common interests and the interests of the entire nation, Madison was convinced that acting as a collective was impossible for citizens. Therefore representatives should be chosen who were concurrently accountable to their constituencies. Rousseau, in turn, was highly critical of the concept of representation, since the latter would revoke the function of a polity.⁷

3 Dominik Perler: *Repräsentation bei Descartes*. Frankfurt am Main (Vittorio Klostermann) 1996.

4 Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan oder Stoff, Form und Gewalt eines kirchlichen und bürgerlichen Staates*. Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp) 1996. An interpretation of Hobbes’ theory: David Runciman: *Hobbes’s theory of representation: anti-democratic or proto-democratic?* In: Ian Shapiro / Susan C. Stokes / Elisabeth J. Wood / Alexander S. Kirshner (eds.): *Political Representation*. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2009: 15–34.

5 John Locke: *Second Treatise* § 158. In: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2006), <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch13s2.html> (accessed 26 August 2016). See also Rolf Meyer: *Eigentum, Repräsentation und Gewaltenteilung in der politischen Theorie von John Locke*. Frankfurt am Main et al. (Peter Lang) 1991: 96–134.

6 The French Constitution of 1791 explicitly mentioned the term “representation”. On the original meaning of representation see Hasso Hofmann 1974; Döring 1997: 476–512; Leibholz 1973: 25–43; Sintomer 2013.

7 In a similar vein Barber argues that representation would be “incompatible with freedom because it delegates and thus alienates political will at the cost of genuine self-government and autonomy”, Benjamin R. Barber: *Strong Democracy. Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley et al. (University of California Press) 2003: 145.

Thus far, the most cited and most influential book on representation is Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's book "The Concept of Representation",⁸ in which, as in most books and articles on this topic since the 18th century, representation in a democratic setting is the normative sense of the term.

With regard to political representation, political science is primarily concerned with institutionalized representation in legislatures, elections, and the normative and technical issues of democratic processes.⁹ The conviction prevails that only persons elected in a competitive electoral procedure can be conceived of as legitimate representatives.¹⁰

However, focusing merely on normative issues and democratic elections overlooks the dynamics of representation beyond the state, not only in a democratic but also in an authoritarian context. In early works, the focus of "representation" was on the role of legislatures and/or the behavior of legislators,¹¹ and was by no means specifically related to a democratic context.¹² Michael Saward, therefore, is right in arguing that

we need to move away from the idea that representation is first and foremost a given, factual product of elections, rather than a precarious and curious sort of claim about a dynamic relationship.¹³

He further moves beyond state-centered approaches and addresses the issue of non-state institutions and the plurality of modes of political representation.¹⁴

Carl Schmitt (1888–1985), the expert in constitutional law, argued that it is *political unity among a people as a whole* which is represented. This unity is made visible through representation only, and the representatives and the parliament have to warrant that unity. However, the unity may be impaired by such things as pluralism (e.g. of a multitude of political parties), federalism, etc. Schmitt therefore believed that representation is something personal and can only be achieved by somebody displaying authority. The object of representation was an authoritative person or an idea represented by a single (authoritative) person and voluntarily accepted and believed by people. According to Schmitt, political unity (of both the state and the people) can also be represented by an autocrat. What shines through here is the idea of an authoritarian type of representation. Accordingly, Schmitt quotes the famous French saying, ascribed to King Louis XIV, "L'etat c'est moi" – I am the state – meaning that even an absolute monarch (German: Fürst) could represent the unity and identity of a nation.¹⁵ For Schmitt, only "those who rule participate in representation", which can be interpreted

8 Hanna Fenichel Pitkin: *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley et al. (University of California Press) 1967.

9 A good example is the volume "Political Representation" ed. by Ian Shapiro / Susan C. Stokes / Elisabeth J. Wood / Alexander S. Kirshner 2009.

10 In his definition of representation Max Weber did not even mention the issue of election but refers to two principal points: acceptance that a representative (Vertreter) is acting in the name of a specific group and that his representative claim is conceived by the group as legitimate. See Max Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1. Halbband. Köln, Berlin (Kiepenheuer & Witsch) 1956: 217.

11 Eulau, Heinz et al.: *The Role of the Representative: Some Empirical Observations on the Theory of Edmund Burke*. In: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (1959): 742–756.

12 Exemplified by the trustee approach, which was considered as a "pre-democratic" issue and was outlined most prominently by Edmund Burke. Burke did not believe that representation was closely related to the issue of consulting the represented; rather, he spoke

of representation as an unattached interest. See Pitkin 1967: 210

13 See Michael Saward: *The Representative Claim*. In: *Contemporary Political Theory*, 5(2006): 298.

14 See e.g. the case of civil society organizations and representation: Erik Jentges: *Die soziale Magie politischer Repräsentation. Charisma und Anerkennung in der Zivilgesellschaft*. Bielefeld (transcript) 2010.

15 Carl Schmitt: *Verfassungslehre*. Berlin (Duncker & Humblot) 1970: 205, 214.

ed as meaning that only those are representing who are ruling under authoritarian conditions.¹⁶ He concurrently argues that only an intellectual elite is capable of distinguishing carefully between personal interests and the interest of the entire nation as well as capable of subordinating one's personal interests to the whole.¹⁷ Accordingly, Schmitt speaks of a political unity of representation and identity, i.e. that the representing elite creates a unity between representers and the represented or likewise between those governing and those governed ("identity representation").¹⁸ A later section below will examine the way in which Schmitt's argumentation has been taken up in the Chinese discourse on representation.

As mentioned above, in the academic literature on representation we find two principle strands which can be classified as (a) the political strand sketched above, and (b) the cultural strand. The latter one goes back to the sociologist Stuart Hall (1932–2014). Hall is concerned with "mental representations". He argues that two parallel systems exist: (a) concepts and images (thoughts of something) and (b) exchange and communication through language. For Hall, "representation" is a combination of (a) and (b), i.e. "the production of meaning through language".¹⁹ He further argues that "representation is the process by which members of a culture use language".²⁰ More tangibly, Hall's ideas point

to another origin of "representation" in the sense of a play in which the actors "represent" certain characters. The cultural strand of representation is in fact more related to the discourse level, i.e. mental representation.

Michael Saward has attempted to connect the political and the cultural strands by arguing that Hall's concept of "cultural representation" is related to "meanings by sharing 'codes'". His argument is that representation is not only a political act but concurrently an aesthetic and cultural one and therefore always entails a symbolic dimension.²¹ In the process of representation and its interpretation, the representative has to be creative, since she or he rarely receives clear signals on *how* to represent interests and groups.

Saward's arguments imply that the political type of representation entails not only issues of the political setting and the specific political culture (such as electoral systems, voting or organizational behavior, etc.) but also issues of identity and identity-building, norms, beliefs and values, everyday life, cultural limitations and patterns of behavior, i.e. specific cultural "codes".²² In the interaction between the representatives and the represented, "every signifier given as encoded with meaning has to be meaningfully interpreted or decoded by the receiver".²³ With regard to our sub-project on China, this means that we have to decipher the specific meaning and information provided by abstract codes such as "representation". Accordingly, we understand discourses not only as a form of societal discussions on a specific topic but also as the production of meaning through language – in the case of China as re-

16 Schmitt 1970: 212. See also Hofmann 1974: 22.

17 Schmitt 1970: 311.

18 See Schmitt 1970: 204–208. See also Hasso Hofmann: *Legitimität gegen Legalität – Der Weg der politischen Philosophie Carl Schmitts*. Neuwied, Berlin (Duncker & Humblot) 1964: 150–155; see also Schlee 2015: 93–147 on Schmitt's concept of representation.

19 Stuart Hall (ed.): *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London et al. (Sage) 1997: 28. In his seminal work "Representation and Reality" the philosopher Hilary Putnam calls these the "mental representations", Cambridge/Mass. (MIT Press) 1988.

20 Hall 1997: 61.

21 See also Paula Diehl: *Repräsentation im Spannungsfeld von Symbolizität, Performativität und politischem Imaginären*. In: P. Diehl and Felix Steilen (eds.): *Politische Repräsentation und das Symbolische*. Wiesbaden (Springer VS) 2016: 7–22.

22 Saward 2006: 309–312.

23 Hall 1997: 33.

lated to patterns of representation (such as the “Three Represents” (三个代表), the Mass Line (群众路线), consultative democracy (协商民主)²⁴, deliberative democracy (审议民主)²⁵, collaborative governance²⁶, etc.).

Symbolic representation, i.e. the above-mentioned symbolic dimension, is a salient part of political representation. Both strands, the political and the mental, are merged in this type. The philosophy of symbolic forms was coined by the philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1875–1945). According to Cassirer, symbols are modes of interpretation of reality (German: Weisen der Wirklichkeitsdeutung) and systems of orientation.²⁷ In fact, symbolic representation makes ideational meanings such as nation, nationalism, religion, self-images, beliefs, perceptions of politics, etc. visually present, whereby the respective audience assigns a very specific meaning to these symbols. This kind of representation certainly has an integrative effect, thus fulfilling a specific social function.²⁸ Here, symbols stand for the principle political values and principles of order of a social entity. “Representation as a symbolic relationship”, writes Gerhard Göhler,

is the portrayal of the fundamental values and ordering principles of a community. It is the portrayal of the political unity by making visible what holds this community in its wide diversity together.²⁹

Given differences between Chinese and “Western” political cultures and discourses, the question arises whether the Western term “representation”, which is strongly related to Roman, Christian and Western ideas, has in fact the same meaning as the Chinese term “daibiao-xing” (代表性). In the course of the present project we will trace whether for China the concept and term “representation” is a simple import from Western countries or whether we can identify a similar notion in the Chinese historical and cultural context.

The term “daibiao” (代表) has been in use since the Tang and Ming dynasties. One meaning was “to substitute for”, “to replace” (in the sense of *tidai*, 替代); another was “to show off, flaunt, parade” (显耀, *xianyao*). Later, the Japanese translated the English word “representation” as “代表”.³⁰ In Chinese translations the Japanese translation was borrowed by Chinese translators. The most authoritative dictionary (汉语大词典) assigns three meanings to “daibiao”: (a) a person substituting for an individual or a group in doing something or expressing an opinion; (b) somebody entrusted or assigned by an individual, a social organization or a government to act or express opinions; (c) to display common characteristics. In this sense the modern Chinese term “daibiao” has two principle meanings:

24 Some authors translate consultative democracy as “zixun minzhu” (咨询民主), see e.g. Yu Keping: *Zhongguo tese xieshang minzhu de jige wenti* (Some problems of a Chinese distinct consultative democracy), <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/1223/c40531-23922990.html> (accessed 29 June, 2016).

25 The most popular translation of “deliberative democracy” in mainland China is “xieshang minzhu” (协商民主), see e.g. Huosheng Tan: *Deliberative democracy in China: A sociology of knowledge perspective*. In: *Economic and Political Studies* 1.1 (2013): 156–177.

26 Yijia Jing: Introduction. *The Road to Collaborative Governance in China*. In: Y. Jing (ed.): *The Road to Collaborative Governance in China*. New York et al. (Palgrave Macmillan) 2015: 1.

27 Ernst Cassirer: *Das Problem der „Repräsentation“ und der Aufbau des Bewusstseins*. In: *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, 1. Band. Hamburg (Felix Meiner Verlag) 2010: 25–38.

28 Budde 2013: 47–48.

29 See Göhler 1997: 49; Rudolf Speth: *Die symbolische Repräsentation*. In: Göhler 1997: 433–475. On the concept of “symbols” and symbolic politics: Rudolf Speth: *Symbol und Fiktion*. In: Göhler 1997: 65–142.

30 Liu Zhengyan / Gao Mingkai / Mai Yongqian: *Hanyu wailaici cidian* (Chinese dictionary of imported words). Shanghai (Shanghai cishu chubanshe) 1984: 73.

