

**Constructing Minority Representation:
Empirical-Theoretical Study**

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Abstract

Performance and performativity are deeply entwined in political representation. This research explores the *performance* of minority representation – i.e., how representatives from ethnic minority backgrounds shape their positions and deliver their claims *about* and *for* minorities depending on the audience they address – and the performativity of their representative claims – i.e., how they contribute to the construction of ethnic identities and interests, which they purportedly merely describe or present. In doing so, the thesis reuses, tests and expands the increasingly influential theoretical understanding of representation as claim-making, while, at the same time, it effects a much-needed constructivist turn in the empirical study of the representation of ethnic minorities. In theoretical terms, the dissertation argues that the categories of descriptive and substantive representation remain essential to the study of minority representation. Its contribution to the theoretical literature is in reconceptualising these categories in line with the constructivist turn.

The constructivist understanding of political representation has had considerable theoretical impact, but limited operationalization and empirical application. When applied to the study of group representation, the representation of gender has commanded attention. The thesis breaks new ground in applying it to the study of the representation of minority ethnic groups, a field in which the traditional understanding of representation as responsiveness to the pre-given demands and interests of constituents remains dominant. Focusing on two similar cases where ethnicity has been historically and institutionally constructed as a relevant feature to be represented in political forums, this thesis shows that rather than factors determining the behaviour of representatives, institutional and cultural backgrounds can be, and are often, deployed creatively as resources in the claim-making process whereby ethnic identifications are produced and reproduced over time.

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the Ph.D. degree from the University of York is solely my own work, other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others. All sources are acknowledged as References. The work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Several paragraphs in Chapter 1 related to the ways the existing literature studies minority representation were initially discussed in: Lončar, J. (2017). Accountability of minority representation: methodological advancements, *Nationalities Papers*, online ahead of print, pp. 1-17.

Issues related to identification of minority representatives in Serbia discussed in Chapter 2 were published in: Lončar, J. (2016). Electoral Accountability and Substantive Representation of National Minorities: The Case of Serbia, *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 30:4, pp. 703-724.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I want to live in a city where love is more important than religion. I want to live in a city where Serbian and Bosnian aren't foreign languages. I want to live in a city where Serbs and Bosniaks are one because they worship the same God in a different way. And I want to live in a city where people respect differences of opinion.

This is me. This is you. This is who we are! We are all humans!
This is me! This is you! This is who we are! Good people!

Excerpts from the play *Beton Mahala* [Concrete Hamlet]

The play *Beton Mahala* (Concrete Hamlet) has since 2015 been performed all over the Western Balkan region, but has been forbidden in a town in Serbia where it originated from. It was written and has been performed by a group of teenagers, amateur actors from Novi Pazar, a multiethnic town in Serbia where Bosniaks and Serbs comprise the two major ethnic groups. By critically discussing the positions of the majority and the minorities, the actors challenge the dominant views about essentialism of ethnic identities and differences. The play is based on actors' personal experiences and conceptualised around problems arising from conflictual inter-ethnic relations (Serb-Bosniak) such as naming of a mother tongue (Serbian or Bosnian¹) or conflicts with parents for falling in love with a person of different ethnicity. Almost all political parties in Novi Pazar perceived the play as offensive to the authentic identity of the Bosniak minority. Being aware of how words construct meaning, they joined their efforts to ban the play. The issues the play raised were seen as dangerous as they challenged the dominant image of ethnicity as natural and essential to one's identity, which has been so carefully cultivated by minority parties and representatives. The play has been described as "anti-Islamic" (Džodan, 2015), "anti-Bosniak" (Nićiforović and Strugar, 2015), and "controversial" (Direktno.Hr, 2016). While framed as protection of identity, these reactions, and consequent banning of the play, aimed to conceal the role of the parties in constructing inter-ethnic relations and what is to be recognised as an authentic identity. This is the issue I explore in this thesis.

¹ Serbian and Bosnian are basically the same languages, hence the additional importance of naming: it is what distinguishes them the most.

Similarly to the above play, this thesis challenges the essentialist understanding of ethnicity and ethnic interests. The central argument of this thesis is that political representation is also a creative activity in which representatives construct themselves as *representatives of minorities* and at least partly construe ethnic identities and minority groups by making claims about them and their interests. While this research is inspired by the widespread perception of ethnic identities in the Balkans as natural things in the world, it is also called for by a gap in the literature on minority representation that tends to take minority groups and their interests as essential categories.

Much of the existing literature on minority representation assumes that despite internal heterogeneity, the shared experience of structural discrimination allows us to identify a set of essential interests that are common to all members of a minority group. Based on this, the literature suggests that presence of any member of a group in parliament secures presence to the whole group (Anwar, 2001, Celis, Eelbode et al., 2013, Dancygier, 2013, Moser, 2008, Protsyk, Matichescu et al., 2008, Saggat and Geddes, 2000, Schönwälder, 2013, Teney, Jacobs et al., 2010, Togeby, 2008). These representatives are further expected to advance essential minority interests in parliament (Bird, 2011, Celis and Wauters, 2010, Dunning and Nilekani, 2013, Gay, 2007, Jensenius, 2013, Jones, O'Toole et al., 2015, Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou, 2011). In doing so, the previous literature tends, even if unintentionally, to treat groups as homogenous, unitary bounded actors with a natural essence. Regardless of internal diversity based on e.g. class or gender, it is assumed that ethnicity is sufficient to unite them and distinguish them from all other groups.

In contrast, I suggest that when analysing minority representation we have to conceive ethnic groups as *imagined* communities, constructed over time, and through complex processes as homogenous and natural objects (Anderson, 2006, Handler, 1994). Ethnic groups and ethnic identities are better conceptualised in terms of ongoing negotiation, categorisation, construction and reconstruction (Handler, 1994, p. 27). As Hall argues, they are “never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation” (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Such conceptualisation of ethnic groups is not new. Nor is politics, and in particular political representation, external to those “discourses, practices and positions” whereby ethnic identification is constructed on different, sometimes intersecting, sometimes purely antagonistic terms. It is rather the case, I argue, that it lies at their core. Even those researchers who understand representation as a unidirectional responsiveness to pre-defined minority interests otherwise acknowledge intra-group differences and the relational and strategic nature of ethnicity (Wauters, Eelbode et al., 2016). But this recognition demands a further step. In particular, it implies that there is a need

to equip empirical researchers on minority representation with theoretical and methodological tools to analyse representation without falling into the essentialist traps and taking the full complexity of ethnicity into account. This is the main objective of this thesis.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain the rationale of my research, research design and methodology. In addition, I demonstrate the relevance of this research for both theory and practice, and provide an outline of the following chapters.

1.1. Theoretical background: from unidirectional responsiveness towards the constructivist turn

In the effort to shift the focus of minority research from presence and responsiveness to minority interests towards a more constructivist understanding of representation, I propose that we go back to the representative turn in the 1990s, which has contributed most to the interest of empirical researchers in minority representation (Kymlicka, 1995, Mansbridge, 1999, Phillips, 1995, Williams, 1998, Young, 2000). The researchers of minority representation embraced two main contributions of this turn. First, rather than seeing representation as an elitist project opposed to democracy and participation, they adopted a view that representation is inherent to democracy (Näsström, 2011). Second, they suggested that descriptive representation of groups in political institutions is needed to undo the pervasive structural discrimination to which such groups tend to be subject (Brito Vieira, 2017a). Based on this, researchers of minority representation concluded that shared experience of discrimination and marginalisation allows us to identify a set of essential interests that are common to all members of a minority group (Cameron, Epstein et al., 1996, Dunning and Nilekani, 2013, Gamble, 2007, Jensenius, 2013, Juenke and Preuhs, 2012, Minta, 2011, Owens, 2005, Preuhs, 2007, Tate, 2003, Ueda, 2008).

Yet, what the empirical researchers of minority representation have failed to acknowledge is that the representative turn scholars also started to unveil some of the complexities of social identity and how institutions might want to reflect it. Young (2000), for example, argued that members of social groups have their own views, opinions and interests and their identities are constructed through various life experiences, contacts and membership of different social groups. In her words: “Political theory would do well to disengage social group difference from a logic of identity, in two ways. First, we should conceptualize social groups according to a relational rather than a substantialist logic. Secondly, we should affirm

that groups do not have identities as such, but rather that individuals construct their own identities on the basis of social group positioning” (Young, 2000, p. 82). As they were more interested in issues of democracy than representation, scholars such as Young (2000) or Kymlicka (1995) did not offer a new understanding of representation based on the constructed quality of identity. For these reasons, and despite embracing several aspects of the representative turn such as a renewed interest in representative institutions, empirical researchers continued working within the traditional accounts of representation, understood as a principal-agent relationship which should be directed by the pre-defined interests of fixed minority constituencies (Pitkin, 1967). In claiming that there are some essential interests out there that came into being prior to representation, they reduced representation to a unidirectional responsiveness and denied it any creative and relational character.

I suggest, on the other hand, that groups and their interests are also constructed during the representative process. By making claims about groups, representatives constitute them as a democratic political subject “that becomes recognizable as a unified and not merely aggregated entity only by means of representation” (Disch, 2015, p. 490). This thesis, therefore, aims to shift the focus from presence and interests towards the performance of representative claims. In doing so, I join the more recent wave of scholars making a constructivist turn, which is often subsumed under the broader representative turn (Disch, 2011, Saward, 2010).

The constructivist turn advances our understanding of representation in the following aspects: 1) it recognises representation’s creative and aesthetic aspects, i.e. representation is a claims-making activity that is constitutive of both representatives and the represented; 2) representation is relational; it does not depend on the will or interests of either representatives or the represented; it is produced and performed in the complex and dynamic relations between representatives, constituents and diverse audiences; 3) representation is cultural in a sense that it is not sufficient that a claim is made; the success of representative claims depends on their cultural resonance. This understanding enables us not only to explore the dynamics of representation but also to avoid essentialisation of groups.

In addition, the constructivist scholars argue that conceiving of representation as a dynamic activity requires us to dismiss the old and static categories such as descriptive and substantive representation. In this thesis, I however, suggest that the use of these concepts may be beneficial if we redefine them in accordance with the constructivist turn. I endeavour to do this in the following chapter.

1.2. Research design and methodology

I apply the above presented theoretical framework to the cases of Serbia and Kosovo. These two cases are interesting for the analysis of minority representation because of their ethnic diversity and institutional and cultural incentives for representation of ethnicity such as lifted threshold and reserved seats for minority parties, recent experience of ethnic conflict and inter-ethnic tensions. My empirical analysis focuses in particular on parliamentary representation and claims made by MPs with minority background for the following reasons: first, in Serbia and Kosovo parliaments remain the main locus of minority representation because of the weak minority civil society and lack of public visibility of claims made by non-elected actors; and second, in both Serbia and Kosovo, claims about and for minorities tend to be made exclusively by representatives with minority background because of deep inter-ethnic divisions that are produced through historical events and encouraged by institutional design.

Based on the institutional and cultural setting in which representation is performed, Serbia and Kosovo make for two very similar cases. Both Serbia and Kosovo are ethnically diverse, with numerous and geographically concentrated ethnic groups. They are both unitary states with unicameral parliaments, a proportional electoral system with 5% electoral threshold and a single nationwide electoral district. Both parliaments have affirmative action measures such as lifted threshold for minority parties, while Kosovo also guarantees parliamentary seats for minority parties. Finally, both societies are divided along ethnic lines with high discrimination against ethnic minorities. Although sufficiently similar to enable a focused comparison, Serbia and Kosovo also differ in several respects: the ballot structure, the relative institutional strength of minority parties, presence and the influence of international actors and depth of ethnic divisions.

I analyse portrayals of representatives and constituencies made during plenary speeches and semi-structured interviews. I chose to focus on plenary speeches because they allow MPs to express their views on a range of issues, reflect on policy proposals, ask parliamentary questions, and add new issues to the agenda. In addition, plenary debates are televised and transcripts of plenary sessions are publicly available. In contrast, in both of my cases, records of committee meetings are unavailable, and MPs do not have websites or blogs through which one could access their views and public statements. Interviews, being more personal, add an additional quality to my analysis: they give MPs a chance to elaborate on their perceptions, beliefs and motivations, explain how they understand their roles and

positions in parliament and how affected they feel by the institutional and cultural background they work in.

I explore the performance of representative claims about and for minorities by focusing on: 1) resources that claim-makers use to construct themselves as representatives of minority groups, 2) portrayals of minority groups and their interests, and 3) influence of the intended audiences on the shaping of minority related claims. Following Saward (2010, p. 36), this analysis is conducted by dividing each of the claims made in plenary speeches and interviews into the following components: An *MP* puts forward a *subject* which stands for an *object* that is related to an *ethnic group* and is offered to an *audience*.

I acknowledge, however, that representative claims are not made in a vacuum. Institutional and cultural backgrounds provide opportunities and constraints for particular behaviour, and create expectations in the audience. Rather than making claims out of thin air, representatives carefully tailor their claims to persuade the audience. They know that the felicity of their claims depends on their resonance with the audience. To this purpose, they explore the institutional incentives and cultural resources in making their claims convincing. Yet, I aim to show that these incentives do not determine representative behaviour. Representatives actively negotiate and sometimes challenge the incentives they face. Hence, I offer a more dynamic analysis in which due attention is given to the ways in which political actors mobilise institutions and background culture as resources for the pursuit of the new courses of action they favour.

1.3. A note on terminology and spelling

In this thesis, I use the term “constituency” to refer to all those that minority MPs claim to speak for. Since minority representation is in the focus of my study, I particularly focus on representative claims that evoke minority groups as intended constituencies. This is important to clarify since the term constituency in the existing literature usually refers to either those eligible to vote or those who voted for a representative (Rehfeld, 2005, p. 35). In addition, in my understanding, the term refers to “objects of representation” rather than referents. An object is a representative’s idea of an ethnic group rather than ethnic group itself (the referent) (Saward, 2010, p. 36). The term audience, on the other hand, refers to all those who receive the claim and engage with it either by accepting, challenging or rejecting it (Saward, 2006, p. 303).

In addition, the terms “minority representatives” and “minority MPs”, which I use throughout the thesis, relate to all MPs who claim to have ethnic minority background. In contrast to those studies that operationalise minority or ethnic representatives as those who make claims about or for ethnic groups (Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou, 2011), I use the term in a more narrow meaning merely because of the scope of my thesis that encompasses only the claims by MPs with minority origin. By using the term, I furthermore, do not imply anything related to their behaviour, i.e. I do not aim to suggest that they are representatives of minorities or in any way representative of minorities.

The terms minority groups, ethnic groups, ethnic minority groups, national minorities and minority communities appear interchangeably throughout the thesis to refer to the evoked minority constituencies, i.e. ethnic groups that are in minority in relation to the dominant ethnic group. I am, however, aware that these terms could imply different meanings. For instance, minority groups in Serbia are constitutionally defined as national minorities, which positions them as minorities of national relevance, favouring therefore integration. In Kosovo, on the other hand, minority groups are labelled as “communities”, which positions them as unitary objects, but also aims to give them a more equal weight to the dominant ethnic group (Toth and Vizi, 2014). In Serbia, minority MPs are present not only in minority parties but also in nation-wide parties, which I refer to as “majority parties” or following Sikk and Bochsler (2008) sometimes as “mainstream parties”.

Finally, it is important to clarify terminology and spelling that I use related to my cases. I use the term “Serb MPs” rather than “Serbian MPs” to refer to MPs with Serb ethnic origin. In cases I use the term “Serbian”, I refer to the country, e.g. the Serbian government. Different uses of the terms “Serb” and “Serbian” may be encountered in the literature. For instance, some authors use the term Serbians for all citizens of Serbia; others use it to refer to Serbs from Serbia, while connecting the term “Serb” to Serbs from other countries (Judah, 2000). I suggest that this would only create confusion. Since this thesis focuses on representation of ethnic groups, I chose to refer to the ethnic background of representatives and constituencies regardless of their citizenship or regional backgrounds. I also use the term “Kosovo” rather than “Kosova” or “Kosovo and Metohija” because this is the region’s name in English. Kosovo Albanians prefer the term Kosova, while Kosovo and Metohija is a Serbian name for the region. However, if any of these terms was used in the MPs’ claims, I did not “translate” it but used the term they preferred. My use of any of these terms bears no political implications regarding the status of Kosovo. Similarly, in Kosovo Serbs and Albanians use different names for cities and municipalities. In those cases, I chose to use the term used by the MPs whose claims I analysed.

Names of places and persons are mostly originally spelt rather than Anglicised. Yet, in some of the cases, e.g. when spelling the names of minority MPs in majority parties, I used Serbian spelling because that is how they chose to have their name spelled in the official parliamentary documents. MPs from minority parties, on the other hand, have their names spelt in original. For instance, the names of the Hungarian MPs Bálint Pásztor and Elvira Kovács would in Serbian be spelt as Balint Pastor and Elvira Kovač. When it comes to places, I did Anglicise some of the names such as Belgrade (rather than Beograd) or Serbia (rather than Srbija) because they are widely known in the English speaking world by their Anglicised names.

1.4. Relevance of the thesis

The primary original contribution of this thesis is a new conceptualisation of minority representation and empirical analysis of representation as performance of representative claims. This is relevant for our understanding of representation and future empirical research.

First, the theoretical framework I offer in this thesis throws new light on minority representation and enables us to analyse how representatives construct themselves as ethnic minority representatives and how they contribute to the construction of the ethnic identity they propose to represent in the process. While some of the recent literature, particularly on gender representation, explores how representatives construct the represented and their interests (Celis and Childs, 2012, Celis, Childs et al., 2014, Schouteden and Wauters, 2017, Squires, 2008), barely any attention has so far been paid to the resources representatives use in positioning themselves as those who know who their constituents are and what they need. This is important because the success of representative claims depends on whether claim-makers succeed in constructing themselves as authentic and legitimate representatives of true and objective interests of their evoked constituents. My approach also offers the theoretical and methodological tools for exploring other important questions that were neglected in the previous literature, such as: What is going on in representation beyond elections and intra-party relations? Which groups and interests are evoked in representation and what is there in “evoking” them, i.e. how in effect their identity is actively articulated? Who speaks for those groups, which are not present in parliament? Why do MPs sometimes make contradictory claims and promises? How do different audiences affect shaping of the representative claims?

Second, a reconceptualization of descriptive and substantive representation is relevant for any empirical research on minority representation. Our understanding of minority representation has for decades been shaped by the concepts of descriptive and substantive

representation that empirical scholars are not ready to give up on. Despite calls for abandoning of these categories as not useful to explain the complexity of representation, even those scholars who acknowledge the constructedness of minority interests continue using them (Bird, 2015, Cianetti, 2014, Hodžić and Mraović, 2015, Toró, 2017). I offer ways of reworking these concepts and operationalizing them for empirical research that render them more fruitful.

Third, there has been a disconnect between the representation theory and empirical research on minority representation, a gap my thesis aims to fill. While constructivist turn in representation has been embraced in the gender representation research, empirical research on ethnic minority has remained impermeable to changes in our understanding of representation, and has continued working with the traditional and static categories of representation. More specifically, the thesis offers a new light on the performance of minority representation in the region so often reduced to conflict prevention and presence of group members in national parliament.

Fourth, the thesis informs comparative analysis of minority representation. It identifies similarities and differences in claims-making in the analysed cases. While this thesis focuses on the *how* of representation rather than the *what* or the *why*, my approach still allows me to analyse how representatives react to and negotiate diverse institutional and cultural incentives in constructing themselves as representatives and minority groups as their constituency. Understanding institutional incentives and cultural resources as things that enable – or might be made to enable - representatives to pursue their goals challenges previous literature that perceives a relationship between background setting and representation as static and unidirectional.

Fifth, the study of the performance of minority representation in Serbia and Kosovo is important because it fills a gap in the literature, which has until now focused mostly on the US (Fine and Aziz, 2013, Gay, 2007, Haynie, 2001, Kraus and Swanstrom, 2002, Marschall and Ruhil, 2007, Meier, Juenke et al., 2005, Minta, 2009, Parry and Miller, 2006, Preuhs, 2007, Swain, 1993, Tate, 2003). Over the past two decades, Central and Eastern European parliaments guaranteed the presence to minority groups. Despite this, we have little information on what this presence means for representation of minorities. In these countries, minority representation has been reduced to minority presence, which is seen as being necessary for peace and democratic stability. My research adds to our knowledge of the region by showing how representation is performed in the context of deep ethnic cleavages and institutional incentives for the representation of ethnicity.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

Inspired by the recent advances in the representation theory, Chapter 2 offers a new conceptualisation of minority representation. I conceive of representation as a dynamic, relational, creative and cultural claims-making activity. Informed by both the constructivist understanding of ethnicity and the constructivist turn in representation theory, the main objective of this chapter is the reconceptualisation of descriptive and substantive representation. Rather than defining them as forms of representation, I see them as positions representatives construct so that they might occupy them in making claims about and for minority groups and their interests. To make their claims convincing, representatives more or less explicitly evoke their ethnic resemblance with the constituency (descriptive representation) or their capacity to know minority interests and act upon them (substantive representation).

In Chapter 3, I develop the research design and outline methodological foundation of my research. This chapter introduces the case studies and rationale for their comparability. I suggest that the two cases have similar institutional and cultural backgrounds that make a basis for their comparability. While explaining their similarities and differences, I actively engage with existing literature to explore how these incentives affect the process of shaping of representative claims. This chapter, further, shows that my research departs from the previous literature in a sense that I do not take these incentives as determinants but rather as resources, which representatives use to make their claims more resonant with the audience. In the remainder of this chapter, I explain the methods of data selection and data analysis. I propose that the representative claims analysis is employed for studying the performance of minority representation and set the grounds for its application in the empirical research.

Chapters 4 and 5 explore the performance of representative claims in Serbia and Kosovo respectively. In my cases, representation of minorities is performed by MPs as claim-makers and around ethnic groups as referents. While claim-makers and referents are stable and known in advance, I argue that the subjects and objects of representation and audiences are constituted in the representative process. I explore how MPs construct themselves as descriptive and substantive representatives of ethnic groups, how they construct minority groups and their interests and how they shape their claims depending on the audience they address. This differentiates my research from the previous literature on minority representation that tends to take both the identity of a representative and the constituents as something pre-given, static and fixed.

Chapter 6 builds on the previous two chapters by exploring the relationship between representative claims and background incentives in Serbia and Kosovo. In this chapter I tackle the issue of whether and how institutional incentives and cultural background influence the process and nature of claim making *for* and *about* ethnic minorities. In doing so, this chapter seeks to provide an alternative understanding of background incentives: rather than taking them as a given, I argue that representatives actively negotiate and sometimes challenge the incentives they face. My analysis is hence a more dynamic one. I explore how political actors mobilise institutions and culture as resources for obtaining their specific goals.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I summarize the main findings, discuss their theoretical and empirical contributions, and acknowledge the limitations of my study. In addition, I suggest directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Rethinking political representation of ethnic groups

2.1. Introduction

Much of the literature in the field of ethnic representation focuses on the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation of minority interests and thereby relies on traditional accounts of political representation as a principal-agent relationship, taken to be a matter of “acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin, 1967, p. 209). However, our understanding of representation has moved beyond different variations of this static and unidirectional approach. We now know that representation is a dynamic and multi-directional process in which constituencies, their perceived interests, and representatives are at least partially constructed in the process of being spoken for and about (Saward, 2010).

This chapter aims to extend the focus and possibilities of ethnic minority research by introducing the notion of the constitutive representation of ethnic groups. I suggest that the analysis of ethnic minority representation would be significantly refined if we adopted a more constructivist understanding of representation. I argue further that this shift is necessary if we want to avoid the essentialisation of minority groups. As I argued in the Introduction to this thesis, ethnicity is not a static and objective category but socially, politically and historically constructed, performed and transformed. It is not a given “thing”, but the evolving product of a complex process of identification, to which the political practice of claim-making is integral. In that sense, what Butler says of gender could be applied to ethnicity:

[Ethnicity] proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, [ethnicity] is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed... There is no [ethnic] identity behind the expressions of [ethnicity]; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results (Butler, 1999, p. 33).

This requires us to change both the questions we ask in researching minority representation and our understanding of what minority representation is about and how it is performed. I suggest that we should analyse representation as a performance that at least partly creates both the representatives and the represented, and the relations among them. I argue, further, that this understanding of representation can be reconciled with more usual categories such as descriptive and substantive representation, which are deemed so important

for minority representation, but only insofar as they are reconceptualised in the light of the claim-making approach. This is the objective of this chapter.

The first section of the chapter considers the limits of the traditional understanding of descriptive and substantive representation and calls for a shift towards a more constructivist approach in understanding ethnic representation. The second section introduces the main strengths of the constructivist turn in representation theory. In the light of this turn, the third section offers a new understanding of group representation by reconceptualising descriptive representation. I argue that descriptive representation refers to the claim-making process whereby the representative leads her constituents to take her and their “common” identity for granted. This involves the externalisation – indeed the performance – of identity, or personal self-identification, in order to produce ethnic identification with the constituency. The latter constitutes, in turn, a powerful resource in legitimising one’s claim to speak in the name of the group and of its “natural” or “necessary” interests. In the fourth section, I aim to redefine substantive representation. I suggest that substantive representation refers not only to actions taken or results delivered, but also to the construction of representatives as those who can know and can act upon what they frame as essential minority interests. In other words, for interests to come to be perceived as the interests of the constituency they need to be constituted and articulated as such, and this is the work of politics. In the final section, following constructivist scholars, I offer an understanding of representation as performance, i.e. a dynamic, relational, creative and context-dependent activity.

2.2. How is ethnic representation studied?

Ethnicity and ethnic groups are produced and reproduced through social interactions. This has been widely acknowledged in nationalism studies and the sociology of race and ethnicity literature (Jenkins, 2008, Nagel, 1994). However, when we think about inter-ethnic relations, representation of ethnic minorities or ethnic conflicts we tend to take ethnic groups as a given. Even scholars who otherwise recognise that ethnic groups are constructed tend to do this. Previous research on minority representation tends to treat ethnic minorities as internally homogenous and externally bounded unitary collective actors. This has made their boundaries appear to be harder than they actually are, rather than produced and reproduced over time. It has also diverted attention from the ways in which the meaning of ethnic identification is re-created, and the role of politics in this reinvention. I argue in this section that the

constructedness of ethnicity requires us to think of ethnic representation in more performative and creative terms.

Most of the literature on ethnic representation subscribes to the traditional account of political representation. It is particularly informed by Pitkin's understanding of descriptive and substantive representation. Pitkin defines descriptive representation as standing for the represented "by virtue of a correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 61). Descriptive representation, operationalised as the presence of group members in representative institutions, has long been at the centre of minority studies (Grofman, 1998, Nakao, 2011, Sobolewska, 2013). These studies, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, tend to focus on the impact of electoral rules on the number of minority representatives that make it to the legislature (Bochsler, 2010, King and Marian, 2012, Protsyk, Matichescu et al., 2008, Protsyk and Sachariew, 2012).

Since descriptive representation itself is not evidence of effective minority representation, the research, particularly in the US, has shifted from mere descriptive representation to the analysis of its impact on substantive representation (Bullock, 1995, Bühlmann, Widmer et al., 2010, Canon, 1999, Casellas and Leal, 2011, Gamble, 2007, Haynie, 2001, Hänni, 2014, James, 2011, Lublin, 1997, Minta and Sinclair-Chapman, 2013, Swain, 1993, Tatari, 2010, Tate, 2003, Whitby, 1997, Whitby and Krause, 2001). These studies primarily have normative concerns: they are interested in "good representation", that is, articulating "standards for assessing the performance of individual representatives" (Dovi, 2012, p. 22) or evaluating empirically the behaviour of minority representatives. Following Pitkin, the studies on ethnic representation assess representation by asking whether and under what conditions representatives act "in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 209). Because responsiveness is at the center of such understanding of representation, Pettit refers to it by using the term "responsive representation": "Responsive representers *act for or speak for* the representees, playing the part of an agent in relation to a principal; how they act is responsive to how the representees would want them to act" (Pettit, 2009, p. 65). For Pettit, representatives need to "track the wishes of the representee" (p. 71). In reducing substantive representation to congruence of representatives' roll call votes with the constituencies' perceptions much of the literature on ethnic representation embraces Pettit's definition of responsiveness (Casellas and Leal, 2011, Hero and Tolbert, 1995, Kopkin, 2017, Lublin, 1997, Overby and Cosgrove, 1996, Swain, 1993, Tate, 2003, Whitby and Krause, 2001). Yet, such understanding is often unjustly attributed to Pitkin. Pitkin argues that a representative cannot always follow the instructions of the constituents because they may not have the experience, knowledge or skills to know what action is in their best interest. It is rather the case, as she argues, that representatives' actions should always be guided by, and

responsive to, the constituents' real interests² rather than their wishes or perceptions. As Pitkin argues, the question is not:

whether the representative ought to act in his constituents' interest as he sees it or as they see it. Both formulations distort; he must act in their interest, period. Their view of their interest may or may not be definitive, depending on the issue and the situation; but if he follows it, it should be because the action accords with their interest, not because they merely think it does (Pitkin, 1967, p. 165).

Hence, although Pitkin's understanding of substantive representation is more constructivist than much of the empirical literature tends to acknowledge, for Pitkin constituents still have objective and true interests that need to be represented (Pitkin, 1967, p. 210). Her understanding of interests returns us to an essentialist path.

Responsiveness to interests rather than constituencies' beliefs and perceptions has been in the focus of a more recent literature on ethnic representation (Cameron, Epstein et al., 1996, Dunning and Nilekani, 2013, Gamble, 2007, Jensenius, 2013, Juenke and Preuhs, 2012, Minta, 2011, Owens, 2005, Preuhs, 2007, Tate, 2003, Ueda, 2008). This literature maintains that shared experience of discrimination and marginalisation allows us to identify a set of essential interests that are common to all members of a minority group. Following Young who suggests that "claims to cultural recognition usually are means to the end of undermining domination or wrongful deprivation" (Young, 2000, p. 83), they argue that individual rights are not sufficient to undo the pervasive structural discrimination to which such groups tend to be subject. Hence, in addition to anti-discrimination policies, minority groups need the protection of their culture and affirmative action measures such as a guaranteed proportional presence in public institutions (Bird, 2011, Minta and Sinclair-Chapman, 2013).

In making this argument, they seem to share Pitkin's understanding that interests are somehow objective, transparent, accessible and defined prior to representation. In addition, it is either explicitly or implicitly suggested that the role of descriptive representatives is to follow and, in so doing, advance the essential interests of the groups they belong to. Substantive representation is thereby operationalised as acting in the "natural" or "necessary" interests of ethnic groups. Those who experience structural discrimination may indeed feel that elimination of discrimination is in their interest. Yet, in taking interests as essentialist and defined prior to representation, we are prevented from observing how representatives engage with cultural incentives and constraints, whether they reinforce or change them, how their claims contribute to the construction of new interests or what their motivation is for evoking particular interests in their speeches. For instance, representatives may, responding to the

² For the more constructivist readings of Pitkin see Disch (2011).

cultural expectations of their constituents, speak about interests as “necessities” or “fundamentals”, but they may do it strategically, to win over their opponents or achieve other goals. If interests are constructed in such a way, it is hard to claim otherwise. Hence, rather than taking interests as a starting point of a discussion on representation, I argue that interests are an end point of the construction process, to which representation is integral.

In defining representation as a static and unidirectional responsiveness to group’s pre-defined interests, the literature on ethnic representation fails to capture the constructed aspects of ethnicity. While there is a rich literature in sociology on how group identity is portrayed and constructed through the processes of social and cultural representations (Ahmad and Evergeti, 2010, Aspinall, 2015, Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002, Ray, 2003, Sela-Sheffy, 2004), ethnic representation scholars have not incorporated these findings in their research. In other words, they have overlooked the ways in which 1) identity and ethnicity are such vital rhetorical resources in the politics of claim-making, as well as the ways in which 2) the process of making claims *for* and *about* ethnic groups contributes actively to the processes of social identification on which identity and ethnicity depend. Yet, the sociology scholars correctly remind us that ethnic groups should not be treated as “substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed” (Brubaker, 2002, p. 164, Brubaker, 2004, p. 8). Brubaker rightly warns us that: “Ethnicity, race and nationhood exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications. They are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world” (Brubaker, 2002, p. 174-175, Brubaker, 2004, p. 17). Politics is integral to the development and reproduction of these perspectives.

As such, ethnic groups do not have “true” interests or intrinsic identities that should be represented. Ethnic groups and ethnic identity are rather being constantly reproduced through various social, political and cultural processes (Wimmer, 2008). Besides that, they consist of individuals who are at the same time members of different groups and whose identities, opinions and attitudes are shaped through various life experiences and contacts within and outside of the group, including processes of institutional socialisation, such as those which occur in parliaments: “Ethnicity is situationally defined, produced and reproduced in the course of interactions that occur at or across – and in the process help to constitute – the ethnic boundary in question” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 54). These interactions are both internal, in the sense that group members in their mutual exchanges define the meaning and content of group identity and external in the sense that group unity is necessarily constructed in relation to the Other:

What goes on at and across the boundary affects the ‘cultural content’ of identity. Our ‘cultural stuff’ will, even if only in part, reflect our interactions with Other(s): how those Others categorize and behave towards us, how they label us. Nor is this

all. Our categorizations of Others, and the routines that we evolve for dealing with them, are also intrinsic to our 'cultural' repertoire. Social interaction at and across the boundary will necessarily involve categorizations: of 'us' by 'them', and of 'them' by 'us'. Whose categorizations are the more influential, and the balances that are struck between group identification and categorization, are ongoing open questions, emerging out of history and past experience, located within power relations in the here-and-now, and constitutive of the ongoing situation. Whose definition of the situation counts, nominally and virtually, impinges upon the (external) interactional boundary and (internal) 'cultural content' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 171).

In this sense, while acting for group interests or standing for the group based on a shared ethnic identity is often de-politicising, insofar as both identity and interests are presented as unassailable, "natural" or "necessary", what is really at stake is a highly contested and power-driven process whereby she who defines the meaning of ethnicity and of vital interests most convincingly gains control over the represented group. Therefore, we should not simply ask what group interests are, which representatives are responsive to them or whether the composition of a representative institution reflects the ethnic composition of the population as a whole. Instead, I suggest that we focus on when, why and how categories such as groups and ethnicity are invoked and constructed during the representative process.

Because of the constructed and performative nature of ethnicity, the research on minority representation could benefit significantly from embracing the so-called "constructivist turn" in political representation. Marked by the work of Saward (2006, 2010), Mansbridge (2003, 2011), Rehfeld (2006), Disch (2011) and Urbinati (2000), the constructivist turn has contributed significantly to our understanding of what is involved in the practice of representing. In particular, it has shown that representation is far more dynamic and performative than traditionally assumed: it does not merely work from the represented to the representatives; representatives suggest to the constituents what they should care about, contributing thereby to the construction of their interests and identities. In turn, the constituents and wider audience are invited to accept these claims as accurate.

Saward's (2006, 2010) claim-making approach is particularly useful for the research on ethnic minority representation. The claim-making approach shifts the focus from acting or standing for the groups' essential interests and identities to *representative claims* to represent, embody, stand for, know, symbolise or project the interests, the needs, the desires, the wants, or the characters of something or someone (Saward, 2006, p. 305). The following sections will, first, consider the main benefits of this new approach to representation, and second, reconsider ethnic representation in the light of this turn.

2.3. The constructivist turn in political representation

The constructivist turn in representation challenges the traditional understanding of representation in several ways. First, it acknowledges that constituencies and their interests are at least partially constructed in the process of representing. Second, it emphasises the dynamic and relational aspects of representation instead of unidirectional responsiveness. Third, it shifts our attention from the representative forms to the representative process.