(1) to represent someone or something; (2) to embody something symbolically.³¹

The question arises whether similarities with the modern term have merely been constructed or whether there are semantic differences between “representation” and “daibiao”. If so, we will have to discuss whether the semantic contents, their notions and perceptions in the

minds of the people concerned are identical or whether – due to cultural and semantic peculiarities – we might become victims of “language games”, as the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once formulated, i.e. language games which provide us with structural rules for sorting out our (Western) experiences in a framework that does not in fact reflect the reality in China.³²

3 THE MEANING OF REPRESENTATION, ITS DEFINITIONS AND SPECIFICITIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Pitkin also clarifies the interaction between those represented (“A man is represented if he feels that he is and not if he does not”³³) and the representatives who represent something or act on behalf of a group of people. The issue of (democratic) elections stands squarely in the focus of the debate on representation and revolves around points such as modes (e.g. the discourses on direct vs. indirect democracy, on mandate vs. independence, on representative vs. constituent, on the trustee vs. delegate controversy,³⁴ or on the interaction between voters and members of parliaments).

However, not only groups of people are represented but also ideas and policy fields (e.g. a nation, environment, liberal ideas, nationalist sentiments, and other issue-specific types of representation). Bruno Latour notes accordingly that there would not be much difference between the representation of people and that of things. Both people and things need someone to speak for them.³⁵ However, if ideas or policy fields are represented they are in fact represented by people and thus are personified.

The notion of “representation” has been much criticized in Western thought. Rousseau, for instance, was one of the early critics of representation due to his belief that representation by others was detrimental to direct democracy and thus the liberty of the people.³⁶ The contempo-

31 Huang Heqing (ed.): *Jinxiandai ciyuan* (Modern etymology). Shanghai (Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe) 2010. See also Li Shuxiang / Hu Sheng: *Xiandai hanyu cidian* (Modern Chinese dictionary). Shanghai (Shangwu yinshuguan) 1996. I am grateful to Prof. Zhaohui Xue of Stanford University for providing me this information.

32 Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Vorlesungen 1930–1935*. Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp) 1984: 158–160.

33 Pitkin 1967: 9.

34 See e.g. Rudy B. Andeweg / Jacques J.A. Thomassen: Modes of Political Representation: Toward a New Typology. In: *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2005: 507–528; Andrew Rehfeld: Representation Re-thought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy. In: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 103, No. 2, May 2009: 214–230.

35 Bruno Latour: *Science in Action*. Cambridge/Mass. (Harvard University Press) 1987: 72.

36 F.R. Ankersmit: *Political Representation*. Stanford (Stanford University Press) 2002 provides an overview of the history of the term representation. See also Nadia Urbinati: *Representative Democracy and its Critics*. In: Sonia Alonso / John Keane / Wolfgang Merkel (eds.): *The Future of Representative Democracy*. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2011: 23–49. Since the 1980s the critique of existing forms of political representation was sparked by the question whether grassroots democracy was superior to representative democracy. See Gerhard Göhler: *Politische Repräsentation in der Demokratie*. In: Thomas Leif / Hans-Josef

rary critics of the concept of (democratic) representation point out that collective action based on delegation (representation) is always threatened by the possibility of (non-democratic) appropriation by delegates,³⁷ and that state power does not necessarily emanate from the people.³⁸ Moreover, as Saward argues, representation is a “two-way street”³⁹, i.e. it should be concerned not only with the representatives but also with the represented, not only with the question of what representation is, but rather what it *does*.⁴⁰ Historically, the critique of the concept of representative democracy resulted in demands for reinforcing grassroots democracy, referendums, establishing council systems or community-based forms of participation such as public hearings or participatory budgeting.

The academic literature on representation displays a broad variety of definitions signifying that the concept of political representation is highly contentious.⁴¹ Already in 1960 Henry B. Mayo stated that representation had developed into a catch-all term no longer of much use.⁴² And Andrew Rehfeld tells us that there is no

general concept of representation comprising all political entities, settings and underlying ideas.⁴³

Initially, Pitkin’s seminal work defined representation as “making present again”,⁴⁴ meaning that in political processes the interests and voices of citizens are made “present” by their representatives. She further noted that “something is simultaneously both present and not present.”⁴⁵ Such a definition is apparently too vague to be empirically verified. Her definition goes back to Carl Schmitt’s concept of representation as the visualization and realization of an invisible being by means of a public present being. “The invisible is assumed to be absent and yet simultaneously present”, Schmitt notes.⁴⁶ But Pitkin provides us with a further definition of representation, i.e. that of “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them”⁴⁷, a definition strongly reminiscent of the Weberian ideal-type of an elected legislature.⁴⁸

Saward in turn gives us a different definition. According to him “representing is performing, is action by actors, and the performance contains or adds up to a claim that someone is or can be ‘representative’”.⁴⁹ He speaks of “claim-making” which is more flexible than the contention that a person is factually representing specific constituents or interests. A representative claim in this sense is “a claim to represent or to know what

Legrand / Ansgar Klein (eds.): Die politische Klasse in Deutschland. Eliten auf dem Prüfstand. Bonn, Berlin (Bouvier Verlag) 1992: 108–125.

37 Pierre Bourdieu: Politik. Schriften zur Politischen Ökonomie 2. Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp) 2013: 311–312.

38 Dolf Sternberger: Nicht alle Staatsgewalt geht vom Volke aus. Stuttgart et al. (Kohlhammer) 1971: 9. He calls the idea that citizens in a representative democracy are represented both by and in political bodies, indicating an identity between a people and their representatives, the “dogmatic theory of representation”.

39 Saward 2006: 301.

40 Michael Saward: The Representative Claim. Oxford et al. (Oxford University Press) 2010: 9.

41 See e.g. the entry “Political Representation” in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-representation> (accessed 29 June 2016).

42 Henry B. Mayo: An Introduction to Democratic Theory. Oxford et al. (Oxford University Press) 1960.

43 Andrew Rehfeld: The Concepts of Representation. In: American Political Science Review, Vol. 105, No. 3 (2011): 635–636.

44 Pitkin 1967: 8.

45 Pitkin 1967: 9.

46 Carl Schmitt 1970: 209–210.

47 Pitkin 1967: 209.

48 A critic of Pitkin: Lisa Disch: Democratic Representation and the Constitutency Paradox. In: Perspectives on Politics, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2012): 599–616, and Saward 2006: 297–318.

49 Saward 2006: 302.

represents the interests of someone or something”,⁵⁰ be it openly or tacitly. However, such a claim must normally be acknowledged (or rejected) by a specific audience.⁵¹ This acknowledgement can be formal or informal, public or tacit. Saward highlights three crucial points of claim-makers: “(1) you are / are part of this audience, (2) you should accept this view, this construction – this representation – of yourself, and (3) you should accept me as speaking and acting for you”.⁵² In a similar vein, Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) speaks of the “alchemy of representation” through which the audience seems to create the representative whereas in reality the representative creates the group by giving it visibility and a public voice.⁵³

David Budde argues that political representation has two basic preconditions: (a) the existence of a function of representation warranting representation by a specific actor; and (b) the existence of an actor who is accepted by a specific audience as representative.⁵⁴ But the term also implies the issue of legitimation of representatives. Budde discerns two types of legitimation: (a) legitimation by rational procedures (German: durch Verfahren) in the sense of Niklas Luhmann, and (b) legitimation through symbolic power as described in the section on symbolic representation above. The latter is primarily based on informal institutions such as unconscious rules, values and claims.

From a functionalist perspective, James A. Stimson et al. speak of “dynamic representation”, meaning that “representation exists when changing preferences lead to changing policy acts. In that sense representation is dynamic because the idea, in its essence, is structured *in time*” [italics by Heberer].⁵⁵ Here, representation is not only conceived of as a process in time but is also related to processes of change and/or the avoidance of change. Moreover, the concept of dynamic representation implies the necessity of the existence of “windows of opportunity”. Representation and representational claims are simultaneously dependent on the overall political environment. Their effectiveness depends on factors such as external support, possible alliances, resources and incentives, the level of repression and responsiveness by the state, i.e. structures and institutions important for goal attainment of representatives.⁵⁶

In the “West” we find three different meanings: representation in the sense of agency (mandate) (German: Stellvertretung) in a distinct principal-agent relationship,⁵⁷ representation as embodi-

50 Saward 2006: 305.

51 Audience refers to the group of people who acknowledge or reject representatives. An audience differs from the group of people being represented. See Budde 2013: 65.

52 Saward 2006: 303.

53 Pierre Bourdieu: Language and Symbolic Power. Cambridge, Oxford (Polity Press) 1994: 106.

54 David Budde: Formen der Repräsentation und ihre Legitimation. Die voraussetzungsvolle Anerkennung von Repräsentanten in der Politik. Working Paper No. 3, Center for Political Theory & History of Political Ideas, Berlin (Free University of Berlin) 2013: 19.

55 James A. Stimson / Michael B. Mackuen / Robert S. Erikson: Dynamic Representation. In: American Political Science Review, Vol. 89, No. 3 (1995): 543–565.

56 Douglas McAdam / John D. McCarthy / Mayer Y. Zald (eds.): Comparative perspectives on social movements. Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings. Cambridge (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics) 1999; Sidney Tarrow: Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 1998.

57 See e.g. Thomas Schwartz: Representation as Agency and the Pork Barrel Paradox. In: Public Choice, Vol. 78, No. 3, 1994: 3–21, which raises the question whether the principal-agent model is compatible with our context. Golosov writes: “This model applies to situations in which there is a hierarchical relationship between two actors, one of whom (the agent) is expected to act on behalf of the other (the principal). The two actors have different interests and asymmetric information, with the agent having an informational advantage over the principal; hence the problem of ensuring that the agent

ment (German: Verkörperung) of the represented and representation in visible form (German: Abbildung), for instance that of visible minorities in electoral systems.⁵⁸ In this sense, Sintomer made the helpful distinction between symbolic representation (“the model and the image”) on the one hand and “juridical-political representation” on the other. Both can be traced back to the original Latin meanings of “repraesentatio” mentioned above.⁵⁹ And both meanings stand for the dualism between the political and cultural strands of representation sketched on page 5 of this paper.

Max Weber (1864–1920) in turn differentiated between “appropriated representation” of traditional societies (clan heads, chieftains of tribes, traditional village leaders, etc.), the “estate type of representation” (German: Ständerepräsentation), and “instructed representation” (freely elected representatives constrained by an imperative mandate).⁶⁰ This differentiation signifies that cultural distinctions also exist between various forms of representation and the accountability of representatives beyond the mere assignment of “democratic” and/or “authoritarian”. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, for instance, show that in societies with strong clientelistic ties between patrons and their clients political accountability of and trust in representatives differ from those in societies in which party affiliation and ideological commitments

play a salient role. In the first, representation is rather personal, in the latter it is more impersonal.⁶¹ That said, in analyzing representation and the interaction between representatives and audiences in a given society we must always bear in mind the cultural setting, including values, beliefs, ethnicities, mentalities, and the mind-set of a given people. Taking such “cultural” features into account helps us to avoid the pitfalls of comparison between different countries and societies.

Pitkin points to another important distinction, i.e. between the dualism of “acting for” and “standing for”, which involves the dichotomy of political representation – i.e. acting on the one hand for or in the interests of a constituency – and on the other embodying a person or a group of people.⁶² In the end, however, her focus is – as mentioned above – on acting in a democratic setting and on responding to the people represented.

Many contemporary scholars are dissatisfied with such classical normative approaches and have introduced new modes and forms of political representation. Didier Ruedin e.g. differentiated between the following: dyadic, collective, direct, and individual representation.⁶³ Rehfeld argues that the trustee/delegate distinction should be overcome by focusing in any analysis on the three factors of aims, sources of judgment, and the responsiveness of representatives.⁶⁴

is acting in the best interests of the principal rather than in the agent’s own interests. In authoritarian [settings, the authors] ... the goal of the principle ... is the maximization of political control”. See Grigorii V. Golosov: Proportional Representation and Authoritarianism: Evidence from Russia’s Regional Election Law Reform. In: *Representation*, Vol. 49, No. 1/2013: 84.

58 Budde 2013: 16–17; see also Karen Bird: The Political Representation of visible Minorities in electoral Democracies: A Comparison of France, Denmark, and Canada. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11/2005: 425–465.