In representation, different interests are voiced, created and confronted against each other. Elected representatives, the media and civil society organisations make different claims about, and in the name of, others. They do not merely provide information but also tell their audience what they should care about. They thereby influence the creation of, and change the opinions and preferences of, the audience (Thomassen, 2007, p. 116). By arguing that the representative's role is to act in the objective interests of the represented, Pitkin (1967) neglected the constitutive dimension of representation. By contrast, Saward (2006, 2010) contends that the interests of the represented are not always crystalized and that representatives through their representative claims also shape and articulate these interests, convincing constituencies and audiences that these are the things the former should care about. He argues that "by following Pitkin too closely we stand to lose a sense of contingency, and the strong element of dynamic constructedness of representative politics (along with the importance of those who do constructing) across a variety of democratic and other contexts" (Saward, 2010, p. 15). Disch (2011) pushes this argument further by arguing that there is nothing beyond construction. For her, "representing is an activity that produces ontological effects while seemingly merely to follow from an existing state of affairs" (Disch, 2011, p. 107-108). In her view, representation literally brings the represented into being and infuses them with a distinctive political meaning of their own. It is this – not ethnicity or interests as such – that might cause people to believe themselves to be and need/want certain things, and to act in certain ways.

My account differs from Disch in a sense that I see representation as contributing to the construction of the represented. While identities and interests are constructed, the processes of identity construction and contestation go well beyond representation: identities and interests are constructed and reconstructed over time and through complex social, political and historical processes, which involve representation but cannot be reduced to it. In that sense, my understanding of representation is closer to Saward who argues that "of course people and groups *exist* prior to evocation or constitution in politics. There is always a *referent*" (Saward, 2010, p. 51). For Saward, representation involves "a maker of

representations (M) [who] puts forward a subject (S) which stands for an object (O) which is related to a referent (R) and is offered to an audience (A)” (Saward, 2010, p. 36). Saward explains that “the idea of the referent expresses the sheer materiality of people and things, versus the constructions of meaning that different actors, perspectives and claims may place upon them” (Saward, 2012, p. 125-126). Such construction refers to objects of representation: objects of representation are not natural categories, but the claim-maker’s ideas, her imagi(ni)ng or portrayal of a referent. Saward’s critics suggest that the distinction implies that there is “something beyond representation”, which gives his argument “an unnecessary metaphysical flourish” (Thompson, 2012, p. 111). According to Disch, in making the distinction between referents and objects, Saward fails to observe that material realities are also made: “this making entails not just placing various meanings upon entities that are somehow independent, but rather affirming that materiality is discursively constituted” (Disch, 2012b, p. 117). I agree with Saward that “little is gained by denying the real and the material – a constructivist approach aims to reveal processes whereby specific meanings or constructions are naturalized or normalized, rather than questioning the real and material entities out of which meanings are built” (Saward, 2012, p. 126). Furthermore, the distinction between referents and objects of representation is particularly important for the representation of ethnic minorities. The literature on minority representation tends to treat minority groups as a given, assuming that representation is virtually unmediated: representative claims are believed to simply make the referent present, rather than offer a particular image of a referent or a perspective on what might count as its interest. The distinction between referent and object suggests that referent does not have an essential substance: its characteristics, identities and interests are subject to different interpretations.

By formulating a claim, the maker of the claim invites audience to recognise it as their own preference and recognise her as their legitimate representative. Therefore, representation is relational rather than unidirectional. Relational means here that representation works both ways from the representative to the represented, and in the opposite direction, as well as from the representative to the audience and in the opposite direction. Saward’s use of subject-object terminology to describe this relationship has been criticised by Disch as recognising agency only on the side of representatives (Disch, 2012b, p. 116). She proposes instead the terms *signifier* and *signified* as more appropriate if representation is indeed understood as mutually constitutive. Yet, as Saward contends, both subjects and objects of representation are effects of claim-making rather than actually existing categories (Saward, 2012, p. 125). Furthermore, in representation, relations range considerably more widely, since every representative claim presupposes the possibility of a counter-claim. There is no representation without openness to counter-claims. The claim is

always at risk of being contested or rejected by the would-be constituency or audience, which, in a plural democracy, includes other political parties. When making a claim, a representative invites the audience to accept her as their representative and the claim made about and for them as something in which they view themselves. Since representation includes the active making of what is to be represented and the contestation of claims, representation should be seen as a dynamic on-going relationship among various actors. This has hardly been taken into account in the literature on ethnic representation, but it is something I seek to reconstitute in my analysis.

The audience may be anyone to whom, or for whom, the representative claims to speak. For example, when David Cameron speaks in Scotland “to the people of this country” several days before the Scottish independence vote and tells them “what is at stake”, he not only presents facts, but also makes a contestable claim about the future. In his performance, he not only expressed the opinions of his constituents, but, more importantly, tried to convince Scottish voters not to vote for independence (and to recognise him as their representative in that moment). His audience in this speech were the “people of Scotland”, whom he spoke to, but also “millions of people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland – and many in Scotland, too who would be utterly heart-broken by the break-up of the United Kingdom” as he claimed to speak for all of them (Dearden, 2014). On another occasion, Cameron spoke in the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, where he referred to his Jewish ancestry and claimed to have “some sense of connection” to the Israeli people (Holehouse, 2014). He was thereby doing two things. First, he was seeking to address Israeli citizens as his intended audience while also suggesting that they form for him a kind of surrogate constituency. Second, he was presenting himself and asking to be recognised as someone who is predisposed to act for the interests of Jewish people abroad. Representative claims are as much a matter of self-presentation as of re-presentation. In examining them, the emphasis must be placed therefore on representation’s constitutive rather than merely presentational qualities.

In addition to the constitutive and dynamic understanding of representation, Saward invites us to think of representation as an activity, a performance instead of focusing on its definitions and forms (Saward, 2006, p. 298). While this approach has been criticised for the lack of clarity on what exactly representation is (Rehfeld, 2017), definitions and typologies reduce representation to a static view and prevent us from acknowledging the dynamics and shape-shifting of representation. If formerly descriptive and substantive representation were treated as separate representative forms, we are now invited to look not so much at what they are as at what is going on in representing descriptively or substantively, i.e. at how representation is performed. The assumption here is that representatives do not simply act as

delegates or trustees³, descriptive representatives or substantive representatives, etc. It would indeed be surprising to find a representative who occupies a single position during the whole exercise of her representative function. It tends to be rather the case that while performing representation, representatives shift between different positions, as assuming different positions enables them to do different things. In positioning themselves, representatives use different resources, party membership, expertise, gender or ethnic background, to list a few. Descriptive representation and substantive representation do not exist therefore as archetypal and non-communicating forms of representing, or indeed as things defined apart from how the representative performs them, in order to establish herself as a descriptive or substantive representative before her constituency and audience. They work rather as inter-connected positions that a representative creates and takes on in performing representation⁴.

Depending on structural options and their personal motivations, representatives may keep a more stable position over time or shift more often. Saward contends that structural options such as socio-economic or political context and representative's desire or reasons may encourage or constrain shape-shifting (Saward, 2014, p. 728-729). Based on these incentives, Saward distinguishes four types of shapes and shifters: shape-retainer, shape-shifter, shape-accordion and shape-confined representatives. Shape-retainers and shape-shifters have greater structural options for shape-shifting, but the former have little desire or need to shape shift, while such motivation is greater for the latter. In contrast, shape-accordioning and shape-confined representations are a result of fewer structural options, with lesser motivation for the former and greater for the latter (Saward, 2014, p. 728-729).

Finally, we should also bear in mind that, although representation has a constitutive force, representatives "cannot simply conjure claims out of the air" (Saward, 2006, p. 303). Cultural context and pre-given understandings determine what is or is not claimable and how the claim is likely to affect the audience. To be accepted, the claim must understand, and express itself in social and cultural codes the constituency and audience might share. The construction of the representative, the constituency, and the latter's "preferences", is, therefore, a rather complex dialectic context-dependent process, which needs scrutinising if we are to understand what is going on in representation (Disch, 2011, Saward, 2010).

³ A delegate usually refers to an agent who has a strict mandate to follow voters' instructions as accurately as possible. On the other side, a political representative is perceived as a trustee when she is authorised to act independently in accordance with her own judgment.

⁴ Another important contribution to conceptualising representation as performance is extending the scope of political representation beyond electoral representation. NGOs, social movements or labour unions also make claims to represent politically and elected representatives often engage with these claims. Important work on non-elected representation has been done by Brito Vieira (2015), Montanaro (2012, 2017), Näsström (2015) and Saward (2010). Due to the limited scope of my research, I will focus only on the parliamentary representation of minorities. However, I recognise that other non-elected actors also engage in minority political representation.

To summarize the main contribution of the constructivist turn to our understanding of political representation one could say that this has now come to be taken for a dynamic relationship between the represented and the representatives, in which the representative at least partially construes the identity and interests of her constituents in the process of enacting them. This is primarily a discursive process, but because representation is an embodied practice, an embodiment might be one of the forms in which one represents. The performance of representation will inevitably include non-verbal elements, some of which culturally heavily coded, as we shall see. Also key to this novel understanding of representation is the reconsideration of the role of the representative as she who actively construes in simultaneity: 1) herself as a representative and, 2) the represented and what is to be represented about them. The role of the representative, together with the identity and interests of the constituencies, are thus being constantly negotiated and interpreted during the representative process. This takes the form of an active and dynamic process of claim-making in which claims have a distinctively productive constitutive dimension whereby they call constituencies into being as political subjects capable of bearing demands. This has at least two important implications for the study of minority representation: 1) we should not assume that an ascriptive characteristic such as ethnic background makes one automatically a group representative in descriptive terms; 2) we should not evaluate minority representation based simply on unidirectional responsiveness. The following sections suggest new ways of studying minority group representation. These will be used to frame my empirical analysis in subsequent chapters.

2.4. The constitutive representation of ethnic groups

Relying on the constructivist understanding of representation and ethnicity presented above, in this section I aim to conceptualise a new understanding of minority representation. I thereby take the following steps: First, I redefine descriptive and substantive representation, arguing that they should be seen as positions that are constructed and can then be taken so as to enable the felicity of representative claims rather than static representative forms. In my understanding, the descriptive representation of minority ethnic groups depends on how successfully representatives construct themselves as one of and one with their groups, while substantive representation relies on representatives' construction of themselves as those who can know essential minority interests and act upon them consequentially (albeit understandings of what this might mean and imply, as we will see, vary considerably). Second,

I operationalize the notion of representation as performance, i.e. a dynamic, relational, creative, and context dependent activity.

2.4.1. Rethinking descriptive representation

Previous research on the representation of ethnic minorities focuses either on descriptive representation or the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation. Defined statically as mere resemblance, descriptive representation, as it is commonly understood, is not in accordance with the claim-making understanding of representation. Similarly, substantive representation, understood as acting in the “true” interest of the constituencies and in a manner responsive to them, does not acknowledge the creative aspects of representation, in particular in the constitution and articulation of the interests that come to be perceived by the constituency as theirs. Working within a constructivist approach, one might expect me to simply abandon categories such as descriptive or substantive representation. Indeed, I suggest that looking at the relationship between presence and responsiveness to pre-defined minority interests does not help us understand the dynamics of group representation – that is, what is going on in it. Instead, I suggest that we should look at how representatives with minority backgrounds construct themselves as the rightful representatives of an ethnicity and how ethnic identity and minority groups (as objects) are being constructed and publicly performed in the same process. At the same time as I propose a new angle of analysis, I will be claiming that there are advantages in keeping old categories such as descriptive and substantive representation as long as we redefine them in accordance with the constructivist turn and take them as dynamic positions rather than independent representative forms.

In my effort to reconceptualise descriptive representation I go back to Pitkin. Although relying on Pitkin, the currently dominant operationalisation of descriptive representation as mere presence significantly narrows down Pitkin’s understanding. Here are Pitkin’s words on the subject: “The [descriptive] representative does not act for others; he “stands for” them, by virtue of a correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection” (Pitkin, 1967, p. 61). Words can be misleading: Pitkin does not assume thereby that descriptive representation involves no action. On the contrary, as she makes clear elsewhere, the role of descriptive representative is to “give information about constituents’ views”, i.e. “depict or present or reflect popular opinion” (Pitkin 1967, p. 63). According to Pitkin:

If representation always means that something absent is made present in some sense, although not literally present, then... the making present consists of the presence of something from which we can draw accurate conclusions about the represented, gather information about the represented, because it is in relevant ways like the represented (Pitkin, 1967, p. 81).

What she claims therefore is that descriptive representation is a way of making representations about the constituents (Pitkin, 1967, p. 84). In that sense, a descriptive representative has a “talking function” (it speaks about the constituency) instead of the function of acting in the sense of “making policy” on its behalf (Pitkin, 1967, p. 63). Descriptive representation provides an answer to the question of how minority representation might be performed: that is, how minority relevant policies are justified, what information was given about the group to defend or criticise a particular policy proposal (Piscopo, 2011).

Therefore, for Pitkin the role of descriptive representatives is not simply passive; they are expected to render as accurately as possible the characteristics, conditions, needs, desires and worries of their constituencies. This shows that Pitkin’s conceptualisation of descriptive representation was far more exhaustive than is commonly acknowledged in the literature on ethnic representation. On the other hand, however, the weakness in Pitkin’s approach is also visible. For Pitkin, the represented, their identities, characteristics, and interests, are, broadly speaking, transparent and pre-defined. They give themselves to representation so that the role of a representative is seemingly reduced to providing accurate information about what is already there. In this way, Pitkin neglects key creative aspects of representation: she presupposes what representation effectively creates (Saward, 2006, p. 301).

Constructivist scholars emphasise that representatives *make claims* about constituents. The practice of claim-making cannot be equated however with that of providing information about pre-existing groups, their condition, and their demands. “At the heart of the act of representing”, Saward explains “is the depicting of a constituency as this or that, as requiring this or that, as having this or that set of interests” (Saward, 2006, p. 301). It becomes vital therefore to close in on *how* this happens. Applying the claim-making approach to gender representation, Squires argues that “the central issue is not *whether*, but *how* gender relations are constituted through representative claims making processes” (Squires, 2008, p. 188). Piscopo (2011) furthers this argument in redefining descriptive representation as rendering information about women’s status and roles while at the same time shaping the identity of women as a group. Descriptive representation has therefore both a “constative dimension” – claiming to reflect an already mobilised group identity – and a “performative dimension” – the creation of a particular group identity (Thomassen, 2011). Its success in speaking *to* both constituency and audience, and making both *take up* the portrayal of the constituency that is

provided, depends on the apt performance of both of these reflective and creative dimensions.

My account of minority descriptive representation builds on Squires' conception of the 'constitutive representation of gender' and Piscopo's conceptualisation of women's descriptive representation. When viewed in terms of ethnic minority representation, descriptive representation means that representatives of minority origin will present themselves as one of and one with the group and therefore as singularly positioned to give information about ethnic groups, their views on most issues and their interests. However, this information is not "accurate" (correct, precise, exact), Pitkin's favoured term that leads us back to an objective understanding of "interest", but depends on the representative's judgment and perceptions of the group and what is of most worth to it. By making claims about the group's characteristics and experience, a representative paints a picture of what it means to be a member of a particular ethnic group and invites the audience to accept that particular portrayal of the group. This also settles the subject of demands and the representative position from which legitimate demands can be made.

In addition to constituents, the representative relationship also has a constitutive effect on the representatives. They must constitute themselves as such and such if the constituency is to believe them to be the rightful occupants of that representative position. Representatives constitute themselves, however, not only in their interaction with the constituency, but also in their interaction with the audience. Just as the audience is at least partially influenced by the representative claims, so the representative claims are influenced, and indeed constrained, by the audiences they target and the cultural context in which they operate more generally. Culture is the basis for the construction of the identity, meanings and behaviours of all actors in representation (Hall, 1997). How the representative will construct her roles, what positions she will be able to take is not something to be decided in a vacuum. The audience and the representatives are all part of the process in which meaning – in my case, primarily, the meaning of ethnic identity and associated interests – is shaped and articulated.

The final point I want to make is that the maker of a claim has to be portrayed in a particular way to be recognised as the descriptive representative of a minority. Empirical evidence shows that not all representatives with minority backgrounds claim to speak for minorities (Protsyk and Sachariew, 2012). It is also plausible to assume that not all representatives with minority backgrounds are necessarily taken to be speaking for them. Moreover, a representative of minority extraction does not necessarily act as a descriptive representative every time she speaks about her ethnic group. A representative may, for example, invoke her professional expertise ('As a doctor, I know how bad the medical

conditions are in the areas inhabited by minorities’) or a regional background (‘As someone who comes from the region inhabited by minorities, I can assure you that minority groups face discrimination’) as grounds that legitimise her representative claim. Hence, and even though audiences might take someone to be a descriptive representative who makes no claim to it, in most cases, descriptive representatives are not inherently descriptive representatives, they rather make themselves. In other words, they mobilise their ethnicity, in more or less explicit ways, to construct themselves as belonging to the group and being “natural” spokespersons for it. In contexts where ethnic boundaries are harder and ethnic self-identification is the main currency of social exchange, less might be more: that is, claiming might be most effective where it goes almost unspoken and relies rather on the supposed naturalness of the identity link. In accordance with Saward,

We can hypothesize that explicit claims will most often be made where the claim is new, controversial, or unfamiliar, or where it cuts across conventional codes and categories of representations. Implicit claims will most often be made where the style or the focus of the claim is familiar, and invokes or rests upon accepted representational, often framing or constitutional, codes or institutions (Saward, 2010, p. 60).

Activating ethnicity can therefore take different forms, which do not always involve arguing explicitly for its relevance, but what matters to us is that the representative will nonetheless be inviting the audience to recognise her as a descriptive representative based on her ethnicity. The constitution of descriptive representation is captured nicely in the following example: “If I allege that you, a potential constituent of mine, possess key characteristic X, and if I can get you to accept this, I can then present myself as possessing capacity or attribute Y that enables me to represent you — by virtue of a certain resonance between X and Y” (Saward, 2006, p. 302). The goal is to achieve this resonance; the means might vary depending on context.

In conclusion, I suggest that descriptive representation should be conceptualised as dynamic claim-making about ethnic identity, the characteristics, experiences and needs of the ethnic group through which a representative constructs herself as “one of them” and brings together the constituents around the particular portrayal of ethnicity and ethnic identity. This significantly affects the ways we should study minority representation. Instead of asking whether a minority presence affects the representation of minority interests, we should ask how representatives with minority backgrounds construct themselves as representatives and ethnic groups as objects of representation; what resources they use to this purpose; and to what effect.

2.4.2. Rethinking substantive representation

In this section, I redefine substantive representation in the light of the claim-making framework. As I have already argued, previous literature on ethnic representation defines substantive representation as “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin, 1967, p. 209). In this section I challenge the way each of the components of this definition – acting for, interests dimension and responsiveness – has been operationalised.

First, following Saward, I argue that substantive representation is not about true and essential interests but about claims to “know” these interests that aim to cause the articulated *interests* to be *perceived as such* by the constituency. This moves us from an essentialist copy-and-paste or mimetic understanding of representation towards acknowledging its creative aspects, namely in the constitution of interests and the kind of demands to be made upon them. In claiming to “know” minority interests, representatives create what they claim to merely present, and thus treat as being already there. In so doing, they engage in the performative and the constative dimensions of representation in one and the same claim. In Saward’s words, albeit representatives might present themselves as doing this, they cannot simply “read off” their constituents’ interests; these interests need to be “read in” (Saward 2010, p. 310). This understanding of substantive representation as a creative activity has been widely adopted in the gender representation literature (Celis, Childs et al., 2008, p. 106). The ethnic representation literature, however, has mostly accepted the naturalised version of interests that is often the end product rather than the starting point of the representative process.

Second, if minority groups and their interests are constructed during the representative process, then, as Disch rightly maintains, “responsiveness to those interests is hardly a reliable indicator that democratic representation is functioning well” (Disch, 2012a, p. 600). Although Pitkin’s definition of substantive representation was operationalised as congruence between representative behaviour and constituencies’ pre-existing preferences, even Pitkin was aware of some of the pitfalls involved in such an understanding. While Pitkin saw responsiveness as a central criterion of representation in cases of transparent and clear interests, she was keen to stress that where the represented were unaware of their interests or had distorted views, the representative’s task was not to follow their preferences but to do what, in their judgment, was best for them (Pitkin, 1967, p. 164). In such cases, responsiveness was not an adequate criterion for measuring substantive representation, but rather,

accountability, i.e. the explanation and justification of representative decisions to the represented (Brito Vieira, 2017b, p. 27-28). Contra Pitkin, I suggest that there are no essential or objective interests out there to be discovered, but that representatives actively construct what is to be recognised as such in more or less convincing ways. This involves a complex and contested process of establishing what is at stake in a given policy; what is in the interest of a constituency and why; what ought to come first in their hierarchy of interests; who gains, and eventually who loses, with the greater weight given to those interests, etc. Hence, substantive representation cannot be understood as simply an issue of responsiveness to preferences set apart from their more or less competitive political articulation (see also Cianetti, 2014).

Third, representatives need to portray themselves as those who can access or get to know minority interests and act upon them in relevant ways if they want to convince the audience of the authenticity and consequence of their claims. This is where the interplay between descriptive and substantive representation comes to the fore. Both descriptive and substantive representations include claims about and for minorities and their demands (formerly, “representations”). Yet, to position themselves as descriptive representatives, claim-makers need to convince the audience of their belonging in and with the constituency, which can then be used as a resource in making claims about minorities and making demands on their behalf. Claims to substantive representation depend on the successful depiction of representatives as those who can know minority interests and are capable of acting upon them based on their particular relationship with the minority community – in this case, one of identity, as constituted through embodiment and their claim to be and act as descriptive representatives. In this process, representatives tend to treat both identity and interests as natural or necessary, thereby deliberately hiding from view their role in the creation of both. Goffman accurately captures this process,

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be (Goffman, 1956, p.10).

The fourth point I want to make in reconceptualising substantive representation relates to the meaning of its *acting for* component. Rather than merely portraying minority interests, substantive representation is conceived as an advancement of these interests, i.e. an activity with consequences. In line with this, the literature on minority representation tends to operationalise substantive representation in terms of the congruence between constituents’ preferences and their representative’s voting records (Cameron, Epstein et al., 1996, Ueda, 2008). Yet, in adopting such a static measurement, and in presupposing the pre-existence of

the thing that the action is measured against, this literature fails to capture the performative aspects of the representation of interests. On the other hand, gender scholars who have adopted a more constructivist understanding of representation define acting for as denouncing a situation that is disadvantageous for women, formulating proposals to improve the situation of women or that claim a right for women (Celis, 2006). While they embrace the performative and aesthetic aspects of the constructivist view of representation, their understanding of what might count as actions seems to remain rather restrictive. Representatives make claims not only about constituencies' interests but also about what it means to act for these interests – and what it means to achieve something of value through that action. Empirical research must therefore ask how claim-makers *claim to act for* their constituents rather than work with pre-established notions of what counts as a legitimate *action upon* minority interests. In contrast to those scholars who argue that making interests present is not an instance of substantive representation (Severs, 2012), I suggest that representatives may frame even simply publicizing or speaking about such interests as their way of acting upon minorities and changing things in their favour. “Action and not just words” establishes an opposition that they overtly reject: words do things, and things can be made in saying something, especially where this something reaches or indeed disturbs relevant audiences. In contrast to Severs, further, who criticises Saward for not specifically defining activities performed on behalf of the represented (Severs, 2012, p. 173), I argue that a lack of a specific listing of what counts as acting for is not a shortcoming but a necessary move if we adopt an aesthetic and dynamic view of representation, which looks into the how, and learns from it, rather than pre-determines it through categorisation.

Therefore, in my understanding, substantive representation refers to claims to act upon minority interests, which involves a creative process that consists of: 1) the construction of minority groups and their interests as bearing a natural or necessary relation; 2) the construction of a representative as the one who can know the minority's true or vital interests; 3) and the construction of the array of actions that count as, and should be recognised as counting as, legitimate *actions upon* minority interests.

2.4.3. The performance of group representation

Recent advances in representation theory encouraged me not only to redefine descriptive and substantive representation but also to embrace an understanding of representation as performance. Even the most basic definition of performance as “an activity done by an

individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group” (Schechner, 2003, p. 22) unveils several important aspects of representation.

First, representation as any performance is a practice, an activity that has to be enacted. It consists of doing rather than being. This implies that the traditional understanding of representation in terms of static and independent forms is inadequate. Although I have argued above that there is space for categories such as descriptive and substantive representation within the claims-making approach, these categories should be perceived as dynamic and inter-connected positions that representatives construct and occupy rather than static forms of representation. As Saward argues, “representative roles are not exclusive, or clearly contrasting, as is so often argued or implied. The would-be representatives can play different roles at the same time, or switch between roles, or blend supposedly different ones in one action or claim” (Saward, 2010, p. 71).

The same applies to other positions representatives take in making claims about constituencies, such as trustees or delegates. The term ‘trustees’ usually refers to those representatives who have greater autonomy from their constituents’ will, while ‘delegates’ are bound by the will of their constituents. While recent theoretical literature has questioned the analytical interests in such categories (Rehfeld, 2009), I do not avoid using them because of my interests in how MPs act out these positions, in ways that allow them to do things they would be unable to do otherwise. Yet, I do not take delegate/trustee positions as comprehensive forms of representation, which are sufficient to explain the range of options representatives have. I agree with Rehfeld that constituents, for instance, may delegate their representatives to act as trustees. Similarly, MPs may claim to act as delegates, while actually acting independently of the constituents’ will or showing little interest in listening to what constituents have to say. In the same vein, representatives may use descriptive representation as a resource to make claims to know and act for minority interests. In practice, it would probably be hard to separate trustees, delegates, descriptive, substantive, and other representative positions, although it is helpful to separate them analytically to see if any predominates or how they interplay at particular junctures.

A second important implication of the above definition of performance is that performance is done in the presence of an audience. Representation is performative in a sense that it exists only in actions and relations: it is not “in” anything, but “between” (Schechner, 2013, p. 30). The interaction between representatives and constituents is usually wrongly reduced to election time. There is no representation without continuing interaction between representatives, constituents and audiences (Hill, 2010, p. 18). In shaping their claims, representatives always have particular audiences in mind, who respond to these claims by

accepting, challenging or rejecting them. Hence, representation is not only about doing, but also about “showing doing” (Schechner, 2013, p. 28), and performativity is key to this.

In addition, performance is a creative activity. Indeed, as I have argued above, representation is creative and transformative in at least three aspects. Claim-makers use the resources at their disposal (such as for instance, descriptive resemblance or substantive positions they create) to construct both the representatives and the represented. A representative does not exist without the represented and the other way around. They are mutually constitutive. The moment representatives make claims about the represented is the moment of their own creation. In the same vein, there is no representative without an audience’s recognition. In addition, if successfully enacted, representative claims also change the views and transform the audiences. This suggests that performativity is integral to performance. Performativity “refers to a range of ways in which actions (including, of course, performances) produce effects and affects for subjects, audiences and observers” (Saward, 2017, p. 76). The concept was first described by Austin (1962) who maintained that language does something in the world rather than merely describing it and was later developed by Butler (1993) to describe the processes of gender construction through a series of performative acts. For Butler, while performative acts are intentionally made to appear essential or natural, they inscribe sex on the body in particular ways.

Finally, performance always takes place on a particular stage. Furniture, décor, physical lay-out and other background items which supply the scenery affect how audiences will experience the performance (Goffman, 1956, p. 13). They themselves already create expectations even before actors appear on stage. Similarly, representation is often performed in a particular institutional and cultural setting that affects representatives’ claim-making opportunities and the audience’s reception. The audience does not passively receive the claims, but interprets them in light of their cultural contexts (Saward, 2010, p. 75-77). In this way the creativity of the representative calls up the creativity of the audience. Receiving the claim is never passive. Representation as performance is “‘socialized’, moulded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented” (Goffman, 1956, p. 22-23). It is hence an activity of making tailored claims to persuade particular audiences, with their specific set of expectations and mental frames. Yet, the representatives do not merely incorporate aspects of the institutional and cultural background into their performance. Instead, they often adapt, modify and question them to achieve their own goals.

To sum up, in this section, I have argued that I approach representation as a dynamic, relational, creative, and context dependent performance. I have suggested that representation is a performative activity that is always enacted in relations between representatives,

constituencies and audiences. These relations are creative and transformative in the sense that they construct representatives as those who have a legitimate right to speak about and for the constituents and constitute the identities and interests of the evoked constituencies as such and such. Finally, the felicity of such performances depends on how well representatives exploit institutional and cultural resources to their advantage.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the research on the representation of ethnic minorities could benefit significantly from incorporating the constructivist approach to representation. Often assuming that minority groups can be treated as homogenous and unitary actors with essential and transparent interests, the existing literature on minority representation tends to focus on the presence of group members in representative institutions and its effects on the advancement of minority interests through policy and legislation. The constructivist turn in representation theory challenges the literature on minority representation and the traditional understanding of representation that underpins it, in several ways. First, it acknowledges that constituencies and their interests are at least partially constructed in the representative process. Second, it emphasises the dynamic and relational aspects of representation instead of unidirectional responsiveness. Third, it shifts our attention from the representative forms to the representative process – from the “what” to the “how”. My aim in this chapter has been to articulate and extend the claims-making approach to representation in a way that makes it usable and attractive for the empirical study of the representation of ethnic minorities. Working within the constructivist turn required me to reconceptualise old categories such as descriptive and substantive representation and the way representation is researched. I have done this in three steps:

First, I maintained that descriptive representation is wrongly narrowed down to characteristics passively held by the representative. In order to establish herself as a descriptive representative, a maker of representative claim needs to construct both the ethnic group she claims to represent and herself as the rightful group representative. Descriptive representation should therefore be conceptualised as a dynamic claim-making about ethnic identification in which the representative constructs the constituency and herself as one of them and one with them. This seeks to bring together the constituents around the particular

portrayal of ethnicity and ethnic identity that provides grounds for their identification with their representatives.

Second, in contrast to the literature that takes both minority interests and ethnic identity as transparent and objective, I have argued that minority groups and their interests are constructed in the representative process. I further suggest that the 'acting upon' component of substantive representation should also be seen as part of the representative performance. Therefore, in my empirical analysis I will be looking into representative claims that actively construct both minority interests and what it means to act upon and for these interests. For these claims to be successful, representatives also need to construct themselves as those who can know and act upon the "true" interests of the minorities, i.e. interests framed as being already out there rather than created through representative activities.

Third, I have argued that representation should be studied as a performance. This implies that representation is an activity, a verb rather than a noun. Consequently, descriptive representation and substantive representation do not exist as forms independently of the representative's enactment of them. They are rather inter-connected and dynamic positions that a representative takes in performing representation. This allows us to look at how group representation is performed without falling into essentialist traps and restricting ourselves to the identification of particular representative forms in what they do. We are furthermore, required to acknowledge the creative and relational quality of representation. Instead of looking at the relationship between the descriptive and substantive representation of ethnic minorities, this chapter argued that we should focus on how minority groups are constructed in representation, how representatives with ethnic minority backgrounds construct themselves as group representatives, how diverse audiences affect the shaping of representative claims and what resources are used in making claims about and for minority groups resonant. Finally, I argued that representation is performed in a particular institutional and cultural setting, which representatives explore in their effort to address their constituency and audiences in ways that can produce the desired effect and leave a real trace behind them.

Chapter 3: Representative claims analysis: research design and methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a framework for applying the claim-making theory of representation in empirical research. In doing so, it aims to challenge the assumptions made in the existing literature on minority representation, about what representation is and how it can be studied. Treating minority groups as unified identity bearers with transparent and fixed interests, the literature analyses whether and under what conditions minority representatives act in accordance with these interests. In contrast, as argued in the previous chapter, my approach to minority representation stems from a constructivist understanding of ethnicity. I understand ethnicity as “complex repertoires which people experience, use, learn and ‘do’ in their daily lives, within which they construct an ongoing sense of themselves and an understanding of their fellows. Ethnicity, in particular, is best thought of as an ongoing *process* of ethnic identification” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 15). This process of ethnic identification is an integral part of representative claim-making or what they seek to produce. Representatives’ claims “to speak for also speak about” a given group (Saward, 2010, p. 49) by defining who belongs to the group, by putting those within the group in a certain kind of relationship to one another and to other groups within and sometimes also outside the polity (e.g., when the minority in a country is the majority in a neighbouring country).

In order to shift the focus of empirical research on minority representation towards a more constructivist understanding of representation, my research takes the following steps: First, rather than taking minority groups as objective categories and focusing on the relationship between presence and responsiveness, I analyse how minority groups and their interests are constructed in the process of representative claim-making. Second, I suggest that the traditional categories, such as descriptive and substantive representation, need to be redefined if they are to be used in the empirical research in new and more productive ways. In performing descriptive representation, I argue that the felicity of representative claims about minority groups depends on how successfully they construct themselves as ethnically resembling their groups. I operationalise substantive representation as a creative process of constructing constituencies’ interests and claiming to act upon them. The success of such

claims depends on how successfully representatives construct themselves as those who know and have direct access to what they frame as essential minority interests. Third, I suggest that institutions and culture do not determine the behaviour of representatives, but are instead employed as resources that enable representatives to frame their claims in a more or less successful way, success meaning here that claims resonate and are taken up by the constituency and relevant audiences. While the theoretical literature has already alerted us to it, the ways institutional and cultural resources are used in the process of representative claims-making have not so far been empirically explored.

After explaining the design of my research, I outline the rationale of applying this framework to the cases of Serbia and Kosovo. The two cases are particularly well suited for my analysis because of their ethnic diversity and institutional and cultural construction of ethnicity as an important feature that drives and in turn is driven by processes of political representation. Due to the complexity introduced by the specific institutional and cultural contexts of my cases, my research is narrowed down to the performance of claims by representatives with minority backgrounds in the national parliaments of the two countries. This comes also justified by the fact that the representation of ethnicity has come to be monopolised by these representatives. By focusing on the performance of claims, I will be able to explore how representative claims contribute to the construction of ethnic identity and ethnic groups. Although “successful performance seems natural, not contrived, not a performance but an effortless expression, true to life”, performance is a creative activity that has constitutive effects upon both the performers (representatives) and the audience (Alexander, 2011, p. 4). In addition to an analysis of the performance of claims, the comparative design of my thesis allows me to explore what might explain potential variations in the representative performance of ethnicity. More particularly, it allows me to analyse whether and how institutional incentives and cultural background influence the process and nature of claim making *for* and *about* ethnic minorities.

In its final section, this chapter explains the methods of data selection and data analysis used. The main sources for my analysis are plenary speeches and semi-structured interviews. In combining these sources, I will be able to tap into both public and more personal perspectives about representative performance: its nature, its function, and its requirements. Compared to other data such as roll call votes, legislative proposals or amendments, the selected sources promise to offer an insight into the ways in which representatives frame their claims and the reasons why they do so. Finally, I propose that the analysis of representative claims analysis can be employed to study the performance of minority representation and outline the grounds for its application in empirical research more widely.

3.2. Research design

Recent advances in the theory of political representation have shown that representation is more dynamic and performative than traditionally assumed. The constructivist theory of political representation acknowledges that representatives, constituents, and their interests are at least partially constructed in and through the representative process itself.

The literature on minority representation still tends to work with the traditional accounts of representation, taking minority groups and their interests as pre-given, fixed and transparent (Saalfeld and Bischof, 2012). Concerned with structural discrimination against minorities and ethnic conflicts, minority research will normally take two different directions. The first of these explores the factors that affect the number of representatives from minority backgrounds in representative institutions, arguing that a proportional minority presence is necessary for peace (Hänni, 2014, Tatari, 2010) and justice (Celis, Eelbode et al., 2013, Eelbode, Wauters et al., 2013). Another group of empirical studies builds on this by exploring the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, suggesting that in addition to a guaranteed presence, minorities need to have an influence on policy-making (Gamble, 2007, Juenke and Preuhs, 2012). Both strands of research work with the traditional understanding of the categories of descriptive and substantive representation. For them, descriptive representation is about resemblance, while substantive representation is defined as congruence between representative actions and essential minority interests and perceptions. In addition, this literature suggests that institutional rules and incentives determine both the composition of the legislature and the behaviour of representatives. Consequently, they analyse which institutional and electoral rules induce responsive behaviour (Whitby 1997; Whitby and Krause 2001; Tatari 2010; Swain 1993; Tate 2003; Canon 1999; Bullock 1995; Gamble 2007; Haynie 2001; Lublin 1997; Minta and Sinclair-Chapman 2013) or increase the presence of minorities in parliament (Bochsler 2010; Protsyk, Matichescu, and Chatre 2008; Protsyk and Sachariew 2012; King and Marian 2012).

This thesis takes a different approach. It aims to show, first, that the so-called “constructivist turn” in the study of both ethnicity and representation offers important insights into the empirical research on minority representation. In particular, I argue that political representation is a creative and dynamic process that involves not only the construction of minority interests – who benefits, who does not, what is to be valued, what not, but also discursively constructs representatives and brings groups into being through a representative’s depictions of constituencies as this or that. This is not to deny that ethnicity exists. It is rather

to affirm that for it to exist in ways that are consequential – that is, for identity and ethnicity to mobilise or cause people to do things – the content, or the cultural meaning of ethnic identification, needs to be spelled out, and this spelling is an imminently contested political process. In this process, some “cultural stuff” – to use Barth’s (1969b, p. 15) favoured expression – is prone to be more consequential and constraining than other stuff, amongst which are figure embodiment, language, and collective history, which lie at the core of the analysis of the performance of ethnicity through representative claims I offer in the chapters that follow.

Second, I argue that, if we adopt a more dynamic and performative understanding of representation, the categories of descriptive and substantive representation need to be redefined. This is key to their deployment in empirical research. As I have already argued, I take them as dynamic positions rather than independent representative forms. To explain, in my understanding, descriptive representation refers to representative claims about minority groups whose felicity depends on how successfully representatives construct themselves as resembling or, more specifically, being one with their constituents. I define substantive representation as articulation of the political language through which the constituencies’ interests are constructed and come to be perceived as such, i.e., as interests. Representatives do not simply identify and promote pre-existing interests but they articulate group identity and associated interests in what is essentially a creative activity. The felicity of such claims depends on how successfully representatives conceal the constructedness of interests and convince the audience that they are addressing minorities’ pre-existing and essential interests. At the same time substantive representation involves the construction of a representative as the one who can know minority interests as s/he bears the right sort of relationship to the constituency.

Third, in contrast to the previous research on minority representation, which suggests that institutional and cultural factors determine the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, I argue that representatives employ institutional incentives and the cultural background as resources in order to make their claims more resonant with the audience. Instead of them determining the behaviour of representatives, representatives actively use these resources to achieve their goals, modifying or reinforcing these norms in the process. Hence, rather than aiming to explain the behaviour of representatives, my aim is to understand the *how* of representation: the ways in which representatives, minority groups and their interests are constructed and performed through the activity of representing, and how minority MPs employ institutional and cultural resources to give their claims the necessary reach and influence.

3.2.1. Selection of cases: Serbia and Kosovo

In order to explore empirically the performance of minority representation, I chose to focus on cases where ethnicity has been constructed as an important feature to be represented in formal institutions and where I could *prima facie* expect to find a diversity of claims about and for minorities. In line with this reasoning, I decided to focus on Serbia and Kosovo. Powerful ethnic identities need not lead to conflict, or even violence. But these countries are post-conflict countries in which a war was fought around ethnicity. In the course of it and in its aftermath, ethnicity and self-determination have become prominent and virtually unassailable political values. Ethnic identity has become such an important political resource that it has come to be accepted that the notion means something in and of itself and that people ought to act on its terms. What it “dictates”, political action must realise and follow. And thus the appeal to identity has become virtually unquestionable, surrounded as it is with an aura of belonging, authenticity, and even fate. My two cases reflect this. They comprise countries that have numerous minorities and are struggling to integrate them into a meaningful whole. There are more than twenty minority groups in Serbia and at least ten minority groups in Kosovo. Hence, a diverse articulation of minority interests is to be expected. These countries have also adopted institutional incentives for minority representation such as reserved seats, a lower threshold for minority parties and a minority veto which suggests that essentialist assumptions about identity and ethnicity might have dominated institution building.

My choice of cases, however, comes with a limitation. In post-conflict societies and in my cases in particular, mainstream media rarely provide information related to ethnic minorities. In the context of Serbia and Kosovo the only claims about minorities that are publicly visible are claims made in the national parliaments. That claims are publicised is an important condition, since they need to be public in order for audiences to engage with them. On the other hand, minority civil society organisations and minority media tend to be established and financially supported by minority political parties, which affects the range of discursive opportunities they have, and severely constrains their ability to make counter-claims. Because of this, I decided to focus on claims made in parliament. This decision has some disadvantages, however, as I will not be able to encompass the whole universe of claims about and for minorities. In other contexts, nonelected actors would be expected to raise a range of issues different from those raised by political actors and portray constituencies in different terms (Celis, Childs et al., 2014, p. 163). An analysis of non-electoral claims would then be indispensable to the analysis of how one and the same object of representation can be constructed as a different political subject so that it might bear different political demands. But

this variety is seriously lacking in Serbia and Kosovo. The little there is is definitely worthy of attention in future studies since parliamentary representation has so far received the most attention. Yet I am convinced that a novel way of looking at parliamentary representation such, as the one offered here justifies my research.

In particular, I focus on the 8th Serbian parliament (2008-2012) and the 4th Assembly of Kosovo (2010-2014). I chose those periods for two reasons. First, I decided to focus on periods after the formal transition to democracy (Serbia after 2000, Kosovo after 2008) because minority representatives were either not participating in parliamentary work before that, or were not allowed to voice their concerns therein. Second, these were the only full four-year term parliaments after the democratic transition. Both Serbia and Kosovo often have early elections and I wanted to encompass the periods in, between, and outside of electoral cycles, in the expectation that minority representatives may put forward different claims or address different audiences at different times (see Celis, Childs et al., 2014, p. 162).

Second, as I have already pointed out, in both Serbia and Kosovo, claims about and for minorities tend to be made exclusively by representatives from minority backgrounds. This is not specific to Serbia and Kosovo. In societies with a history of ethnic conflict MPs from majority groups rarely make claims about or for minorities (Htun, 2004). Those who usually claim to speak for minorities are MPs from minority backgrounds. Both of my cases have experienced ethnic wars in the last twenty years and inter-ethnic tensions are still high, particularly between Serbs and Albanians. For these reasons, I had to restrict my research to claims made by representatives from minority backgrounds. This, however, allows me to revisit, critically, literature that treats all MPs with minority backgrounds as descriptive representatives merely because of their ethnic belonging to the minority group they claim to represent. It also allows me to engage with the literature that treats minority representatives as a unified group without examining intra-group differences (Bird, 2011, Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou, 2011).

Identifying representatives with minority backgrounds posed some challenges. MPs affiliated with minority parties were relatively easy to identify because the registers of minority parties are available online and party names often contain a reference to the minority groups they claim to represent. In addition, in Kosovo all minority representatives were elected through guaranteed or reserved seats for minorities so there was no doubt about their identifications. On the other hand, in Serbia some of the minority MPs are affiliated with majority parties and parliament holds no records of ethnicity but only of MPs' party affiliation, age and residence. For these reasons, it was more challenging to identify them. I first tried to identify them based on their minority-sounding names and then tried to find out if they publicly confirmed their ethnic background. I expected that some of them may have evoked

their ethnic background in debates on minority related legislation, which made me read thoroughly the transcript of the debate on the Bill on National Councils of National Minorities. I chose this bill because that was the only bill adopted during the 8th parliament that exclusively evoked national minorities. The law guarantees the cultural autonomy of national minorities and their right to self-governance in the fields of education, language, media and official use of minority language. As expected, many of the minority MPs from majority parties spoke up, evoking their ethnicity as a resource for claim-making. In addition, I looked at the reports on the elections of minority national councils in 2010 to see if any of the MPs ran for election and therefore publicly identified themselves with minority communities. Finally, one of the MPs had a minority-sounding name but I could not find any evidence of his ethnicity. I contacted him directly and he confirmed his Russian background and agreed to an interview. In the end, I identified 20 MPs from minority backgrounds in majority parties (see Table 4 in Appendix 1).

3.3. Institutional and cultural incentives: Serbia and Kosovo

I have argued above that representative claims are not made in isolation from institutions and culture. Previous literature on minority representation suggests the importance of political parties and electoral systems for representation. I acknowledge that. Institutions set the rules of the game: who is allowed to sit and speak in parliament and under what conditions depends largely on the electoral system and parliamentary rules. In addition, to be successful, representative claims need to tap into existing cultural tropes. As Saward argues, “political representation is necessarily *cultural* in the sense that there are cultural limits to the types of subject-object links that can plausibly be made in a given context” (Saward, 2010, p. 75). In order to be successful, representative claims need to resonate with the audience. As Alexander puts it:

Behind every actor’s social and theatrical performance lies the already established skein of collective representations that compose culture – the universe of basic narratives and codes and the cookbook of rhetorical configurations from which every performance draws... The ability to understand the most elementary contours of a performance depends on an audience knowing already, without thinking about it, the categories within which actors behave (Alexander, 2011, p. 57).

The comparative design of my thesis allowed me to explore how these institutional and cultural resources are evoked and worked out in the performance of representative

claims. I show in the following sections that based on similarities and differences in relevant institutional and cultural aspects, Serbia and Kosovo represent the two most similar cases. When comparing the cases on the institutional axis, I focus on ethnic diversity, size and geographic concentration of minorities, institutional design of the country and electoral system since the existing literature sees these as affecting representation of minorities the most. On the other hand, the theoretical literature does not offer guidelines on how to identify and explore cultural resources (Celis, Childs et al., 2014, p. 160) and the empirical literature tends to overlook them. Some cultural elements are likely to be more constraining than others. We also tend to think of them as fixed or facing stringent limits on their malleability and negotiability. Amongst these, embodiment, language, collective history, and, in many cases, religion, figure prominently. I will show below, however, how these are deployed and transformed in the process of representing and indeed constituting ethnic identity. But I will not stop at this. Following Celis et al., I understand cultural resources as similarities and differences in basic values related to minorities, such as values of equality and multiculturalism (Celis, Childs et al., 2014, p. 160). In order to be successful, representative claims need to resonate with the basic values in society. For example, claims advocating integration would probably risk being rejected by the constituencies of deeply divided societies. Therefore, on the cultural axis, I compare the cases based on their levels of ethnic divisions, structural discrimination against minorities and the cultural impermeability of ethnic boundaries (see Ruedin, 2013, p. 23-24).

3.3.1. Similarities

The background incentives for minority representation are similar in many respects in Serbia and Kosovo (see Table 1). National minorities are geographically concentrated in both countries, which suggested that the construction of ethnic boundaries and minority interests may be similar, for example, territorially based. In addition, both countries are ethnically diverse, with numerous ethnic groups, which encourages pluralism of claims and interests as representatives of each group may articulate their specific demands. The countries are at the same time relatively homogenous with 16.68% of minorities' share in total population in Serbia and 7.1% in Kosovo according to the 2011 Population Census. However, most Serbs boycotted the 2011 Census in Kosovo and although according to official data there only 1.5% of the population are Serbs, it is estimated that there are 6-8% of Serbs there. Similarly, Albanians in Serbia boycotted the census and while the 2011 census data showed that the percentage of Albanians in the total population is 0.08%, the 2002 census indicated that there were 0.82% of Albanians in the total population. The similar size of minority groups in both cases is relevant

for the comparison since groups of different sizes may have incentives to articulate different demands. For example, it may be expected that the small size of minority groups compared to the majority discourages claims related to territorial autonomy or separatism.

In respect of the institutional design, both cases are unitary states with unicameral parliaments. Electoral systems are, furthermore, similarly designed in the two countries. Both Serbia and Kosovo have a proportional electoral system with a 5% electoral threshold and a single nationwide electoral district. In order to increase the presence of national minorities in the legislature, both countries have introduced affirmative action measures. They have each lifted the electoral threshold for minority parties, whereas Kosovo has also guaranteed parliamentary seats for minority parties. The Kosovar parliament has guaranteed 20 out of 120 seats for representatives of national minorities⁵. In addition, minority parties were exempted from the electoral threshold in the period from 2007 to 2014⁶. Any seat minority parties won through elections was added to the 20 guaranteed seats (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008, Article 148, KIPRED, 2012). These provisions enabled minority parties to win five additional seats (3 for the Serb, 1 for the Bosniak and 1 for the Turkish party) in the 2010 parliamentary elections. Similarly, in the Serbian parliament, the election of minority representatives has been facilitated by lifting electoral threshold for minority parties. These measures have enabled Hungarian, Bosniak, Albanian and occasionally Roma minority parties to win seats in parliament. In the analysed period, there were 12 MPs from minority parties sitting in the Serbian parliament⁷.

These measures suggest that ethnicity is a politically relevant feature to be represented. Combined with a single nation-wide electoral district, electoral systems in both

⁵ Half of the guaranteed seats are reserved for the Serb national minority; four seats are reserved for the representatives of Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma minorities; three are guaranteed for the Bosniak minority; two for the Turkish minority in Kosovo and one for the Gorani community (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, Art. 64).

⁶ The international condition before deciding on the final status of Kosovo was that Kosovo's institutions should demonstrate that they are willing and able to protect minority rights. The measures to protect minorities were envisaged in the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (hereafter Ahtisaari Plan), which was prepared by the Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, Marti Ahtisaari, in March 2007. Although the Ahtisaari Plan never came into force, since Russia strongly opposed it in the UN Security Council, Kosovo authorities included it in the new constitution and legislative framework adopted after 2008. It was agreed that in the event of conflict the Ahtisaari plan should prevail over the Kosovo Constitution (Beha, 2014). According to the Ahtisaari Plan, for the first two consecutive electoral mandates (effectively 2007-2010, 2010-2014) any seat that political parties, citizen's initiatives or candidates representing minority communities gained through elections would be added to the 20 guaranteed seats (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, Art. 148). Parties representing non-majority communities were also in the first two elections exempted from the 5% threshold that applies to Albanian parties. In order to win an additional seat above the 20 guaranteed seats, minority lists had to cross the 'natural' 1% threshold (KIPRED, 2012).

⁷ Seven of them represented minority parties that entered parliament independently through affirmative action measures. Another five MPs also represented minority parties in the parliament, but secured seats through pre-electoral coalition agreements with mainstream parties.

cases encourage the constitution of representatives and constituencies around ethnicity. Since constituency in both cases has been defined based on ethnicity, representatives have incentives to act for ethnicity rather than class, party, profession or anything else. As Rehfeld argues,

“one problem is that whenever *electoral* constituencies are defined by a certain quality – be it territory, profession, race, religion, gender, ideology, party ID, or so on – the defining quality introduces a de facto interest into the legislature even as it defines the nature of political representation within the polis” (Rehfeld, 2005, p. 146).

Following this, it may be expected that MPs from minority parties frame their claims in ethnicised terms; that is, portray their groups as unitary bounded, collective actors whose identity is defined based on group culture and difference from Others.

Contrary to Kosovo, where members of minority groups are affiliated with minority parties only, in Serbia, there were also 20 MPs from minority backgrounds in the majority parties. Their constituencies were not necessarily defined by ethnicity. Therefore, I had an opportunity to compare the ways in which they construct both themselves and ethnic groups with the MPs in minority parties. The previous literature argues that electoral constituency matters more than ethnic resemblance (Tatari, 2010, p. 52-53). Hodžić (2011) has, further, found that national minorities perceive representation through majority parties as lacking legitimacy. Based on this, it may be expected that MPs from majority parties will frame their claims as relating more to all citizens than to minorities exclusively. As such, their claims about minorities may be focused more on integration and improving inter-ethnic relations than minority parties' claims.

In addition, discrimination against national minorities is high in both of my cases, particularly against Roma and Albanians in Serbia (CESID, 2012, Simeunović Bajić, 2011, Simeunović, 2008) and Serbs and Roma in Kosovo (Baldwin, 2006, Beha, 2014). Both legislatures passed anti-discrimination laws and laws that guarantee minority rights, the protection of minority identities and a proportional employment of minorities in public administration. Yet the laws are often not implemented either because the necessary by-laws are not adopted or because local governments refuse to implement them (Arraiza, 2014, Bašić and Pajvančić, 2015, p. 6, EC Ma Ndryshe, 2013). Finally, both societies are divided along ethnic lines. This is at least partly a consequence of recent Yugoslav wars. Political elites constructed the breakup of Yugoslavia as an inter-ethnic conflict and mobilised citizens along ethnic lines (Gallagher, 2003, Pavković, 2000). Minorities in each of the countries were persecuted and discriminated against (Bieber and Daskalovski, 2003, Jenne, 2009, Jović, 2009). This produced strong ethnic boundaries and inter-ethnic distrust, and divided the societies

along ethnic lines. Hence, in my cases, MPs may be expected to make claims that speak inwards: i.e., that speak exclusively to the group. As long as they are seen as being one with the group, they do not need to evoke further resources to claim their legitimacy. It is important to note that this would not necessarily be the case in any society. In societies that are not as ethnically divided, MPs' construction of their position based merely on ethnicity would probably not be sufficient for audience recognition. Furthermore, since it is culturally unimaginable, particularly in Kosovo, that an MP from a majority background claims to speak for a minority group, there is less competition for minority votes and hence, I expect that minority MPs do not feel as pressured to give accounts for their actions.

Table 1: Comparison of cases: institutional and cultural incentives

	Serbia	Kosovo
Ethnic composition of population (2011 census)	Homogenous (16.68% of minorities*)	Homogenous (7.1% minorities**)
Territorial dispersion of minorities	Concentrated	Concentrated
Design of the state	Unitary	Unitary
Parliament	Unicameral	Unicameral
Electoral system	List PR	List PR
Threshold	5%	5%
Districts	Single nationwide	Single nationwide
Affirmative action measures for minority parties	Yes (Threshold exemption)	Yes (Threshold exemption + Reserved seats)
History of ethnic conflicts	Yes	Yes
Ethnic divisions	Strong	Strong
Ballot structure	Blocked	Open
Institutional strength of minority parties	Token presence	Power sharing
Influence of international actors	Weaker	Stronger
Ethnic boundaries	Less conflictual	More conflictual

* Most Albanians boycotted the 2011 Census. It is estimated that Albanians constitute a total of 0.82% of the total population of Serbia, while the census data show only 0.08%. If correct, this would slightly increase the minorities' share in the total population.

** Most Serbs boycotted the 2011 Census. It is estimated that there are 6-8% of Serbs in the total population of Kosovo, while the census data show only 1.5%. If this is correct, the percentage of minorities in the total Kosovar population is 11.6-13.6%.

3.3.2. Differences

Although they are similar in significant ways, Serbia and Kosovo differ in several respects: ballot structure, the relative institutional strength of minority parties, influence of international actors and the depth of ethnic divisions. The previous literature would expect that these differences explain potential variation in the performance of representation.

First, their electoral systems differ in ballot structure. In Serbia, the order of candidates on electoral lists is fixed, and parliamentary seats are awarded based on the order of candidates on the list (Jovanović, 2015, p. 33-35). In Kosovo, on the other hand, voters are allowed to change the order of candidates on the electoral list. Voters may give up to five votes to individual candidates on a single electoral list. Candidates with more personal votes move up the list. The voters may also choose to vote for the party, i.e. for the whole electoral list, in which case the party's ranking determines the success of individual candidates (Krasniqi, 2015a, p. 51).



Figure 1: The influence of institutions on the behaviour of representatives

Arguing that the behaviour of representatives may be explained by institutional factors (see Figure 1), the previous literature urges me to expect that MPs in Serbia will behave as party delegates while MPs in Kosovo will be more independent. The literature suggests that party discipline is stronger in systems with a closed ballot structure, such as Serbia, because the election of a candidate primarily depends on their selection within the party. The higher one is on the electoral list, the higher the chances that one will be elected. In such systems, MPs are expected to act as party delegates. If lists are open, MPs are expected to act more independently because their electoral success depends more on their ability to attract preference votes than on the party's success (Bird, 2005, p. 445, Lutz, 2011). Since individual candidates compete with other candidates on the same list, they are under pressure to run personal campaigns and demonstrate independence from the party structures. Compared to closed ballot systems where parties directly mediate the relationship between representatives

and constituents, in open ballot systems, representatives have a more direct relationship with their constituents.

Second, both countries are unitary, but Kosovo has introduced power sharing guarantees to minority parties, which is not the case in Serbia. The constitution of Kosovo guarantees minority representatives the powers to veto legislation related to “vital interest of the communities”⁸. This serves as a suggestion to minority representatives about what issues they should focus on in their parliamentary work. The constitutional prescription of minority interests further signals that ethnic groups are institutionally treated as homogeneous, unitary collective actors with transparent and fixed interests. The adoption of what are defined as minority related laws requires both the majority of votes of present and voting deputies from the majority ethnic community and the majority of votes by the present and voting deputies from the minority communities (Kosovo Const. Art. 81). Minority communities also have guaranteed representation in the executive. Namely, at least one minister in the government has to be from the Serb community and at least one from other minority communities. If the government has more than 12 ministers it should include a third minister with a minority ethnic background (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, Art. 96). In contrast, Serbian rules do not guarantee to give minority representatives similar influence. Instead, minority parties are institutionally encouraged to achieve only a token presence, and because of this their decision-making influence depends on their success in joining a government coalition and making a profitable coalition agreement.

The previous literature suggests that power-sharing guarantees encourage responsiveness, while a token presence prevents MPs from achieving outcomes (Birbir, 2007, Lijphart, 1977, Tsebelis, 2002). In other words, it is expected that the power sharing structure in Kosovo enables MPs to deliver more policy outcomes than MPs in Serbia. This expectation is based on the argument that party’s influence on decision-making depends on its position in government, its size and constitutional veto powers. Parties in government have more influence on decision making than those in opposition (Birbir, 2007). The biggest parties in a government coalition are the ones with the most influence on decision making. Nonetheless, in minority and minimum-winning coalition governments smaller parties can have an even bigger impact (Tsebelis, 2002, p. 114). For instance, if the votes of minority parties are

⁸ Laws of vital interest to the communities are, according to the Constitution, considered: “(1) Laws changing municipal boundaries, establishing or abolishing municipalities, defining the scope of powers of municipalities and their participation in intermunicipal and cross-border relations; (2) Laws implementing the rights of Communities and their members, other than those set forth in the Constitution; (3) Laws on the use of language; (4) Laws on local elections; (5) Laws on the protection of cultural heritage; (6) Laws on religious freedom or on agreements with religious communities; (7) Laws on education; (8) Laws on the use of symbols, including Community symbols and on public holidays” (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, Art. 81).

necessary for the government's survival, minority parties can successfully achieve at least some of their goals through the ruling party's policy or office concessions (Tsebelis, 2002, p. 114). The institutional position of minority parties is even stronger in power-sharing systems where minority parties have a guaranteed presence in both the legislature and the executive, minority veto powers and territorial autonomy (Lijphart, 1977, p. 41). Safe ministerial seats and minority veto powers suggest that minority representatives may be in a position to exercise significant influence on decision-making process. Based on this, it is expected that the more institutional and de facto powers minority parties have in the government, the more they will bring specific benefits to their communities.

Third, in both Serbia and Kosovo, international actors, primarily the EU, have had a significant impact on the protection and implementation of minority rights. This primarily relates to the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action measures for increasing the presence of minorities in parliament (Beha, 2014, Stanovčić, 2004, Stanovčić, 2008, p. 493). Since both Serbia and Kosovo aim to join the EU, they want to present themselves as countries that respect minority rights (Sasse, 2008). However, the influence of the international actors is expected to be much stronger in Kosovo since the representatives of the EU, OSCE and influential embassies are directly present in Kosovo and monitor all political processes. They aim, by their presence, to secure peace and reconciliation among the divided ethnic groups. In addition, they directly monitor all the plenary sessions and committee meetings of the Kosovo parliament in order to secure the implementation of international agreements and cooperation among representatives of different ethnic groups. Previous literature describes international actors as powerful decision makers, whose presence deprives local actors of any agency (Jenne, 2009). If so, minority representatives may be expected to act in accordance with international directives, and in particular, to demonstrate cooperation with the majority and a readiness to compromise. In addition, kin states are usually seen as having an important role in the creation of minority opinions and, consequently, the behaviour of minority representatives. This is even more strongly emphasised in Kosovo in the case of the Serb minority since Serbs do not recognise Kosovo's independence from Serbia and treat Serbian government as the highest authority. In contrast to the international pressures, in the case of the Serb minority representatives, it may be expected that the kin state encourages conflictual and non-cooperative behaviour (Beha, 2011).

Fourth, I have argued above that both societies are ethnically divided. Yet there are some differences between them. While both Serbia and Kosovo share a recent history of bloody ethnic conflict, ethnic war was fought in Kosovo's territory, but not Serbia's. While the majority of Serbian citizens did not directly experience violence and hostilities, the citizens of Kosovo suffered directly. Inter-ethnic tensions throughout the 1990s between Serbs and

Albanians, followed by war and NATO bombing resulted in many casualties, hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, burned homes and devastated villages. This traumatic war experience in Kosovo affected the creation of rather strong ethnic boundaries in comparison with Serbia, where ethnic boundaries persist but tend to be more permeable (Kostovicova, 2005, Krasniqi, 2015b, Zuber, 2013). Ethnic communities in Kosovo live as separate societies without much inter-ethnic contact. Communication among members of different ethnic communities is additionally constrained by language barriers. The majority of the ethnic minority population does not speak Albanian, i.e. the language of the ethnic majority. It is the same the other way around. In contrast, ethnicity in Serbia is articulated in a less conflictual way, at least in the sense that minority communities do not live in isolated enclaves. Inter-ethnic tensions spark occasionally in the southern part of the country where the majority of Albanians live; Sandžak, an economically poor part of Serbia inhabited by Bosniak population has a similar situation; while in Vojvodina, the northern province of Serbia, secessionist ideas have become less popular in recent years. However, in Serbia these calls have been marginal, without any significant influence and recognition by the wider minority audience.

Basic values and attitudes in both societies have, furthermore, been affected by the Serb-Albanian conflict in Kosovo and Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008. While Kosovo was recognised as an independent state by 115 states, i.e. the majority of the EU member states and more than half of the UN members, Serbia and Kosovo Serbs do not recognise it as a sovereign state. This affects not only the strength of inter-ethnic distance among Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, but also how the perception of Kosovo Albanians reflects on the construction of other minorities in Serbia. Based on these differences, the literature makes me expect that MPs in Serbia will behave more moderately than MPs in Kosovo (Bird, 2003, p. 28). In addition, previous literature suggests that, due to feelings of exclusion, minority MPs in Kosovo will be less willing to express their views publicly (Celis and Wauters, 2010, p. 387, Childs, 2006, p. 154, Dodson, 2006, Fine and Aziz, 2013, Inglehart and Norris, 2003, Ruedin, 2013, p. 28). A political and social environment hostile to ethnic minorities may make representatives uneasy and unlikely to raise minority-related issues (Dodson, 2006, p. 17, Fine and Aziz, 2013).

3.4. Research expectations and methodological contribution

I acknowledge that both institutional and cultural backgrounds matter for the performance of representation. While claiming to represent, MPs do not work in a vacuum. They rather work against particular institutional and cultural backgrounds, which, at least in part, set up the structure of opportunities open to them. In order to be successful, representatives' claims need to use these opportunities to make claims that resonate with their constituencies and audiences. However, my research differs from previous literature in the sense that I do not merely search for strong explanations of the behaviour of representatives. I argue, instead, that representatives exploit institutional and cultural backgrounds as resources that enable them to pursue their goals (see Figure 2). I follow Saward in arguing that "every making of a representative claim involves challenging, reinforcing, or modifying a certain code, including electoral ones" (Saward, 2010, p. 76). Hence, I am interested in how representatives engage with the background incentives by confirming to them, and pushing boundaries, and how they use diverse incentives to their advantage. For example, Serb MPs in the Kosovo parliament were during the whole duration of their mandate from 2001 to 2004 provided with special transport. They were transported to parliament from their homes in armoured vehicles and under a special armed escort of KFOR soldiers (Stefanović, 2001). While this speaks about inter-ethnic conflict in their society, at the same time just by entering Serb municipalities every day to take MPs to work the armoured vehicles themselves may reinforce a sense of conflict and instil fear in Serb citizens.

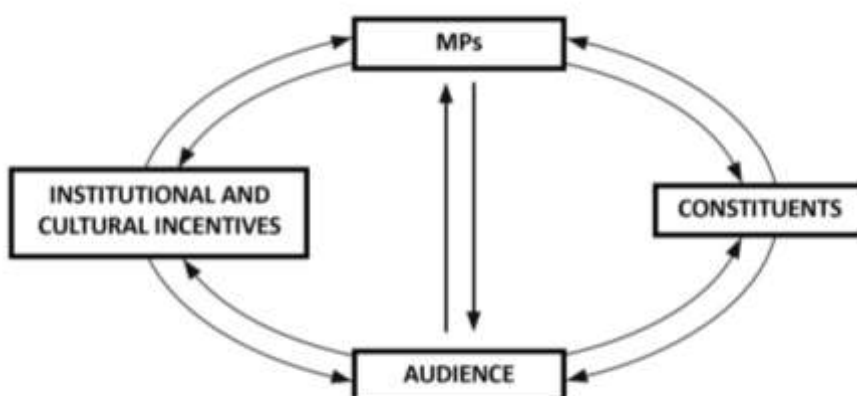


Figure 2: Representation as a dynamic relationship between representatives, constituents, audience and background incentives

In contrast to the previous literature, I further argue that institutional incentives do not make representatives' behaviour static and predictable. While MPs may, encouraged by electoral rules, portray themselves as party delegates, I do not exclude the possibility that in the next minute they may claim to act as trustees. This may, for instance, depend on the audience, i.e. the public nature of their claims. Some of the representative claims are made during televised plenary sessions; others are made when the cameras are switched off or behind the scenes in personal communication between politicians. In their claims, MPs sometimes address their constituents, at other times their party leaders or fellow parliamentarians, which may affect the way they construct the claims and their content. Hence, under the same electoral rules, MPs may behave differently depending on the audience they address.

Finally, the previous literature does not fully explore cultural incentives. The expectations minority constituents have of their representatives are also at least partly affected by cultural structures. If representatives want their claims to be successful, they need to frame them in a way that resonates with the basic cultural values of their audience. Yet, as with the institutional background, I do not understand culture in a deterministic way. Representative claims may also aim to challenge and modify cultural codes:

The discourse of civil society creates the vocabulary for political speech, but it is flesh-and-blood actors who make this script walk and talk, who speak the words, form intonations, create tropes, and time rhetorical flow. These are not matters of culture's structure but its pragmatics (Alexander, 2011, p. 102).

For example, the claims of Serb MPs in the Kosovo parliament need to resonate with the atmosphere of the non-recognition of Kosovo's independence if they are to be recognised as legitimate representatives of Serb minority. Yet, if they do not want to be perceived as merely emissaries of Serbia by the Albanian audience, they need to demonstrate cooperation and loyalty to the institutions of Kosovo. Hence, their claims may differ depending on the audience they address and the cultural values these audiences share. On the other hand, following Kosovo Albanians, other minorities in Serbia may ask for more rights and autonomy. At the same time and for the same reasons, the reaction of the Serbian majority to such demands may be harsh. All these diverse feelings by different audiences may affect a range of discursive opportunities minority MPs have.

3.5. Data and methods

In order to analyse the relationship between the discursive construction of representatives, ethnicity and audiences, I look at two types of sources: representative claims made by MPs in plenary sessions of the two parliaments, and semi-structured interviews. In the following sections I explain the data selection methods and the methodology of data analysis.

3.5.1. Plenary speeches

In both cases, I chose to analyse representative claims made during a four-year parliamentary term. More specifically, in Serbia, I look at the claims made during the 8th National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (2008-2012), while in Kosovo I focus on the 4th Assembly of Kosovo (2010-2014). In the analysed periods, 33 MPs from minority backgrounds served in the Serbian parliament, and 25 in the Kosovo parliament (see Appendix 1). Minority MPs in Serbia delivered in total 1283 speeches in the plenary sessions, while in Kosovo they delivered 617 speeches. All the transcripts of their speeches were available online.

Since I only have parliamentary transcripts rather than the footage of plenary sessions, my analysis, unfortunately, does not include tone of voice, appearance, clothing and posture. An analysis of body language would have allowed me to explore the performativity of claims in a more dynamic and multidimensional way. Having merely transcripts makes the interpretation of claims more difficult. For example, it was not easy, if possible at all, to catch satisfaction, irony or other emotions in the words. Another limitation of my research arises from the lack of other available data. I could have enriched my research by comparing the claims made in plenary sessions and parliamentary committees. Being open to different audiences, it may be expected that MPs frame their claims differently in plenaries and committees. Yet, committee meetings take place in camera and the parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo do not make transcripts of committee meetings. Personal websites, blogs or social media outlets would also allow MPs to express their views and communicate with the constituents but the majority of MPs in Serbia and Kosovo do not use any of these communication channels.

Despite these limitations, plenary speeches are useful to look at because plenary sessions allow MPs to reach the widest audience. Being televised, they allow MPs to address

not only other MPs and government representatives, but also their constituents and the wider public. This provides incentives for MPs to construct themselves and their roles in diverse ways, and articulate their opinions on diverse issues including their understanding of ethnicity and minority interests. Plenary sessions usually include amendments to, or defence of, proposed legislation and parliamentary questions, but they also allow MPs to introduce new issues to the agenda and address what they perceive to be the most important minority issues. The existing literature on gender representation demonstrates the usefulness of plenary speeches in exploring how representatives portray women's interests through varied ideological prisms and narrative strategies (Piscopo, 2011). Similarly, parliamentary debates proved useful in exploring a diversity of women's interests represented in parliament (Celis, 2006).

My choice of data and approach to data analysis differs in at least three respects from earlier research on ethnic representation:

First, while I look at the plenary speeches, most of the previous literature tends to focus on roll-call voting (Baker and Cook, 2005, Casellas and Leal, 2011, Hero and Tolbert, 1995, Kopkin, 2017, Lublin, 1997, Overby and Cosgrove, 1996, Swain, 1993, Tate, 2003, Whitby, 1997, Whitby and Krause, 2001). Voting on legislation has been used to show how consistent MPs are, whether they criticize bill proposals during the debates, or vote against the bill if their amendments are not adopted. More importantly, voting on legislation has been used to measure the congruence between constituents' attitudes and representatives' voting decision. It has been used to show whether representatives generally vote with minority interests in mind. Understanding representation as responsiveness, these research studies neglect the dynamic and performative aspects of representation. In contrast, I argue that the claim-making process that precedes voting is more important than information on its outcomes. In the process that leads to voting, MPs offer arguments for or against a particular proposal, make amendments and aim to convince their colleagues to support them. This process not only affects the voting decisions of MPs, but more importantly, constructs different interests and relationships, makes diverse portrayals of the affected constituents and offers the audience interpretations of a legislative proposal and its consequences. It also enables MPs to construct an image of themselves as legitimate and authentic representatives who "know" what their constituents "need". By focusing on outcomes only we miss all these important aspects of representation.

Second, many research studies on minority representation analyse legislative proposals (Baker and Cook, 2005, Bratton and Haynie, 1999, Haynie, 2001) or amendments (Canon, 1999, Haynie, 2001) rather than the claims made in plenary speeches. Yet, these sources offer only a partial vision of minority groups. Plenary speeches include justifications of

proposals and amendments while at the same time allowing MPs to address wider issues. In contrast to legislative proposals, plenary speeches also allow us to compare claims by different actors and the ways different political parties and MPs frame their roles, minority groups and interests.

Third, those research studies that look at the plenary sessions focus on the relationship between presence and responsiveness rather than looking at the performance of claims. Some studies, for example, measure substantive representation by the number of civil rights or social welfare hearings held in the House and Senate (Minta and Sinclair-Chapman, 2013) or the number of parliamentary questions related to minority interests (Saalfeld, 2011, Saalfeld and Bischof, 2012). Others focus on whether MPs speak on issues that are usually perceived as minority related. In her research on visible minorities in Canada, Bird, for example, argues that “it is possible to identify a set of political issues that likely hold heightened significance for most visible minorities. These include issues of racial discrimination, multiculturalism, immigration and the socio-economic status of ethnic minorities” (Bird, 2011, p. 215). Those studies take any reference on issues deemed relevant to minorities as substantively representing minority interests. Aydemir and Vliegenthart (2016), on the other hand, argue that claims that encourage integration of minorities should not be treated as actions in minority interests. According to them, MPs support minorities only by speaking about autonomy and cultural protection rather than socio-economic issues, which are important for integration. I differ from these approaches in not taking a value-based approach. I rather argue that MPs through representative claims contribute to what minority constituents see as their characteristics, needs, problems or interests. Hence, rather than predefining what MPs should be talking about, I am interested in looking at what it means for them to act for minorities and how they frame minority groups and their interests.