59 Sintomer 2013.

60 Weber 1956: 217–218.

61 Patrick Chabal / Jean-Pascal Saloz: *Culture Troubles. Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*. Chicago, London (The University of Chicago Press) 2006: 273.

62 Pitkin 1967: 60–143.

63 Didier Ruedin: Individual Representation: A Different Approach to Political Representation. In: *Representation*, 48, issue 1/2012: 2–5.

64 Andrew Rehfeld: Representation rethought: on trustees, delegates, and gyroscopes in the study of political representation and democracy. In: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 103, No. 2 (2009): 214–230.

There are, however, further forms of representation such as: bottom-up and top-down representation, mobilized and autonomous representation, latent and manifest, legitimate and illegitimate, elected and unelected representation, “gyroscopic” representation (in which representatives act on the basis of their own experiences, i.e. with less responsiveness and more independent judgements), induced (more responsive), surrogate representation (by those elected from another district), promissory and anticipatory representation, etc.⁶⁵

We believe that the distinctions between bottom-up and top-down representation as well as mobilized, autonomous, latent, and manifest representation are of specific interest in examining the concept of representation in a non-dem-

ocratic setting such as China. The *gyroscopic type* is also prevalent in China, where representatives in formal organizations are to act less in the interests of their respective clientele group and more in the “nation’s” interest. This renders gyroscopic representation almost a “must”.

We agree with Mayo, Rehfeld, Sintomer and others that there is no one single concept, theory and definition of the term “representation” which is valid for all cases, circumstances, and across political regimes.⁶⁶ On the one hand, this has to do with the fact that completely different factors are comprised by this term.⁶⁷ On the other hand, this fact does not spare us the need to examine whether or not there are country-specific political concepts of representation (in our case, of course, in China).

4 REPRESENTATION IN AN AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT AND THE CHINESE CASE

Barbara Geddes points out that for

most of recorded history, most human beings have lived under dictatorial rule. Nevertheless, most theories of government explain leadership selection, policy making, and institutional choice in democracies. Most students that deal with authoritarianism seek to explain its begin-

ning or ending rather than the way authoritarian governments work.⁶⁸

What is widely lacking in the scientific literature are approaches (in our case to representation) which explain the nature of political representation in a non-democratic setting. The one-sided view in which political representation is linked to democratic systems and democratic institutions tends to obstruct the view of patterns and devices of representation in authoritarian regimes such as that in China. Acemoglu and Robinson, for instance, argue that “Non-democratic regimes share one common element: instead of representing the wishes of the population at large, they represent the preferences of a sub-

65 See e.g. Jane Mansbridge: Clarifying the Concept of Representation. In: American Political Science Review, Vol. 105, No. 3 (2011): 621–630. See also J. Mansbridge: Rethinking representation. In: American Political Science Review, Vol. 97, No. 4 (2003): 515–528.

66 See e.g. Mayo 1960; Rehfeld 2011: 635–636; Sintomer 2013: 2.

67 Representation is an important category in epistemology, cognitive science, political science and law, linguistics, theology, sociology, etc. See Gang Liu: Moderne politische Repräsentation und die Stellung der Parteien. Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Berlin 2012: 5–14.

68 Barbara Geddes: Stages of Development in Authoritarian Regimes. In: Vladimir Tismaneanu / Marc M. Howard / Rudra Sil (eds.): World Order after Leninism. Seattle, London (University of Washington Press) 2006: 149.

group of the population: The 'elite'. And: "In China, it is mainly the wishes of the Communist Party that matters".⁶⁹

Such a statement seems far too simplistic. On the one hand the elite not only acts in its own interests but also seemingly represents aims that are desired by most of the Chinese people (modernization and developing the nation into a strong and influential nation). Secondly, we find highly different types of authoritarian systems in the world: strong and weak ones, "harder" and "softer" regimes, more and less effective ones etc. "Different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy", notes Barbara Geddes.⁷⁰ Therefore, referring to the term "authoritarian" alone does not sufficiently explain why some of these systems are more successful than others. Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski have raised the question why "some autocrats survive for decades, and others fall soon after taking power".⁷¹ With regard to China, social, political and institutional processes in the meantime have become more complex, diverse and fragmented, involving a broad variety of actors. We need therefore to analyze the inner dynamics and the logic and function of this system's operation. Adam Przeworski has summed up this dilemma in the phrase that the Soviet Union failed but China flourishes, arguing that the "one-party state cannot be the difference".⁷²

Accordingly, the distinction between formal and informal institutions and patterns of representation in an authoritarian context constitutes a "black hole" in the literature on representation. In authoritarian entities, institutions are also important, albeit these differ with regard to democratic ones. In an authoritarian context, patterns of representation are more hierarchically organized and strongly monitored (in China by the party-state) in order to avoid the emergence of parallel power structures. Rehfeld has convincingly shown that representation is not "a democratic phenomenon at all". He speaks of "institutionalized nondemocratic representation".⁷³

Merely referring to democratic settings does not enable us to explain specific forms of representation in non-democratic environments. In countries such as China we also find phenomena such as direct elections (of village committees, partly urban residents' committees, since 1980 of People's Congresses up to the county level, business associations, etc.); indirect elections (of People's Congresses above the county level, partly elections of resident committees in urban neighborhoods), and non-elected legislatures such as the Political Consultative Conferences from the central down to the township levels in which composition is decided by the Communist Party (CCP). Such elections are not a move in the direction of a democratic transition but rather related to the issue of regime resilience, participation and gathering information about local policy processes and problems. Moreover, elections can help to monitor the performance

69 Daron Acemoglu / James A. Robinson: *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2006: 17.

70 Barbara Geddes: What do we know about Democratization after Twenty Years. In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2/1999: 115–144.

71 Jennifer Gandhi / Adam Przeworski: Authoritative Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats. In: *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 11 (2007): 1279.

72 Adam Przeworski: Parties, States, and Economic Reforms in the Soviet Union and China. Paper presented at the international conference "Governance, Adaptability and Institutional Stability under Contem-

porary One-party Rule: Comparative Perspectives," Nanchang, 27–29 March, 2014, Chinese version: Yu Keping / Thomas Heberer / Björn Alpermann (eds.): *Zhonggong zhili yu shijing. Bijiao de shijiao* (Governance and Adaptation by the CCP. Comparative Perspectives). Beijing (Zhongyang Bianyi Chubanshe), 2nd edition 2016: 49–86.

73 Andrew Rehfeld: Towards a General Theory of Political Representation. In: *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 1, February 2006: 1. Golosov 2013: 84 notes accordingly that "authoritarian institutions do matter".

of local officials. As Manion argues, representatives in China view themselves less as elected “Burkean trustees” autonomously representing their constituency or “Leninist party agents” acting only as agents of the CCP. They may, particularly at the local level, sometimes personally feel responsible for solving the practical problems of their constituencies.⁷⁴ On the other hand, however, People’s Congresses (henceforth in this paper “PC”) are involved in legislative procedures and the supervision of local governments and have reinforced their role as remonstrators, thus contributing to institutionalization, predictability and political effectiveness. At the local level where these congresses are directly elected by the people delegates sometimes feel personally responsible for solving the practical problems of their constituencies, i.e. they act as post-electoral representatives. Manion emphasizes that apart from elections the issue of “post-election representation” increasingly plays a major role now.⁷⁵ Moreover, the activities of delegates outside the annual sessions are meanwhile regularly evaluated by higher authorities.⁷⁶

Apart from elected or selected representatives in official bodies established by the party-state, informal patterns of representation exist as well. In a modification of Fukui’s definition of informal politics, we define informal political representation as a “tacitly accepted, but unenunciated one existing outside the framework of legal government, constitutions, bureaucratic constructs

and similar institutions”.⁷⁷ The rules of informal representation are not set up by the party-state but are rather non-legitimized means of pursuing public goals. In contrast to the institutionalization and codification by the party-state, the informal pattern is strongly related to social self-organization or the collective action of social groups. From a functional aspect we might argue that the formal patterns of representation primarily serve the exercise of power, whereas informal ones primarily serve influencing policies. In China, we further find a broad variety of informal patterns of representation such as clans and lineages in villages, hometown associations, Internet bloggers, social networks, social circles (*xiao quanzi*), petitioners, etc.

Moreover, we also have the onus of explaining why representation in an autocratic context can produce political output and exhibit legitimacy among the represented. Legitimacy, i.e. the belief that under given circumstances a system is the most appropriate one for a given society,⁷⁸ is highly dependent on an audience’s judgment, even in an authoritarian context. Rehfeld argues accordingly that the only precondition of representation is that something can be represented and something that represents it irrespective of a given political order.⁷⁹

The question arises why authoritarian regimes foster political institutions that resemble certain institutions in democracies.⁸⁰ On the one hand – as mentioned above – there are significant differences among authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, Wright shows us that, for instance, one-party regimes are more dependent on eco-

74 See e.g. Melanie Manion: *Information for Autocrats. Representation in Chinese Local Congresses*. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2015: 2–4.

75 See Manion 2015; Kevin J. O’Brien: *Agents and remonstrators: role accumulation by Chinese people’s congress deputies*. In: *The China Quarterly*, 138 (1994): 359–380; Tomoki Kamo / Hiroko Takeuchi: *Representation and Local People’s Congresses in China*. In: *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2013): 41–60.

76 On cadre evaluations see Thomas Heberer / René Trapel: *Evaluation Processes, Local Cadres’ Behaviour and Local Development Processes*. In: *Journal of Contemporary China*, No. 84 (November 2013): 1048–1066.

77 See Haruhiro Fukui: *On the Significance of Informal Politics*. In: Lowell Dittmer / Haruhiro Fukui / P.N.S. Lee (eds.): *Informal Politics in East Asia*. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2000: 3.

78 Seymour M. Lipset: *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. London (Heinemann), 2nd edition, 1983: 64.

79 Rehfeld 2006: 5.

80 See e.g. Gandhi / Przeworski 2007: 1279–1301.

conomic investments for economic development and therefore deem it necessary to establish legislative bodies that curtail their power in order to protect investors and their property rights against any kind of expropriation, thus stimulating further investments.⁸¹ This argument seems, however, insufficient to explain the existence of legislatures in authoritarian regimes. Their existence, e.g. in China, is rather related to the cooptation and inclusion of various strata by the power holders in order to limit frictions, contradictions and conflicts between the party in power and new social forces, and to foster representation of views and interests neglected by the dominant party so as to improve governance and guarantee stability, legitimacy, national cohesion, and innovative progress on the part of the regime.⁸²

What is feasible in a democratic setting is in fact less feasible under authoritarian conditions. In China, particularly in authorized public assemblies such as the People's Congresses (PCs) and Political Consultative Conferences, deputies are urged not to represent specific groups but specific interests, specifically the interests of the entire nation, the party-state or the "big" society. Referring to the former Soviet Union, Theodore H. Friedgut thus speaks of the deputies under the Soviet system as representatives who represent "the regime to the citizens and be the vox populi to the soviet executive and apparatus."⁸³ Accordingly, in China the deputies of the PCs primarily represent the party-state and/or their legislature in the various localities (villages, neighborhoods, enterprises, townships, counties, etc.); they report on the outcome of the

legislature's sessions and explain public policies to their constituencies, i.e. the "masses". In most cases, however, the deputies conceive of themselves as representing a specific unit or location and not the constituents. The deputies are rather expected to abide by "political correctness" as defined by the party-state. The latter, i.e. the party-state, also figures as an audience authorizing delegates.

We believe that in China representation encompasses the following points: (a) It is authorized by a given political entity (be it the party-state, a business or other association, an informal club, a group of petitioners, a clan, representatives of underground churches, various interest groups, etc.); (b) both interests, ideas, traditions, religions etc. as well as groups of people can be represented; (c) a representative's action produces a specific effect for the group or interests being represented. Our own interviews in China revealed that entrepreneurs in their function as delegates to the PCs intend to represent their individual interests but in fact are putting forward views that are in the interest of most other entrepreneurs as well.⁸⁴ In this way deputies can even contribute to identity- and group-building in specific groups⁸⁵ thus "constituting constituencies".⁸⁶

But how to capture the notion of political representation in the Chinese case? We argue that representation has a dual character encompassing both bottom-up and top-down patterns. "Bottom-up" refers to the issue of formal or informal elections such as local PCs, village leaders, social associations, homeowner com-

81 Joseph Wright: Do Authoritarian Institutions Constrain? How Legislatures Affect Economic Growth and Investment. In: *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, No. 2, April 2008: 322–343.