3.5.2. Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with minority MPs in addition to an analysis of plenary speeches. The aim of the interviews was to add a more personal perspective to the findings drawn from their publicly made claims. As Aberbach and Rockman argue:

Interviewing is often important if one needs to know what a set of people think, or how they interpret an event or series of events, or what they have done or are planning to do.....If one needs to probe for information and to give respondents

maximum flexibility in structuring their responses, then open-ended questions are the way to go (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, p. 673).

In line with this, I wanted to give MPs a chance to elaborate on their perceptions, beliefs and motivations. I was interested in how they understand their roles and positions in parliament and how affected they feel by the institutional and cultural background they work in. Some of the MPs never spoke in the plenary so the interviews allowed me to hear their perspective.

I conducted 31 semi-structured interviews with minority MPs from diverse ethnic, party and gender backgrounds (see Appendix 2). Among them, 15 interviews were conducted in Serbia and 16 in Kosovo. In determining the number of interviewees I followed Fiona Devine's advice that for qualitative analysis, "a small sample of 30-40 interviewees is the norm" (Devine, 1995, p. 142). More importantly, additional interviews did not add new understandings of representation and ethnicity, or perceptions of MPs' positions in parliament. I soon realised that there was no need to interview more than one or two MPs from the same party since MPs from the same party gave similar responses. In the process of selecting my interviewees, my main goal was to encompass a diversity of party affiliation and ethnic background. In Serbia, I managed to interview representatives of 10 out of 12⁹ minorities present in parliament and 11 out of 13 political parties. Similarly, in Kosovo, my interviewees encompassed the majority of ethnic backgrounds (6 out of 7¹⁰) and political parties (10 out of 13). Interviews in Kosovo were conducted in February and June 2014, while in Serbia I conducted interviews in May, June and November 2014.

The duration of interviews was between 40 minutes and two hours. The length of the interviews depended on MPs' time availability and the length of their responses to my questions. Each interview took roughly two to eight hours to transcribe. Shorter interviews resulted in approximately 4-6000 words, while the longer ones were 9-11.000 words long. Such an extensive data base provided me with sufficient material to conduct an in-depth analysis.

While I prepared the interview guide in advance, the interview process was rather flexible. The interviews were semi-structured, which means that questions did not necessarily follow the order outlined in the guidelines and some of new questions were added as a reaction to what interviewees said (see Bryman, 2012, p. 471, Gillham, 2005). The loose interview structure enabled me to get more detailed explanations of MPs' opinions and

⁹ Members of the following groups were present in the parliament: Albanian, Bosniak, Bulgarian, Croatian, Hungarian, Muslim, Roma, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Slovak, and Vlach. I did not manage to interview any representatives from Bulgarian or Romanian background, while at least one MP from the other ten groups was included in the interview sample.

¹⁰ The Kosovo parliament guarantees seats for the representatives of Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Serb, and Turkish communities. My interviews included at least one MP from each of these groups except Egyptians.

allowed me to pick up on issues that my respondents prioritised. This proved particularly useful when MPs commented on the work of their colleagues or their relationship with the party leadership. Unstructured interviews would have also been useful for understanding MPs' perceptions of representation and their parliamentary work. Yet, I chose semi-structured over unstructured interviews because MPs tend to be very busy and from my experience, want to see that a researcher is prepared. They find some structure useful; otherwise they tend to feel that they are wasting their time.

In interviews, I asked questions related to MPs' constructions of minority groups and their interests and themselves as representatives such as:

What do you believe your role as an MP is?

Is the role of minority MPs in any sense different from the role of majority MPs?

Who do you feel you represent in parliament?

What do you think are vital interests of your minority group? Why?

In other questions, I focused on the relationship between background incentives and representative performance. For example:

In which ways are your parliamentary goals similar to or different from your political party?

How important is participation in government for representation of minorities?

Discrimination against minorities still seems very high in Kosovo/Serbia. Do you feel affected by this in any way in your work?

What are the main dividing issues between minorities and majority ethnic group?

How they influence minority representation?

I refrained from challenging MPs directly on specific claims they made in plenary debates. As Severs et al. argue, “such framing would have elicited predominantly political—pro or contra—reactions, diverting attention from the overarching question about how MPs undertake representation” (Severs, Celis et al., 2015). Instead, I asked indirect questions such as:

Several minority parties compete for minority votes. Could you tell me how your party differs from other minority parties?

In your opinion, what are the differences between minority parties in government and opposition?

Some of the minority MPs were not very active in parliament. What do you think are the reasons for that?

The most difficult topic to broach in most of the interviews was related to intra-party relations and decision-making within the party. Since most of my respondents were at the same time either party leaders or officials they were not willing to discuss openly how decisions were made within the party or how electoral lists were composed. Only if they had left a party to form a new one, were they willing to discuss issues related to intra-party democracy in their former party.

I also found that discussions about similarities and differences between minority and majority parties were not very productive. On most occasions, MPs were not ready to move beyond identity issues. Expecting, further, that MPs would speak about minorities in “politically relevant moments” (Piscopo, 2011, p. 457), I asked my interviewees on which occasions they felt that they spoke about and for minorities the most, but the answer was often limited to “all occasions”. In addition, some of the MPs in Kosovo were not aware that minority parties had veto rights or guaranteed seats in the government, which affected the discussion on the relationship between these incentives and their claim-making opportunities. Yet, this in itself was also a useful finding.

I was also faced with additional limitations in the interview process, which arose from my identity and the challenges of elite interviewing. I discuss these limitations below.

Securing interviews with busy politicians was at times quite difficult (see Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, p. 673). In Serbia, MPs’ email addresses or phone numbers were not available online so I had to ask for help from my colleagues at the University of Belgrade and

organisations that work with the parliament. An additional problem was that most of the MPs did not reply to my emails and phone calls. In addition, some of the MPs were no longer in office at the time of my fieldwork so reaching them was a bit more challenging. In these cases, I had to look for an intermediary who could introduce me to a representative. Intermediaries are “individuals who formally introduce the researcher to the respondent, and who have in-depth knowledge of the research project’s context. They also have inter-personal authority over target respondents” (Petkov and Kaoullas, 2015, p. 412). Using an intermediary was helpful not only in reaching interviewees but also in “creating an aura of trust, by providing emotional support to the respondent and by converting the interview to a friendly conversation” (Petkov and Kaoullas, 2015, p. 411). The intermediaries did not affect my choice of interviewees and were not present during interviews; it was sufficient that they vouched for me before arranging the interview. Although very helpful, and indeed necessary, the use of intermediaries was not without limitations. I risked being seen as associated with organisations that served as intermediaries rather than coming in a personal capacity as a postgraduate student. This could have affected their decision to speak to me in a more official way. To prevent this, I tried to explain in detail the purpose of the interview and my research.

In Kosovo, I also tried contacting MPs via email. Contrary to Serbia, in Kosovo MPs’ email addresses and mobile phone numbers were available on the parliamentary website. However, none of the MPs actually replied to my emails. Before arriving in Kosovo I did not have a single interview scheduled. Once I was there, I phoned MPs and some of them immediately agreed to meet me. I also tried to meet potential intermediaries who could introduce me to MPs. Socialising enabled me to meet NGO activists, researchers and state officials who were all very helpful in contacting my interviewees.

In addition to difficulties in gaining access to elite interviewees, previous literature warns that interviewing decision-makers may involve a hierarchical relationship since the elite tends to demonstrate its positions in front of the researcher (Desmond, 2004, Schoenberger, 1992). During my fieldwork, a couple of MPs directly demonstrated their superiority. One example was the MP in Serbia who did not reply to my emails or phone calls, but instead delegated his younger, female colleague to meet with me. Since he was the leader of the minority parliamentary group, I expect that his perspective would have significantly enriched my data. Unfortunately, rather than speaking to him, I only got an opportunity to speak to an additional MP from his party. Another MP, also in Serbia left me waiting in his office for two hours, explaining later that he was at a more important meeting with a minister. Some of the more experienced MPs in Serbia had pre-prepared answers for me and avoided directly answering my questions. One MP did not let me ask him any questions, but gave instead a 45 minute monologue. In such cases I was not able to get from an interview anything more than I

already had in the plenary speeches. I was not able to avoid this, but tried to compensate by using lots of prompts and also interviewing less experienced politicians who seemed more open and genuine in their responses.

In Kosovo, on the other hand, MPs easily agreed to be interviewed, but in most cases either asked that I call them again the following day or asked if the interview could be conducted immediately. After I realised that I had to be immediately available for an interview to occur, I would go to parliament first thing every morning and from there start contacting potential interviewees. In cases when the interview was scheduled in advance, disregard of timetables was the most common scenario. Some of the MPs also either cancelled in the last moment or did not show up at all. It happened to me one day that I had five interviews scheduled, all confirmed the day before, and all cancelled on the day. However, on the same day I managed to arrange and conduct five new interviews. The difficulties in scheduling interviews were more a matter of culture than a reflection of attitude towards me and my research and did not affect the conversation once we managed to meet up.

In contrast to those MPs who exercised authority, some other MPs seemed insecure and nervous during interviews, while others seemed to enjoy the conversation (see Smith, 2006). An interview with a UK based researcher gave a sense of importance to some of the Kosovo MPs who argued that not many researchers are interested in their work. One MP, for example, asked his secretary to take a photo of us and upload it to the party's webpage and social media outlets. Several MPs in Kosovo also appreciated the opportunity to reflect upon their work and minority representation, arguing that they "have never thought about these issues before" (Milosavljević, Interview, 2014).

On the other hand, some of the interviewees constantly asked for my confirmation of their claims or asked if other MPs also gave similar answers. Their insecurity affected what they were willing to say: their answers were often short and incomplete, which affected the productiveness of the interview, and consequently my analysis. In such cases I tried to conduct an additional interview with another MP from the same political party since I had experienced that the perceptions of MPs from the same party tend to be similar.

Finally, since the audience for an interview is different than for the plenary sessions, I expected less formal and more direct responses to my questions. As Cook argues, "one-on-one interviews also change the context in which MPs have to 'perform' their identity and can provide space for a more detailed, reflexive discussion about the way that descriptive representation in particular is played out" (Cook, 2013, p. 67). Yet, MPs' discourse in interviews mostly did not differ significantly from the plenary speeches¹¹. This could be

¹¹ For these reasons, in the following chapters I do not separate the interview findings from the plenary speeches' findings. Yet, I make sure to emphasise where representative claims were framed differently.

because MPs were interviewed in their capacity as MPs and agreed that I could reveal their identity in my research outputs. On the other hand, my identity could have affected what they were willing to say and how.

Having Serbian nationality was overall an advantage when I was trying to arrange interviews with minority representatives in Kosovo. Since I was perceived as a representative of Serbia, they felt more obliged to help me. One Serb MP, for example, even postponed a meeting of a parliamentary committee she chaired until the end of the interview. However, for other Serb MPs I represented the kin state that betrayed them. Perceiving me in this way, they found it important to complain to me about the role of Serbia in the conflict and the lack of support from the Serbian government. This often diverted attention from issues of representation to political issues. I had to remind them of the questions and issues I was interested to hear more about. I also felt that they overemphasised the importance of their presence in the Kosovo parliament. This could be because at the time Serbia did not officially support their participation in Kosovo institutions and hence their legitimacy was often challenged. While I had to show understanding for this, I tried to avoid it affecting my findings by asking them to reflect critically on the work of their colleagues.

I was able to avoid other limitations related to my identity more successfully. For example, perceiving me as young, several MPs insisted on keeping the conversation on a very basic level. To avoid this affecting my findings, in some cases I followed advice from previous literature that showing expertise is important, to avoid allowing the “elite respondent to be dismissive” and seeking “to overpower the researcher in the control of the interview” (Petkov and Kaoullas, 2015, p. 413-414). Once I had demonstrated my knowledge of parliament, MPs more readily opened up to an in-depth conversation. In other instances, it was sufficient to rephrase some of the questions I asked. For example, at first I was asking my interviewees what their role as MPs was. Some of the MPs interpreted this as my lack of knowledge about parliament and started to explain the competencies of a legislature. These problems were avoided once I rephrased the question by asking how they personally perceived their positions and roles in parliament and what issues and tasks they put most emphasis on.

3.5.3. Research ethics

Research ethics was one of the issues I paid a lot of attention to. My main worry was to make sure my participants were well informed, that confidentiality was secured and that the data

were processed and stored fairly and safely without making any potential harm to my participants. To this end, I obtained ethics approval from the University of York prior to conducting fieldwork. At the beginning of the interviews, each participant was given a research information sheet and asked to complete the written consent form. The information sheet and consent form introduced participants to the research, explained how the information they give would be stored and used, as a guarantee of confidentiality and security. All of my participants were offered anonymity. However, expecting that politicians might not want to be anonymous, I also gave them an option to decide for themselves. The consent form allowed the participants to state whether they want to remain anonymous or not. The MPs I interviewed had never seen a consent form before so they were a bit suspicious. After a detailed explanation of the purpose of the consent form, all the interviewees allowed me to use their names. Some of them asked first if others allowed the same, and then agreed. Some others wanted to wait until the end of an interview to make such a decision. None of them requested copies of the interview recordings or interview transcripts.

Data protection was another important ethics requirement. I did not want to lose my data or expose my interviewees to any risk for agreeing to talk to me. Interviews resulted in three sets of data: interview recordings, electronic interview transcripts and informed consent forms. Interview recordings were stored on encrypted hard disc attached to the University network. After copying data to the hard disc, all the data were immediately deleted from the voice recorder. I transcribed all the interviews myself so that no one else had access to the data. All interview transcripts were made in electronic form only and stored safely with password protection. Consent forms were stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office and I am the only one who has had access to them. All the data will be stored for five years and then destroyed. This will allow me to complete the research and publish the results. I will make the contents of my dissertation available to the participants upon request, and I will send an email to them upon its completion to let them know that it is available.

3.5.4. Representative claims analysis

As I argued in the previous chapter, this thesis understands representation as a creative process, which involves creative portrayals of both representatives and their constituents. Accordingly, my data analysis focuses on the performative aspects of representing: that is, the *how* of representation.

In the analysis of plenary speeches and interviews, I take representative claim as a unit of analysis. I understand a representative claim as any claim that evokes a relationship between an 'imagined community' and its representatives. It may be expressed as a claim to know the interests of the evoked constituency, a claim about that constituency's characteristics, or a claim that constructs the claim-maker as a legitimate representative of an evoked constituency. Following Saward, I analyse each claim by breaking it down into the following components:

A *maker* of representations ('M') puts forward a *subject* ('S') which stands for an *object* ('O') that is related to a *referent* ('R') and is offered to an *audience* ('A') (Saward, 2010, p. 36).

In this thesis, a maker of representations is an MP who constructs or makes a claim. Claim makers may put themselves forward as subjects of representation or offer, for example, political parties or parliamentary groups as those who perform the representation. The differentiation between a referent as the thing represented and an object, that is, the claim-maker's idea of a referent is also particularly important for my research. Since this thesis analyses the performance of minority representation, I focus on *ethnic groups* as referents and MPs' *constructions of ethnic groups* as objects of representation. I thereby fill the gap in the literature on minority representation that tends to take minority groups as a given, assuming that representative claims directly make the referent present, rather than a particular image of a referent. Finally, an audience counts as those who receive the claim and accept, reject or ignore it. Since this thesis focuses on parliamentary representation, the structure of parliament already determines that the potential audience are at least members of parliament and government representatives. As the plenary sessions in both of my cases are televised, the wider public could also be part of the representatives' intended audience.

It is important to note that Saward makes a further distinction between the intended and actual constituency. The intended constituency is a constituency that is claimed to be represented by the subject, while the actual constituency is composed of all those who recognize the claim as being for and about them. For example, if an MP claims to speak for the particular ethnic minority group, members of that group are his intended constituency. If members of the intended constituency recognise that the claim was made for them, they become the actual constituency. Due to the limited scope of this research, I focus only on how intended constituency is constructed rather than looking at the acceptance of claims. An analysis of whether the constituency evoked feels represented would be fruitful and is very

much needed¹². Since this thesis is restricted to claims made by representatives only, I am capable of grasping only the intended constituency.

Hence, in my cases, the form of representative claims is the following:

An *MP* puts forward a *subject* which stands for an *object* that is related to an *ethnic group* and is offered to an *audience*.

This approach to representative claims analysis is open to the criticism that it is not sufficiently applicable to empirical research (De Wilde, 2013, p. 280). De Wilde argues first that distinction between maker and subject of representation does not make sense because:

The presentation of others as representatives is rarely done in a positive light as the nature of politics tends to be conflictive (Crick 2000). Rather, we may expect a distinction between maker and subject to occur in derogatory statements where one political actor attempts to discredit another as the representative of some illegitimate interest (De Wilde, 2013, p. 284).

The second problem he identifies relates to “the difficulty of identifying a passive and often not specifically mentioned audience (De Wilde, 2013, p. 284). For him, we can neither know who the claim was directed to, nor who actually received the claim.

According to De Wilde, these shortcomings can be corrected by combining Saward’s model with Koopmans and Statham’s (1999) empirical methodology of claims analysis. Koopmans and Statham (Koopmans, 2002, Koopmans and Statham, 1999) offer the following solutions to the above mentioned objections: 1) instead of distinguishing between the maker and subject of representation, they introduce the “claimant”: an entity performing a strategic or communicative act in the public sphere; 2) instead of audience, they introduce the “addressee”: an authority addressed by the claimant to enact the claim.

Contra De Wilde, I argue that a distinction between maker and subject is fruitful. In my cases in particular, MPs may evoke their political parties, parliamentary groups or other MPs as subjects of representation. This information is not irrelevant. When MPs, for example, claim: “My political party serves as the only legitimate representative of minority interests”, they construct themselves as merely a voice of the party, which allows them to shift the blame to the party for any controversial decisions. In addition, the focus of this thesis is not on naming the entity that performs representation but on how the subject is constructed by the claim-maker. For example, MPs as claim makers may construct the subjects of representation differently:

¹² Akachar, Celis and Severs (2016) provide a useful framework based on focus group methodology that may allow for studying social groups’ feelings of (not) being politically represented.

MP (maker) offers *herself as an expert* (subject) in minority issues (object) to members of minority groups (audience).

MP (maker) offers *himself as an embodiment* (subject) of his ethnic group (object) to his electoral constituency (audience).

This step is particularly important since the previous literature on minority representation does not problematize the identity of a representative. In contrast, I argue in this thesis that representation is also about constitution of a representative. By evoking particular resources, representatives invite the audience to recognise them as legitimate representatives.

De Wilde's second objection requires more detailed consideration. I recognise that the identification of audience in empirical research may be challenging. For example, the following claim does not give information on audience: "In this society, minority groups are treated as second class citizens". If the claim is made in a televised plenary session, we do not know if the MP intended to address, for example, other MPs, minority constituents or the wider public. De Wilde's proposed solution, that instead of an audience we look at the authority addressed by the claimant to enact the claim, does not solve the problem as not all claims are framed as policy demands that can be enacted. I argue that while identification of the intended audience may not always be easy, the inclusion of an audience component is important because it allows us to explore how the framing of claims changes depending on the audience.

The problem De Wilde (2013) mentions persists if we look at an isolated claim. While a particular claim may not explicitly evoke an audience, an audience may sometimes be identified if we look at the speech as a whole. In addition, interviews allowed me to ask MPs who they were speaking to during plenary sessions and how their intended audience affected the process of claim making. Finally, since I analyse all the speeches minority MPs made in four years, I expect that in addition to those claims that do not specify an audience, there will also be many claims that allow us to identify the intended audience. For example, we may imagine an MP claiming:

I ask the prime minister why textbooks in minority languages are still not provided.

I want to use this opportunity to address the representatives of the international community and ask them until when they plan to ignore the violation of minority rights.

I do not expect that all claims explicitly evoke subjects, objects and audience. For example, a claim such as, "Minority groups are discriminated against" speaks only about the

constituency and the “other” who discriminates, and produces therefore a perpetrator/victim dynamic. Yet, indirectly we may conclude that a claim-maker is also a subject of representation. In addition, some claims explicitly mention subject-object-audience but aim to portray an image of only a single actor. Let us look at the following example:

I (subject) address this parliament (audience) as a legitimate representative of a minority group (object), i.e. the one who is authorised by members of an ethnic group.

This claim evokes a minority group as an object of representation and parliamentary members as the audience but does not tell us anything about them. What we learn from this claim is something about the subject of representation: the claim-maker constructs a subject of representation based on electoral authorisation. What makes him/her a representative is electoral authorisation. S/he does not claim to represent based on ethnic resemblance or expertise or any other resource except electoral authorisation. Let us look at another example:

Members of national minorities can be proud of living in the country that protects their rights on such a high level.

This claim portrays an idea of national minorities as integrated in society and satisfied with the level of minority rights (in opposition to those claims that portray minorities as discriminated against).

Therefore, in the following chapters I analyse representative claims by asking who or what MPs as claim-makers frame as subjects, objects and audience and how these actors are discursively constructed through the representative process. Because of the different components of representative claims that I am interested in, my research required a very detailed analysis of each claim. In addition, since my data-base contains 1900 speeches and 31 interviews, the data analysis was labour intensive. I used NVivo, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software to organise data and provide rapid access to the required information. The analysis took the form of an interpretive thematic coding (Boyatzis, 1998). The approach to coding was both deductive and inductive (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The pre-defined codes refer to the components of representative claims I was interested in: ‘representatives,’ ‘constituents,’ ‘minority interests’ and ‘audience’. I then inductively coded the data and added sub-codes under each of these general codes. For example, during the analysis different codes emerged under the ‘representative’ code such as: ‘delegate’, ‘expertise’, ‘gyroscope’, ‘ethnic resemblance’, ‘substantive representative’, ‘trustee’, etc. These sub-codes represent resources evoked by MPs in constructing the subjects of

representation. Some of these codes were also assigned additional sub-codes that explained in more detail the way MPs constructed their position in parliament. For instance, I assigned sub-codes such as 'cooperation', 'policy influence' or 'trade-off' to MPs' different understandings of substantive representation. Similarly, ethnic groups were portrayed as 'equal citizens', 'discriminated against', 'ethnically divided', 'patriots', 'poor', 'territorially embedded' or 'unitary groups'. Each of these was added as a sub-code attached to the 'constituency' code.

3.6. Conclusion

In order to demonstrate the methodological and theoretical advantages of a claim-making approach, this chapter has outlined new directions for empirical studies of minority representation. I argued that an analysis of claims about and for minorities should focus on the performance of claims: 1) how claim-makers construct representative roles and positions; 2) how minority identifications and interests are construed through claims about and for relevant groups; 3) how the framing of representative claims differs depending on the intended audience; and 4) which resources are employed in order to make representative claims legitimate and successful.

I have set out the rationale of applying this framework to an empirical analysis of representative claims made by MPs with minority backgrounds in the parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo. I chose these cases because of their ethnic diversity and expected a diversity of claims about and for minorities. While I explore the performance of claims in each of the cases separately, the comparative design of my thesis allows me to add an additional dimension to my research, that is, an exploration of how MPs exploit their institutional and cultural backgrounds as resources in achieving the felicity of their claims. More specifically, comparing these two very similar cases allows me to explore how the differences in the ballot structure, the relative institutional strength of minority parties, the influence of international actors, and the depth of ethnic divisions affect different performances of minority representation.

Finally, the chapter has explained the data selection methods and the methodology of data analysis. I decided to rely on two types of sources: representative claims made by MPs in plenary sessions of the two parliaments and semi-structured interviews. I further operationalised an analysis of representative claims for empirical research. Based on Saward's (2010, p. 36) model of representative claims, representative claims were analytically divided into the following components: An *MP* puts forward a *subject* which stands for an *object* that is

related to an *ethnic group* and is offered to an *audience*. I suggested that the claims are analysed by asking who or what MPs as claim-makers frame as subjects, objects and audience and how these actors are discursively constructed through the representative process.

While my research offers new ways of studying minority representation, it also faces several limitations. Some of these arise, first of all, from the limited scope of my research. In looking at claims made in parliaments rather than including non-elected actors, I will not be able to encompass the whole universe of claims about and for minorities. Furthermore, since I focus on claims made by representatives only, I am not capable of grasping the constituencies' feelings of being represented and the ways audiences respond to representative claims. A second set of limitations is connected to data access. A lack of available data such as videos or plenary sessions and committee meetings prevents me from analysing body language, which is integral to performativity. An analysis of claims made in committee meetings or through online communication channels would have allowed me to compare how the framing of claims differs depending on the audience. Unfortunately, the parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo do not provide transcripts of committee meetings and MPs rarely use personal websites, blogs or social media outlets. Third, the nature of elite interviewing and my own identity could have also affected the research process and its findings. Since I interviewed politicians who were used to giving media interviews, it was challenging to convince them to open up to a more personal conversation. I also had to accept the fact that I would not be able to reach every MP I wanted to talk to, such as a leader of a minority parliamentary group in the Serbian parliament. Some MPs also gave very short and incomplete answers which affected the productiveness of an interview. In addition, MPs were not willing to speak openly about issues such as intra-party relations, although luckily these issues were not decisive for my analysis. Finally, my ethnic identity further encouraged some of the MPs to focus in the interview on political issues rather than their performance of representation, which required me to repeat the questions often and use many prompts. Despite these limitations, I managed to conduct a sufficient number of interviews and gathered extensive and rich data.

While my empirical research focuses on Serbia and Kosovo, the empirical findings about how groups are constructed in these particular cases could have implications for countries with similar institutional and cultural backgrounds (e.g. the Central and Eastern European region which shares a diversity of minority groups and a post-conflict and communist past). My theoretical and methodological implications are more generalizable. Any empirical research on minority representation could benefit from incorporating this approach regardless of its specific focus. I challenge some of the common assumptions in the literature on minority representation such as those about minority interests being fixed and transparent and institutions determining representative behaviour. My particular contribution includes

redefinitions of the categories of descriptive and substantive representation and the tools I have developed for the empirical analysis of representative claims.

Chapter 4: The performance of minority representation in Serbia

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 2, I stressed the constitutive dimension of representation. I argued that representation is best understood as a dynamic process of mutual constitution of representatives and represented. In this view, representation is responsible for constructing the represented as a political subject – i.e., as a kind of unified grouping capable of bearing interests and demands. It is also responsible for constituting the representative as someone who can convincingly stand in for and act for such a grouping, whose identity he helps define. Thus understood, representation is a distinctive aesthetic and performative process, engaged in the construction of verbal and visual images of what something is like so that it may be enacted before the relevant audiences. This process takes place in the medium of discourse: beliefs, prejudices and practices constrain the representative claims, thereby standing a chance of resonating with the audience and being taken up by the constituency. Claim-makers portray both themselves and their intended constituencies depending on the available resources, specific goals and potential or targeted audience.

In this chapter, I explore the performance of the representation of ethnic minorities. The representation of minorities is performed around ethnicity and ethnic groups as stable referents, while other actors such as subjects, objects of representation (the constituencies) and audiences may vary. Minority politics often hinges on demands for cultural and political recognition that are articulated from a supposition of identity as something pre-given, already formed, and authentic. In my study I turn this assumption on its head, to ask how groupings and their identities are constituted in the politics of representative claim-making. This does not commit me to the claim that representation makes up the represented from scratch. But it does commit me to the view that representation plays a major role in their constitution as political subjects.

To sum up, this chapter examines the following questions: What resources do claim-makers use to construct themselves as representatives of minority groups? How are minority groups and their interests and roles portrayed in representative claims? In what ways do the targeted audiences affect the shaping of minority related claims?

To explore these issues, I use traditional concepts such as descriptive and substantive representation. These concepts are useful because they highlight the resources representatives use in shaping minority related claims. However, my understanding of these concepts differs from that of the existing literature. I define descriptive representation as a claim-making process that consists of the discursive construction of a representative as a member of minority group, which is used as a resource for representative claims about the group and offered to the audience.

The existing literature does not problematize the identity of a representative. It is assumed that a descriptive representative of minorities is any member of a minority group who claims to speak about the group (or even she who belongs ethnically to the group and speaks about it making no particular claims about this). However, the ethnic resemblance is not necessarily evoked as a resource for minority related claims, even in cases when a representative claims to be a member of a particular minority group. For example, a representative may claim to speak about the group as an expert on a particular minority related issue or exclusively as a party delegate. To constitute themselves as descriptive representatives, claim-makers need to justify their claims about minority groups based on their ethnic resemblance and/or shared experience and history, and the resulting structure of opportunities in a given society. The differences between constituencies and referents are also not made sufficiently clear in the existing literature on minority representation, which tends to take minority groups as a given, assuming that representative claims directly make the referent present, rather than a particular image of a referent. However, as Disch argues, representative claims “do not *refer* to the represented in any straightforward way but work to *constitute* the represented as unified and (typically) as a bearer of interests and demands” (Disch, 2015, p. 490).

Hence, I define descriptive representation as consisting of three essential elements:

- 1) the construction of a representative based on claims of ethnic resemblance with the invoked minority constituency;
- 2) the discursive construction of ethnicity around a particular issue or matter (e.g. cultural identity, economic interests, national unity);
- 3) a wider audience determining the success of the claim, where by “success” I mean the resonance of claims with the audience.

In my understanding, substantive representation refers to claims to act upon what are portrayed as true minority interests, which involves a creative process of the construction of minority groups and their interests as bearing a natural or necessary relation, and a construction of a representative as the one who can know these true or objective interests. In addition to this, what is meant by “acting upon” is also constructed in the process of

representative claim-making. Hence, while traditionally minority interests were seen as objective categories that can be known in advance, I argue that minority interests are constructed through representative claims and their dynamic interaction in competitive democratic politics. In addition, while the existing literature operationalises “acting upon” as either voting in accordance with minority interests and preferences, or as outcome where representatives succeed in passing minority relevant laws (Cameron, Epstein et al., 1996, Ueda, 2008), I argue that what the audience is invited to recognise as actions that count, first as actions, and second as actions upon minority interests, is also constructed through the representative performance. Thus, MPs may claim to act upon minorities by what we might deem active or passive actions: for example, changing the legislative agenda, submitting amendments or legislative proposals, merely raising minority related issues, or even publicly declaring their powerlessness to change things in favour of their constituencies, thus pressing for changes in the rules of the game.

Hence, my understanding of substantive representation may be summarised as consisting of three components:

- 1) the construction of a representative through claims to know interests based on a certain relationship with a constituency;
- 2) the construction of minority identity and associated interests;
- 3) portrayals of representative actions as advancing minority interests.

In order to explore empirically how claim-makers personally understand, justify, qualify and perform representative claims based on identity and claims to know minority interests and act upon them, this chapter analyses representative claims made by MPs from minority backgrounds in the 8th Serbian parliament (2008-2012). I analyse representative claims made in the plenary sessions and semi-structured interviews. My research encompasses 15 interviews and 1283 plenary speeches of 32 MPs from twelve different minority groups. Having claim-makers (MPs) and referents (minority ethnic groups) as constants allows me to focus in more detail on the interplay between the constitution of representatives, constituencies and audiences.

As I have already argued in the previous chapter, representation is never performed in a vacuum. In the process of claims-making, representatives evoke specific institutional and cultural resources to make their claims effective. The felicity of claims depends on the ways in which background opportunities are explored to make claims that resonate with constituencies and audiences (Austin, 1962). While this chapter focuses on the performance of claims, background incentives are explored in more detail in Chapter 6. Yet, since incentives set up the structure of opportunities for representative claims, their inclusion in this chapter allows us to formulate several expectations about the ways representatives perform their

claims. Incentives are here understood as not simply given however. Claim-makers may attempt to challenge, modify or reinforce them.

In the Serbian context, first, the representation of ethnicity is institutionalised through the lifting of electoral threshold for minority parties. In order to win elections, minority parties are encouraged to emphasise ethnic divisions and differences. Since institutions already define them as descriptive representatives, MPs from minority parties need to invest less effort in convincing the audience of the authenticity of their claims than MPs from majority parties. Furthermore, minority parties are legally defined as parties whose “main goal is representation of the interests of national minorities and protection and improvement of rights of members of national minorities, according to international standards” (2004, Article 13, paragraph 2-3). Legislative definition already conveys a sense of minority parties as both descriptive and substantive representatives. This puts certain expectations upon MPs from minority parties and at the same time facilitates the success of their descriptive and substantive claims. Based on these institutional incentives, it may be expected that representatives elected on minority lists will aim to construct their constituencies in terms of difference and closed ethnic boundaries.

Second, a PR system with a single nationwide electoral district provides incentives for the development of numerous political parties and coalitions which allows us to expect a diversity of minority related claims. Twenty out of thirty-two MPs were elected to parliament as members of six mainstream political parties: four ruling parties and two opposition parties. Another twelve MPs were members of seven different minority parties. However, only seven of them were elected on minority lists, implying that their electoral constituencies were primarily members of minority groups. The seven MPs elected on minority lists later formed a joint parliamentary group. The other five MPs from minority parties were elected on mainstream electoral lists due to electoral agreements with a majority party. In parliament, they served as members of the majority parliamentary group.

Third, an electoral system with a closed ballot structure encourages party disciplined behaviour rather than the construction of a representative as directly accountable to voters. For instance, representatives do not vote in accordance with their constituencies’ positions or according to their “internal moral compass”, but are instructed to vote along party lines.

Fourth, MPs from minority backgrounds are present in parliament not only through minority parties but also as members of majority parties. The fact that a representative is elected on the list of a minority party lends *prima facie* support to the claim that the representative acts as both a descriptive and substantive representative of minority interests. This resource is not so easily available to the representatives from minority backgrounds who belong to mainstream parties. While their ethnic background is a resource they could

potentially use in positioning themselves as descriptive representatives, they may be expected to make wider interest claims because of their party affiliation. Merely by joining a majority party, a representative from a minority background is already making a claim about inter-ethnic unity, even before addressing an audience through any particular speech act.

Fifth, the ethnic wars that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the later Kosovo conflict that resulted in the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, encouraged discrimination against minorities, feelings of exclusion among members of minorities and strong divisions along ethnic lines. Consequently, it may be expected that MPs are more inward-oriented; that they speak exclusively to their ethnic groups and reinforce ethnic divisions through an emphasis on distinct minority identity and culture.

To sum up, in the Serbian context, it may be expected that MPs elected on minority and majority lists will put forward different claims. MPs from minority lists are encouraged to formulate their claims in terms of ethnic difference and divisions, while MPs from majority parliamentary groups have incentives to advance a national (inter-ethnic) unity and more neutral citizenship perspective. In addition, it may be expected that MPs draw on party discipline as a resource in making claims.

Although discursive constructions of representatives, constituencies and audience are intertwined, for analytical purposes I will treat them separately in this chapter, which will allow me to follow more closely the dynamics of representatives' shape-shifting (Saward, 2014), and any tensions between different portrayals of ethnicity and ethnic groups that might develop. Since the performance of representative claims involves the construction of oneself *qua* representative, as well as the prospective constituency and the audience, in the following sections, I analyse representative claims by MPs from minority backgrounds in these three analytically separable, but practically intertwined dimensions.

4.2. Constructing a representative through shape-shifting

In this section, I demonstrate how representatives from minority backgrounds in Serbia strategically shape their positions to present themselves as representatives of minority groups. To this end, they combine different resources such as ethnic resemblance, electoral authorisation, or claims to know the interests of minority groups. The finding that representatives shift their positions, sometimes even in the same speech or claim, supports earlier theoretical arguments about the performativity and dynamic quality of representation.

4.2.1. Descriptive representation

As I have already explained in the introduction, all the claims I analysed were made by MPs from minority backgrounds. Interestingly, my findings demonstrate that descriptive representation was mostly performed by MPs elected on minority parties' lists. MPs elected on the lists of majority parties rarely evoked their ethnicity as a resource for making claims about minorities. This finding challenges the existing literature, which treats all representatives from minority backgrounds as descriptive representatives as a matter of fact.

MPs from minority parties performed descriptive representation by evoking authenticity as a resource in claim-making. Minority MPs in Serbia framed authenticity as being one with the group and having an unmediated relationship with the group (cf. Saward, 2009):

National communities have the right to be represented by their authentic representatives, i.e. political parties of national minorities; maybe some vote for other parties, but those who vote for these parties have the right to have their representatives here who really advocate for their interests (Elvira Kovács, PT, 07.06.2011).

In such claims, MPs portray themselves as a mere expression of pre-constituted identities and interests. They make up for the absent presence of the minority. They give voice to the voiceless and summon their presence to the political stage. But in this they acknowledge no gap between the absent people and their action in representing them. Theirs is a presentation rather than a re-presentation. They invoke a direct, unmediated relation to their constituency, which confers full presence on the latter.

The sense of authenticity of MPs from minority parties is additionally strengthened by discursive construction of the representatives from majority parties as "Others" and hence of themselves as monopolistic community leaders. In the following response to a claim by a majority party's MP that representatives from minority backgrounds in majority parties are also authentic representatives of their groups, the Albanian party representative argues:

The story we have just heard about equality between MPs - those elected through central parties and those elected through parties of national minorities. They are equal as MPs but you can see empirically – when and how often these MPs, affiliated with a central party, stand on the floor to defend the interests of minorities, and after all, what is the situation in society, how integrated and included in social and political life minorities are (Riza Halimi, PT, 07.06.2011).

The claim suggests that although MPs from minority and majority parties can be equal as MPs, or in their standing before parliament, they cannot be equal as *minority* representatives, or in

their standing before their communities. They have different links and share differently in the destiny of their communities: while MPs from mainstream parties are integrated into the majority, their ethnic groups are excluded and marginalised from the society as a whole.

Interestingly, however, MPs' conception of authenticity does not exclude a need for accountability. On the contrary, their claims to authenticity rely on proximity, or a direct electoral link with minority voters (cf. Saward, 2009):

It is a direct responsibility. We mentioned accountability, that someone elected you primarily because of that. In the [parliamentary] term we talk about, you were elected on a minority list, and by definition you told these people who elected you that you stand for this and that (Džudžo, Interview, 2014).

Through such claims, MPs invoke their authorisation as representatives as a resource to legitimate their authority to speak about and for minority groups. Their authenticity is not tainted by elections and parties because minority parties are portrayed as true personifications of group identity and interests. The term is used here in a different sense than the one emphasised by Saward. Saward argues that the strength of electoral claims comes from the value of authorisation, while the claims by non-elective representatives rely on authenticity (Saward, 2009, p. 21). Authenticity refers to the extent to which claims are "untainted", that is, independent of the electoral pressures, participation in government or state institutions and procedures (Saward, 2009, pp. 19–20). In contrast, MPs from minority parties in Serbia claim that the source of their authenticity comes precisely from affiliation with a minority party and electoral authorisation by minority voters.

On the other hand, MPs from majority parties are denied the right to such a claim because they have to compromise their position and their relationship with minorities once they join majority parties. Since political parties nominate candidates for MPs and voters vote for the electoral list as a whole, representatives of majority parties do not have a clear idea of who their constituents are. The electoral system in Serbia, with a single nation-wide electoral district, reinforces a fluid rather than bounded perception of constituency. Representatives, then, subscribe to the role of party delegates, actively constructing political parties as mediators between representatives and voters. This is not the case for MPs from minority parties because, regardless of the electoral system, which allows everyone to vote for either a minority or majority party, a minority party is voted exclusively by members of the minority group it claims to represent (Kovács, Interview, 2014):

I am here because I have 17 thousand votes of Albanians from Preševo, Bujanovac, Medvedja and some from Belgrade and other centres where Albanians live... Absolutely for no other reason, what I have just said, I said as their legitimate representative (Riza Halimi, PT, 23.12.2008).

Being elected on a minority list makes their demos transparent and hence their relationship with the constituency more direct:

You bear responsibility by the mere fact that you are elected directly. When you go out on the street, a market, a bar or anywhere else, someone will ask you whether he voted for you to speak about citizen's rights, general issues, the economy or whether I voted for you to fight for my rights (Džudžo, Interview, 2014).

Most of the MPs from majority parties also perceive themselves as less authentic than MPs from minority parties. As one of the MPs argued, they cannot be "more Catholic than the Pope" (Lodi, Interview, 2014). Only a few of them occasionally evoked their ethnic background as a resource for making claims about minorities. At the same time, most of them claimed that ethnicity is not something given and refused to be seen primarily as members of ethnic groups. Hence, while they evoked their ethnicity as an objective category when it suited their goals, for other purposes they challenged the objectiveness of ethnic identifications and groupings based on ethnicity. It may be concluded that compared to minority party MPs, who occupied a stable position as descriptive representatives (i.e. "shape-accordance" representation), MPs from majority parties shifted their positions more actively (Saward, 2014, 728-729).

MPs from majority parties constructed themselves as descriptive representatives in plenary speeches in order to gain legitimacy for their claims about minorities as integrated in society¹³:

As an MP, a citizen of the state of Serbia and a member of the Ruthenian national community that has lived with other communities on this territory for more than 260 years, I want to express my extreme personal satisfaction for participating in passing the most important law that regulates the position of members of national minorities (Djura Mučenski, PT, 21.07.2009).

Similarly, minority MPs in majority parties evoked their ethnic background to defend the government's legislative proposals against the objections of minority parties:

I, as a member of a national minority and a man interested in the rights of national minorities, believe that you should not insist on this amendment, because this is not right. ... I want to tell you that I know the laws very well and know exactly what you are asking for, because I am myself a member of national minority, as I have already explained (Jon Magda, PT, 17.03.2010).

He portrayed himself as equal to MPs from minority parties: as someone who can know minority interests because of shared ethnicity. This claim had to be made explicitly and repeated to sound more convincing since his relationship to the minority constituency is not as

¹³ Since this section focuses on the ways MPs construct themselves as representatives, I will write more about these portrayals of constituency in the following section.

evident as the one minority parties have. In effect, in the dynamics of competitive party politics, this relationship can often feel under assault.

In contrast, in interviews where I was the only audience, majority parties' MPs either claimed that their ethnicity is a private matter, not relevant for the performance of politics or denied their attachment to a minority identity. Such claims also permeated the plenary speeches but in a more implicit way, through speaking about minorities as "them". These attitudes are respectively reflected in the following claims:

[Minority parties] are mainly conservative, traditionalist parties, which reduce the whole political life to exclusive protection of some traditional values related to a particular national community. They neither want, plan nor have ambitions to function beyond that and thereby extremely limit their political engagement and opportunities for cooperation with other parties ... I have never had a minority-based approach. A minority-based approach assumes a narrow position... I mean, do not get me wrong, I was raised in a Hungarian family, my parents are Hungarians. Therefore, I am attached to that culture, those traditions (Popović, Interview, 04.11.2014).

Arguing that her ethnic background does not determine her political behaviour, she also suggests that ethnicity is not a feature that is worthy of representation.

Several other MPs dismissed their ties with minority groups implicitly by identifying themselves with the majority and portraying minorities as Others: "By changing legal conditions, we are all together trying to enable members [of national minorities] to exercise their rights" (Djura Mučenski, PT, 27.04.2010). The quoted representative sees himself as part of the government ("we" are helping "them"). Framing members of national minorities as Others, he is also indirectly implying that he does not need to be enabled, that he is satisfied with his position and rights. He claims that majority parties perform substantive rather than descriptive representation of minorities: they act for minorities, but not as one of them. While substantive representation necessarily involves claims about minority groups – since claims about group interests at the same time construct group identity – it differs from descriptive representation in a the sense that its felicity depends on how successfully representatives portray themselves as those who know and can act for minorities' true interests, rather than as those who share an ethnic background with the constituency. This, however, does not mean that MPs cannot use descriptive representation as a resource to make claims to know and act for minority interests. They will, and they do.

MPs' constructions of themselves as different from minorities are additionally captured in other references to minorities or representatives of minorities as "them" or "Others". The suggestion is that minority party representatives claim an exclusive title to the representation of their constituencies, thus creating a divide – even an enmity – within the

group, between their minority constituents and the majority party representatives' minority constituents. For example, when commenting on the Hungarian party SVM, a majority party representative with the same ethnic background argues that "they always fight for *their* Hungarians" (Žiroš Jankelić, Interview, 2014). Similarly, another Hungarian MP claimed that "we from the ruling parties could do so much more because we had more money and better connections than *members of national minorities*" (Lodi, Interview, 2014).

Finally, two other MPs went even further by not only denying their ethnic background in a political sense, but also by constructing themselves as Serbs. An MP with a Russian background, for example, argued that he is proud of his Russian origins and respects the traditions, but at the same time he was born in Serbia and in affective terms feels like a Serb:

People who came [to Serbia from Russia] at the time when my family came do not have that kind of connection. They can declare emotionally as this or that, similarly as I could declare myself as Russian, which I do not do because that is not how I feel. But I am proud of my origins and I celebrate Russian holidays, we go to the Russian church, have our tradition, I do not want to bother you with these issues... I am just an interesting example of a complete assimilation (Samofalov, Interview, 2014).

A Muslim MP, on the other hand, argues that Bosniak identity has recently been constructed for political purposes and invites the audience to see them as Muslim Serbs:

My family and I have always declared as Serbs and I feel as a Serb of different religious affiliation. And I do not let anyone be more Serb than I am... There were three constitutive peoples in the old Yugoslavia: Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. As the political situation changed, every group created its national corpus trying to prove in impossible ways that they belong to national minorities, which is not true...I recognise [Bosniaks] as Muslim Serbs. That is how they declared themselves for centuries (Spaho, Interview, 2014).

In conclusion, I have argued in this section that to be a descriptive representative of a group, a representative needs to mobilise her ethnicity and construct herself as someone who belongs to the group. As Pitkin herself at some point noted, what is necessary to make descriptive representation is "the intention to depict" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 67). Making someone present who is not literally present by resemblance, requires the invocation of that resemblance either by a claim maker or the audience. By activating their ethnicity and arguing for its relevance, representatives invite the audience to recognise them as descriptive representatives based on shared ethnicity. This is visible in different claims made by MPs in both minority and majority parties. While MPs from both groups make claims about and for minorities, they do not always necessarily construct themselves as descriptive representatives.

It is easier for minority parties to successfully invoke ethnicity as a resource in claims-making since their claims are supported by the institutional and cultural background. The strength of their claim to authenticity lies precisely in the fact that it does not even have to be

made explicitly. It is believed to be self-evident that one can claim to speak for and about minorities only if one is a member of a minority party and shares ethnic identity with a constituency. In contrast, the relationship of majority parties' MPs with minority constituencies is neither electoral nor party based so they have to make more explicit effort to convince the audience of their legitimacy to speak about and for minorities based on shared identity. Although this is not necessarily true of all majority party MPs with ethnic minority backgrounds, some of them joined those parties precisely because they either do not feel ethnicity is a relevant feature to represent in parliament or do not feel any particular attachment to a minority group. In such cases, as expected, they did not evoke their legitimacy as based on ethnicity. In contrast to the views that individuals have basic motivations and needs that drive their behaviour, this suggests that representatives have mixed and diverse motivations. These findings further demonstrate that ethnic resemblance is not a sufficient condition for descriptive representation. This further develops a minority line of inquiry, according to which in the representation, identity cannot be treated as unproblematic, static and objective category (Piscopo, 2011, Squires, 2008).

4.2.2. Substantive representation

In addition to invoking descriptive representation in performing their representation of minorities, MPs from minority backgrounds also claim to act for the interests of minorities. Two different understandings of MPs' roles as substantive representatives emerged from these claims: First, MPs from majority parties understand acting for minority interests as an advancement of minority rights through legislative outcomes, arguing that compromise is needed if representation of minorities should amount to anything more than providing information. Second, MPs from minority parties framed substantive representation as a futile effort to advance minority interests, presenting themselves thereby as powerless idealists who are cast, by both themselves and others, outside the decision-making processes.

4.2.2.1. Representation as outcomes

Existing literature defines substantive representation as advancement of minority interests and connects it to legislative outcomes (Cameron, Epstein et al., 1996, Ueda, 2008). This traditional understanding of substantive representation was also promoted by MPs from majority parties. When performing representation in such a way, MPs underscored its

constitutive aspects. They based their success on their readiness to compromise, arguing that compromise is needed if any benefit for minority groups is to be achieved.

This is the case, for instance, with the Roma representative in the governing majority parliamentary group, who argued that cooperation with the majority parties enabled him to achieve substantive benefits for his community:

The National Council of the Roma national minority has since the moment of its foundation, i.e. since five years ago, managed to regain supremacy and to integrate the Roma ethnic community in the socio-political life of Serbia. We have shown this by the fact that Roma are particularly mentioned in the law and affirmative action measures are applied to them. (Vitomir Mihajlović, PT, 27.12.2008).

According to these MPs, taking a position of intransigence and deepening inter-ethnic tensions will not result in positive outcomes in terms of improving the living conditions of minority citizens. It is more beneficial to work together with the majority parties and representatives:

It is important that we reach a wide consensus. The more parliamentary groups accept [the draft law], the more easily the law will be implemented and the important issue of the position of national minorities in our country will be solved. It is important to mention that this law went through a wide public discussion that included different representatives of both national communities and the majority nation, which is also interested and gave their suggestions and which has the right to decide on all these important issues (Djura Mučenski, PT, 21.07.2009).

In making this claim, the MP suggests that minority related decisions should not be made exclusively by members of minority groups. These are matters that ultimately affect the whole, and that will only produce effect if the whole is committed to them. Hence, inclusion beyond the concerned minority is believed to be both right and effective. As co-citizens and members of the same wider polity, representatives of the majority have the right to participate in debating minority related issues and designing minority related legislation. This comes with an added bonus: if included, they will be more committed to the implementation of these decisions.

These claims also convey a message that a relationship between MPs and minority constituents tainted by majority parties may sometimes be more beneficial than a direct and unmediated relationship. Suggesting that cooperation with the majority is the only way of advancing minority interests is a resource minority MPs use to justify their decision to join majority parties. At the same time, such claims suggest to minorities that it is in their interest to integrate in society rather than striving for the separation of ethnic groups and autonomous decision-making. Portraying themselves as those who know and act for minority interests, in ways that bear consequence, MPs invite the audience to recognise them as legitimate representatives of minorities.

Yet, not all MPs from majority parties made such claims. Some of them argued that while they wanted or were expected to act in the interest of minorities, they were constrained by their parties' interests and ideology. They argued that affiliation with majority parties or mainstream parliamentary groups prevented them from making claims about and for minorities. Ruling political parties in particular have to make many compromises to keep the majority. In this political game, minority issues are either ranked low or not listed at all among the party's priorities. The representation of minorities also depends on whether the party leadership and the Head of the Parliamentary group "have understanding" (Žiroš Jankelić, Interview, 2014) of minority issues. These claims were made not only by MPs affiliated with majority parties, but also those from minority parties in majority parliamentary groups. Although representatives of minority parties, they framed themselves as delegates of majority parties because their parties acted within majority parliamentary groups in parliament.

For instance, an MP from a Croatian minority party in coalition with one of the majority parties argued that he had to "respect the attitude of a big brother":

On the one hand, you are a representative of a minority community in parliament, but on the other hand, you accepted to be in parliament under certain conditions... I realised that I was part of a bigger story within the then ruling Democratic party (DS) and I never voted against [the government proposals]. Even when representatives of the SVM [Hungarian minority party] voted for national minority laws and the laws in the interest [of minorities], but the DS was against, in that case, I unfortunately had to be against because I respected party discipline, that is, the agreement within the parliamentary group. I had many problems because of that in our community, even in Croatia, but I always asked what the alternative was (Kuntić, Interview, 2014).

At the same time, this claim suggests that minorities have no alternative but to cooperate with majority parties and negotiate for what is possible.

Similarly, a Roma MP in the majority opposition party spoke about how he felt constrained by his party:

If you are elected by the majority party, then you are a representative of a majority party. Although you are Roma, you have to implement the program of a majority party, and not the program of Roma national minority. You can mention Roma, but only occasionally, when you are allowed, but where not [allowed], you cannot because you are not a representative of Roma community (Damjanović, Interview, 2014).

For this MP, "being" a representative of the Roma minority involves implementing "the program of Roma national minority", rather than merely sharing ethnic characteristics with a minority constituency. Hence, this claim advances the traditional concept of substantive representation as the realisation of key minority interests. In addition, it speaks about the importance of electoral rules in making constituencies as such and such: elections bring the

constituency into being, define who a representative should speak for and legitimise objections to any representative claims to speak beyond electoral constituency.

4.2.2.2. Representation as raising minority related issues

Minority parties' MPs also argued that they were prevented from advancing minority interests in the sense of obtaining outcomes because they were effectively excluded from the decision-making process. They framed their position in parliament as lacking any power to affect the course of action. For example, the Albanian representative argued:

Honourable chairman, ladies and gentlemen MPs, when I submitted this amendment, I had no illusions that it will be accepted by the Government or that it could get the majority votes in this assembly. Not only my amendments, but also the amendments of my predecessors who represented Albanians of Preševo Valley in the National Assembly during the 1990s, had no chances to be adopted, not a single one (Riza Halimi, PT, 28.12.2008).

This claim portrays the representative as an outsider in parliament. He is in parliament, but with no power to partake in parliamentary action. He is a passive spectator of what is, supposedly, his own show. Similar is the following claim: "I came here to solve life issues. Until now, I tell you openly, I have had the same role as our representatives from 1990 to 2000. This role is to speak about problems, but without an opportunity to solve them" (Riza Halimi, PT, 18.12.2008). These two claims speak about ineffective speech acts, empty words, and biased power relations. Although representation invests them with the power to be in parliament and speak for others, this power is useless if it is not a power to influence decisions and co-determine courses of action. Exclusion from power and power positions is sometimes descriptive of intended and unintended consequences of the rules of the game as determined by institutional design. But these consequences are often also integral to their chosen self-portrayal as outsiders, which leaves them free from ties – institutional and otherwise – in playing their role. Being placed at the margins, MPs from minority parties need not stick to the rules of the game. Effectively, they can only act for minorities by being idealists who push for what is impossible but right, and who do not compromise their position by standing for that which is possible but falls short of their standard of righteousness:

We are trying to support the government, while representing the interests of our voters, the people who, I repeat once again, sent us to this Assembly. We are not in this Assembly for power and the fact that we have no ministers is the best proof of this statement. That is why we simply cannot be bargained with. I want to say once again that when it comes to courts, and when it comes, for example, to the Vojvodina budget and those famous 7%. Maybe we are a bit idealistic, maybe we are

even incorrigible idealists, but we are in the Assembly because of these objectives and as long as we are in the Assembly, we will certainly represent these goals... I repeat once again, we are trying to represent those ideas that we believe in and the interest of those who sent us to this Assembly. We will never be able to vote for any bill that is contrary to our convictions and the interests of our voters (Laszló Varga, PT, 03.12.2008).

Discursively constructing themselves as idealists, MPs from minority parties construct a qualitative difference between themselves and minority MPs in majority parties. MPs in minority parties portray themselves as gyroscopes: they will not compromise their ideals even when some compromise would possibly allow for the better pursuit of some interests. These moral qualities, and the underlying understanding of politics in strongly moral terms, distinguish them from the MPs in majority parties who are seen as realists involved in bargaining and negotiation for what is possible.

Although their legislative proposals and amendments are never adopted, their presence in parliament is not meaningless. Their role is to point to the problems faced by minority communities. While this is not usually understood as acting in the interests of the represented, I elaborate below how they portray themselves as the only ones who know and can act upon minority interests based on raising minority related issues.

Their proclaimed authenticity and unmediated relationship with minority constituents gives them a monopoly to act as the unique voice of their groups. For example, the Albanian party representative claims that if he were not present in parliament, the voice of the Albanian minority would not be heard in parliament. Therefore, his role is to give voice to the Albanian minority in order to educate the audience about their interests and problems. His role as a descriptive representative of Albanians can best be described by one of his statements: "Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja have only one representative and that is me and if I do not speak about their problems, no one else will" (Halimi, Interview, 2014). He suggests thereby that he is offering a new voice in the parliamentary debate. As a monopolistic leader, he is in a privileged position to decide which information is relevant, what the major problems of Albanian minority are and who they are as a group. These claims resonate with the audience, as members of majority parties seem to accept that minority parties "took an exclusive position to speak solely for national communities" (Popović, Interview, 04.11.2014). For the Hungarian party representative, the role of minority representatives is to point to the problems members of the Hungarian minority face in society such as discrimination and violent attacks on members of national minorities (Bálint Pásztor, PT, 07.04.2009).

While they acknowledge the ineffectiveness of their efforts, they argue that in making representations to parliament they are the only ones who can act for minority interests. They make this claim by comparing themselves to minority MPs in majority parliamentary groups:

I believe that a minority politician can contribute to and do anything for his community only in a minority party because he has to account to his voters for his work and efforts. And if a minority politician does not do what he promised and how he promised to do it, he will certainly not be re-elected... but the one who worked hard, who advocated for their interests, he can always in a way count on these votes (Fremond, interview, 2014).

I think that a difference between being elected on minority and majority lists is like sky and ground because your hands are completely tied. I had an impression that these colleagues are merely there... maybe it is nice that minorities are included in these lists, but realistically they cannot do anything in parliament. I mean, they cannot. Maybe sometimes they can submit an amendment, but then at the voting time, if their amendment is not acceptable to the government, then sometimes they do not even vote for their own amendment! (Kovács, Interview, 2014).

They further argue that despite immediate ineffectiveness, raising minority related issues does contribute to advancing minority interests in the medium to long run by making the public more aware of minority problems. Hence, if ever a decision is taken that advances minority interests, it is because of them:

We had influence by using public speeches and public addresses as a way of applying legitimate pressure. If I say something publicly – an attitude or a request for amendments to the law – I make the position easier because I put pressure on those who make decisions to say: wait, this was heard about (Džudžo, Interview, 2014).

Their actions are, therefore portrayed as not just expressive; they do achieve outcomes even though these are not immediate but deferred. They question the nature of minority politics itself as a politics of interests, if not a pork-and-barrel politics, in which all there is are benefits being exchanged. While the importance of pursuing fundamental community interests is not denied, the emphasis is the uncompromising protection of values. When it comes to interests, it is in the interest of minorities that the public is introduced to minority problems that would otherwise go unseen. While their amendments are not adopted, their voices serve to educate decision-makers and put public pressure on them. They claim that they advance minority interests by mediating between minorities and decision-makers. Minorities cannot reach the decision-makers themselves; they need their voice extended, by the passion of an advocate:

I really dealt with all these issues that are problematic and these are everyday problems of agricultural producers. We are present on the ground every day. For example, I live in the countryside and all my neighbours are agricultural producers and in winter we organise many gatherings and there we hear the voice of agricultural producers. We raised their interests and problems in the committee for agriculture and asked some questions about their problems here in the National Assembly and we really tried to advocate their interests (Fremond, Interview, 2014).

Hence, although excluded from decision-making, the audience is invited to recognise their actions, such as raising minority related issues, asking parliamentary questions or submitting amendments, as advancement of minority interests.

These findings confirm that substantive representation is better understood as *claiming to act upon* what are portrayed as true minority interests than as *acting upon* essential minority interests. In other words, what is meant by “acting upon” is constructed in the process of representative claim-making. As we have seen in this section, MPs from majority parties claimed to act for minorities by cooperating with the majority in order to secure some legislative benefits for their communities. On the other hand, MPs from minority parties framed themselves as excluded from decision-making but at the same time as the only ones who truly act for minorities by raising minority related issues. Both groups of MPs invited the audience to recognise their actions as advancing minority interests, but held contrasting – sometimes opposite – understandings of what this might mean. This section further focused on how MPs construct themselves as those who know minority interests and can act upon them. MPs from majority parties argued that as members of minority groups they know that the minority interest is integration in the society. The above claims implied that MPs from minority parties evoked their authenticity to frame minority interests as prevention of discrimination. These findings illustrate how descriptive and substantive representation can be – and most often are - closely inter-connected. In this case, MPs used their descriptive resemblance to construct themselves not only as those who have the legitimate right to speak about minorities, but also as those who have the capacity to act upon their interests. I argued earlier that both descriptive and substantive representation include constructions of constituencies and their interests. While this component of representation has been neglected above, it is the focus of the following section.

4.3. Constructing constituencies

Almost everyone agrees nowadays that ethnic identity is not fixed or given, but rather historically emergent (Brubaker, 2009, p. 28, Jenkins, 2008). Despite this, much work on ethnic representation tends to treat groups as internally homogenous, externally bounded, collective actors. In this section, I argue that representative claims about groups are not merely depictions, but discursive constructions of group identity. Hence, ethnic identity is constituted in the process of representation and the invoked constituencies are invited to recognise

themselves in the claims being made (Hall, 1996, p. 4). The object of representation is not the referent itself (ethnic group) but the idea or portrait of the referent (Saward, 2006, p. 310).

Some of the MPs themselves acknowledge the constitutive power their claims have upon the constituencies. Moreover, they argued that it is their duty to change the perceptions of their voters, as suggested in Mansbridge's (2003) model of anticipatory representation:

I applied for the job because I believe that it is my duty to explain certain things to my, let me say, co-ethnics (Lodi, Interview, 2014).

I believe that the duty of all parliamentary parties, a duty of MPs, and primarily government and ministers is to give citizens accurate information, to give citizens information on both positive and negative sides of very important issues... It is not the duty of politicians in Serbia to tell people what they want to hear, their duty is rather to "educate" citizens... The duty of a politician is not to tell people what they think they want to hear; we should, instead, tell them the truth (Bálint Pásztor, PT, 06.10.2009).

In addition to changing the preferences of the constituents, these claims suggest that the role of MPs is to 'explain', give 'accurate information' and tell the 'truth'. Politicians are thereby framed as those who have a monopoly over truth, while the represented may be deceived about their true interests.

The analysis below offers examples of how MPs from minority parties discursively bring minority groups and their interests into being, tending to construct them as unified and culturally specific identity groups. On the other hand, majority parties tend to depoliticise ethnicity by framing minorities in terms of citizenship and inclusion. Therefore, contrary to the extant literature, which tends to treat only ethnicised claims as representations of minorities, I show that representatives may also choose de-ethnicisation strategies in performing representation of ethnicity (see also Toró, 2017).

4.3.1. Minorities as unified, culturally specific identity groups

Minority constituencies are discursively constructed through MPs' claims about ethnicity and ethnic minority groups. One of the ways they do this is through naming the constituencies. As Butler argues, "being called a name is also one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted in language" (Butler, 1997, p. 2). Ethnic minority groups are constitutionally labelled as "national minorities" which positions them as minorities of national relevance, therefore favouring integration. On the other hand, minority MPs also bring together minority constituencies under the same term. Yet, in their claims, the term "national minorities" was

used to suggest that different minority groups should behave politically as a group with collective consciousness. Grouping national minorities into one category derogates the political relevance of inter-group differences and creates them as a single agency in opposition to the majority. In addition, the term itself reflects existing power inequalities and their marginalised position in society (see Beltran, 2010).

These characteristics were more explicitly evoked in the representative claims of MPs from minority parties. These MPs referred to their constituencies not only as minorities in relation to the majority group, but also evoked their distinct ethnicity, culture and language as defining characteristics. While there were 32 MPs from twelve different ethnic minority groups¹⁴ in the 8th Serbian parliament, only those minorities descriptively represented by minority parties were discursively made present in the representative claims. By being invoked specifically as Albanians or Hungarians, it is suggested that these groups have a unique cultural identity and a common set of interests. This strategy facilitates the construction of intra-group unity by reproducing ethno-cultural boundaries.

For instance, the Albanian minority was portrayed in the speeches of the Albanian party representative as powerless and marginalised in society as a whole:

When it comes to Albanians of Preševo Valley, who have been ghettoised after the changes in 1999, it can be concluded that they are in a far worse situation than they were in any previous periods after the Second World War. Level of minority rights, gentlemen, is still lower than during the 1960s and 1970s based on the 1974 Constitution (Riza Halimi, PT, 26.07.2010).

Similarly, the Bosniak party representative discursively creates a unitary image of Bosniaks around issues of difference and discrimination. He argues that the rights of Bosniaks to education in their native language and official use of language and script are not implemented and that Bosniaks are discriminated against not only in relation to Serbs, but also other minority groups (Esad Džudžo, PT, 19.01.2009; 05.05.2011). In his claims, members of the Bosniak minority are invited to see themselves and their institutions as endangered in Serbia.

The same MP further claimed that the government is responsible for “serious manipulation and serious violations of human rights and the rights of minorities in central Serbia, especially in Sandzak, eastern and southern Serbia” (Esad Džudžo, PT, 21.07.2009; 28.12.2011) and is blocking the implementation of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the Bosniak national minority (Esad Džudžo, PT, 28.12.2011). In these and the following claims, ethnic unity is being constructed in opposition to government. The Albanian party’s MP claimed that the government “continues with authoritarian imposition and even anti-

¹⁴ Albanian, Hungarian, Bosniak, Croat, Roma, Ruthenian, Romanian, Slovak, Bulgarian, Vlach, Muslim and Russian.

civilizational solutions by providing privileges to only a part of population based on ethnic background” (Riza Halimi, PT, 12.12.2009). According to him, violation of the rights of Albanians contributes to “ethnic cleansing” of Albanians as a group (Riza Halimi, PT, 07.07.2008). By creating a cleavage between an endangered minority and the state constructed as the “Other”, representatives aim to naturalize their respective representations of ethnic groups. If members of minority groups are constantly discriminated against because of their ethnic identity, they will either assimilate or emigrate from the state. This implies that members of minority groups have to be united to protect their identity and right to existence.

The strongest claim about the government’s denial of the right to exist was made by the Bosniak party’s MP. In 2014 he changed his last name from Džudžević to Džudžo claiming that at the beginning of the twentieth century the state was violently adding the suffix ‘-vić’ to Bosniak last names with the goal of erasing Bosniak identities and assimilating them with Serbs (Aleksić, 2014). In this case, naming is seen as a political category, which works to found the society as Serbian and exclude the “Others”. By framing the Bosniak last names as an attempt at Serbisation, the MP aims to convince the Bosniak minority that through naming the Serbs constituted themselves as superior to Bosniaks and, in effect, effaced them. At the same time, he constitutes himself as someone reclaiming the Bosniak identity and resisting the effacement. Therefore, by changing his last name he does not resist the process of ethnicisation itself. He rather reinforces it by giving himself a “more Bosniak name”.

All of the above claims portray minorities in terms of power relations and oppression, thereby strengthening inter-ethnic boundaries and inter-ethnic distance. Therefore, as Hall argues, “the 'unities' which identities proclaim are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are the result, not of a natural and inevitable or primordial totality but of the naturalized, overdetermined process of 'closure'” (Hall, 1996, p. 4-5). This process also includes the construction of minority interests, which representatives should act upon. Portraying minority groups as being denied the right to their own identity, representatives suggest that the most vital interests of minorities are the survival and protection of group identity. Such claims were often made implicitly in the plenary speeches because these interests have already been constructed as minority relevant through historical and cultural processes. Yet, MPs framed them more explicitly in interviews:

At the moment, the survival of the minority community is most important. We had population censuses from 2001 to 2012 and according to the latest information we now have only a little more than 250 thousand Hungarians left, which is around 10% less. For example, the situation is the same with other minorities and many young people go to work abroad. We have to work hard to secure a climate in which our people will want to stay here, so that the community could survive. We are trying to achieve this in every possible way (Fremond, Interview, 2014).

In order to advance these interests MPs focused in their parliamentary work primarily on adopting guarantees and securing implementation of minority rights to the protection of their culture, minority media and the use of minority language in education and public institutions.

Even when they address socio-economic issues in parliament, they do it to protect minority culture because “every infrastructure, every investment, every employment in a particular way influences also the minority to use its minority collective rights in a more credible way” (Džudžo, Interview, 2014). In these claims, culture is depicted in terms of boundedness and homogeneity and portrayed more as a noun “than as a verb indicating process, intercommunication, and the ongoing construction and reconstruction of boundaries that are symbolic and not naturally given” (Handler, 1994, p. 29).

4.3.2. Minorities as equal citizens

Similar to MPs from minority parties, MPs from majority parties also discursively constitute national minorities as natural things with a unique identity and interests related to language and culture:

The interest of minorities is to have education, to nurture their culture, to preserve their language, to have their exhibitions, their media (Žiroš Jankelić, Interview, 2014).

We are facing the problem of language preservation, which means that Slovak language is increasingly less spoken and that is a really big problem. Another problem is... low birth-rate. Our numbers decrease every day. Now, there are economic and other reasons for this, but the preservation of language, yes, language and script, that is currently the main problem the community faces (Toman, Interview, 2014).

One interest of national communities is to have the right to education secured. I believe that identity is based on language. Culture and tradition are safeguards of identity. Language primarily serves to protect identity of a people, so according to me, the right to education is priority (Papuga, Interview, 2014).

In these claims, groups and their identities are portrayed as objective categories. Group identity is presented as “what it really is, uniquely, in and of itself, in its inner being and without reference to externals” (Handler, 1994, p. 28). It is particularly interesting that MPs have internalised the socially and politically accepted way of thinking about minorities, while at the same time, when asked about their own ethnic background, they frame ethnicity as constructed and request that it is recognised as such.

While sharing a similar understanding of minority groups with MPs from minority parties, MPs from majority parties criticise them for behaving merely as “temporary tenants with some other purposes”, rather than behaving as “residents of this country, which is their own home” (Miletić Mihajlović, PT, 02.11.2011). The contrast being emphasised here is between minorities who see their permanent home in the whole/national versus minorities staying tied to the whole/national only insofar as it brings benefits. Benefits, it is claimed, are “extracted” by emphasising inter-ethnic difference and constantly asking for more rights. MPs from the majority parties contest these claims by emphasising inter-ethnic equality and pride in living in a country that guarantees minority protection on such a high level: “We can all be proud because we, members of national minorities, live in Serbia and exercise our rights, our right to the use of language, on such a high level” (Pavel Marčok, PT, 13.04.2010). A Bosniak MP from the same parliamentary group argued that the descriptive claims by minority parties’ MPs are not accurate, because the living conditions of minorities are *actually* much better than they claim (Munir Poturak, PT, 07.04.2010) because everyone has the same opportunities in Serbia regardless of ethnic background (Munir Poturak, PT, 23.12.2008).

Through such claims, MPs portray minorities as an integral part of the Serbian state and society. What unites the majority and minorities is that both are treated equally, loyal citizens of Serbia with the same needs and problems. If there are problems in the implementation of minority cultural rights, these problems are “technical” rather than political (Munir Poturak, PT, 27.04.2010) or caused “by the overall social and economic state, that affects all our citizens” (Oto Kišmarton, PT, 19.03.2009).

In support of this claim, another majority party MP argued that his party “supports the right of national minorities to express, preserve and cultivate the language and alphabet, the protection of tradition, and cultural and religious differences” but argued that these rights do not change anything essentially:

when the majority of citizens, not only minorities, are denied the most important right – the right to work, many cannot exercise their right to education, to many people the state cannot secure the right to free medical care, etc.... To sum up, as long as Serbia is ruled by crime, corruption, high unemployment, poor economic situation, and the crisis in the state and the family, there will be no progress and a better life either for the majority, or for national minorities (Oto Kišmarton, PT, 21.07.2009).

At the same time as they frame minorities as equal citizens with the same socio-economic needs and interests, majority party MPs also at the same time disintegrate minority groups and deny them identity:

Slovaks in Serbia are not threatened as a national minority; they are threatened as individuals, as citizens of Serbia that live hard, that have no money to pay the bills, to

educate their children, that are troubled by unemployment, not to mention buying newspapers and books in mother tongue, that the same as other citizens of Serbia lack money for theatre, that every year due to low birth-rate, equally as the majority group, decrease in numbers (Marina Toman, PT, 21.7.2009).