82 See Kenneth Jowitt: Inclusion and Mobilization in European Leninist Regimes. In: *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (October 1975): 69–96.

83 Theodore H. Friedgut: *Political Participation in the USSR*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1979: 182–185.

84 See e.g. Thomas Heberer: Strategic Behavior of Private Entrepreneurs in China – Collective Action, Representative Claims, and Connective Action. Working Papers on East Asian Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen, No. 108, Duisburg 2016. https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/in-east/about/publications_green_series/paper108-2016.pdf.

85 Heberer 2016.

86 Saward 2006: 306.

mittees, and to some extent the heads of urban residents' committees. "Top-down", on the other hand, refers to nominations by party and state authorities, delegates of the Political Consultative Conferences, leading officials, etc. Beyond bottom-up and top-down there are also representatives who are tacitly accepted by the "masses" since they represent the interests of certain groups of people or specific ideas and sentiments within a community (leading figures championing the interests of people without being elected, e.g. in cases of petitioning, NGOs, mass organizations, the media, including the Internet, social movements⁸⁷, clans and lineages, temple associations, etc.) or at least claim to represent these interests or ideas. Having said that, we understand that political representatives claim to act in the interests of *somebody* (a group of people) or *something* (such as ideas, the nation, traditions, interest etc.). Normally, the respective claim should be acknowledged by a specific audience. The claims may be formal or informal, public or tacit. The audience to be represented can be an organization (the party-state, a mass organization, an interest group, an association, a group of petitioners, clan members, villagers, neighborhood residents, media, bloggers, etc.) but also an idea or a concept.

In terms of Max Weber's classification, we will have to examine whether his three patterns: the "appropriated type" (traditional, such as clans, village communities, temple organizations, secret societies, hometown associations, etc.), the "estate type" (such as representatives of non-communist parties, of organizations of private entrepreneurs or independent personages in e.g. the Political Consultative Conferences), and the "instructed type" of representation" (e.g. in PCs) also exist in China.⁸⁸

87 Charles Tilly points out that specifically social movements "center on sustained challenges to authorities in the name of populations otherwise lacking direct representation", see Charles Tilly: *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*. Lanham et al. (Rowman & Littlefield) 2002: 53.

In China, for example, the trustee/delegate dichotomy and its variants are not of much analytical use. We have, therefore, to include the cultural dimension of representation into our analysis. To give just one example: According to the Confucianist tradition in China the *junzi* (君子) was considered to be the optimal representative due to his high ethical standards. Theoretically, any virtuous man willing to improve himself could become a *junzi*. Accordingly, the best representative was one being a "trustee" type in the sense of being both an outstanding intellectual person with a perfect virtue and continuously and selflessly speaking up for the common good. Accordingly, in Chinese political culture the issue of representation is highly personalized and less institutionalized.

In China, for instance, the national flag and anthem, pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, the opening and closing ceremonies of party congresses, sessions of the PCs, historical narratives such as that of the "Opium Wars", the anti-Japanese war, the Nanjing massacre or the CCP's Long March, and currently the strong Party leader Xi Jinping – i.e. the symbolic system of the state – all figure as symbols and embodiments of national identity and unity, representing the trinity of interests of the nation, the party, and the socialist system. In Chinese political culture it was always crucial to have a strong leader representing a strong state (or in modern times the nation) – as a symbolic representative organically linked to the people and being the "face" of this state or nation with which the people could identify. In that sense both Mao and the people believed e.g. that he was the representative of both the people and the truth.

For China the functional aspect of representation is crucial. We argue that it is less important

88 On representation in local People's Congresses see Melanie Manion: *Authoritarian Parochialism: Local Congressional Representation in China*. In: *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 218 (June 2014): 311–338. In more detail: Manion 2015.

what political representation *is* but what it *does*, primarily its tangible output and less its abstract forms. Michael Hatherell called this the “representative repertoire”.⁸⁹ Delegates may have been appointed by the party-state. The crucial question however is the extent to which they represent – consciously or unconsciously – the interests of specific social groups or of the “big society”. That is precisely what Melanie Manion⁹⁰ means when she talks about the expectations of electing people whom community leaders or PC delegates then help to solve practical problems.

A few Chinese and Western authors talk about the existence of a “consultative democracy” in China, that is, a type of a collaborative governance defined as “the sharing of power and discretion within and across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors for public purposes”.⁹¹ Sometimes it is argued that even a kind of “deliberative democracy” exists,⁹² and that China has an “unpromising terrain for political deliber-

ation”.⁹³ Beibei Tang and John S. Dryzek mention, for instance, issues such as participatory budgeting,⁹⁴ village elections, public hearings, policy consultations or village assemblies at the local level as typical for deliberative processes in China.⁹⁵ The question here is how far these concepts are related to “representation” (or “democracy”) or rather display a legitimizing character. In any case it is the party-state which decides. We have, therefore, to question these concepts. At a conference in Beijing in June 2016 a Chinese professor of the Chinese Academy of Social Science noted: “协商民主不如政治民主” (Consultative democracy is not like political democracy). He holds the view that the term sounds good and is touted as something “typically Chinese”, though in fact he would not conceive of it as something really democratic.⁹⁶ A further question is whether these concepts have “travelled” to China from the West or whether there are indications that they are embedded in the Chinese political culture.

The CCP conceives of itself as the major representative of the Chinese people or the “masses”, whom they embody on the political stage. A new development in 2002 underscored this notion. In that year the 16th Party Congress ratified the concept of the “Three Represents” (*sange daibiao*) which had been put forward by the Party chief Jiang Zemin in the year 2000 and has been included in the Constitution in 2002. This concept

89 Michael Hatherell: Repertoires of Representation and an Application to Indonesia’s Jokowi. In: Representation, Vol. 50, No. 4 (2014): 439.

90 Manion 2015: 151.

91 Yijia Jing 2015: 1.

92 See e.g. Ethan J. Leib / Baogang He (eds.): The Search for Deliberative Democracy in China. Basingstoke (Palgrave MacMillan) 2006; James S. Fishkin et al.: Deliberative democracy in an unlikely place: Deliberative polling in China. In: British Journal of Political Science, 40 (2010): 435–444; Baogang He / Mark E. Warren: Authoritarian deliberation: The deliberative turn in Chinese political development. In: Perspectives on Politics, 9 (2011): 276–279; Beibei Tang / John S. Dryzek: Introduction: The Continuing Search for Deliberation and Participation in China. In: Journal of Chinese Political Science, 2014 (19): 109–114; Beibei Tang: Development and Prospects of Deliberative Democracy in China: The Dimensions of Deliberative Capacity Building. In: Journal of Chinese Political Science, 19 (2014): 115–132; Baogang He: Reconciling Deliberation and Representation: Chinese Challenges to Deliberative Democracy. In: Representation, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2015): 35–50. See also Tan Huosheng: Minzhu shenyi yu zhengzhi hefaxing (Democratic deliberation and political legitimacy). Beijing (Falü chubanshe) 2007; He Baogang: Xieshang minzhu: lilun, fangfa he shijian (Deliberative democra-

cy: theories, methods, and practice). Beijing (Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe) 2008.

93 He / Warren 2011: 271.

94 Professor Lin Muhua argued at a conference at Renmin University in June 2016 that in China the concept of “participatory budgeting” (such as in Wenling or Yanqin) had actually been unsuccessful.

95 Tang / Dryzek 2014: 110–111. Due to the specific political setting in China they classify it, however, as “authoritarian deliberation”.

96 For a long time former Indonesian dictator Suharto has propagated in a similar vein that “consultative democracy” was a “typical Indonesian form of democracy”. After his removal nobody raised this argument again.

implies that the CCP represents the advanced social productive forces (creating a modern economy and raising the living standard of the people), the progressive course of China's advanced culture (i.e. creating a society with a high level of education and morality), and the fundamental interests of the majority of the Chinese people (i.e. taking into account the interests of the entire population including private entrepreneurs who formerly were branded as capitalists and/or anti-socialist forces). By these "representers" the CCP claims that it is embodying the interests of almost the entire Chinese nation and its modernizing development and thus the Chinese developmental state. This kind of representation encompasses two issues: representation/embodiment of the Chinese people and their interests, and – symbolically – representation/embodiment of the Chinese nation and its future development (i.e. an idea). This claim of the CCP is exactly what Edward Shils and others have referred to as "institutional charisma".⁹⁷ Shils argues that the

charisma of an institution or of a corporate body does not depend on its foundation by a charismatic person (although it might well be true that only charismatic persons can command the authority and resources to create a new and very powerful institution or corporate body). Corporate bodies – secular, economic, governmental, military, and political – come to possess charismatic qualities simply by virtue of the tremendous power concentrated in them.⁹⁸

The institutional type of charisma is therefore not linked to a single personality – albeit charis-

matic leaders such as Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping had a lasting effect on the development of the CCP – but to a specific organization such as in our case the CCP. Under the conditions of institutional charisma it is irrelevant whether factions and different interests are existent within that organization or whether the entire people or only a large section and/or sub-groups of a population supports it; rather, the question is whether a political party such as the CCP is in possession of "tremendous" and effective power and legitimacy, and whether it is supported by a majority of the population who believe in its mission. Here, representation is strongly linked to the loci of power, authority and meaning, i.e. the symbolic representation of power.

Nevertheless, institutions are represented by leaders. It is therefore the Chinese leadership, and particularly the current Party chief Xi Jinping, who finally lay claim to representation of the entire nation, thus making the nation visible (cf. the goal of realizing the "Chinese Dream"). Leadership in authoritarian states is not a bottom-up but rather a top-down process. In a similar vein, Max Weber argued that even in "every democratic political order" it is "not the politically passive 'mass' that brings forth a leader of one's own accord (German: aus sich), but rather the political leader who gains the allegiance of that mass, thus winning over the mass by means of demagoguery".⁹⁹

The Internet has generated new patterns of representation and collective action in China, whereby

online technologies function as connectivity-enhancing tools and have prompted the search for novel or inherently formed different new

97 Edward Shils: *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*. Chicago, London (University of Chicago Press) 1975: 127–134 and 256–275. On the interrelationship between charisma and institution-building see Shmuel N. Eisenstadt: *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*. Chicago, London (University of Chicago Press) 1974.

98 Shils 1975: 267.

99 Max Weber: *Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland*. In: *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, ed. by Johannes Winckelmann, Tübingen (J.C.B. Mohr) 1988: 401.

communities (“collective formations”) and actors on the web.¹⁰⁰

Most important is “Sina Weibo”, a microblogging website (akin to Twitter or Facebook) with more than 222 million subscribers and 100 million daily users in 2015. Public discourses primarily occur not only via the Internet but also through SMS, MMS (multimedia messages) and voice messaging services (*Weixin* or *WeChat*).¹⁰¹ Activities through these new social media have spawned an alternative participative and representative culture, engendering new socio-political dynamics and changing power relations.¹⁰²

Collective activities organized by means of Internet blogging are meanwhile scientifically classified as “connective action”. This is based on “individual engagement using technologies to carry personal stories” and functions as a platform for creating new types of networks.¹⁰³ These networks are sometimes labeled “E-communities of interest”¹⁰⁴, referring to communities linked by shared interests across specific locations. Online chat networks are “flexible organizations”

which provide “online meeting places”, coordinate “offline activities”, and create “interpersonal trust”.¹⁰⁵ New patterns of representation have emerged. Let us look, for instance, at the case of Han Han, one of China’s most popular bloggers, a professional race car driver, novelist, occasional singer and magazine editor. He figures as an Internet opinion leader, shaping the views of millions of young people who are his followers. Therefore he can be counted as a specific representative of a large share of the younger generation.¹⁰⁶ The question arises whether Han Han figures as a “celebrity politician” or “celebrity representative”, a term referring to people who, “via mass media, enjoy a greater presence and wider scope of activity and agency than are those who make up the rest of the population”¹⁰⁷. Celebrity figures harness their popularity to address specific issues in an attempt to influence policies or at least public opinion.¹⁰⁸

100 Ulrich Dolata / Jan-Felix Schrape: *Masses, Crowds, Communities, Movements. Collective Formations in the Digital Age*. SOI Discussion Papers (2), University of Stuttgart, 18 (2014): 3.