In this claim, groups are denied any identity of their own: they are nothing but aggregates of individuals and it is as individuals that any "group" members are threatened. This vision of minority constituency stands in opposition to the portrayal of minorities in narrow ethnic terms I presented above. Yet, both images were painted into existence by the same representatives, sometimes even in the same speech. For instance, the claim above was made by the same MP who on other occasion argued that the survival of Slovaks and their distinct identity is threatened in Serbia because of the low birth-rate and reduced use of Slovak language. These different visions of minorities could be directed to different audiences, but they could also be a product of a clash between the representative's feelings of detachment from a minority identity and affiliation with the majority party and the culturally and politically accepted image of minorities. While representatives act upon the represented, thereby constructing their identities and interests, they are also acted upon by the institutional and cultural codes and audiences' claims.

While portraying minorities and their associated interests in terms of cultural identity, MPs from majority parties also argued that it is wrong to push national minorities into narrow ethnic thinking (Miletić Mihajlović, PT, 21.07.2009). While the 'national minority' category presupposes ethnicity as something given, MPs who frame minority constituencies as citizens aimed to depoliticise the ethnicity:

Because being a citizen does not mean that one cannot be a member of a national minority, it does not mean rejecting faith and nation; it does not mean that one cannot be Bosniak, Serb, Hungarian, Croat, Albanian, etc. On the contrary, to be a citizen includes all of this, and political affiliation refers only to inclination towards particular political ideas and a way of implementing these ideas (Kenan Hajdarević, PT, 21.07.2009).

A Hungarian majority party MP claimed that her party does not accept the ethnic key and political benefits to national minorities (Judita Popović, PT, 02.12.2008). In her claims, citizens with minority backgrounds were given political subjectivity as individual citizens not as ethnic groups. Similarly, another MP argued that "No one can have, because his name is Nemanja, more rights and feel Serbia more as his country than us called Rasim, Kenan or differently. Serbia belongs to all its citizens. Liberal-democratic party, me as a representative of Liberal-democratic party, feel that way and in this capacity, I represent the interests of all citizens (Kenan Hajdarević, PT, 19.05.2010).

In the claim above, a representative disintegrates national minorities as groups and calls them into being as individuals more amenable to unification in a seamless unity. Furthermore, by arguing that his party “does not calculate and speak to Serbs or Bosniaks as merely voters, but rather as human beings – 220,000 citizens voted for us, for our party, because they are citizens of the Republic of Serbia”, he implies that ethnicity politics is “artificially” pushed by electoral and party rules (Kenan Hajdarević, PT, 30.03.2010). Ethnic minority parties see their constituencies as mere numbers that enable them to attain power and for this reason only, they want to remain ethnic minority parties.

Requesting that minorities are treated as citizens forms the basis for constructing the representative claims as citizen claims rather than minority claims. Aiming to depoliticise ethnicity, several MPs went as far as to portray minorities primarily as tax payers and bank customers. This is exemplified in the following claim:

There are many people, who live in Vojvodina and are members of national minorities, who want to use the service of bank credits, but they have a problem in understanding contracts in the Serbian language. Therefore, this is not even about violations of their rights as members of national minorities, but about violation of their rights as customers, as users of financial services (Judita Popović, PT, 23.05.2011).

By framing the violation of the minority right to the use of their language as the violation of bank customers’ rights rather than discrimination against their language and identity, this claim aims to take the political sting from the debate. It neutralises what is being “stolen” and reduces identity to mere currency or volatile market value. Unintentionally, this claim points to a gap between the representative and the represented: if minority constituencies do not speak Serbian, they cannot understand the claims their representatives make in parliament, since the spoken language of parliament is Serbian. Without opportunities to receive the claims made in their name, the constituencies cannot accept, challenge or reject them and therefore, do not have the necessary capacity to hold the representatives to account.

In this section, I have demonstrated that MPs portray minority constituencies in diverse, often contrasting ways. Minority constituencies were claimed to be oppressed vs. equally treated, homogenous identity groups vs. aggregates of individuals, and with an interest in protecting their cultural identity vs. their socio-economic interests. All these contrasting portrayals of the same constituencies were offered to the audience as natural depictions of a given and pre-formed minority identity rather than as part of the political dynamics within which who they are and what they are is permanently contested. My findings also demonstrate that representative portrayals of constituencies are not necessarily mutually

consistent. The same MPs on different occasions spoke about minorities as both unitary groups and as mere aggregates of individuals. These findings further demonstrate why we should not treat only ethnicised claims as claims about and for minorities. Images of minorities as equal citizens with socio-economic interests are also offered to minority audiences as images of themselves, in the same way as claims that portray them as unitary and marginalised groups. There are no convincing reasons for a researcher to treat any of the particular images representatives evoke as more convincing or accurate portrayals. Which portrayal will be recognised at any particular moment, as such depends only on audiences' recognition.

4.4. Claim-making before different audiences

Representatives direct their claims not only towards their intended constituencies but also towards different audiences. One cannot represent if one is not being heard. The presence of an audience is necessary for the performance of representation. Representation does not refer merely to making claims about constituencies, but rather to interaction between claim-making and hearing (Spivak, 1994). In line with this, one of the minority MPs who made zero speeches over the whole term argued that she did not speak in parliament because "MPs do not listen to each other. It is evident that MPs speak to themselves only" (Žiroš Jankelić, Interview, 2014).

While the legitimacy of a claim is determined by constituencies' acceptance, the success of a claim depends on the audience. Representatives may change their arguments or even make contradictory claims before different audiences. Therefore, plenary speeches provide an opportunity for MPs to portray themselves and their constituencies in different ways depending on the intended audience.

In the case of electoral representation, the structure of political institutions already determines the potential audience. The immediate audience for representative claims in parliament is other MPs, and in particular those MPs who make up the parliamentary majority. In the 8th Serbian parliament, MPs from minority parties often accused majority MPs from majority parties of lacking legitimacy to represent minorities or of not speaking adequately for minorities. As one majority party MP explains: "I think this [their relationship with minority parties' MPs] was a great rivalry and we often had to put up with their attacks that we are not doing sufficiently for Hungarians as they are. I believe this was a political game" (Lodi, Interview, 2014). This claim suggests that MPs from minority parties tried to convince the audience to accept their claims based on portrayals of themselves as more Hungarian than

MPs from majority parties. Evoking the Other in opposition to whom the identity of a representative is constructed makes claims about being one with the group more convincing. The felicity of such claims, furthermore, allows MPs to make claims without accounting for their actions. Portraying themselves as the true embodiment of a group, minority parties do not need to consult the constituencies or hear their perspectives. Accordingly, there was no need to raise the issue that many members of minority communities do not speak Serbian and hence cannot function as an audience for representatives' claims.

In countries such as Serbia with strong party discipline, the party leadership tends to make a more important audience for representative claims than the constituents themselves. When MPs from the ruling parties speak about the fairness of government decisions related to minorities (Jon Magda, PT, 17.03.2010) or express their "personal satisfaction for participating in passing the most important law that regulates the position of members of national minorities" (Djura Mučenski, PT, 21.07.2009), they do not only address those affected by the decisions, but also their party superiors in government with the aim of impressing them. Similarly, the following claim targets the higher party structure as its intended audience:

If it was not for the Serbian Radical Party, Roma would not be present here, there would not be any Roma minister, there would not be any MPs, we would not be able to express our problems in the highest institution of this state (Jovan Damjanović, PT, 03.07.2008).

In order to make such claims about minorities convincing, MPs evoked their ethnic background. Yet, on other occasions, and in interviews, they claimed more explicitly that they did not see ethnicity as an important part of their identity and feel themselves to be citizens: "I have never seen myself as a minority" (Popović, Interview, 2014); "I have not seen myself as a Slovak, I see myself as a citizen of this society" (Toman, Interview, 2014). These conflicting claims were made for different audience and different purposes: when addressing the minority audience or making claims about minorities, they evoked a minority identity, but in other occasions, their claims relied on their portrayals of themselves as equal citizens.

Government representatives may also play the audience role in cases where they are invited to plenary sessions during question time or when they act as proposers of legislation. This was particularly the case when MPs performed substantive representation of minorities. While minority parties constructed themselves as idealist and authentic descriptive representatives for the minority audience and minority MPs in majority parties, this strategy significantly changed when their goals were to affect the decision-making process. We could argue, therefore, that the diversity of motivations and goals led to greater shape-shifting behaviour. For instance, the Hungarian party that often presented itself as authentic, highly

moral and idealist, on many other occasions framed itself as constructive and moderate. During a discussion on minority language rights, they did not evoke structural discrimination and endangered cultural identity as a rationale. This strategy would probably have an effect upon minority constituents, but since their goal was to convince the government to accept their proposals, they chose this strategy. Hence, they justified their demands as about complying with the Constitution:

We are not tightening up, we only demand that the Government of the Republic of Serbia respects the constitution of this country and enables members of national minorities to use their languages officially in those local municipalities where their language is in equal official use (Bálint Pásztor, PT, 02.11.2009).

On other occasions, they advocated for decentralisation of the regions inhabited by the Hungarian minority by expressing their concern for all citizens and wider interests rather than arguing that minority groups should govern themselves:

This is not a national [i.e. minority] issue. What I am talking about is not only in the interest of Vojvodina Hungarians residing in the territory of these municipalities on the river Tisa, but in the interest of all citizens who live in Kanjiža, Senta and Ada, regardless of ethnic background, because this is about elementary, common sense (Bálint Pásztor, PT, 18.06.2009).

In Serbia, as in many other countries, plenary sessions are televised, which allows MPs to address much wider audience in their speeches. Because of the live coverage, the claim cited above may have had an audience consisting not only of government representatives, but also of Hungarians who speak Serbian, citizens of the regions invoked, or even citizens of other regions who may be interested in the issue of decentralisation.

While I have argued that MPs target the government when they want to achieve substantive goals, when they primarily address a minority audience they seem to shift their position either towards that of 'authentic representative', or towards 'powerless idealist' (or indeed both). When the goal is to show their constituencies that they are the only ones speaking about their problems, MPs often construct themselves in opposition to the "manipulative" and "discriminatory" government, which "continues with authoritarian imposition and even anti-civilizational solutions by providing privileges to only a part of population based on ethnic background" (Riza Halimi, PT, 12.12.2009). Instead of showing the "political will" to solve the problems of Albanians in the Preševo Valley (Riza Halimi, PT, 13.03.2011), the government manipulates the Albanian community and excludes them from public institutions (Riza Halimi, PT, 28.12.2008). This image of government enables the MP to construct himself as the monopolistic insider, the only one who cares about minority interests. The primary audience to which this claim is directed is the minority group. Similarly, when the

Bosniak representative asks the prime minister to explain “whether we, members of the Bosniak national community in the Republic of Serbia, have the right to develop our own national minority institutions” (Esad Džudžo, PT, 19.01.2009), he does not only address the prime minister, but more importantly the Bosniak minority.

How a representative’s strategy changes based on the targeted audience is particularly visible in the claims of a Roma representative. In some of his claims, Roma are constructed as a group “on the lowest social, cultural and educational margins” (Jovan Damjanović, PT, 26.10.2010) arguing that the government discriminates against Roma and violates their rights:

If you want to integrate the Roma, you cannot take away the most elementary rights from us; the rights guaranteed by the world and European laws and charters. We have the right to information, we have the right to education, we are entitled to tradition, we have the right to language, we have the right to culture. That is what you took away from us (Jovan Damjanović, PT, 03.07.2008).

On other occasions, however, he argued that:

There is no discrimination against national minorities in our country. It is possible that there is a neglect of individuals, but in general, we are entitled in all segments and regions of the Republic of Serbia, from politics to education, to enter, to fight and to be influential in our national minority. This is guaranteed by the Constitution and the law... Our success in our country depends only on how capable we are, how homogenous we are, and how integrated we are. We cannot whine about the majority nation not allowing us this and that. We need to know the constitution and law and to ask for our rights (Jovan Damjanović, PT, 12.12.2008).

These two different stories serve different purposes in respect to the audience. The first claim suggests that the claim-maker is the only one who acts in the Roma interest and presents the Roma audience with a particular image of themselves, which explains why they need him there. This claim also aims to impress the higher party structure, since his party was the opposition party building their position on criticism of the government. The second claim addresses, on the one hand, his party colleagues and party ideology. His party is a Serb nationalist party that aims to portray Serbs as “heavenly people” and Serbia as a great democracy where all minority nations loyal to the state are recognised and tolerated. On the other hand, this claim is aimed at the Roma population, and potentially serves as a justification for MPs’ lack of substantive achievements in parliament.

While minority groups, other MPs, political parties and the government are the most often invoked audience, both minority and majority parties also address the EU as their audience. Because of EU conditionality, for majority party MPs it is important to pass minority related laws to show that:

We are a civilised and democratic society that has capacities to take care of all its citizens. And second, that we are ready to make another step forward and to show

other states as well that we are better in solving important and sensitive issues (Djura Mučenski, PT, 21.07.2009)

In these claims, national minorities are marketed as a “brand” for the EU audience (Munir Poturak, PT, 15.04.2009), serving to frame the country as “an example of tolerance and good interethnic relations and EU countries could learn from us on this matter” (Oto Kišmaron, PT, 21.07.2009). These claims also speak to the general public, asking them to embrace minority rights, not as a matter of justice and caring about minorities, but as a way of getting closer to the EU. Protection of minorities and implementation of minority rights has been one of the crucial conditions for the integration of the country into the EU. These claims further tell us something about the representatives and their constituents. By evoking the EU in a positive tone, MPs clearly set themselves apart from those who are against EU integration and oriented towards the East. This was particularly important until 2010, since an identity cleavage between those pro- and anti- EU was constructed as the most dominant social cleavage in the society. Consequently, MPs found it important to show where they stood on the issue of EU integration processes (Riza Halimi, PT, 07.07.2008; Bálint Pásztor, PT, 07.07.2008).

I have shown in this section that representatives frame their claims differently depending on the intended audience. This finding demonstrates why the audience is an important part of representative claims and why any analysis of representatives’ performance needs to include audiences. While audience was rarely invoked explicitly in representative claims, and it was therefore not easy to identify an intended audience with certainty, knowing the context in which representative claims were made allowed me to identify potential audiences and see how they impacted the claims being made.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that representation is performed differently by MPs from minority and majority parliamentary groups.

MPs from minority parties tend to portray themselves as authentic, highly- principled idealists who give voice to the voiceless. By portraying themselves, often implicitly, as a mere expression of minority identities and interests, they suggest that there is no gap between the absent people and representatives’ actions. In their claims, minority constituencies are portrayed as powerless and marginalised unified groups defined by their cultural identity. Minority parties construct boundaries around ethnic groups through evoking cultural difference and the privileged position of the majority, thus contributing to the separation of

ethnic groups. Ethnicisation of representative claims is structurally facilitated by the lower electoral threshold for minority parties and exclusive electoral authorisation of minority parties by minority voters. According to minority party MPs, the main task of authentic representatives of minorities is to advance their most important interests, such as the protection of their cultural identity and the use of minority languages. They emphasise, however, that their claims receive little support in parliament because of power relations, discrimination against minorities and the government's authoritarian and anti-democratic approach towards minorities. Being excluded from decision-making, their actions for minorities are reduced to raising minority related issues. Such portrayals of representatives, their constituencies and their interests are primarily addressed towards their minority audience and other MPs, particularly those in majority parties who are themselves from a minority background.

In contrast to minority party MPs, who had fewer structural options and less motivation for shape-shifting (and hence often acted as "shape-accorders"), MPs in majority parliamentary groups positioned themselves as shape-shifters more often. They offered two different portrayals of both themselves and minority constituents. First, they evoked their ethnic resemblance with minority constituencies to frame ethnicity as a natural category and minority interests as related to culture and tradition. At the same time, while MPs from minority parties deny any distinction between themselves, minority parties and minority constituents, MPs from majority groups suggest that their relationship to minority constituents is mediated by majority parties. Being constrained by party interests and ideology, they lack opportunities to act for minorities. Secondly, the vision of minority groups offered by MPs from majority parliamentary groups aims to depoliticise ethnicity. Regardless of their parliamentary status, most of them claimed that ethnicity is not something given and refused to be seen primarily as members of ethnic groups. In these claims, minority constituents are discursively constructed as equal citizens who have the same interests as all other citizens of the country. These interests relate to better living conditions and social and economic welfare. In order to achieve these interests, MPs from this group suggest that those who represent minorities need to cooperate with the ruling parties, be moderate in their demands and ready for compromise. Contrary to minority parties, which emphasise ethnicised demands, MPs from majority parties aim to silence these demands by depoliticising ethnicity. By giving voice to individuals only, representatives are making minority groups invisible and marginal. Hence, in contrast to existing literature that treats only ethnicised claims as representations of minorities, I argue that de-ethnicisation strategies may also be used in representative claims about minorities. Conflicting claims were made for different audiences and different purposes: when addressing a minority audience or making claims about minorities, they evoked a

minority identity, but on other occasions, their claims relied on their portrayals of themselves and minorities as equal citizens.

These findings point to the dynamic complexity of representation and the importance of studying the representation of minorities as an interplay between institutional and cultural resources, different portrayals of representatives, and the evocation of images of both those represented and of intended audiences. The findings suggest that the identities and interests of both representatives from minority backgrounds and ethnic groups are not fixed and transparent, but rather are constituted in the process of representation. Three more particular conclusions are drawn from these different performances of representation:

First, MPs from majority parties frame themselves as resembling the constituents only when they spoke about minorities as integrated and equally treated. On most other occasions, they argue that their ethnicity is a private matter that is not relevant for the performance of politics, or deny their attachment to a minority identity. Although they speak about minorities, they do not perform descriptive representation because they frame their own identity as not defined by ethnicity. This finding challenges previous literature that takes the identity of a representative as a static and objective category and treats all representatives from minority backgrounds as descriptive representatives of minorities.

Second, the audience is offered two contrasting visions of minority interests: protection of culture vs. socio-economic welfare. Furthermore, what it means to act for these interests is defined differently in the claims of MPs from minority and majority parties: persistently raising minority related issues despite exclusion from decision-making vs. achieving legislative outcomes through the politics of compromise. In contrast to the literature that sees both minority interests and advancement of these interests as objective and pre-defined categories, I suggest that all these different claims to act for what are portrayed as true minority interests represent instances of substantive representation.

Third, I have argued that MPs often use their descriptive resemblance to minority constituencies as a resource in making substantive claims. MPs argue that they know minority interests and how these interests should be advanced because they are true embodiments of the ethnic groups they claim to represent. For instance, the claim “As one of you and one with you, I know that you are oppressed, discriminated against and that your survival is threatened”, illustrates a way of performing descriptive representation. This claim was later used as a resource in performing substantive representation: “Based on this, I know that your interests are protection of minority culture and identity and act upon these interests by non-compromising my position and giving voice to your demands”. This confirms the arguments I made in Chapter 2 that descriptive and substantive representation cannot be treated as separate and independent representative forms, as much of the existing literature suggests.

They are rather dynamic and inter-connected resources that representatives use in shaping claims about and for minority groups.

Furthermore, these findings reflect something unexpected. They indicate that affiliation with majority or minority parties did not result in significant differences for MPs elected on the majority electoral lists. However, one could have expected that politicians who identify more strongly with their ethnic groups will join minority parties, while those with weaker attachments to their groups would join majority parties. In contrast to MPs from majority parties whose constituents are vague and unknown, the intended constituents of minority parties are members of minority groups exclusively. It seems however, that a lack of electoral authorisation produced a more loose relationship between parties and their intended constituents. In addition, there was no significant difference in the ways representation was performed by MPs from governing and opposition parties. Even those MPs from minority parties who were part of the government coalition were critical of government actions and portrayed their constituents as oppressed by the government. In doing so, they aimed to hide from view any responsibility they had for government decisions or at least for giving support to such a government. This strategy of denying any mediation between themselves and minority constituents enabled MPs to make claims of being one with the group more successfully. Finally, there were minority MPs from twelve different minority groups present in the Serbian parliament, yet they did not evoke inter-ethnic differences in making claims about and for minorities. It is particularly interesting that such portrayals were not made, even in claims about groups as defined by distinct culture and language. I explore this issue in more detail in Chapter 6 where I aim to offer some tentative explanations of MPs' behaviour based on different institutional and cultural resources.

Chapter 5: The performance of minority representation in Kosovo

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I analysed the performance of minority representation in Serbia. Using the same methodology and theoretical foundation, I focus in this chapter on the representation of minority ethnic groups in Kosovo. I explore first, how MPs construct themselves as descriptive and substantive representatives of ethnic groups and, second, how group identities are constituted in the politics of representative claim-making.

From my study of the Serbian case, I reached two main conclusions. First, representatives with minority backgrounds do not *ipso facto* act as descriptive representatives. Much depends on how they present themselves and how the audience receives this self-presentation. A representative takes the role of a descriptive representative only by actively invoking ethnic resemblance as a resource for representative claims, even if “active” invocation need not always be “loud” or explicit. In Serbia MPs from minority parties constructed themselves as authentic embodiments of a homogenous minority identity. In contrast, MPs from majority parties emphasised civic rather than ethnic citizenship. In most of their claims they portrayed themselves and members of minority groups as patriots and citizens sharing in the interests of other citizens of the country. Contrary to minority parties, which emphasised ethnicised demands and made them the centre of their parliamentary politics, majority parties’ MPs aimed to silence these demands by normalising and depoliticising ethnicity.

In addition, and this is my second main conclusion, the performance of minority representation in Serbia contributed to a novel understanding of substantive representation. Scholars have tended to define substantive representation as taking policy actions that serve the interests of constituents (Pitkin, 1967). Based on the analysis of minority representation in Serbia, I argued that MPs may construct themselves as those who act for their groups even if they remain, or even deliberately place themselves, outside decision-making processes. In particular, they claimed that they managed to advance minority interests, first, by refusing to be co-opted into legitimising decisions they object to on behalf of their constituents, and, second, by making the public aware of minority related issues and thereby exerting a pressure on decision-makers to introduce policies that are relevant to minorities. Hence, substantive representation is not only about how perceived interests come to be perceived as such – that

is, as *interests*. The construction of group interests – who benefits, and who does not, what is valued and why it must be so – has as its necessary correlate the question of implementation, or what it might mean to act for those interests and advance them. What constitutes such acting is contested terrain and its definition is impacted both by the purposes MPs pursue, and by the purposes constituencies are made to see as worth pursuing.

In this chapter I examine how MPs from minority backgrounds in the 4th Assembly of Kosovo (2010-2014) performed their representation of minorities. Their performance was played out in a particular institutional and cultural setting that significantly affected the opportunities for claim-making. Based on these, we may expect MPs to perform representation in the following ways:

First, and similar to Serbia, affirmative action measures in Kosovo encourage the constitution of representatives and constituency around ethnicity. Minority parties have 20 guaranteed seats in the Kosovo Assembly. In the period covered by my research, minority parties were also guaranteed a lower electoral threshold in addition to the reserved seats, which enabled them to win five additional seats. The lower threshold provides incentives for politicians to put forward their candidacy as members of ethnic parties, which already positions them as descriptive representatives and defines the boundaries of the constituency based on ethnicity. Hence, the process of becoming a representative activates both a representative's ethnic background and constituents' ethnicity: one can become a representative only if one declares as a member of an ethnic group and claims to speak for that group. Furthermore, contrary to Serbia where some MPs from majority parties claim to represent minorities, in Kosovo there are no MPs with minority backgrounds in majority parties. Based on this, while one could have expected a greater tendency for MPs in majority parties to define their practice of representation in strictly civic terms, in Kosovo all MPs might be expected to legitimise their claims by reifying ethnic groups and their personal identification with them in stronger terms.

Second, in addition to guaranteed parliamentary seats, minority communities have guaranteed seats in the government, and powers of veto over the adoption of laws of vital interest for minorities. This enables minority representatives to exert considerable influence in decision-making processes. Hence, in contrast to Serbia where minority parties construed themselves as powerless idealists excluded from decision-making, I expect that representatives in Kosovo would face difficulties in construing themselves as such. As the kernel of their representative function is the construction of local interests and catering for them, they are expected to bring substantive benefits to their communities.

Third, the behaviour of MPs may also be influenced by formal electoral authorisation and accountability mechanisms. In Kosovo, voters are allowed to vote for individual candidates

rather than simply voting for the electoral list as a whole. Open electoral lists serve as an incentive for a more direct relationship between representatives and the represented. Hence, unlike Serbia, in which there is strict party discipline, in Kosovo MPs might cultivate a close relationship with their constituents in order to generate independence from their political party.

Fourth, an incentive that is particularly relevant for minority representation in post-conflict countries, such as ours, is the role of the international community. Their role in Kosovo is to secure peace and reconciliation by guaranteeing the implementation of international agreements, which have created Kosovo explicitly as a multi-ethnic democracy. Their monitoring tasks include, among others, sitting in the plenary and committee meetings of the Kosovo parliament. Their presence in parliament aims to secure that the divided sides cooperate and that the agreements reached behind the scene are implemented. It may be expected that such a strong presence of international actors prevents escalation of conflicts and encourages representatives of ethnic communities to portray themselves as cooperative. In contrast to the international incentives, the strong influence of the kin state on the Serb minority may be expected to encourage their lack of cooperation with the ethnic majority.

Fifth, basic values and beliefs in Kosovan society are shaped by ethnic conflict between Serbs and Albanians. Almost ten years after the end of war, Kosovo is still a society deeply divided along ethnic lines. Despite international efforts, the majority of Albanians want their new state to be defined by majority identity. Serbs, on the other hand, do not recognise Kosovo's independence despite participating in its institutions. They live in separate enclaves without much contact with the majority. It may be expected that these divisions are also visible in parliament. Moreover, since the felicity of representative claims depends on their resonance with the audience, it is reasonable to expect that these divisions are activated and reinforced through the adversarial exchange of representative claims about minorities as unified homogenous identity groups whose boundaries and interests are defined in opposition to one another. Furthermore, minority MPs are encouraged to perform a lack of communication and cooperation with the majority representatives for at least two reasons: first, because of the hostilities the majority population expresses towards them and second, because their legitimacy depends on their closeness to their communities and consequently their distance from the majority.

These diverse incentives can be expected to encourage MPs to frame their claims in terms of group unity and inter-ethnic difference. In contrast to Serbia, MPs in Kosovo are encouraged to portray themselves as more independent from their parties and more influential in decision-making processes. Given their dependence on their constituencies, it might be expected that pork-barrel politics is incentivised. In addition, MPs are faced with

some conflicting incentives: international presence presses cooperation while a history of bloody conflict and its enduring legacy encourage antagonistic behaviour. In this chapter I explore how MPs navigate these incentives. As I argued in Chapter 3, incentives do not necessarily determine representative behaviour. While they certainly condition it, MPs may utilise them creatively to make their claims culturally resonant.

The structure of this chapter follows the structure of the previous one. I first examine the ways MPs construct themselves and their roles, moving then to the portrayals of ethnic groups and finishing with the role of different audiences in the representative process.

5.2. Constructing a representative

In this section, I examine how MPs from minority backgrounds construct themselves as descriptive and substantive representatives of minorities. All the MPs invited the audience to recognise their claims based on their ethnic credentials and their sharing in the experience of the ethnic group they claimed to represent. In addition, they portrayed themselves as substantive representatives, whose primary representative function was to provide either service or policy benefits to their communities. Regardless of power sharing guarantees, their efforts were not necessarily successful: success seems to be more dependent on the international community's backing than on MPs' veto powers. Hence, alongside constituencies themselves, the international community ranks amongst the MPs' most important audiences. The analysis offered below shows that MPs construct themselves differently depending on their relationship to constituents and audience. This supports my earlier argument about the complexity and dynamics of representation – how its form shifts according to its audience and function.

5.2.1. Descriptive representation

Claims by minority MPs in Kosovo confirm my argument that just as identity is not simply a "thing", descriptive representation is not simply a given. Both are rather the result of complex and ongoing processes of social identification to which politics, and, in particular, the politics of minority claim-making is integral. In Kosovo, perhaps more clearly than in Serbia, we see how the internal project of constructing a sense of commonality, or similarity, work in tandem

with the construction of a sense of difference from external Others. MPs invite the audience to recognise the represented as internally ethnically and culturally homogenous based on MPs' construal of themselves as embodiments of these groups and their "naturalised" distinctive traits.

As I argued in the introduction, ethnic identity remains central to discourses about the war and what is presented as its on-going continuation by other means. In countries where, in spite of being institutionalised, ethnicity remains so closely associated with conflict and violence, it tends to shape emphatically the positioning and role of political representatives. Claims made by the minority MPs in the Kosovo parliament show that Kosovo is not an exception:

Since the war, it has always been: I am a Serb and I look after my interests; he is Albanian and he cares about his interests. I am sure and have seen in a number of cases that Albanians are not interested to improve the living conditions for the Serb community because they would be criticised by their community. At the beginning when we came here, when we started working, some [Albanian] MPs talked to us when we went abroad to Brussels, Germany, or somewhere else, but when we came back to Kosovo, they behave as if we did not know each other (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

This claim suggests that identities are, as the late cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1996) argued, strategic and positional, rather than essential. Identity is constructed as exclusionary: a true representative of an ethnic group is expected to create internal boundaries of collective authenticity and to define these against external boundaries towards other groups and their representatives. These boundaries are meant to exclude audiences beyond the constituency and limit representation to a unidirectional and inviolable relationship between representatives and their constituents. A representative typically speaks about the interests and identities of her ethnic group as if they were natural and inevitable and as if her legitimacy depended solely on recognition by the constituency. Any claims to speak beyond one's own ethnic group or across constituencies would therefore risk making representatives illegitimate. This is not to deny however that the performance of identity varies strategically before different audiences (e.g., in front of international actors or the local constituency). On the contrary, as we shall see, MPs redefine their role as representative differently as the context of action shifts.

Similar to Serbia, MPs in Kosovo make a claim to authenticity in constructing themselves as descriptive representatives. Descriptive representation is depicted as a true personification of one's ethnic group and its naturally defining characteristics. It does not depend on electoral authorisation or affiliation with minority parties; it is about *who* a representative *really is*. Being one of them and being one with them are taken as synonymous

and as a guarantee that the representative cannot harm the community's interests. She shares in their experience and will always act in the knowledge of it: "I do not need any or anyone's glasses to understand the reality in which Serb community has been living all these years" (Vesna Mikić, PT, 19.03.2012). This MP suggests that her relationship to the constituency is direct: she does not need anyone's mediation or interpretation to know her constituency and what is of worth to it. As one of them, she could not possibly think or do anything differently than the constituents themselves.

For minority MPs, furthermore, being authentic refers to being rooted in the territory, with territory and identity being equally fixed, and unmoveable by external influences:

I was born in Kosovo, I went to school in Kosovo, I was here during the war, I married in Kosovo, have a child in Kosovo and actually I can say that I have not left Kosovo for a single day (Živković, Interview, 2014).

The representative's undisputed rootedness in the territory makes her a true representative of the Kosovo Serb community. In the context of Kosovo, this is a particularly important claim to make: many people have left or plan to leave the economically poor post-conflict society, in which minorities feel unwelcome. Yet, the representatives speak for those who have decided to stay and aim to convince them that Kosovo is also their home. In not sending their families to Serbia and in not planning to leave themselves, they are affirming their commitment to community.

This understanding of authenticity differs from the one developed in the claims of minority MPs in Serbia. As I argued in the previous chapter, minority MPs in Serbia framed authenticity as emerging from a direct electoral link with minority voters (that is, as emerging primarily from authorisation). Minority MPs in Kosovo do not connect authenticity with authorisation, but to an independent, untainted and direct connection with the group, a "personification" (ethnicity internalised in absolute personal self-identification) which then implies no need for accountability (cf. Saward, 2009).

Group unity and an unmediated relationship between the representatives and the represented were also evoked in other claims about the capacity to identify material interests:

Our contribution, as legitimate representatives of our communities in the Kosovo institutions, comes from the fact that we are every day in touch with all the problems and challenges faced by our community and we feel them completely (Petar Miletić, PT, 18.10.2012).

A representative shares the same living experience as his constituency, which enables him to not only *know* but also to see from their perspective, *feel* their worries and *share in* their interests. According to this claim, a representative is one with the community: he does not only give it voice, but rather enables its full presence on the political stage.

This close and direct relationship between representatives and the represented is constructed as an even stronger bond in the following claim by an Ashkali MP:

No one can defend a minority interest if he is not a member of that group. I say it as a politician and a lawyer. Until you have your man, no one can defend you. That is the same as having a small child. A neighbour cannot breastfeed your child. And this works for all parties (Ademi, Interview, 2014).

Politics is here constructed as war-like and the relationship between minority constituencies and their representatives compared to that between a baby and a mother, in which dependency is total. One of the main roles of a mother is to look after and protect her child. Like mothers, representatives are expected to be unselfish and fully committed to their children. Moreover, a mother gives birth to a child; not only does she breastfeed the child, but its very existence and developing personality also depend on her. Read in this way, and perhaps against the representative's original intention, this claim reveals the truth about the act of representing. For it speaks not only about the constitution of a representative, but also about the power of representatives to shape ethnic identities and bring interests into being: to give them form. A representative does not merely repeat what is already there, representation also constitutes minorities as what they are (Thomassen, 2007, p. 116). Therefore, while the above-mentioned claims aim to portray representation as mere *presentation*, in effect they invoke the constitutive and performative dimensions of representation.

Claims to authenticity were particularly emphasised by the Serb MPs because their identity and ethnic loyalty are under fire by the kin-state:

It hurts me that they call us *Thaçi's*¹⁵ Serbs because I am not, I am Serb and I protect Serb interests.... We recognise that the only way out for survival and to stay in this region is to enter the institutions of Kosovo and fight for Serb interests, for our rights. This is the only way, by boycotting you do not get anything (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

Serb MPs in the Kosovo parliament are often portrayed as traitors in Serbia because of their cooperation with the Kosovo institutions. The metaphor '*Thaçi's Serbs*' alludes to their betrayal of Serbian interests by their participation in what are considered illegitimate institutions and their resulting legitimisation. This external pressure imposes a huge constraint on the performance of representation: to make their claims culturally resonant, MPs would be expected to demonstrate their loyalty to Serbia by being uncooperative and resisting ethnic Albanian state-building efforts. In interviews, however, MPs claimed that instead of giving in to such pressures, their strategy was to redescribe the meaning of betrayal and loyalty.

¹⁵ Hashim Thaçi was the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo from 2007-2014. In 2016 he was elected the President of Kosovo.

First, they claim that substantive representation or the advancement of the interests of their community can be delivered only through participation and compromise; it is not a betrayal of interests if one is doing what is necessary to pursue these effectively. Second, they argue that “good representatives” of the Kosovo Serbs are not those loyal to Serbia but those loyal to the Kosovo Serbs. The stress is therefore on local identification and loyalty as the pursuit of local symbolic and material interests. Hence, Serbia’s position is not to be followed blindly. Instead the representatives of Kosovo Serbs must think independently about ways of strengthening local identity and pursuing what is locally valued:

There are these good representatives of their communities who are real Serbs, who are from Kosovo, who think independently and who understand this process in time ... They understood it in the way that integration in Kosovo institutions and Kosovo society is their only salvation, the only solution for survival and existence. It is easy from a comfortable chair to dictate the tempo of living 350km away; that is very nice and comfortable, but the situation here and our living conditions are different (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

According to this claim, a good representative is more loyal to Kosovo Serbs than Serbia. Since the territory of Kosovo is currently under Albanian rule, if Serbs want to stay in Kosovo they have to integrate in Kosovo society. On the other hand, those who follow directions from Belgrade are constructed as giving up on Kosovo and thereby the Kosovo Serbs. Interestingly, while authenticity is usually defined as the politics of intransigence, for Serb representatives authentic politics is a politics of compromise and cooperation:

Our biggest problem is our lack of unity in Kosovo, our divisions and our self-promotion of someone else’s politics. We do not have a politics that is the politics of Kosovo Serbs, an authentic politics of Kosovo Serbs. This is necessary for us (Marinković, Interview, 2014).