101 See Jacques deLisle / Avery Goldstein / Guobin Yang (eds.): *Introduction: The Internet, Social Media, and a Changing China*. In: deLisle / Goldstein / Yang (eds.): *The Internet, Social Media, and a Changing China*. Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania Press) 2016: 1–27.

102 See e.g. Mirko T. Schäfer: *Bastard Culture! How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production*. Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2011; Henry Jenkins / Mizuko Ito / Danah Boyd: *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era*. Cambridge, Malden (Polity Press) 2016.

103 W. Lance Bennett / Alexandra Segerberg: *The Logic of Connective Action. Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge, New York (Cambridge University Press) 2013: 196.

104 Dolata / Schrape: *Masses, Crowds, Communities, Movements*: 16.

105 Bennett / Segerberg 2015: 753. Regarding China see Jun Liu: *Credibility, Reliability, and Reciprocity. Mobile Communication, Guanxi, and Protest Mobilization in Contemporary China*. In: Sun Sun Lim / Cheryl R.R. Soriano (eds.): *Asian Perspectives on Digital Culture. Emerging Phenomena, Enduring Concepts*. London, New York (Routledge) 2016: 69–84.

106 See e.g. Han Han: *This generation. Dispatches from China’s most popular blogger*. London et al. (Simon & Schuster) 2012.

107 John Street: *Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation*. In: *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, Vol. 6, Issue 4, October 2004: 437.

108 Most existing research on this issue focusses on the examination of the (political) influence of celebrities through Weibo/blogging. Many Chinese articles can be found, such as that of Liang Zengli: *Dangdai Zhongguo mingren weibo zhengzhi canyuanjiu* (Political participation and research of China’s current famous bloggers). Master thesis at Hebei University, 2014, <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10075-1014039198.htm> (accessed 1 September, 2016); Cheng Jialin: *Wangluo canyu daibiaoxing geren huo renqun qianxi* (Individual participative representation in the Internet and crowd analysis), <http://www.cnki.com.cn/Article/CJFDTotal-CAIZ201225123.htm> (accessed 1 September, 2016).

Han Han's activities are not directed towards changing the political system but are rather concerned with sharing information, discussing societal problems, or presenting his assessment of societal developments, lifestyle issues, values, individualism, and individual views.

But even governments endeavor to demonstrate that they are representatives of the peo-

ple by increasing responsiveness to citizen demands. Chen et al. have shown that one-third of county-level governments in China respond to citizens' online demands, criticism and proposals.¹⁰⁹

In the following section we will briefly look at the Chinese discourses on political representation in order to understand how this issue is discussed in the Chinese context.

5 CHINESE DISCOURSES ON REPRESENTATION¹¹⁰

The Chinese discussion on political representation encompasses about a dozen themes. The major themes are: representation in general and its conceptualization, representation in PCs, and representation by the CCP. Moreover, the "mass line" concept plays a major role here. Further topics are: representation by non-communist parties (the so-called "democratic parties"), the "Three Representations" mentioned previously, representation in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conferences, or representation by specific organizations such as the Chambers of Industry & Commerce. In the following we have chosen contributions to the Chinese discourse on political representation in order to illustrate crucial points of the discussion. As examples, we will focus on four points: (a) discourses on Western and Chinese patterns of political representation; (b) discourses on the People's Congresses; (c) discourses on the representational character

of the CCP, and (d) discourses on the "mass line" as a specific method of representative claims. Finally, we will briefly address the role of Carl Schmitt's concept of representation in the Chinese discourses.

(a) Western and Chinese patterns of representation: legitimizing discourses

In a more general sense, Ran Hao from Peking University discusses the relationship between representation and democracy. He differentiates between representative democracy on the one hand and democratic representation on the other. The former refers to representation in a democratic context within an institutional arrangement, where the latter is conceived of as a variety of democratic institutions and is related to the election of representatives of a group of people. According to the author, "forms" of democratic representation (such as the PCs, village elections, participatory budgeting, etc.) can be classified as "democratic" institutions which can also exist in a non-democratic setting (such as China).¹¹¹

109 See Jidong Chen / Jennifer Pan / Yiqing Xu: Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China. In: *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 60, No.2, April 2016: 383–400.

110 The author is grateful to Dr. Guan Ting, who assisted him in tracing the Chinese discourses. She also contributed Table 1 and part of the section on Carl Schmitt.

111 Ran Hao: "Daibiao" de gainian lijie (Understanding the concept of representation). In: *Zhejiang Xuekan* (Zhejiang journal), 5 (2009): 124–129.

Yan Li and Bi Xia from Hehai University highlight the difference between Chinese and “Western” types of representation. They specifically argue that “Western” representation symbolizes a kind of “procedural democracy”, i.e. that its procedure and form (elections) generate democratic legitimacy. According to both authors, Chinese representation is *substantial* representation, i.e. the CCP is – under China’s current conditions – the organization best capable of representing the interests of the Chinese people. Yan and Bi substantiate their arguments by two points: (a) Western representation represents the interests of the upper class, while Chinese representation represents the interests of the masses, e.g. by improving their living standards; (b) Western representation is procedure-oriented, the Chinese one outcome-oriented.¹¹²

In a similar vein Wang Shaoguang, an influential professor of political science at the Chinese University in Hong Kong and visiting professor at the Tsinghua University in Beijing, argues that two kinds of democracy exist: “representational democracy” (代表性民主, *daibiaoxing minzhu*) and “representative democracy” (代议性民主, *daiyixing minzhu*). The latter is the “Western” type, characterized by formal elections which entitle politicians as representatives of popular interests. The former, on the other hand, is that of the Chinese pattern and refers to an accountable, accessible, and autonomous government serving the people and capable of solving global core problems. This would imply that the Chinese type is superior to the “Western” one.

According to Wang Shaoguang, the Chinese leadership addresses the demands of the peo-

ple by means of the “mass line”, the Chinese equivalent of participation. China’s representational democracy accordingly differs from “Western” types in terms of three aspects: (a) Chinese people prefer *substantial* democracy to *procedural* democracy, with the implication that representation in China exhibits a higher grade of legitimacy among the people; (b) *representational* democracy fits China’s specific conditions better than representative democracy; (c) Chinese *representatives* represent the objective needs of the people, while western representatives represent the subjective wishes of the people only. To put it in a nutshell, Wang claims acclamatorily that representation in China means that officials act in the interests of the objective needs of the people by implementing political methods such as the mass line (which will be addressed below).¹¹³

Jing Yuejin, professor of political science at Tsinghua University, finds two concepts of representation in China: (a) that of top-down representation by the (Leninist) vanguard party and (b) democratic representation. He indicates that during the course of history in China the political status of type (a) gained priority over type (b). Accordingly, politics and political organizations such as the PC are controlled by the Party. Now, as China faces a growing need for democratic, bottom-up representation, the tension between these two could intensify. A crucial task for China’s political reform, so the author, is therefore to reconcile these two kinds of representation (top-down party representation and bottom-up “democratic representation”).¹¹⁴ Jing summarizes his arguments in the following table:

112 Yan Li / Bi Xia: Zhongguo daibiaoxing minzhu goujian jichu fenxi: Mao Zedong dui Zhongguo shi minzhu neihan renshi de qishi (Basic analysis of the Chinese representational democracy: enlightenment of Mao Zedong’s understanding of Chinese democracy). In: Zhongxue Zhengzhi Jiaoxue Cankao (Material for teaching politics in middle schools), 12 (2014): 23–26.

113 Wang Shaoguang: Daibiaoxing minzhu yu daiyixing minzhu (Representational democracy and representative democracy). In: Kaifangshidai (Open Times), 2 (2014): 10.

114 Jing Yuejin: Daibiao lilun yu Zhongguo zhengzhi: yige bijiao shiyexia de kaocha (Representation theory and Chinese politics: a comparative study). In: Shehui Kexue Yanjiu (Social Science Research), 3 (2007): 16–21.

Table 1: Differences and features of democratic representation and vanguard party representation (according to Jing Yuejin)

Representation type:	Elective representation	Representation by the (Leninist) vanguard party
Theoretical premise	Sovereignty of the people	Sovereignty of the people
Theoretical foundation	Representation theory	Marxism-Leninism
View of democracy	Equal civil rights	Class nature of democracy
View of politicians	A social profession	A role model with vision and capability
View of citizens / ordinary people	Mainstream view: citizens understand their own interests, and are able to choose the best way to achieve these interests	People are the creator of history, but also need to be inspired, educated and guided
Basis of representation	Bottom-up approach; regular elections; elections are conceived of as an implementation process to ensure people's sovereignty	Top-down approach; no direct link to elections; the party is the vanguard of society and represents the fundamental interests of the people
Target of representation	Serving the people	Serving the people
View of public interests	Pluralism and particularism	Common interest of the people
Relation between representatives and represented	The autonomy of representatives is focal in Europe, while responsiveness of the representatives is emphasized in the U.S.	Against tailism*, leftist adventurism; independent judgment of the people's interests
Nature of political parties	Instruments for elections; results of the elections determine whether a party governs the country	Vanguard organization aiming at capturing political leadership
Role of party members	Campaign and vote for the party	Role models; act on behalf of the vanguard (CCP) and represent the character and program of the party
Relationship between representativeness of the party and representation theory	Representation of political parties according to Western political theory	Representation of the CCP in a non-Western sense

* Tailism or "Chvostism" coined by Lenin (in German: Nachtrabpolitik) is the theory/practice of following behind events. Source: Jing Yuejin 2007: 20.

Wang Hui, professor of literary studies and history at Tsinghua University, a leading representative of the "New Left", and one of China's foremost critical intellectuals, is concerned with the global "representation crisis" which he conceives of as a global crisis of political parties. He speaks of a thorough crisis in the political sphere, mainly characterized by a breakdown of representation. Party systems around the world face the same political crises. Because of global transformation, political parties across political systems lose their capacity to represent the people. He argues that albeit political parties are still important today, they have lost their character as representatives of specific social groups and social movements (such as during the 19th and 20th century). They are rather inclined to follow national logics and to distance themselves from

the unprivileged classes. This also holds for China and the "super-political party" (超级政党), i.e. a leading and hegemonic party such as the CCP that claims to represent the nation, the Chinese people and the future. In discussing representatives' political principles and conditions in China since the early 20th century, Wang finds that the CCP does no longer represent a social movement or the lower classes such as the workers and peasants. The CCP has rather been assimilated to the bureaucratic system of the state apparatus, its politics became depoliticized. Meanwhile, both the leftists and the rightists attempt to "revert" to a kind of "party politics" [i.e. representation of social interests by parties] to improve China's representation system. The rightists propose establishing a multi-party parliamentary system of representation, the leftists want to rebuild a

CCP-led system of representation. Wang further indicates that in China it is important to develop an open, advanced and non-bureaucratized representation system without reverting to such old-style “party politics”. According to Wang a “post-party” political system was better suited to contemporary China than any kind of traditional “party politics”. “Post-party politics” here means that although parties are still very important, they have lost their representativeness and the corresponding political logic of the 19th and 20th century. A new kind of representativeness should be fostered by means of the “mass line”.¹¹⁵

(b) The discourses on the People’s Congresses: improving governance and representation

One of the commonly discussed issues is representation at the various levels of PCs. Yang Xuedong, a political scientist at the Central Compilation and Translation Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, points out that an analysis of the Chinese PC should be done from the perspective that the current Chinese system needs political structures and institutions which suit to its current system, and that any analyses from “Western” perspectives would fail to meet the Chinese peculiarities. He classifies the Chinese governance system as a still-developing “hybrid system”, i.e. a combination of traditional, more modern, and foreign experiences. According to Yang the PC system is also continuously developing, and this within the context of modernization of the Chinese governance system. He posits the existence of both a constitution and a system of representation (such as the PC) as crucial for modern states and finds that these preconditions of a modern state exist so far in China only in a purely formal sense.¹¹⁶

115 Wang Hui: Daibiaoxing duanlie yu “hou zhengdang zhengzhi” (The break of representation and “post-party politics”). In: Kaifang Shidai (Open Times), (2) 2014: 70–79. Meanwhile, an expanded and revised version of this article has been published: See Wang Hui: The Crisis of Representativeness and Post-Party Politics. In: Modern China, Vol. 40 (2) 2014: 214–239.

Yuan Zhaoting from Heze University examines the characteristics of “daibiaoxing” and the features of the PC delegates. He argues that from the Chinese semantic perspective “daibiao” implies that the representatives should be controlled by the represented and that the former should express their opinions frankly. However, in practice, most PC delegates would not meet these demands since they are not controlled by the people and are unable to act in the people’s interests. Moreover, delegates are not selected on the basis of their capabilities as representatives but rather on the basis of their “morality”, i.e. by being recognized as moral models. After comparing the definition of “daibiao” and the actual practices of the delegates, the author makes suggestions for improving the “representativeness” of the PC delegates: (1) delegates should be selected according to a percentage analysis of social strata and classes; (2) direct elections should be implemented more frequently; (3) the professionalization of PC delegates should be emphasized; and (4) specific platforms should be established for the delegates regarding the collection and distribution of information.¹¹⁷

116 Yang Xuedong: Tixi jixiao, zhili xiandaihua yu Renmin Daibiao Dahui zhidu (System performance, modernizing governance and the system of the People’s Representatives Congresses). In: Jiaoxue Yu Yanjiu (Teaching and Research), 6/2015: 5–14. Yang’s argument of the existence of a “hybrid system” corresponds with the argumentation of the late Edward Shils that in modernizing Asian societies we find a “threefold composition”, i.e. the parallel existence of a modern culture, a mixture of traditional and indigenous heritages, and of a “traditional religious-philosophical culture”. See Edward Shils: *The Intellectuals and the Powers & Other Essays*. Chicago and London (University of Chicago Press) 1972: 376.

117 Yuan Zhaoting: Shilun rendadaibiao daibiaoxing de wanshan (The improvement of the representation of the representatives). In: Renda Yanjiu (Renda research), (5) 2010: 13–16. The issue how to improve the quality and competence of PC delegates is a salient topic in China, see e.g. Wang Lei / Zhang Manjing: “Daibiaoxing” shiyu xia de minzhu dangpai daibiao renshi duiwu jianshe (From the domain of “representativeness” establish a contingent of delegates from the democratic parties). In: Chongqing Shehuizhuyi

Zhang Aijun and Sun Guiyong from Liaoning University point out that congressmen do not yet have real authority and should be granted wider powers in order to enhance the status of the PCs and improve the quality of popular sovereignty. This could be done by means of (a) an **electoral reform** for greater transparency of elections; enhancing direct elections; designing electoral districts on the basis of territory rather than on work units (*danwei*); and enhancing competitiveness in elections; (b) **improvement of the PC system** through verifying the qualifications of the candidates, reducing the number of delegates, and enhancing the professionalism of the delegates; (c) **improvement of the NPC session system** by extending the conference periods, changing the discussion style, etc.; and (d) **giving PC delegates greater supervisory power vis-à-vis regional governments**.¹¹⁸ Concurrently, in order to minimize corruption (vote buying, bribery of delegates), entrepreneurs should not become congressmen, supervision mechanisms should be improved, and new mechanisms for the removal of delegates should be installed.¹¹⁹

Yang Tao, a journalist and public intellectual, criticizes that the composition of the PC delegates is inappropriate, particularly with regard to the number of delegates who become officials (*guanyuan daibiao*). In the PC of Guangzhou city alone, for example, these delegates constitute 38.4% of all delegates. On the other hand, the number of delegates who were previously workers and peasants is rather low. Moreover, most

delegates counted as workers and peasants do not in fact belong to these social strata and by no means represent the interests of these groups. As a result, the author suggests that the transparency of elections and the structure of the PC delegates should be improved.¹²⁰

Interesting in this context is the statement of Li Changping, a former township cadre, that the representation ratio between peasants and urban citizens is 1 : 10. He notes that peasants, who constitute the majority of China's population, do not have a voice or representation in PCs. He argues that the system of political representation is the structural reason why poor people suffer poverty in the long run.¹²¹ Like Yang, Li also points to the inadequacy of the PC's composition.

c) Representation by the CCP: the hegemonic discourse

Huang Xiaofang, assistant professor at the Beijing CCP's Party School, argues that representation is a core function of modern political parties. How to shape the relationship between parties (representatives) and the people (the represented) is – according to Huang – a crucial question for both China and Western countries. In the latter, elections put pressure on parties to take care of the interests of their constituencies. This interest representation is, however, short-term, since the term of office is limited to only a few years. In China, in contrast, only a one-party system exists and can pursue the people's interests from a long-term perspective, thus guaranteeing continuity and stability. As in the West, however, the ruling party in China (the CCP) too faces a weakening of its representation function and deficiencies in its accountability mechanisms

Xueyuan Xueban (Journal of Chongqing's University for Socialism), 6/2013: 15–19, http://cjrbcjn.cn/html/2015-12/17/content_5495888.htm (accessed 4 September, 2016).

118 Zhang Aijun / Sun Guiyong: Daibiao shizhishang youquan shi rendagaige de fangxiang (The reform direction of the NPC is that representatives have the powers). In: Tansuo Yu Zhengming (Exploration and Contention), (1) 2015: 52–57.

119 Zheng Ziqing: "Daobiao weiyuan" zige buneng cheng zhengzhi kuizengpin (The title of "congressman" cannot be a political gift), http://opinion.china.com.cn/opinion_77_123177.html (accessed 27 August, 2016)

120 Yang Tao: "Guanyuan daibiao" jianshao shi minzhu zhengzhi de jinbu (Reducing "representatives who are officials" means progress of democracy). In: Zhengfu Fazhi (Government and Law), 7 (2010): 5.

121 Li Changping: Die wahren Gründe für die Armut der Bauern. In: Heinrich Böll Foundation (ed.): Wie China debattiert. Neue Essays und Bilder aus China. Berlin (Heinrich Böll Foundation) 2009: 99.

due particularly to new social organizations and movements. Therefore, so Huang, the CCP must reinforce its cooperation and consultation with the “democratic parties” which represent various social interests. In the end it will be the task of the CCP to act as a balancing force between competing social interests.¹²²

This selection of discourses shows that there is an ongoing discussion in China about the concept of representation which goes far beyond the official discourses of the party-state. A crucial issue which pops up in many discourse contributions is that of the “mass line” concept as a specific kind of representation in which the party collects and analyzes the opinions and demands of the masses and then translates these into concrete policies. In this interaction the CCP and its cadres are conceived of as the representers, the masses as the represented. As we have seen, authors such as Wang Shaoguang believe that the “mass line” represents a higher form of representation and democracy than those existing in Western democratic countries. In the following we will briefly address this view.

(d) Representation and the “Mass Line” **(qunzhong luxian)**

The “mass line” concept was developed by Mao Zedong in the 1920s. Today it is still viewed as a cornerstone of CCP politics. The term was coined by Mao and is conceived of by the party on the one hand as a theory for shaping and implementing policy and on the other as a theory of the interactions between political leaders (of the CCP) and the “masses”. In 1943 Mao summarized the concept as follows:

Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the

ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership – such is the basic method of leadership.¹²³

In this view, the concrete scope of the Party’s tasks is determined through interaction with the “masses”. The latter’s ideas are identified, formulated in an ideologically correct way and then translated into policies. These policies in turn are then explained to the “masses” until they embrace them as their own and translate them into action under the guidance of the Party.

The correctness of policies is tested in practical work with the “masses”. Thereafter, the opinions of the “masses” must once again be collected and translated into new policies, etc. In this sense, the “mass line” is deemed to be the specific contribution of Mao to Marxist theory. According to Mao, an orientation towards the needs and ideas of the “masses” will prevent the emerging of an elitist distance between the party’s cadres and the ordinary population.

The meaning of “mass line” in this sense is to generate change bottom-up under the guidance of the CCP. Without a close relationship to the “masses” no correct definition of the tasks and the policies of the CCP is possible. These tasks must be formulated according to the interests, needs, and practical experiences of the people in order to make the Party’s policies more accessible for the “masses”. According to Mao, the “masses” will support these policies only if they recognize an identity between their interests and the policies of the CCP.

In the following we provide first some examples of the “mass line” discourse and then address the recent “mass line” campaign under the leadership of Xi Jinping. In examining the “mass line” we will focus on the issue of representation.

122 Huang Xiaofang: Zhongguo gongchandang zhengzhi daibiao guan de shanbiao jiqi pingxi (Evolution and assessment of the concept of political representation through the CCP). In: Jiaoxue Yu Yanjiu (Teaching and Research), 9/2016: 67–74.

123 Mao Zedong: Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership (June 1, 1943). In: Selected Works, Vol. III, Beijing 1969 (Foreign Language Press): 120.

Cong Riyun, a professor of political science at the Chinese University of Politics & Law, critically conceives the “mass line” as a rather transitional concept. He argues that the concept of the “masses” stands for a transition from “subjects under a feudal ruler (臣民)” to “citizens”. The term “masses” displays features of both and implies that the people still play a passive role on the whole, even though they have already developed some characteristics of “citizens”.¹²⁴ Cong’s conclusion is that the (passive) “masses” need someone to represent them, and that the Party therefore is the natural representer.

Jing Yuejin finds an updated version of the “mass line” in the representation of villagers by village elections and villagers’ self-governance (established in the 1990s). In this new pattern of “mass line” policy, he sees a crucial contribution to China’s political reform process.¹²⁵

For Wang Shaoguang, the “mass line” is a “Chinese” decision-making model that provides a public channel for representation which is strongly linked to the participation of the masses. The cadres of the CCP in turn are obliged to maintain close relations to the “masses” so that they can figure as real representers.¹²⁶ In contrast, Wang Jianhua, professor of political science at Nanjing University, conceives of the “mass line” as a bottom-up mode shaped by the actions of the masses. Although the implemen-

tation of the “mass line” entails many problems, it can help in converting the “top-down” process of mass mobilization into a “bottom-up” mass movement.¹²⁷ The outcome will be a shift from a top-down representation (by the Party) to a bottom-up one in which the role of the Party will change accordingly.

To achieve the goal of ensuring that the entire party is not only following its economic and political line but also regaining its function as the “real” representative of the “masses” the Xi Jinping leadership in 2013 launched a major “Rectification Campaign” to “thoroughly clean up the working style” of the members of the CCP, followed by an anti-corruption campaign. The first, initiated by the CCP leadership in June 2013, was given the name “Mass Line Education and Practice Activities” (*qunzhong luxian jiaoyu shijian huodong*) and was designed to last a full year.¹²⁸ The second commenced in the same year 2013 and was still underway at the time of publication of this paper. It is reminiscent of Maoist political campaigns inasmuch as the idea is to combat corruption, bureaucratic behavior, hedonism, and extravagance. The purpose is also to “rectify” party members by means of self-purifying (*ziwo jinghua*), self-perfection (*ziwo wanshan*), self-reformation (*ziwo gexin*), self-elevation (*ziwo tigao*), self-criticism (*ziwo piping*), self-education (*ziwo jiaoyu*), and self-analysis (*ziwo pouxi*).¹²⁹

124 Cong Riyun: Dangdai Zhongguo zhengzhi yujing zhong de “qunzhong” gainian fenxi (Analysis of the concept of “masses” in China’s political context). <http://www.fw5u.com/lunwen/zhengzhilunwen/172510197.html> (accessed 3 September, 2016).

125 Jing Yuejin: Qunzhong luxian yu dangdai Zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan. <http://m.wendangku.net/doc/8c946df0680203d8ce2f24e8.html> (accessed 3 September, 2016).