Because of the lack of adequate support from Belgrade, Serb MPs claim that they “feel like orphans in a military school, who are left alone in a graduation ceremony and everyone else’s parents came to support” (Milosavljević, Interview, 2014). The metaphors used in this claim portray beautifully an image of representatives as inexperienced children who need the care and support of their parents – in this case the kin-state – but have been abandoned by them. MPs portray themselves as left to their own devices in parliament. But the long arm of Serbia makes itself felt in other ways: the play of loyalty to Serbia creates disunion; it divides them against themselves. This is strengthened by the portrayal of the Kosovo parliament as a military school. Being in a war zone requires joining forces and acting as one before the enemy. But what one witnesses is rather internal division, which undermines the development of a true politics of Kosovo Serbs, the only one that can serve their interests.

Being abandoned by Serbia should, however, encourage them to do the contrary: that is, to develop their own, independent, politics of Kosovo Serbs. Amongst other things, this politics includes integration into the Kosovo institutions and cooperation with the majority. In making such claims, MPs challenge the culturally accepted norms that no cooperation is possible with the enemy. In order to make such claims legitimate they argue that an orientation towards cooperation and compromise does not exclude resistance. On the contrary, their mere presence in Kosovo institutions disrupts Albanian goals of creating an Albanian ethnic state:

They are bothered by our presence. The Vetevendosje¹⁶ party cannot stand to even watch us and they would prefer that we were not around anywhere, and especially in the Kosovo Assembly. They would like to rule everything. Maybe that is hidden somewhere deep in other political parties, but definitely, it would have been easier for them if Serb representatives were not here (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

The presence of Serb MPs in the Kosovo parliament suggests that the institutions of Kosovo do not belong to Albanians only, and that Serbs have the right to participate in them and shape them.

By being present in parliament, MPs send a message that minority groups are an integral part of Kosovo. After the proclamation of Kosovo independence, those minorities, which were on the side of Serbia during the war, did not feel welcome in the new Albanian state. The presence of Serb representatives in parliament is in itself a claim to ownership over Kosovo and perceived as such. It also reduces their fear of the Albanian majority and encourages their constituents to act in the same way:

Until I started working here in Prishtina in the assembly, I was afraid to leave the borders of the enclaves. There was always fear. That is not the case now. I believe that my example also shows others that they could also venture outside the areas of enclaves and that that is the only way to check what is permitted and what is not and that this is the only way to try, literally, to build a life. This process is not finished and we will need a lot of time, but it is worth trying (Živković, Interview, 2014).

These claims indicate how mere presence can do things: it shapes a state identity and makes a claim to its ownership. Hence, presence is never passive, as suggested in the previous literature (Htun, 2016). Presence itself performs representation by speaking to the audience about the group and its rightful belonging.

Institutional incentives such as reserved seats and a cultural background of deep ethnic divisions position minority MPs in the Kosovo parliament as descriptive representatives

¹⁶ An Albanian radical nationalist political party that opposes any negotiations with Serbia and any international involvement in Kosovo's state building. Their ideology is based on ethnic nationalism which excludes the recognition of minority groups: they could only be recognised as individual citizens of Kosovo.

even before they make any claim based on their ethnicity. This allows them to make convincing claims about minorities more easily. Hence, the rootedness of their claims in their descriptive similarity to the constituency is self-understood; it does not have to be made explicitly. This explains why most of their claims to authenticity analysed in this section were made in interviews rather than plenary speeches. In interviews, MPs constructed themselves more explicitly as being one with the group, a genuine expression of the pre-constituted minority identity and interests. At the same time, institutional design and a recent history of ethnic conflict foreground the representation of ethnicity, they also act as a constraint: minority MPs feel prevented from making any claims beyond minority groups and their interests:

We are not given space to discuss issues or topics related to life in general, that is, economy, law, any other area. Instead, we are always invited there where we have to discuss minority communities and defend our communities. I do not like this political discrimination (Redžepi, Interview, 2014).

Descriptive similarity is used as a resource in performing substantive representation, but it also imposes a limit on how far the “substance” of that representation might extend – not economy or law in general, but “minority matters” (or economy and law only insofar as it intersects with these). To legitimise themselves in advancing these, MPs construct themselves as having an unmediated relationship with the constituency. Their claims are not tainted by any mediation including mediation by the kin state; they are authentic embodiments of the true minority identity, which enables them to know and advance true minority interests. Here again descriptive and substantive representation do not work as separate and independent representative forms, but rather as dynamic and intertwined positions representatives strategically take and seek to mutually reinforce.

Finally, my findings show that it is not possible to separate the components of a representative claim except analytically. In constructing themselves as legitimate, representatives necessarily evoke their relationship with the constituency offering thereby a particular portrayal of it. In the above claims, we saw representatives constructing the constituency as an inward-oriented, unitary group, bearing natural interests and a fixed identity. MPs further claimed that it is in the minority interest to integrate with the wider society and be allowed to think independently, unconstrained by any external pressure, be it of the party or of the kin state. In the following sections I focus in more detail on the claims that construct minority constituencies and their interests.

5.2.2. Substantive representation

In addition to descriptive representation, minority MPs portray themselves as substantive representatives. According to them, acting on behalf of what they perceive as the minority interest is at the core of representation. In their speeches, interest representation is operationalised in two ways: first, through providing services such as employment and investments and second, through policy influence.

In contrast to those minority representatives in Serbia who framed themselves as powerless idealists, MPs in Kosovo argue that a representative should be ready to compromise in order to achieve a benefit for minority groups:

One cannot protect the national interest by chest beating and saying I am a Serb, mother Serbia, Belgrade, etc. No, if you want to protect the interests of your community, be present in a parliamentary committee, defend the interests of your community there, propose amendments, make a suggestion, fight to convince other members of the committee to support your proposal. Fight, rather than thinking that you will defend Serb interests by making nationalistic arguments once in three years, while you have zero minutes of parliamentary speeches or only a single speech (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

Painful compromise, as some call it, is less painful than constant decay and falling behind the civilised world, which is the consequence of a frozen conflict (Petar Miletić, PT, 21.04.2013).

This understanding of substantive representation is similar to the representatives' understanding of authenticity. An authentic representative is perceived as someone who is aware of the political reality in Kosovo and claims that the only way to give voice to minorities is through participation in Kosovo institutions. Active participation in Kosovo institutions is also constitutive of substantive representation. Neither providing services nor policy influence may be achieved without presence at the negotiating table and readiness to compromise and cooperate with the majority ethnic group. Below, I explore in more detail how MPs perform substantive representation in these two different ways.

5.2.2.1. Providing services and pork-barrel representation

Services and pork-barrel politics constitute a significant aspect of the work of minority representatives. According to minority MPs, their work in parliament is not judged by their legislative work, but by the number of favours done to the constituents:

My greatest success is when I go back to my municipality and meet my citizens and when a citizen tells me that he is satisfied with my work... that I made him a certain favour because we have many problems with the administration. Many of our citizens from the municipality of Štrpce were born in Prishtina before the bombing, before the war. The problem is now that all the documents such as birth certificates, citizenship certificates and certificates of residence may only be obtained in Prishtina, but there is no direct bus line between Štrpce and Prishtina. We, then, collected these documents, applied for them in Prishtina and took them to the citizens (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

The claim below also speaks about different services representatives provide to members of their communities:

I invested 700.000 euros last year in a village where only Ashkali live... there are 44 houses there. Twenty five people were employed in the government. We registered 77 students at different faculties in Kosovo and we still help them (Ademi, Interview, 2014).

In addition to efforts to secure particularised benefits for members of their ethnic groups, minority MPs define their parliamentary role as “allocation responsiveness which refers to the representative's efforts to obtain benefits for his constituency through pork-barrel exchanges in the appropriations process or through administrative interventions” (Eulau and Karps, 1977, p. 241). Pork-barrel politics relates to representative's efforts to obtain government funding for local projects benefiting solely the MP's constituency. The following claim offers numerous examples of pork-barrel politics such as providing funding for the water system, reconstruction of roads and electricity networks:

My greatest success relates to the investments we made. One may like you or not, but they have to respect you because you brought them a water system, because you made a road, because you reconstructed the electricity network, because you paved all the streets in the villages. There are no Bosniak villages where streets are not paved. We made ten sport halls, eighteen sports stadiums. We employed 47 people in the public institutions (Redžepi, Interview, 2014).

In this understanding, representation is about securing particular services and material benefits, rather than wider policy reforms or ideological attachment. Minority MPs serve as group patrons who allocate resources to their communities in exchange for legislative salaries (King and Marian, 2012, p. 584-585). Constructing politics in such a way diverts audiences' attention from claims made in the parliament. What representatives do or claim in the plenary sessions or committee meetings is relatively irrelevant for the constituents and hence, there is no need that they account for their parliamentary behaviour. Actual representation occurs behind the scene, in making agreements that bring material subsidies and an array of services to the communities. This, further, implies that constituents do not have the necessary capacity to hold their representatives to account: the negotiation processes relevant for the

advancement of minority interests are hidden from their view, for only secrecy allows for concessions without loss of face. All that needs to be known is a profitable outcome.

5.2.2.2. Power to influence policies

Minority MPs also argue that policy influence constitutes an important part of their parliamentary role. Nevertheless, they make contradictory claims about the resources that enable them to exercise this influence. On the one hand, their powers arise from the power sharing guarantees, but on the other hand, these powers would be ineffective if it were not for the mediation of the international community. The portrayal of MPs as influential based on the constitutional power sharing guarantees is visible in the following claims:

Nothing important for our country and related to the rights of minority communities can be changed without the 80 MPs and two thirds of MPs from minority communities. We even have a consultative council for communities within the office of the president. We have an office of community affairs within the Prime Minister's Office. Our man, a Serb, runs the Ministry for Communities and Return. A Serb from a minority community runs the ministry for work and social benefits. What also matters is that we have a functional parliamentary committee for minority communities, which has 12-13 members out of which nine are from minority communities. This means that no law can be adopted without our consent (Kinolli, Interview, 2014).

We as minorities are the deciding factor. Absolutely no law can be adopted without our votes. And that feels really good to know... I understand the Albanian community. That strength feels really good. You know how you feel in a moment when before voting 50 people from parliament call you and tell that something is important for the Albanian community. And then you tell them to wait. It is very important to be a deciding factor and we as a community, all communities in Kosovo are a deciding factor (D. Balje, Interview, 2014).

These claims speak about how politics is performed in the Kosovo parliament. Their veto powers enable them to advance their interests, but more importantly, to trump the will of the majority. While presenting themselves as cooperative, MPs at the same time suggest that this cooperation comes at a certain price. They do not merely give in to Albanian interests, but use their positive powers to achieve their goals. The claims also speak about how constituencies are defined in Kosovo politics: coalitions among MPs and the interests they pursue are defined exclusively in terms of ethnicity.

The same MPs, however, also argued that minorities' influence on decision-making is only an illusion because their relationship with the majority MPs is effectively mediated by international actors. Referring to themselves as "children of the international community"

(Bontić, Interview, 2014), several MPs argued that their voice makes a difference and is conducive to change only if international actors support the demands being made:

My mission is to use every opportunity to achieve what I want, and I know how big these opportunities are. These opportunities are usually zero if we do not make other factors care about it, primarily the international community (Stojanović, Interview, 2014).

Our strength is not in numbers. Our strength is actually in political activities outside parliament, in communication with what we call the international community, which I would say refers to the EU, the embassy of the USA, and the Office of the ICO. Because, it would be easy to out-vote us in parliament, but simply because of our political activities and understanding of the international community, we manage to prevent some things (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

On the other hand, the international community is portrayed as not only supportive to MPs but also as dictating their actions. Therefore, while their vote may be necessary for decision-making, nothing can be done without the approving seal of international actors:

Of course, I cannot forget about the influence of the American embassy or other international institutions. They put pressure on us very often and in this term, we have often been forced to vote for something, that I personally would not vote for, but the influence of the embassy is as it is and it is often decisive and they often blackmail, but that is politics (D. Balje, Interview, 2014).

Showing how MPs shift their position from powerful and influential, to weak and dependent on external support, and even to one in which they are manipulated by the international community, the above claims support earlier theoretical arguments about the performativity and dynamics of representation. These claims serve different purposes. The first allows MPs to justify their presence in the parliament before their constituents: it is important that we are there; we are capable and powerful enough to advance your interests. The second claim, however, brings them closer to the constituents: we are as powerless and marginalised as you are despite all these guarantees that seemingly grant us power and influence. Insiderness and outsidership work here as constructed and shifting identities, allowing MPs to do different things, rather than binaries.

This section shows how acting for minorities may be understood differently depending on the context. While minority parties in Serbia framed substantive representation as making the public more aware of minority issues, despite generalised exclusion from decision-making, Kosovo minority parties' understanding of acting for minority interests is closer to the one advanced by MPs from majority parties in Serbia. Both service provision and policy influence rely on the definition of substantive representation as a consequential action, i.e. achieving concrete and visible benefits for the constituency. These different performances of substantive representation are similar, however, in that none of them questions the transparency of

minority interests and MPs' capacity to know these interests in advance of political engagement and to act upon them in the best possible way. Constructing themselves as the true embodiment of their groups is presented as sufficient to make MPs capable of knowing and advancing their constituency' interests: the ruling assumption is here that ethnic differences define clear-cut differences of interests which are then capable of unequivocally guiding the political action that best serves them.

5.3. Constructing constituency: what is it in the name?

The previous section explored the way representatives construe their parliamentary roles and achievements. I indicated there that representatives constructed their constituencies as unitary identity groups with an interest in integrating in Kosovo society despite inter-ethnic differences and hostilities. In this section, I explore in more detail how representatives construct ethnic groups as politically relevant through their portrayal of group characteristics, interests and identities.

The politics of naming is one of the ways in which minority identities are constructed. In Kosovo, minorities prefer to be called 'communities' rather than 'ethnic minorities'. Every time they are referred to as minorities, minority MPs insist on a correction because "our Constitution does not recognise the Roma minority, but the Roma community" (Albert Kinolli, PT, 06.10.2011). The naming of their groups is so important to the communities, that it is included in the Kosovo Constitution. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the term 'minority' has negative connotations for minorities (especially the Serbs). Although Serbs have been a numerical minority in Kosovo, they have for centuries perceived themselves as a titular nation in Kosovo. Being called a national minority suggests that Kosovo is not part of Serbia anymore, which is something Serbs do not accept. Second, the terminology aims to suggest equality between Albanian and non-Albanian populations. It sends a message to Albanians that they are not getting the position of a majority oppressor with the right to discriminate against ethnic groups with smaller populations (Toth and Vizi, 2014).

Naming is, further, used to construct the Serb community as politically relevant and other communities as an indistinct mass. Rather than being called by their names, non-Serb communities are often addressed as 'Other communities'. One of the Serb MPs acknowledges: "They are offended a lot when someone says Albanian, Serb community and the others. They get so offended by this 'Others' because, as they say, no one even cares to say out loud a full

name of their community” (Kostić, Interview, 2014). In the eyes of non-Serb representatives, Serbs are portrayed as an over-privileged group:

The most famous ministry in this Government, the Ministry for Communities, has allocated the majority of its budget to the Serb community and now the projects are again planned for this community... The budget will be spent only on this community, while other communities can only hope for the hot summers to live on sunlight. I mean seriously, as a representative of the Egyptian community, although here everyone speaks about the communities’ and minorities’ rights, my community has had for many years only few projects from the Ministry of Communities and Return (Xhevdet Neziraj, PT, 25.03.2011).

The same representative refers to the Ministry for Communities and Return as “the Ministry of Brotherhood and Unity” because “half of its employees are Serbs and another half are Albanians” (Xhevdet Neziraj, PT, 06.06.2013). By using this label, the MP constructs a new political unity against which they define themselves as an outside. His rhetorical use of ‘brotherhood’ suggests that this unity is not only interest based, but signifies a sense of affection, belonging and internal harmony. The following claim about Serbs, like those above, functions to construct non-Serb minorities as politically excluded and discriminated against:

We had a problem in the law on education: the ministry of education has to print and donate the textbooks from the first to ninth grade to Albanian children. The following article states that the same applies to Serb children, while for other minority communities it states ‘when needed’. What does that mean? That is against the law on communities, against children’s rights, against communities, and against the Constitution... My children have to buy textbooks, while Albanians and Serbs receive them as a gift. I do not know what to say... this is discrimination (Şinik, Interview, 2012).

While representative claims in Serbia construct a strategic unity of different minority groups through the use of label ‘national minorities’, in Kosovo the evoked intra-group differences exceed any joint interest. Understanding politics as war not only shapes the relations between Serbs and Albanians as the main actors in conflict, but also the claims about other groups and their inter-ethnic relations. I argued in the previous chapter that MPs from majority parties in Serbia evoke civic rather than ethnic nationalism (Markell, 2000) as that which brings them together in one political unit. In Kosovo, even the efforts to produce collective identification are based on ethnicity:

Serbs have a strong ethnic identity, equal to that of Albanians and all previous efforts in this region to identify us as Kosovars were not successful because neither Serbs nor Albanians wanted it. Of course, others do not want it too, Turks do not want it, but a relationship between Serbs and Albanians is crucial for the stability of Kosovo. Therefore, our identity is strong and each of us... I teach my children that they are Serbs; my Albanian colleagues teach their children that they are Albanians (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

These external efforts to produce a Kosovar identity were bound to fail as they were not embraced from within. The idea of a Kosovar identity is depicted as artificial, if not superimposed and fake, while specific ethnic identifications are presented as natural. In contrast to specific group identities, the term Kosovar does not carry any emotive charge or positive connotation. It works almost as an empty and meaningless vessel. However, the claim above shows that group identities are historically and politically constructed, the outcome of long and complex processes of social identification, in which politics plays a constitutive role. Whether individuals see themselves as Kosovars or united around a fixed and specific Serb or Albanian identity depends on the cultural context and political circumstances underpinning the sedimentation of their chief identification. In this context, Hall rightly argued that:

Identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the 'positive' meaning of any term - and thus its 'identity' - can be constructed (Hall, 1996, p. 4-5).

Language is one of the key mechanisms MPs employ in the process of constructing group unity in opposition to “Others” or the constitutive outside emphasised by Hall. It is widely understood as a key ethnic boundary marker. If language barriers cannot be crossed, ethnic boundaries become impermeable too:

It is good that you can say Turks are Turks, Albanians are what they are; it is good that our rights are legally protected, but the problem is that we used to speak all the languages before, and now they do not. The youth does not. For example, Serbs speak Serbian, Albanians Albanian, Turks Turkish and in schools they are not in touch often, they do not make mutual friendships, because of which I am scared for the future (Şinik, Interview, 2014).

This suggests that “the 'unities' that identities proclaim are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion” – in which policies such as those affecting the school curriculum and the teaching of language can perform a vital result (Hall, 1996, p. 5). Identities are therefore “the result, not of a natural and inevitable or primordial totality but of the naturalized, overdetermined process of 'closure'” (Hall, 1996, p. 5). I explore these processes in more detail below. In contrast to Serbia where claims about minorities are focused on what brings them together as a group and as national minorities in general, groups in Kosovo are discursively brought together based primarily on their difference from Others. Rather than bringing to the floor what might connect minority communities, in Kosovo the identity of each of the groups took centre stage and became invariably constructed in opposition to the “constitutive outside” offered by other communities.

5.3.1. Old and new boundaries: constructing Kosovo Serb identity

Serb representatives constructed the identity of the Serb community in opposition to Albanians: "There are great differences between the Serb and Albanian communities related to language, culture, religion, these are literally extreme differences, there is nothing that connects us" (Živković, Interview, 2014). The representative sends a message that reconciliation is impossible and that Serbs and Albanians cannot live together. On a policy level, these claims serve to justify the separation of ethnic groups and requests for decentralisation and autonomy. More than geographical categories, proximity and distance become categories through which communities and individuals experience their affinities or the lack thereof. An image of Serbs and Albanians in physical proximity yet worlds apart is portrayed rather strongly in the following intervention:

We still live in separate societies. Gračanica [Serb municipality] is 3-4km away, but still they live their life there and these people in Prishtina theirs and Albanians have become professionals in treating Gračanica as invisible. ... When he goes from Prishtina to Gnjilane via Gračanica, I have an impression that he passes with his eyes closed. I pass by and I do not want to know that there are Serbs here. And the other way around: I travel from Gračanica to Mitrovica [Serb municipality] to the university and I do not want to know that there is any life between Gračanica and Mitrovica. I close my eyes when I leave Gračanica and open them again when I enter North Mitrovica (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

Serb and Albanian identities are performed in this claim through mutual negation. This claim suggests that existence of Serbs is only possible by denying – literally closing one's eyes to – the "Others". Similarly, another representative aims to construct group unity by evoking fear of Albanisation, of which language – and the stealing of identity it might perform – is the marker:

I would like to ask you to provide me with an identification card which will not identify me as "zonja" [Mrs. in Albanian], but as Rada Trajković. Therefore, discrimination and Albanisation of my Serb name and title should not be a reality (Rada Trajković, PT, 22.02.2011).

She suggests that Albanians do not recognise Serbs and their culture and continue persecuting Serbs even after the war but by different means – in this particular case by renaming them in the official documents. By refusing to be addressed in the Albanian language, she also suggests that a 'true' Serb is one who denies its legitimacy as a dominant language and, hence Kosovo as an Albanian state. Kosovo state is delegitimised not only through verbal utterances, namely hegemonic re-naming, but also non-verbally:

I always say Kosovo and Metohija and that annoys them, but I want to make them accept freedom of speech in parliament. I am not ready to give up on that. For example, when electronic voting is off, I raise three fingers. That would not cross my mind, it would not be so important if we were not in the situation we are, if my people were not isolated, like in Klina – they returned, but they shoot at them – so I want to encourage them. Even in the middle of Prishtina, I show that I am a Serb (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

This claim indicates how naming and body language may be used as powerful tools for the production of ethnic boundaries. The Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija was an official name for the territory before the war. Serbs have used Kosovo as a name for the eastern part of the province and Metohija¹⁷ for the western part. When Albanians declared independence in 2008, they dropped the term Metohija, naming the country only Kosovo or Kosova/ë in Albanian. For both Serbs and Albanians, the phrase Kosovo and Metohija has a Serbian connotation that symbolises Serbia's ownership of the territory. The gesture of raising three fingers carries the same symbolism. It is a Serb salute that symbolises Serbian Orthodoxy and belonging to the Serbian nation. Using these symbols in the Kosovo parliament suggests that Albanian efforts to create an ethnic Albanian state face Serbian resistance. The gesture undermines the effort: it implies that Albanians have failed and that Kosovo still belongs to Serbs. Claims to the state ownership are not only characteristic of Kosovo; they generally tend to constitute nationalist discourses during and after ethnic conflicts (Brubaker, 2015). Non-verbal language is particularly important as it enables representatives to address a wider audience. Since minority representatives address parliament in minority languages, their claims remain imperceptible to the wider Albanian audience. In contrast, culturally recognised gestures, such as the three finger salute, make a strong cross-community impact as they are easily read and interpreted by all in the intended way – i.e., as defiance. They also arouse much stronger emotions than reason-based claims.

Depictions of Serb constituents as opposed to the ethnic majority are complemented by images of Serbs as victims, or prisoners in their own country, threatened and sentenced to “solitary confinement” by Albanians (Vesna Mikić, PT, 01.11.2012):

Twelve years have passed since the conflict in Kosovo and the position of Serb community has not improved much. This claim is supported by the arrests last week when the members of Special Units of Kosovo Police in a bandit way broke into houses and with an extreme demonstration of force; they arrested six people, whose only guilt was that they travel to Vranje every day to provide existence for their families. During the arrest, the fully armed special forces even used swearwords that offend Serb mothers, saying that Serbs do not belong in Kosovo but in Serbia (Vesna Mikić, PT, 01.03.2012).

¹⁷ The term Metohija is derived from the word *metoh*, which means Orthodox Church ground (Kostovicova, 2005).

Suggesting that Serbs are exposed to discrimination and ethnic hatred, one representative argues: “We have constantly been living in what my parents, what my grandparents called ‘Albanian times’ or ‘Serb times’ and we constantly have some time when one group dominates over the others” (Miletić, Interview, 2014). Since the end of the war,

Every new day brings a new unpleasant surprise to the Serb people. Threatening graffiti are written on the Serb monasteries. Topographical signs and signposts in the Serbian language have been painted over with black paint. The declarations on food products are only in the Albanian language. The names of some places have been changed, and signs on some of public institutions of Kosovo are only in one language. As a warning they have started sending us leaflets that clearly say what would happen if we stayed in our centuries-old homes. And that, gentlemen deputies proved to be true, threats became truth, the houses of the returnees who have returned to the village Drenovac, Klinja municipality were burnt yesterday (Goran Marinković, PT, 24.05.2012).

Intimidation, violence and negation of the right to the use of language, they all speak about the threatened position of Serbs on both physical and cultural levels. In the interviews, representatives’ insistence on the recognition of their difference from the majority worked in tandem with a continuing attempt to suppress differences and internal dissent within their own groups:

Albanians are so different from us. They may have diverse political ideologies, but when their national interest is questioned, they are all united, which is not the case with us Serbs... It is harder to reach a goal when we are divided. Essentially, we are all Serbs, right?! I still believe in good people with honest intentions and because of that, although we might be divided by name or a different political vision, I believe that our common vision should be survival, stay and exist (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

This call for a unified political perspective suggests that there is no place for contestation when group interests are at stake. Claiming that ideological diversity does not include a debate on identity and associated interests, here reduced to a minimum uncontested common denominator – survival, the representative assumes that the interests of identity are undebatable. In other words, between identity and its interests the link is natural and necessary. These disciplinary tendencies undermine their own democratic appeals for difference and the protection of their rights to dissent (see Beltran, 2010, p. 56-75).

Similarly, MPs’ appeals against exclusion are followed by their own exclusionary tendencies. The calls of minority representatives for the exclusion of Albanians from municipalities with a Serb majority bring their demands for inclusion and justice into question:

We have a municipality with the Serb majority, which is increasingly being Albanised. They are buying the land ... trying to increase the number of Albanians. If this is not prevented, we will have an equal number of Serbs and Albanians in the municipality of Gračanica for the next elections (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

The above claims should not be read as calls against ethnic hatred as such. Discrimination and the exclusion of minorities are illegitimate only when they are directed towards members of their own groups. Rather than embracing difference and tolerance, in areas where they are in the majority minority MPs demonstrate the same behaviour as the one they fight against in parliament. The performative contradiction is real but not necessarily perceived as such by the constituencies.

Despite the portrayal of Serbs as victims, Serb constituencies are invited to be cooperative and integrate in Kosovo society. The same MP who raised three fingers in parliament, claimed on another occasion that her parliamentary role is “to build a better future together with all MPs for all residents of this territory” (Rada Trajković, PT, 22.02.2011). Pointing to the intertwined destinies of Albanians and Serbs, there was a consensus among Serb MPs that “integration in the Kosovo institutions is the only hope for survival and existence” (Kostić, Interview, 2014) and that “if we want these institutions to change and have a different approach to Serbs and the Serb community in Kosovo, Serbs have to participate actively regardless of how hard, embarrassing and insufficient that is” (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

In order to justify their presence in Kosovo institutions, they tried to persuade Serbs that essentially they have not lost Kosovo even after independence:

Serbian is an official language according to the law on the use of language, official languages and script in Kosovo. This law is based on the International Convention on the protection of Civic and Political Rights and European Convention on the Human Rights Protection (Biserka Kostić, PT, 15.02.2012).

Keeping Serbian as an official language in Kosovo in addition to Albanian, is particularly important because language is generally understood the trademark of nationality and statehood. The embeddedness of Kosovo legislation in the international norms is an even firmer guarantee that the right of Serbs to Kosovo is internationally recognised.

In addition to the production of ethnic identity during interaction with ethnic Others, representative claims about Serbs in Kosovo parliament show how ethnic boundaries are also created during interaction between insiders (Jenkins, 2015). These boundaries are produced in relation to Serbs from Serbia and the north of Kosovo. According to a Serb MP,

[Serbia] does not allow us to develop an authentic idea... They humiliate us, I would say, they like to present us only through humanitarian activities as poor and miserable beggars who need to be dressed up, whose kids need to be taken out a bit from the enclaves. They do not want to present us as intellectuals, as educated people, people who can think, who maybe know more than they do (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

As an object of representation, the MP suggests that Serbia's claims about Kosovo Serbs are not successful because they do not resonate with the intended constituency. Instead of accepting such a victimised image, Serb MPs invite their constituents to recognise a competing vision of themselves suggesting that there are "professional and competent people" in the Serb community, regardless of what both Belgrade and Prishtina think (Biserka Kostić, PT, 15.05.2012). In addition, these MPs argue that

The institutions [of the Republic of Serbia], which is the worst, do not recognise us as Serbs. I have always said, we have been defined as equal citizens according to the Serbian Constitution, but when we cross Merdari [the border with Serbia, when we enter Serbia], we are in a thousand ways, because of our territorial background, deprived of the same rights as Serbs in the rest of Serbia regarding many administrative issues, documents, passports, visas, bank loans¹⁸ (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

These claims suggest that ethnic identity not only depends on the ways that group members perceive themselves, but also, and more importantly, on ascription by others, even if these "others" are now "constitutive outside" which is effectively an "inside" (Barth, 1969a, Hall, 1996, Jenkins, 2008). As Jenkins argues:

Our 'cultural stuff' will, even if only in part, reflect our interactions with Other(s): how those Others categorize and behave towards us, how they label us. Nor is this all. Our categorizations of Others, and the routines that we evolve for dealing with them, are also intrinsic to our 'cultural' repertoire. Social interaction at and across the boundary will necessarily involve categorizations: of 'us' by 'them', and of 'them' by 'us' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 171).

Claims that Serbia misrecognises Kosovo Serbs and portrays them in offensive ways serve to constitute a distinct Kosovo Serb identity. It is a warning to Kosovo Serbs that if they do not fight for their own distinct identity, they will eventually become what Serbia makes of them.

Political disputes between Serbia and Kosovo have contributed to the creation of yet another division among Serbs: a division between Serbs from the south of Kosovo and those in the north. Serbs in the north of Kosovo are secluded both spatially and institutionally and see themselves as citizens of Serbia rather than Kosovo. They do not recognise an independent Kosovo and its institutions and Serbia's government still manages and funds parallel institutions (education, health care, social services) there. While the Kosovo state is barely present in the north, Serbs south of the river Ibar do at least partially take part in and cooperate with Kosovar institutions. Although they do not recognise Kosovo's statehood, they participate in Kosovo's institutions and recognise its legislation. This north/south divide

¹⁸ E.g. citizens of Serbia do not need visas for the Schengen countries, but that does not apply to Serb citizens from Kosovo.

inevitably reflects itself in – and is strengthened by – the claims of Serb MPs: “The North is to me the least known part of Kosovo. Actually, I do not even know what is going on there... I would not even feel comfortable to go to the North” (Bontić, Interview, 2014). According to another Serb MP, the potential autonomy of the North of Kosovo “would definitely increase the separation, especially of us south of Ibar, Serbs who live south of Ibar.... I would not want that we in the South get beaten because the North was granted some concessions” (Milosavljević, Interview, 2014).

Although Serb MPs acknowledge the South-North divisions, they do not approve them:

A division between the North and the South is even more harmful than a division between the Albanian and Serb parties, which by the nature of things is fine and will remain for a long time, but the division between Serbs in the North and the South is unacceptable (Živković, Interview, 2014).

By reminding the divided sides of the one body and soul of the nation, representatives seek to performatively reproduce ethnic unity. The above claim suggests that while inter-group divisions are naturally justified, intra-group divisions are manufactured and illegitimate. A group is expected to stand before Others as a united common front, a position that is incompatible with any intra-group disagreements. While MPs call for a pan-ethnic unity, the constructed divisions point to the dynamic and situational side of ethnic identifications.

5.3.2. Emerging identities in a post-conflict society

While representative claims about Serbs were primarily constructed in opposition to the ethnic majority, other communities were primarily portrayed in opposition to each other. During the conflict, members of ethnic groups aligned themselves with either Serbs or Albanians. This produced not only inter-group but also intra-group divisions and contributed to the creation of new ethnic identities.

For instance, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo were often colloquially referred to as “Gypsies” and treated as a single group, but the political interests of the actors in the conflict led to the production of distinct Egyptian and Ashkali identifications. Those who identify as Egyptians now preferred to refer to themselves, before 1990, as Albanian. Yet the production of this identification as Albanian was not successful because it was not recognised by the audience. In other words, they “were discriminated against for not being ‘real Albanian’ and were searching for a new ethnonym” (Lichnofsky, 2013, p. 37). The conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo facilitated the recognition of these ethnic groups in the 1990s. Since

Egyptians previously declared themselves to be Albanian, the Belgrade government welcomed the identification of a new ethnic group because they were interested in decreasing the number of Albanians in Kosovo (Lichnofsky, 2013). Due to cooperation with the Serbian regime, Egyptians were privileged in Kosovo during the years of repression against Albanians. Loyal to Serbia, they were seen as traitors by Albanians after the war. On the other hand, those who now identify as Ashkali took a pro-Albanian side and joined the Kosovo Albanian army in the war against Serbia. They claimed a distinct identity to differentiate themselves from both Egyptians and Roma, who were considered pro-Serbian and as such persecuted by Albanians. The production of Ashkali and Egyptian identifications for political and strategic reasons in the post-conflict Kosovo challenges the usual treatment of groups as natural things in the world.

The construction of Ashkali and Egyptians as distinct identity groups was further reinforced by the Kosovo Constitution, which recognises three separate minority communities and guarantees a parliamentary seat to each of the three groups and an additional seat to one of these three groups, which won the most votes in the elections (Article 64, paragraph 2). Ashkali and Egyptian representatives in the Kosovo parliament embrace distinct group identities and construct their groups in opposition to each other: “the three communities, Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma, have nothing in common; they have different tradition, culture and language” (Danush Ademi, PT, 07.06.2013).

Yet after the war these identities were challenged again when the international community started referring to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians not as distinct groups with their specific identities, but as a union that shares the same characteristics and interests:

The so-called Festival of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Culture... represents a violation of the rights of the Egyptian community in Kosovo. This festival, which is labelled by the organizers as the Week of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Culture, is only a festival of Roma culture that has nothing to do with the Egyptian community in Kosovo. There is no doubt that these actions, sponsored by the EU, represent an effort to achieve certain goals of the lobbies operating in Europe, but they are in contrast to the interests of Kosovo Egyptians (Xhevdet Neziraj, PT, 24.05.2012).

The international community has a powerful role in defining relevant constituencies since their efforts to rename the constituencies are followed by financial support of cultural events and investment projects for the united Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities. Both of these incentives are tempting enough for the local communities to accept the suggested terminology regardless of its implications for specific group identities. Yet, as the above claim suggests, minority representatives resist such attempts by framing those NGOs and government representatives who accept the internationally imposed framing as “swindlers and illiterates who in these projects only see profit and advancement of their own

interests” (Xhevdet Neziraj, PT, 24.05.2012). In contrast, representatives portray their resistance as principled, arguing that grouping the RAE communities together is “a serious violation of community identity... [and] unconstitutional, illegal and has nothing to do with the truth. People of Kosovo have already been confused. They do not know who represents whom and where and who is a member of which community” (Xhevdet Neziraj, PT, 07.06.2013). Minority MPs reclaim their distinct identity and demand the recognition they were constitutionally granted. The invoked confusion of constituencies suggests that these identities are still undeveloped, although minority representatives depict them as real and established.

Moreover, this confusion translates into representative claims as they insist on separating out their constituencies, while at the same time, recognising that there are grounds for formulating common demands:

I want to inform you that on the 20th of May, 2011, thirty eight families of Ashkali, Roma and Egyptian communities left the collective camp in Plemetina in Obilić Municipality for safety reasons, since the building is not safe for housing and almost collapsing. But so far none of the municipal and government bodies have made any visit to these families or taken any steps to help them out. These thirty eight families currently live in the open sky in nylon tents (Danush Ademi, PT, 27.05.2011).

Depictions of RAE communities as sharing the same interests and facing the same problems suggest that the project of constructing RAE as a single group, or at least as a single political subject bearing common demands, is gaining recognition. Such claims unintentionally contribute to the creation of a shared Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian identity.