126 Wang Shaoguang: Mao Zedong de nixiang zhengzhi canyu moshi – qunzhong luxian (Mao Zedong’s reverse political participation model – the mass line). In: Xuexi Yuekan (Studying Monthly) 23/2010, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/ljsj/ljsj/article_2010062512068.html (accessed 3 September, 2016).

127 Wang Jianhua: Qunzhong luxian: minzhu de Zhongguo daolu (The mass line: the Chinese path to democracy), <https://box1.global.ssl.fastly.net/news/gb/pubvp/2009/02/200902092313.shtml> (accessed 3 September, 2016).

128 See http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-07/12/c_116513966.htm (accessed 1 October 2013).

129 Xi Jinping zai dang de qunzhong luxian jiaoyu shijian huodong gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua (Speech of Xi Jinping at the working conference on mass line education and practice activities) (18 June 2013). <http://qzlx.people.com.cn/n/2013/0726/c365007-22344078.html> (assessed 1 October 2013). See also Liu Yushan zai dangde qunzhong luxian jiaoyu shijian huodong gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua (Speech of Liu Yushan at the Conference on the Activities to edu-

Senior officials are to figure as moral role models representing the CCP.

The idea behind these campaigns is that the CCP claims to represent the fundamental interests of the Chinese people; in order to maintain its representative function and thus its legitimacy, the Party must continuously refurbish and improve itself.¹³⁰

Within China, the contents of the mass line concept appear to be debatable. In an article in “*Xuexi Shibao*” (Study Times) published by the central Party School, the historian Li Haiqing argued that nowadays the new “mass line” concept should be related to “real democratic institutions and reforms”. The masses should participate in policy-making instead of decisions being made by a party which determines what the masses allegedly want.¹³¹ Yao Huan, professor at the Beijing Party School, in turn, voiced what many people in China are already thinking, i.e. that “mass line” without a clean, corruption-free government would merely be empty talk (*mei you qinglie, qunzhong luxian jiu shi yi ju konghua*) and could not represent the interests of the people.¹³² The fact that different interpretations of the “mass line” concept have arisen could be viewed as a sign of major prog-

ress. It also reveals that interpretation of the concept may differ in principle from that of the Mao era. In contrast to Mao’s concept, the idea is now more flexible. The intention is not to mobilize the masses for political or utopian goals, but rather to create a ‘clean’ cadre contingent which not only gives priority to the needs of the people but also requires senior officials at all levels to develop a learning and problem-solving mentality which enhances both the representative function of the CCP and the state’s capacity for guiding the ship of state.¹³³ The idea is that this in turn will ensure a restructuring of the economic developmental model, i.e. a reform of the functions of administrative bodies regarding social services, greater government transparency, a standardization of the cadres’ recruitment and promotion system, and improvement of the cadre evaluation system. By opting for a rather ‘traditional’ and abstract concept of symbolic representation (“mass line”), Xi is trying to prove his skills as a leader and supreme representative of the Chinese people. As Fligstein has pointed out, the crucial issue for social actors is

to frame ‘stories’ that help induce cooperation from people in their group that appeal to their identity and interests, while at the same time using those same stories to frame actions against various opponents.¹³⁴

This pithy statement perfectly describes the tactics of Xi in pushing the “mass line” concept while underscoring the CCP’s claim to represent the “masses”. His ultimate goal is to ensure the compliance and cooperation of the majority of the party members and officials and focus their activities on solving concrete problems, thus proving that the CCP is still representing the “masses”.

cating and practice of Mass Line), <http://qzlx.people.com.cn/n/2013/0726/c365007-22344080.html> (accessed 1 October 2013).

130 See e.g. Xu Rongrong: *Zhongguo Gongchandang fanfu changlian de tezheng fenxi* (Analysis of the features of combating corruption and advocate probity by the CCP). In: *Gaige Yu Kaifang* (Reform and Opening), 14 (2015): 4, <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/dab95381e518964bce847c22.html?re=view> (accessed 5 September, 2016).

131 Li Haiqing: *Cong xiandaihua jincheng kan qunzhong luxian* (From the process of modernization view the mass line). In: *Xuexi Shibao* (Study Times), 8 July 2013, <http://www.cntheory.com/news/XXSBRDGZ/2013/78/1378104389D0HED374I087H35K9J1.html> (accessed 1 October 2013).

132 <http://qzlx.people.com.cn/n/2013/0628/c364917-22010460.html> (accessed 1 October 2013).

133 *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily), 29 July, 2013.

134 Neil Fligstein: *Social Skill and the Theory of Fields*. In: *Sociological Theory* 19 (2001): 105–125.

The “mass line” concept symbolically represents the CCP’s attempt to come to grips with moral decay in the CCP’s cadre contingent and to create proper tools and institutions for dealing with that problem. Among other things, this requires that state officials behave in a clean, non-corrupt and non-bureaucratic manner, and this shall be achieved by fighting the aforementioned “four evils” (corruption, bureaucratic behavior, hedonism, and extravagance) which comprise what in Chinese is called “fubai”, i.e. corruption not as a criminal act but rather as the outcome of a person’s “evil” mind and behavior.

(e) The impact of Carl Schmitt’s concept of representation on the Chinese discourse

In a previous section we raised the question whether Schmitt’s work has had a major impact on the Chinese discourse on representation. In fact, almost all of his works have been translated into Chinese. Schmitt’s publications are particularly cherished by scholars belonging to the Chinese “New Left”. Some call him “the most important and most excellent liberal critics throughout the 20th century”.¹³⁵ According to Zheng Yongnian such an assessment is closely related to the deeply-rooted traditional political culture of China, with its predilection of a powerful state and sentiments of nationalism.¹³⁶ Moreover, Schmitt’s views of representation and the parliament as tools which guarantee a nation’s unity, the negative consequences which a multi-party system may have for this unity, and his justification of an authoritarian regime in the interests of the nation provide a theoretical foundation for the defence of China’s current political system.

135 Zhang Xudong: Shimite de tiaozhan: du “yihui minzhuzhi de weiji” (The challenge of Schmitt: a review of “the crisis of parliamentary democracy”). In: Kaifang Shidai (Period of Openness), 2 (2005): 13, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/6350.html> (accessed 5 September, 2016).

136 Zheng, Yongnian (ed.): Contemporary China: a history since 1978, Malden, Oxford (John Wiley & Sons) 2014: 1–5.

However, some of Schmitt’s arguments have also triggered debate and doubt in China, mainly from liberal scholars. Xu Ben, a renowned public intellectual, noted that the reasons why Schmitt’s works are influential in China are two-fold: On the one hand, some of Schmitt’s arguments are used for criticizing liberalism and the concept of representative democracy. On the other hand, “his work can provide the theoretical foundation for the legitimacy of China’s autocracy, especially after 1989.”¹³⁷ Chen Wei, a professor at Renmin University and an expert on Schmitt’s works, pointed out that Schmitt’s criticism of the formality of a representative government is primarily grounded in the weakness and crises associated with the Wilhelmine Empire in Germany and that Schmitt ignored effective and successful practices of representative governments in other countries.¹³⁸

The consequences of this debate clearly go beyond the bounds of our examination of Schmitt’s impact on the Chinese discourse on representation. Nevertheless, Schmitt’s ideas continue to attract Chinese researchers – mostly because they undergird China’s political reality and thus go far beyond a pure academic interest.¹³⁹

In the following we will attempt to clarify the relationship between representation and participation on the one hand and representation and elections on the other.

137 Xu Ben: Zhongguo bu xuyao zheyangde “zhengzhi” he “zhuquanzhe jueguan”: “Shimite re” he guojiazhuoyi (China doesn’t need this kind of “politics” and “sovereign judgement”: On the “Schmitt fever” and state nationalism). <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/9568.html> (accessed 5 September, 2016).

138 Chen Wei: Zhengzhi daibiao lun: jianlun woguo Renmin daibiao dahui zhidu de lilun jichu (On political representation: the theoretical basis of the People’s Congress system). In: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xuebao (Journal of the Chinese People’s University), 6 (2007): 81–87, http://www.nssd.org/articles/article_detail.aspx?id=25917689 (accessed 5 September, 2016).

139 Xu Ben 2016.

6 REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION: A PRELIMINARY CLARIFICATION

Representation and participation are divergent concepts. In 1997 David Plotke noted that “the opposite of representation is not participation. The opposite of representation is exclusion. And the opposite of participation is abstention.”¹⁴⁰ Whereas representation is linked to the claim of acting on behalf of somebody or something, political participation refers to the involvement of members of a community in common (societal) matters in order to solve collective problems by affecting government action. Jesse C. Ribot is right in arguing that “without locally accountable representation the ostensible objectives of participatory approaches are unlikely to be met.”¹⁴¹ On the other hand, representatives also need power, since otherwise their function becomes a farce.¹⁴²

In the classic definition of political participation from Sidney Verba and Norman J. Nie, political participation refers to those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take.¹⁴³ What

remains unclear, however, is which activities of private citizens are meant here, what the meaning of “more or less directly” is, and why the impact on political decision-making processes is limited to the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take. In his seminal writing “The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis” Aaron Wildavsky has demonstrated that policy implementation by citizens is also an important part of participation and that the inclusion of this kind of implementation leads to a better understanding of the concept of participation.¹⁴⁴

In China, certain observable phenomena can be understood as participatory patterns with an impact on political output. These phenomena involve the issue of *inclusion* (integration of a larger number of non-party persons, groups or organizations in advising and decision-making processes), *bargaining* (the tradition of negotiating between individual hierarchical levels or within those levels in order to generate the greatest amount of consensus), *collective action* (specific forms of non-organized collective behavior which are highly effective and thus have an impact on politics), and lastly *guanxi*, i.e. networks of (social or even corrupt) relationships.

Thus diverse forms of participation in China necessarily assume other forms and means of influencing political output than those in democratic societies. The goal of participation in this case is not as much societal emancipation, but rather the resolution of problems that directly affect everyday life, while especially taking the existing social relations in a (local) community into account.

140 David Plotke: Representation is democracy. In: Constellations, 4 (1997): 19. See also Nadia Urbinati / Mark E. Warren: The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory. In: Annual Review of Political Science, Dec. 2008: 388. Hayat reminds us that in contrast to the exclusion of the represented “inclusive representation” is also possible, i.e. the participation of the people represented. See Samuel Hayat: Inclusive Representation. In: Raisons politiques 2013/2 (No. 50): 115–135 (English version), http://www.cairn-int.info/abstract-E_RAI_050_0115--inclusive-representation.htm (accessed 26 August 2016).

141 Jesse C. Ribot: Participation without representation: chefs, councils and forestry law in the West African Sahel. In: Andrea Cornwall (ed.): The Participation Reader. London, New York (Zed Books) 2011: 304.

142 Ibid.: 305.

143 Sidney Verba / Norman H. Nie: Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality. New York (Harper & Row) 1972: 2.

144 Aaron Wildavsky: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis, London and Basingstoke (The MacMillan Press) 1980: 252–253.

For the purposes of this project, we will formulate a minimal definition of political participation, namely that it is *the cooperation of members of a group in the resolution of any common public matter affecting society or its subgroups*. This minimal definition can be applied to societies with very different cultural backgrounds, to both democracies and non-democracies, and to agricultural and industrial countries alike. When thus defined, "participation" has a broader scope than the concept of participation that is constructed for and applied to Western democratic societies.¹⁴⁵ Concurrently, political participation implies that individuals or groups *intervene* in the interest of conserving or changing public matters. Their intervention is seen as influencing decisions (political output) or creating public facts.

As experience in China has shown, involvement in political activities does not always occur voluntarily. It can also be organized or mandated from above. Following Huntington and Nelson, we therefore distinguish between *mobilized* and *autonomous* participation.¹⁴⁶ *Mobilized* participation is that of persons who become active on the basis of instructions or demands rather than of their own accord. This may include party members who are obliged to comply with party rules, subordinate officials (e.g. caretakers of blocks or houses in urban neighborhoods, residents' representatives, etc.) or persons who are somehow dependent upon Residents' Committees in urban neighborhoods (e.g. income support recipients, the unemployed, convicted criminals, etc.). *Autonomous* participation, on the other hand, denotes freely chosen, voluntary action.

It is not easy to demarcate these two categories cleanly; their boundaries are fluid. One can, for example, participate voluntarily but at the same time believe that one's participation is expected. A mixed form is that of "recruited" participation,¹⁴⁷ which gain the support of persons by means such as agitation, persuasion or relationships; this is currently an important aspect of participation in China.

The question arises, however, as to whether mobilized participation can be understood as a category of political participation, since Western political science prefers to postulate "voluntariness" as an essential element of participation. The degree of autonomous participation in democratic societies is doubtlessly higher than in authoritarian societies; nonetheless, even in democratic societies, participation does not always have a voluntary basis. We can recall concrete instances such as union strikes and forced involvement of union members who voted against striking; the mobilization of party members in electoral races or citizens who became active in certain initiatives primarily to protect themselves and their families from supposed threats. Mobilization does play a greater role in China than in democratic societies. In the meantime the standards for obligatory participation (the prevalent "must dos" from the Mao Era) have lost ground compared to the activities which are regarded as optional or desirable. In present-day China, the individual, specific motives and interests of those involved are also underlying factors that motivate diverse social activities.¹⁴⁸

145 See also Friedgut 1979: 19 ff.

146 Samuel Huntington / Joan M. Nelson: No Easy Choice. Political Participation in Developing Countries. Cambridge/Mass., London (Harvard University Press) 1976: 7–10.

147 See also Henry E. Brady / Kay L. Schlozman / Sidney Verba: Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists. In: American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 1 (March) 1999: 153–168.

148 As in Huntington/Nelson 1976: 9.

7 ELECTIONS IN CHINA AS A SPECIFIC PART OF SELECTING REPRESENTATIVES

No general consensus exists among democracy theorists regarding the function of elections.¹⁴⁹ Drawing on the work of Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) emphasized the aspect of competition between individuals for positions of power.¹⁵⁰ For him, the main function of elections in a democracy was to create an “intermediate organ” (parliament) which appoints a government. Elections are merely a means to an end. Democracy, in Schumpeter’s view, means that the people can accept or refuse the men (and – going beyond Schumpeter – also the women) who are in power.¹⁵¹

For their part, Chinese political scientists have argued very similarly to Schumpeter that periodic elections of political leaders are an adequate expression of democracy. In their view, the essential difference between autocracy and pluralistic democracy is seen in the manner in which political leadership arises.¹⁵²

In China, the political leadership is also voted into power – however not directly but indirectly – at the party level by the Central Committee and at the state level by the National People’s Congress. The leadership thus comes into being as a hand-picked group rather than one chosen by means of open, competitive elections. While such indirect elections certainly represent one form

of both political participation and political representation, elections are only one way of selecting representatives: other modes, in particular informal ones, play a major role in non-democratic entities. In this paper and in our sub-project on representation, we are therefore concerned less with the process of electing or selecting representatives than with their tangible functions.

Furthermore, political science distinguishes between competitive, semi-competitive and non-competitive elections. These classifications are related to the degree of competition among candidates, and to general and secret ballots. Elections characterized by competition, secret ballots, and candidate selection can be classified as competitive elections; if the freedom of elections is restricted, they are semi-competitive; if there is no liberty at all, we can speak of non-competitive elections. There has been some progress in enforcing elections in China in recent decades, particularly through the spread of the system of village and urban neighborhood elections. The success of rural elections reinforced the endeavor to transfer rural experiences to urban areas. The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, which is responsible for grassroots elections, argues that elections have the purpose of strengthening the degree of popular participation and legitimizing the political system.¹⁵³ From the perspective of political science,

149 Richard S. Katz: *Democracy and Elections*. Oxford, New York (Oxford University Press) 1997 and Manfred G. Schmidt: *Demokratiethorien. Eine Einführung*, 5th edition. Wiesbaden (VS Verlag) 2010. Both authors provide an overview of the different approaches.

150 Joseph A. Schumpeter: *Kapitalismus, Sozialismus und Demokratie*. München (Francke Verlag), 4th edition 1975: 427–433.

151 Schumpeter 1975: 432–433; 452.

152 Wei Pan: *Toward a Consultative Role of Law Regime in China*. In: *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12 (34) 2003: 7–8.

153 On elections in China see e.g. Thomas Heberer: *Institutional change and legitimacy via urban elections? People’s awareness of elections and participation in urban neighbourhoods (Shequ)*, in: T. Heberer / Gunter Schubert (eds.): *Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China. Institutional change and stability*. London, New York (Routledge) 2009: 79–106; Gunter Schubert: *Village elections, citizenship and regime legitimacy in contemporary rural China*. In: T. Heberer / G. Schubert 2009: 54–78; Thomas Heberer / Christian Göbel: *The Politics of Community Building in Urban China*. London, New York (Routledge) 2013 (Paperback): 71–98.

on the one hand, elections can be viewed both as a democratic method of selecting public officials and as a technical procedure. In a functional sense, elections constitute an opportunity for citizens to influence the choice of their political leaders and thus to shape the political system.¹⁵⁴ In an autocratic setting elections also provide information to the rulers (e.g. about local developments, sentiments among the population, the standing of Party members, etc.).¹⁵⁵ Additionally, elections may reinforce both the political legitimacy of a system and trust in the efficiency of this system.¹⁵⁶

In China, elections are apparently not really important in selecting representatives. For example, village elections in many regions led to a predominance of vote buying and elective corruption. Moreover, other research projects have shown that in both rural and urban areas people prefer *daitouren* (带头人), i.e. strong, capable and outstanding people embedded in their community with excellent connections to local administration and the economic domain (social capital) who are sharing their wealth and benefits with their community and are capable of solving community problems and/or improving living conditions. Other authors speak of “nengren” (能人, capable persons) and “nengren zhengzhi” (能人政治, politics of capable persons).¹⁵⁷ Such people exhibit authority and in-

spire trust; they are seen as persons who represent interests or ideas (i.e. a meaning) and are accepted by others as representatives. These “leaders” figure as “brokers”, because they foster social networking in the interest of their communities and provide resources in the form of information and services.¹⁵⁸ In a similar vein, Melanie Manion speaks of “good types”, i.e. people with specific qualities who attempt to represent the interests of their communities. She distinguishes this type from “governing types”, i.e. CCP members – mostly officials – who are designated by local party organizations. Both types represent different preferences.¹⁵⁹ For Chinese citizens, however, elections do not play a significant role.¹⁶⁰

Nengren can also refer to people with symbolic capital such as prestige, standing, reputation, etc. due to a higher educational level, professional capabilities, wealth, embeddedness in social networks, access to political leaders, etc. Such people exercise a power which makes them “natural” leaders to whom a specific assertiveness and therefore representative capacity is imputed. Weber called such people charismatic spokespersons (German: Wortführer) in whom people recognize themselves.¹⁶¹

154 For an overview on this topic: Claudia Derichs / Thomas Heberer (eds.): Wahlsysteme und Wahltypen. Politische Systeme und Regionale Kontexte im Vergleich. Wiesbaden (Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften) 2006.

155 See e.g. Jason Brownlee: Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization. Cambridge et al. (Cambridge University Press) 2007: 9–11.

156 See, for instance, Susan A. Banducci / Jeffrey A. Karp: How Elections Change the Way Citizens View the Political System: Campaigns, Media Effects and Electoral Outcomes in Comparative Perspective. In: British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 33, Part 3, July 2003: 443–467.

157 See e.g. Xu Yong: Quanli chongzu: nengren quanwei de jueqi yu zhuanhuan – Guangdong sheng Wanfeng cun xianxing yibu de fangquan gaige ji qishi (Power recombination: the rise and transformation of authority of capable persons – The advanced case and lessons of Wanfeng village in power release reform). In: Zhengzhixue Yanjiu (Studies in Political Science), 1 (1999): 45–50; and Xu Yong: Cun ganbu de shuangzhong jiaose: dailiren yu dangjiaren (The dual role of village cadres: agents and family representatives). In: Ershiyi Shiji (21st Century), Hong Kong, 8 (1997): 156.

158 See e.g. Heberer/Göbel 2013.

159 Manion 2015: 66–72.

160 Manion 2015: 152–153; Heberer/Göbel 2013: 124–137.

161 Op. cit. by Budde 2013: 76.

It is frequently argued by Chinese citizens that elections are not the preferable method of selecting such outstanding people. In addition, in many respects it is the party, rather than individual persons which represents the people or groups (see the above-mentioned “Three Represents”). There is of course both top-down political representation (i.e. by hierarchical appointment) and bottom-up political representation (by elected or non-elected citizens, on the Internet, and in the form of micro-blogging with low barriers of access, etc.). Accordingly, we must also distinguish *autonomous representation* (election or selection by people such as home owner committees or hometown associations) from *semi-autonomous representation* (persons elected by the people and concurrently approved by higher authorities, e.g. local PCs or neighborhood’s Residents’ Committees) and *mobilized representation*, where representatives are appointed by authorities (e.g. in the Chinese People’s Consultative Conferences or mass organizations) and where there is not always a clearly defined audience. We also find what we call *strategic representation* or *strategic delegation*. Strategic representation refers to the election or selection of candidates considered to be “strongmen” who use their capabilities to enforce specific interests, whereas strategic delegation stands for the accountability of such “strongmen” to be committed to the desires of the people within their scope or area of responsibility. Another type is *gyroscopic representation* (see above).¹⁶² In other cases, *inclusionary authoritarianism* attempts to incorporate new social forces or representatives of important groups (such as intellectuals, professionals or entrepreneurs) or potential opposition groups into state or party bodies by means of selection or election.¹⁶³ Max Weber called this kind of in-

corporation “legitimate domination”.¹⁶⁴ This resembles Michel Foucault’s “governmentality” concept. Foucault (1926–1984) defines “government” as the “totality of institutions and practices by which one steers people.”¹⁶⁵ Accordingly, power in a hierarchical political system functions via the ability to “bring subjects to a specific behavior” (power from within).¹⁶⁶ Foucault further argues that the most effective form of wielding power is when those who are dominated can be persuaded to accept the preferences of those who dominate as their own, because this reduces the costs of supervision. In addition, if individuals become thoroughly familiar with the preferences of their dominators, they may become accomplices in their own domination and help not only to uphold, but even to improve dominance structures. And the latter can also be applied to the assessment of representatives and their behavior.

Elections are not necessarily a democratic act. Even during the most radical periods of the Mao era, candidates nominated by the Party for various positions were elected by vote (in this case by a public raising of hands). We must therefore distinguish between different types of elections, and this all the more as the significance of elections, their contents and goals, all depend on a given political system.

162 Mansbridge 2011.

163 See e.g. Guillermo O’Donnell: *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*. Berkeley (Institute of International Studies), 1979: 51 and 91.

164 Max Weber 1956: 159.

165 Michel Foucault / Ducio Trombadori: *Der Mensch ist ein Erfahrungstier: Gespräch mit Ducio Trombadori*. Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp) 1996: 119.

166 Michel Foucault / Daniel Defert / Francois Ewald / Jacques Lagrange / Thomas Lemke: *Analytik der Macht*. Frankfurt am Main (Suhrkamp) 2005: 255–257.

8 CONCLUSION

This article provides a literature review and a preliminary framework for a sub-project on new political claims of representation in China. It has examined the notions and concepts of political representation and representative claims in both a democratic and a non-democratic (Chinese) context. It has also reviewed and assessed the ongoing Chinese discourses on political representation and has provided a preliminary definition which is also valid for an authoritarian (Chinese) setting. In addition, the article has distinguished between formal and informal, autonomous and mobilized, bottom-up

and top-down patterns of representation. Gyroscopic representation in the sense of representing overarching interests such as those of a nation rather than those of particularistic groups is a further category of crucial importance for the Chinese case. This paper furthermore addressed technologically more recent forms of "connective action" related to the Internet and Internet blogging, a topic which calls for further elaboration. Finally, this paper has marked out the lines of demarcation between political representation and fields related to it such as political participation and elections.

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