The process of producing distinct Bosniak and Gorani identities has been similar. The label Gorani was used during the conflict for those citizens of Gora region who cooperated with Serbs. To differentiate themselves from Gorani, citizens of Gora who chose an Albanian side constructed a distinct Bosniak identity:

Both Bosniaks and Gorani are constitutionally recognised minority in Kosovo so it would be illogical to confuse these two communities. You are either Bosniak or Gorani... A difference between Bosniaks and Gorani is very debatable in Kosovo at the moment. I am from Gora, that is, my parents are from Gora. Regionally, I could more than anyone call myself Gorani because my parents and ancestors are from Gora, but we have this phenomenon that Gorani who stayed here have worked in the parallel structures and continued education in Gora, which was connected to Serbia. They have received free textbooks and a much higher salary. This is the parallel system and everyone who was not in this parallel system, practically was not Gorani but something else, that is, Bosniak. Therefore, you essentially have a single group of people, although one part of it, which refers to itself as Gorani, was connected to Serbia and the other part, which felt stronger connection to Kosovo, refers to itself now as Bosniaks. This has expanded after the war and the Bosniaks have become very aware of their identity, they know exactly what they are and where they are from (D. Balje, Interview, 2014).

Despite acknowledging that the two groups have the same origin, this claim shows how ethnicity may be used for political purposes. The representative recognises that boundaries between Bosniaks and Gorani are debatable, but at the same time insists on depicting them as firm and stable. By claiming to represent a distinct Bosniak identity, she contributes to its production. In the process of producing new group identifications, a focus on mutual differences is necessary for the successful construction of a united group identity.

Yet, the difference between Bosniaks and Gorani is not as sharp as their representatives are trying to convince us. In contrast to Ashkali and Egyptian MPs who unintentionally reinforce the creation of the RAE unity, one of the Bosniak MPs strategically created a new political group based on shared Bosniak and Gorani interests. In the interview, where he presented his project more explicitly, he argued that his party has managed to “homogenise Bosniak and Gorani self in a very short time” (H. Balje, Interview, 2014). By using the term ‘self’ for an ethnic group, he seems to be conceiving these ethnic groups as a person with a particular identity, a single organism with its own essence. The new fusion is constructed on claims that ethnic boundaries should not be treated as firm and fixed:

In the Dragaš region, people are not divided into Bosniaks and Gorani, but into two categories: whether they are human beings or not. However, the bad politics of the VAKAT coalition¹⁹ has made people think that you are strictly Martian, rather than also an Earthman (H. Balje, Interview, 2014).

This claim about the permeability of ethnic boundaries does not go uncontested however. While some MPs claim that ethnic boundaries withdraw in the light of the evidence of shared interests and multiple identities, they stress that MPs from competing parties construct harder boundaries still, whereby some ethnic groups find themselves cast out from a common humanity. The metaphor about Martians and Earthmen implies this much. Its intention is to force a radical choice between identities as primary identification, when in effect identities are more permeable, fluid and negotiable.

Nevertheless, this claim was made only for the purpose of the interview and was not directed towards a wider audience. As several other representatives argued, claims about relational and complex identities and the purported unity of Bosniaks and Gorani do not resonate with the constituents:

He is in a Bosniak party... but they lied to people [in Gora] that this was a United Gorani List. They lied to people at every single step...He has his list in Prizren and it is dangerous to say you are Gorani in Prizren because... let us not talk about this... because a Gorani initiative cannot be successful in Prizren and Hamza is not crazy to leave [a Bosniak party] (Haljilji, Interview, 2014).

¹⁹ Coalition of four Bosniak parties, which had two MPs in the 2010-2014 Kosovo parliament.

The claim suggests that a representative declares as either Bosniak or Gorani before different constituents: in Gora where the majority population is Gorani, he framed his electoral list as a United Gorani List, while in Prizren, where Bosniaks are concentrated, he frames himself and his party as Bosniak. His legitimacy is often challenged as his ethnic identity is brought into question: “You should tell me who you are: a Bosniak, Gorani or Serb?” (Kostić, Interview, 2014). This question suggests that only a shared ethnic identity may be the basis for a representative’s recognition. This imposes a strong constraint on the creation of a civic political perspective. If representatives want to speak beyond their ethnic groups, they need to construct themselves as ethnically belonging to each of the groups they claim to represent, but not at the same time, rather interchangeably. The felicity of such claims further depends on how successfully representatives manage to convince each of the ethnic constituencies that their primary identification is with that ethnicity, and that they speak for its members exclusively. However, it is hard to see how such a double act could go on forever.

To conclude, this and the previous section indicate the importance of Other for the construction of ethnic attachments. The production of ethnic unity and homogeneity is easier if the group’s existence is depicted as threatened by the Other, and group interests are reduced to self-preservation. The claims made by representatives in parliament portrayed their constituencies as cohesive groups with shared interests and characteristics. Yet the interviews reveal the existence of internal conflicts and divisions, which suggest that an evoked unity faces challenges. Instead of presenting groups essentially as what they are, the unitary image constructs them as such and seeks to eliminate internal disagreement.

Furthermore, while representatives convince us that their claims about minority groups are accurate presentations of group identity and interests, their claims are not necessarily coherent. For instance, Serb MPs perform group identity through a denial of legitimacy to Kosovo statehood and negation of the Other, while at the same time depicting the group’s essential interest as best protected through integration into the institutions of the new state and cooperation with the ethnic majority, which necessarily implies recognition of the Other. While these contradictory claims are directed towards the same constituency, they are made for different purposes. The first group of claims taps into the shared cultural codes of the Serbian population, inviting the audience to recognise representatives as sharing the same worldviews as their constituents. Based on this, representatives claim to know the interests of their constituents – not those imposed by Serbia or anyone else, but the true interests of the local Serbs. In making such claims, representatives challenge widely accepted cultural beliefs and gradually convince the constituencies to accept and identify around a different vision of themselves, which, with time, might become similarly reified, and talked about as almost a “thing”.

The above claims also show the political and relational side of ethnic identifications and ethnic boundaries. Rather than being static and stable, ethnicity is performed differently depending on political interests and historical circumstances. This is exemplified in constructions of the differences between Bosniaks and Gorani on the one hand, and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians on the other.

5.4. Claim-making before different audiences

The ways in which MPs shape their claims depend significantly on the audience. Institutional, structural and political circumstances determine whom the representatives may address. As I have argued in the previous chapter, in Serbia, MPs primarily address their constituents, party leadership and government representatives. In Kosovo, however, party leadership is rarely addressed. A Bosniak MP explains why this is the case:

An MP is independent in the Assembly of Kosovo, his mandate is personal, independent of a party or president. This means that a party cannot remove an MP, because he was elected by the people. He did not get the votes from the president of the party, but from the people (H. Balje, Interview, 2014).

Since electoral lists are open, voters may vote directly for a candidate rather than a party. For these reasons, it is suggested that party leadership does not have such a strong influence on representative claims in Kosovo as it does in Serbia.

Minority MPs also tend not to address their constituencies directly in parliamentary speeches because of the lack of publicity of parliamentary sessions. Minority communities do not watch TV stations in Albanian, either because of the language barrier or for political reasons, and minority media rarely report from parliament:

Barely any media and any citizen of Serb community in Kosovo know anything about our achievements and our work here in the parliament because... we are left under the cover of darkness by the media... Albanian media are not followed in Serb municipalities because of the language barrier and because, I think, these channels do not even reach our territory (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

Since parliamentary work is invisible to members of minority groups, MPs need to relocate their activities if they want to create a relationship with the constituents. It is not surprising then that MPs construct their parliamentary role around what they can deliver, i.e. pork-barrel and service provision.

Despite their invisibility in the media, MPs avoided making claims in parliament that would challenge their legitimacy in the eyes of minority constituencies. Such was, for instance, the case with the claims made in interviews about “a homogenous self” of the Bosniak and Gorani communities. While in parliament the same MP spoke for both of these groups, explicit claims about the unity of these two groups were never publicly raised. In addition, as argued in the previous sections, the homogenising tendencies in the plenary speeches obscure differences within these groups, which emerged during interviews.

Minority representatives are, furthermore, prevented from reaching an Albanian audience because they address the parliament in minority languages. The only audience they are enabled to address are other MPs, government representatives and international actors present in the parliament who are provided with a simultaneous translation. Nevertheless, MPs argue that translation results in a mediated representation that prevents them from making a meaningful emotional connection with the audience:

We need to make an additional effort because of the language. When an interpreter is there, I get angry, but she does not, she speaks in a linear way. I rejoice, but she does not” (Müfera Şinik, PT, 28.02.2012).

This claim speaks about the role of emotions in politics: claims based merely on rational explanation cannot produce the same effect as those that arouse affective identification. If deprived of this opportunity, representative claims can only be successful if they produce a different effect upon the audience, such as for example appealing to their interests. Since the majority does not have a personal interest in minority issues, the only way minority MPs can hope to produce an effect is by appealing to their hearts and minds. Without a chance to produce an affective connection, they argue that their claims make no impact.

How does the framing of representatives’ claims change when MPs address representatives of the majority and international actors? I argued above that minority MPs address the majority when portraying their constituencies as marginalised and deprived of any rights. The discourse they use thereby speaks about inter-ethnic distance between groups. In contrast, when minority related legislation is on the agenda, they adopt a more conciliatory approach in order to convince the majority to accept their demands:

Kosovo institutions have obligations to protect and promote the cultural and religious heritage of all communities, which live in Kosovo now. I have to mention that cultural heritage is protected according to the Constitution and the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. Annex 5 clearly defines the state obligations related to the religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo. Protection of the religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo is also part of the Action Plan for the European Partnership, which determines the priorities for the European future of Kosovo (Goran Marinković, PT, 20.12.2011).

Albanian MPs are asked to support the legislation, which aims to protect Serb cultural heritage, because of their constitutional obligations and integration in the EU. Despite denying legitimacy to the Kosovo statehood, Serb MPs did not find it contradictory to base their claims on the Kosovo Constitution for strategic reasons. Similarly, Albanian MPs are reminded of the EU stick every time decisions painful for the Albanian majority are expected to be made: “We can move forward and follow the European route, which is the only goal of both Kosovo and Serbia only by the normalisation of relations with Serbia” (Goran Marinković, PT, 18.10.2012).

I have argued in the previous sections that the government is perceived as a powerful decision-maker and as the one that brings investment projects to the communities’ municipalities. Because of that, MPs often addressed the government in their speeches. The government was addressed either when minority MPs were requesting the implementation of minority rights or after meeting some of their requests. Since the protection of cultural identity was seen as a vital interest of minorities, MPs were mostly raising these issues in their addressing the government:

Since the new school year is about to start, I ask the prime minister why the chosen textbooks for education in Bosniak are not printed when all the phases of submission, acceptance, selection, and evaluation are complete and have experts’ consent (Duda Balje, PT, 23.08.2011).

According to the Kosovan Law on the Use of Languages, in Prizren and Mamuša Turkish has equal status with other official languages. According to the laws of Kosovo, Turks have the right to education, printed materials and information in their mother tongue. If we take a closer look at this in the context of compliance with international law, that each individual has the right to information in his/her mother tongue, how can it be that today in Kosovo a young person who has reached 18 years of age cannot obtain a driver’s license? This is because the test is not available in his/her own language, Turkish. Can the Ministry tell us when this test will be available in Turkish? (Fikrim Damka, PT, 05.07.2012)

In contrast to the above claims that are critical of the government’s actions, the following claims speak about gratitude and serve to calm inter-ethnic tensions. Since minority MPs are also part of the government coalition, these claims serve to justify their participation in the government and show its results to minority constituents:

In the name of the community I represent, I would like to thank the negotiation team, that is, the vice-prime minister Mrs Edita Tahiri on making a positive step towards the recognition of diplomas. This has been a great problem for the representatives of minority communities in the last 11 years and they have been discriminated against while looking for jobs in the public institutions of our country (Emilija Redžepi, PT, 20.12.2011).

My party’s diplomatic contacts and mine confirm that one of the priority issues in the talks between minister Hoqe and foreign diplomats was the position of the Serb community and that in these contacts minister has had a realistic and constructive

approach. I want to encourage him and support him in this (Petar Miletić, PT, 11.10.2012).

However, the most important audience for minority MPs were representatives of the international community. MPs particularly addressed international actors when they needed an ally in realising their goals. Following the boomerang pattern, they turned to the international community for help every time they were not able to persuade the government to support their initiatives (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). They hoped thereby that the international actors would help them by exerting pressure on the state.

Representatives of the international community have an important role in Kosovo's politics. They are present in parliament during plenary and committee meetings and monitor all the decisions:

All representatives of the international community are present in the committees. Always. My committee for the budget and finance is monitored by the OSCE, American embassy and German government. Different representatives of international community have an interest in different committees, while all international organisations monitor the plenary sessions (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

The constitutional and institutional design of independent Kosovo was decided by international actors and they have continued to monitor the implementation of its peace- and state-building strategy. Although the supervised independence ended in 2012, the influence of international actors on the performance of minority representation did not change. Since relations between ethnic groups are still tense, representatives of the international community continue to be seen as mediators between the conflicting sides:

It is very hard to speak openly with the Albanian MPs about any issue that is important for the Serb community. MPs then mainly address the international community, the EU, influential embassies and others and literally ask for help. Actually, until now, it would have been very hard to reach any agreement without the intervention of the international community (Živković, Interview, 2014).

My speech will not be directed towards the representatives of the Kosovo government because they have been indolent about the position of the Serb community and solving problems they face every day. For these reasons, I will use this opportunity to address the representatives of the international community and the EU. I am absolutely certain that they monitor every session (Vesna Mikić, PT, 06.09.2012).

More importantly, minority MPs also consult them before making any decisions:

We do almost nothing without their consent, or rather mutual agreement because we are a young state, we are new in parliament, and started EU integration only yesterday. We want to integrate in Europe as soon as possible, and because of that every law has to be in accordance with the *aquis communautaire* and when you want

that and you want your country to go in this direction, you have to be open to dialogue and compromise (Kinolli, Interview, 2014).

As I have already argued, minority MPs particularly addressed the international representatives when they needed an ally in realising their goals:

I appeal to the International Steering Group for Kosovo which monitors the implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan to pay attention to possible omissions in the implementation of all the provisions of the Ahtisaari Plan related to the minority communities (Duda Balje, PT, 29.03.2012).

The problem of missing and kidnapped persons should finally get on the agenda of Belgrade and Prishtina, two important factors, which decide about the destiny of the Kosovo residents... But for better results, the international community should give their best (Jelena Bontić, PT, 10.05.2012).

Because the influence of minority MPs and their capacity to realise their groups' interests depends on the international community, expressions of gratitude to international actors were not rare: "I would like to express my gratitude to the representatives of the KFOR and EULEX for their dedicated commitment to bringing peace and creating conditions for people to return to their everyday activities" (Petar Miletić, PT, 28.07.2011).

Among international actors, the EU has been particularly important. In MPs' speeches, the EU is portrayed as a lodestar and as the solution to all problems:

I can only be a partner to Albanians to fight together for truly European values because European values will offer a possibility for the survival of my people. If we promoted any other values, we would disappear. Extreme Serb positions, silence or assimilation, they all lead towards disappearing (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

Kosovo should join the EU and it should liberalise and then no one will pay attention to who is white, who is red, who is Serb or Ashkali... I think that this culture will arrive both in Serbia and Kosovo (Ademi, Interview, 2014).

Most of the minority MPs portrayed international actors as allies and showed appreciation for their support to minorities. However, one of the Serb MPs, whose opinions were seen by her Serb colleagues as extreme and harmful for the Serb community, was also not so lenient towards the internationals:

I empathise deeply with the families that lost their loved ones during the war... Resentment of the Serb community about this problem is not directed only towards the government of Kosovo, but also towards the international community, which has done nothing all these years, and I can freely say that it still does nothing to solve this problem. One even gets an impression sometimes that they want to hide the truth (Vesna Mikić, PT, 03.05.2012).

The discourse used by minority MPs when addressing international actors was mostly respectful and moderate, showing their subordinate position. Similarly, they performed

cooperation when they expected the majority to adopt decisions relevant for the minorities. Nevertheless, international actors, ethnic majority MPs and government representatives are present during other plenary sessions in which minority MPs make claims that reinforce inter-ethnic conflict and deepen inter-ethnic tensions. Although they are not directly addressed in such claims, they constitute an actual audience that hears the claims and responds to them. However, particularly explicit claims such as suggestions that “nothing connects us” or that “we have constantly been living in either ‘Albanian times’ or ‘Serb times’” were made not in parliament but in the interviews before a limited audience. The moments in which they made conflicting claims were, furthermore, carefully chosen. For instance, under the pressure of the international community, minority MPs voted for the end of Kosovo’s supervised independence in 2012. This produced strong resentment among the Serb population in Kosovo since this act was read as a betrayal of Serb interests and as an official recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty. Under such circumstances, Serb MPs had to mitigate the consequences of their vote by making claims that suggest that they did not give up on Serb interests. The finding that MPs strategically shape their claims for different audiences indicates why an analysis of representative claims without the audience component is incomplete regardless of “the difficulty of identifying a passive and often not specifically mentioned audience (De Wilde, 2013, p. 284).

5.5. Conclusion

Kosovo is a society deeply divided along ethnic lines. These divisions also translate into parliamentary representation. Representatives are institutionally constructed as ethnic representatives: they are elected to parliament as members of ethnic parties expected to speak about and for their ethnic groups exclusively. As we have seen in this chapter, minority MPs in the Kosovo parliament reinforce these norms by framing themselves as true personifications of their ethnic groups, one of them and one with them. Depicting themselves as rooted in the territory, they suggest that they not only share the same identity but also the same experiences and interests, which separates them from all other co-ethnics who live elsewhere, for instance in the kin state.

This chapter further demonstrates that MPs’ descriptive similarity with their constituents enables them to claim they know and, indeed, *feel* minority interests. More importantly, their institutional strength enables them to advance these interests. Their understanding of substantive representation differs from the one advanced by minority parties

in Serbia. While minority parties in Serbia frame themselves as powerless, MPs in Kosovo frame substantive representation as a consequential action in the true interest of the minorities, i.e. providing services to their constituents such as infrastructural investment or employment, and influencing decision-making processes in parliament. Yet, while they present themselves as those who provide benefits to their constituents, they indicate simultaneously that, regardless of power sharing guarantees, their efforts are successful only when supported by the international community.

In politics as war, groups are portrayed as unified with firm boundaries against other groups. Although plenary speeches construct groups as natural with fixed identities and a clear set of interests, my interviews suggest that ethnic identifications are not stable and static but constructed differently depending on political and historical circumstances. This is visible in the following instances: first, in the conflicting images of the same constituency that different actors offer to the audience; second, in intra-group differences, to which MPs pointed in the interviews, but deliberately hid from view in plenary speeches; and third, in the processes of naming and renaming the groups. These findings suggest in many ways that identities are strategic and positional, rather than essential.

This chapter speaks further about the relationship between representatives and their electorates. In Kosovo, MPs deliberately disregard an electoral link between representatives and constituencies in order to hide from view any mediation between themselves and their minority groups. They portray themselves as independent, untainted and as the true personification of their groups. This understanding of authenticity is different from the one offered in Serbia where representatives frame authenticity as emerging from authorisation. This is particularly interesting since open electoral lists in Kosovo encourage the opposite behaviour: to be elected, candidates are expected to develop a strong individual relationship with their voters. While, as expected, they portray themselves as independent from parties, they do not even consider accounting to their constituencies. Moreover, the represented are denied any agency and instead treated as small children.

Finally, I have demonstrated here that representation is co-produced by representatives and audiences. Intra-group divisions that were denied in parliament came to light in interviews before a limited audience. In addition, while in the interviews politics was constructed as war (and, we may assume, in direct contact with the constituents) claims in parliament, where ethnic majority and international actors are the main audience, were more moderate. Depending on the audience, representatives not only constructed their constituencies differently but also their own identities and parliamentary roles.

I have argued in this chapter that the performance of representation in Kosovo differs significantly from its performance in Serbia. I have further demonstrated that MPs actively

engage with institutional and cultural incentives, which are used strategically as resources in making their claims culturally resonant. The following chapter explores these resources in an effort to explain the observed differences in representatives' performance of their roles as MP in Serbia and Kosovo.

Chapter 6: Background incentives and the performance of minority representation in Serbia and Kosovo

6.1. Introduction

This chapter builds upon the previous two chapters, where I analysed the process of minority representation in Serbia and Kosovo. In this chapter I aim to compare the two cases and explore the relationship between representative claims and background incentives. The question I raise here is whether and how institutional incentives and cultural background influence the process and nature of claim making *for* and *about* ethnic minorities. I argued earlier, in Chapter 3 in particular, that the institutional and cultural background provides particular incentives for the construction of representative claims. But such incentives are not simply a given. Representatives actively negotiate and sometimes challenge the incentives they face. Having two cases where representation is performed differently despite their similar institutional and cultural backgrounds allows me to explore how representatives react to and negotiate diverse incentives in constructing themselves as representatives and minority groups as their constituency.

As we have seen in the previous two chapters, in both countries MPs from minority parties found their legitimacy on a claim to authenticity, and portray themselves as embodiments of their ethnic groups. As such, they claim, their inclusion in parliament secures by itself the presence of the group as a whole. In presenting themselves as necessarily tied up with the group, however, they untie their hands. To construe, through their claim to representativeness or even absolute identity they are constructing a position from which they can act freely in representing: being one *of* them and one *with* them they need not necessarily consult or be accountable. The assumption is that they will always act as members of the group would in similar circumstances, pressing their interests. In addition, MPs similarly stress how their constituency has had its agency denied: defined by their cultural identity – also in their life chances – constituents are left powerless and marginalised. Only someone facing a similar structure of opportunities can tap into their motivations and advance their preferences.

Despite these similarities, the performance of representation in the two countries is very different in many other respects. First is their relationship to the party. MPs in Serbia position themselves as party delegates, thereby placing their parties alongside their

constituents as primary subjects of representation, while MPs in Kosovo claim to act independently in parliament. Second is their contrasting understanding of what it means to act for minorities. In Serbia, minority parties construe themselves as “outsiders” in parliament. Because they do not belong, they claim, there is not much they can gain by playing the rules of the game. The only way they can act for the minorities they represent is expressive: that is, by raising minority related issues and not compromising their ideals even when some compromise would possibly allow for more policy influence. On the other hand, minority MPs in Kosovo claim that they protect minority interests by providing personal services to the constituents and bringing public investment to their communities. This might imply a process of negotiation and give-and-take with other political forces, which is openly accepted. The third difference concerns the construction of ethnicity through representative claims. In Kosovo, group identity is created in opposition to the ethnic majority as its constitutive outside, while in Serbia MPs tend to emphasise internal attachment.

To sum up, for all their similarities, the two cases show significant differences regarding the who, what and how of representation:

- 1) *who* acts for minorities (the party vs. individual MPs)
- 2) *what* it means to act for minorities (voice vs. outcomes)
- 3) *how* ethnicity is constructed (through internal attachment vs. difference).

These differences indicate different understandings of what is involved in representing and a different relationship to the institutional context in which the activity unfolds, including the different players therein. Party discipline, relationship with the voters, and relative power within parliament all weigh heavily on how MPs conceive their opportunities and limitations *qua* representatives. These considerations enable them to position themselves in various ways before the audience: sometimes as delegates, at other times as trustees, sometimes primarily as substantive representatives, at other times as descriptive representatives whose function is mainly expressive. In addition, the differences between the cases indicate that what it means to ‘act for’ as a representative is not as obvious as previous literature has assumed: rather than set beforehand, as a script to be followed, it is something negotiated, constructed and legitimized within the representative process itself. Finally, my findings indicate that representation is a creative process: it involves creative portrayals of both representatives and their constituents, and the “ties” that purportedly authorize the former to stand in for the latter.

The question remains, however, of what might explain these differences. Emphasizing the performative aspects of representing: that is, the *how* of representation, our analysis has proceeded mostly at the micro and meso level. However, while performing their claims to represent, MPs do not work in a vacuum. They rather work against particular institutional and

cultural backgrounds, which, at least in part, set up the structure of opportunities open to them. In other words, it is not enough that a claim is made. It is just as important that it is effective. Its “felicity” is dependent on the ways in which these opportunities are explored to make claims that resonate with their constituencies and audiences. Arguably, the institutional territory is also the territory of mainstream studies of political representation, with their emphasis on how electoral and party systems impact what ends up being represented and how. But my analysis comes with a difference. I seek to develop a less deterministic view of how institutions – and the incentives they give – act on political agents. Instead of seeing political agents as simply acted upon or reactive, I argue that a more dynamic analysis is necessary in which due attention is given to the ways in which political actors mobilize institutions and background culture as resources for the pursuit of the new courses of action they favour.

In Serbia and Kosovo I have two cases that share close affinities in terms of institutional background but show significant variation in terms of the construal and performance of minority representative claims. This makes the comparison of what goes on in representing, and the attempt to explain any relevant variation, especially interesting, and potentially productive.

Let us first look into the affinities. Both Serbia and Kosovo are unitary states with a unicameral parliament. Both have a list PR system with a 5% electoral threshold, a single nationwide electoral district, and affirmative action measures for increasing minority representation in parliament. In addition, in both countries minorities are territorially concentrated and account for a small share of the total population. Finally, in both cases representative claims about minorities are almost exclusively monopolised by MPs from minority parties.

The two cases differ, however, in several aspects. Most prominent amongst the institutional differences is the ballot structure and the relative institutional strength of minority parties. First is the ballot structure. Serbia has a closed list PR system, while Kosovo adopted an open list PR. Next is institutional strength. Minority parties in Serbia are not as commonly perceived as being power-players to the same extent as are their Kosovar counterparts. They do not have the numerical strength to push forward their proposals and no institutional guarantees of their inclusion in government. Hence, they tend to lack decision-making influence. By contrast, minority representatives have guaranteed seats in both the Kosovar parliament and government and veto powers in the policy areas considered as minorities’ vital interests.

In addition to the institutional similarities and differences, Serbia and Kosovo share a similar cultural background, that is, “the universe of basic narratives and codes and the

cookbook of rhetorical configurations from which every performance draws... The ability to understand the most elementary contours of a performance depends on an audience knowing already, without thinking about it, the categories within which actors behave” (Alexander, 2011, p. 57). Both of my cases are patriarchal societies that share a recent history of bloody ethnic conflict, which has contributed to the creation of strong ethnic boundaries and a lack of inter-ethnic trust. In addition, only members of ethnic groups are seen as having a legitimate right to speak for their groups.

Despite these similarities, there are some cultural differences between Serbia and Kosovo that could explain different performances of representation. These differences are important because representative claims need to be culturally resonant in order to be successful. First, ethnic war was fought on the territory of Kosovo but not Serbia, which affected the creation of much deeper ethnic divisions among Kosovo’s citizens. Second, since Serbia does not recognise Kosovo’s independence, the claims by Serb MPs, who make up more than half of the minority MPs in Kosovo, need to resonate with the atmosphere of non-recognition if they are to be recognised as legitimate. This topic is equally important for other minorities as their representatives are expected to demonstrate loyalty to either Serbia or Kosovo. Kosovo’s declaration of independence has also affected the range of discursive opportunities available to minority MPs in Serbia. Since the Serbian audience fears that other minority groups may ask for independence following the Albanian example, in order to be recognised as insiders in parliament, minority MPs need to convince the audience of the opposite.

By focusing on institutional and cultural resources, this chapter further develops an analysis of representative performance and performativity. While the previous two chapters focused on representatives, constituencies and audiences, this chapter explores whether, and if so how, the institutional and cultural differences between my cases influence the dynamics of their relationships and affect the performance of representation. This adds to the complexity and depth of the analysis of representative performance allowing us to detect patterns of shape-shifting, which were sometimes not as visible in the previous analysis. The structure of the chapter is based on the differences I encountered between my cases. I start by exploring potential explanations for MPs’ shape-shifting between delegates and trustees, proceed to their different understandings of substantive representation, and end the chapter by analysing how different constructions of ethnicity, audiences and cultural incentives are mutually intertwined.

6.2. The performance of minority representation: delegates vs. trustees

As illustrated in the previous chapters, MPs in Serbia portray themselves primarily as party delegates, while MPs in Kosovo claim to be direct representatives of their ethnic constituency, hiding from view any mediation by the party. Resonating with Saward's (2010, p. 36) operationalisation of representative claims, MPs in the latter system portray themselves as both claim-makers and subjects of representation, while in the former claim-makers present their parties as the main subjects of representation. The following claims by the MPs from Serbia and Kosovo respectively bring this difference to the fore:

I realised that I was part of a bigger story within the then ruling DS and I never voted against... I respected the party discipline, that is, the agreement within the parliamentary group. I had many problems because of that in our community, even in Croatia, but I always asked what the alternative was (Kuntić, Interview, 2014).

In Kosovo, on the other hand, MPs emphasise their independence:

What is my role? To speak about the problems of Serbs without any obligations towards the government, Thaçi²⁰ or any political party. I simply have the freedom to raise any issues, which are usually kept in silence (Trajković, Interview, 2014).

Her colleague claims to act as a trustee, acting freely, according to an internal gyroscope, rather than externally imposed dictates:

The [party] president does not interfere with my work as an MP. I work and vote according to my own convictions, what I think is good for me, our community and the political party (Bontić, Interview, 2014).

The existing literature would explain these differences by the different ballot structure of the two cases (see Figure 3). The electoral studies literature suggests that a closed ballot PR system, such as the one in Serbia, tends to tie representatives more to their parties. An open ballot PR system, such as that of Kosovo, is associated with personal representation, i.e. acting independently from political parties (Karvonen, 2011, Lijphart, 2004, p. 101, Lutz, 2011, Riera, 2011, Strom, 1990). This literature argues that MPs in open ballot PR are expected to be independent from political parties in their parliamentary work because their election depends more on preference votes than party reputation (Bird, 2005, p. 445, Lutz, 2011). In contrast, in closed list PR party discipline tends to shape MPs' parliamentary work since their behaviour is constrained by re-nomination by the political party rather than by the electoral process (Lijphart, 2004, p. 101, Strom, 1990).

²⁰ Hashim Thaçi was the Prime Minister of Kosovo during the analysed parliamentary term.

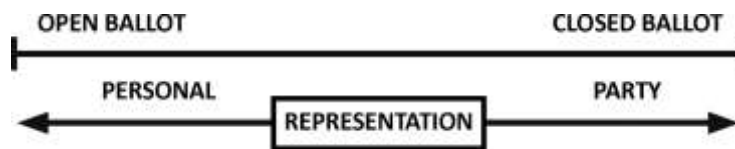


Figure 3: The influence of ballot structure on MPs' positioning

My research, however, suggests that this explanation is not sufficient. While the evidence seems to support the hypothesis, there is more to it than first meets the eye. MPs sometimes behave in the way predicted but they do this for different reasons, some of which are not encompassed by an explanation that focuses entirely on electoral incentives. We also see MPs shifting their position between trustee and delegate regardless of institutional incentives. For instance, even when electoral incentives seem to be the driving force behind a more detached relationship to political parties, MPs may still portray themselves as constrained by political parties. They may, further, claim to act as party delegates, while at the same time acting according to their own convictions. In addition, they do not uniformly position themselves as either constrained or independent of political parties: instead, they shift their position, sometimes even in the same public address.

Explaining MPs' behaviour based on the ballot structure tends to overlook this shape-shifting behaviour and this is where my analytical framework adds to the previous literature. In the following sections, I show that the electoral system and political parties do not make "claim-making a static or predictable affair" (Saward, 2010, p. 76). Instead MPs evoke them strategically as resources in making representative claims (according to their more immediate objectives). I offer below some examples of shape-shifting representative behaviour.

In line with the electoral studies literature, a Kosovo MP explains that their independence in parliament is a consequence of the electoral system:

An open list opens the opportunities for any member of the party to run for elections. Although I was not a president of the Bosniak SDA Kosovo²¹, I had an opportunity to win the votes due to my authority (H. Balje, Interview, 2014).

Similarly, another MP suggests that an open ballot PR system encourages intra-party competition: "There is a competition within the party. We do not compete with other Albanian parties, but compete for the guaranteed seats within the party" (Damka, Interview, 2014).

²¹ Bosniak Party of Democratic Action Kosovo

Yet, when challenged about their voting decisions, which were sometimes against what they claimed to be a minority interest²², the discourse changed towards party discipline. Hence, rather than being *actually* independent, MPs evoke the electoral system as a resource to portray themselves in a particular way and to justify a particular course of action. A Serb MP in the Kosovo parliament suggests that even when they voted against party directives, they did it when their vote could not change the final outcome. Hence, they were able to act out their independence without damaging the interests of the party: “We voted against the party directives because we knew that in doing so we would not stop the process. We knew that we could not stop it, but we did not want to be part of it” (Marinković, Interview, 2014). By looking at the transcripts of plenary sessions, I observed the same. Intra-party competition was not particularly visible during plenary sessions: MPs rather coordinated their activities and tended to act as a bloc.

The following claim speaks more directly about party discipline in the Kosovo parliament:

I was not able [to protect minority interests] the way I wanted because on some occasions I was under pressure to act and work the way someone else [the leader of the party] wanted... [Some MPs do not care about minority interests] because of the party leadership. (Stojanović, Interview, 2014).

Another MP also supported the claim about party discipline by pointing to the importance of the intra-party nomination processes:

[Party members] are afraid for their positions because actually in the party, or rather main board, we have only a few people who think politically. The others are here because someone [among the party leaders] from Štrpce appointed them to this position. One [of the party leaders] from Pomoravlje²³ said the three of you will go there and that is how you construct a pyramid where only those three, four or five people have some influence, while others behave as a voting machine (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

Similarly, MPs in Serbia claimed that their behaviour is significantly constrained by their political parties because political parties determine who will be elected:

If you are elected by the majority party, then you are a representative of the majority party. Although you are Roma, you have to implement the program of the majority party, and not the program of the Roma national minority. You can mention Roma, but only occasionally, in frames, when you are allowed, but where not [allowed], you cannot (Damjanović, Interview, 2014).

²² Such as, for example, voting for the end of the supervised independence phase or voting for the Kosovo Constitution.

²³ Štrpce and Pomoravlje are Serb enclaves in the south of Kosovo, i.e. municipalities where most of the population are Serb.

However, the interviews suggest that party discipline is not only a consequence of the electoral system, but also of the positioning of an individual representative within the party hierarchy. The weaker one's power position within the party, the more one has to submit to its discipline. Minority MPs feel that power within the party is concentrated in the party leadership, which relegates them to a minor position. Political parties were portrayed as "a big brother" whose decisions had to be respected (Kuntić, Interview, 2014):

An individual representative has few rights and has to respect his leader and their agreements... not only in the Democratic Party but in any party. It is all about agreement between leaders and an MP sometimes feels very uncomfortable. You know, I think that maybe in Serbia we only play parliamentarism and democracy... I believe that as an MP, one does not have many rights and has to respect his leaders and vote in the way they agree (Lodi, Interview, 2014).

These claims speak about political parties in Serbia and Kosovo as internally undemocratic, at the same time portraying an image of representatives as powerless. Consequently, they raise a question about the relationship between representatives and voters. By evoking party discipline, MPs throw off the burden of account giving. They can shift the blame to the party for controversial decisions and for any voting on their part in parliament that follows them. At the same time they can claim for themselves the role of "trustees" as the only position in which they can free themselves from any ties and effectively act for the benefit of their constituency (see Figure 4).

In Serbia, for example, nine out of thirty-two minority MPs did not speak at all or barely spoke in the plenary during the four years parliamentary term. When asked about it, they hid behind their parties as if their presence in parliament had nothing to do with them²⁴. One MP, for example, argued that he was in "a strong political party with many experienced politicians who, of course, have an advantage on the list of speakers, and then when the allocated time for a political party passes, you cannot speak anymore" (Kuntić, Interview, 2014). Party discipline is also usefully deployed by minority MPs in majority parties as a resource to deflect blame for failures in representation. As I argued in Chapter 3, there is a cultural expectation that MPs from minority backgrounds speak for minorities in parliament. As members of majority parties, they may always claim to a minority audience that they wanted but were not allowed to do more for them, as suggested in the above quoted claim: "You can mention Roma, but only occasionally, in frames, when you are allowed, but where not [allowed], you cannot" (Damjanović, Interview, 2014).

²⁴ In the interviews, MPs claimed that the level of activity of an individual MP depends on the decision of a Parliamentary group Head.

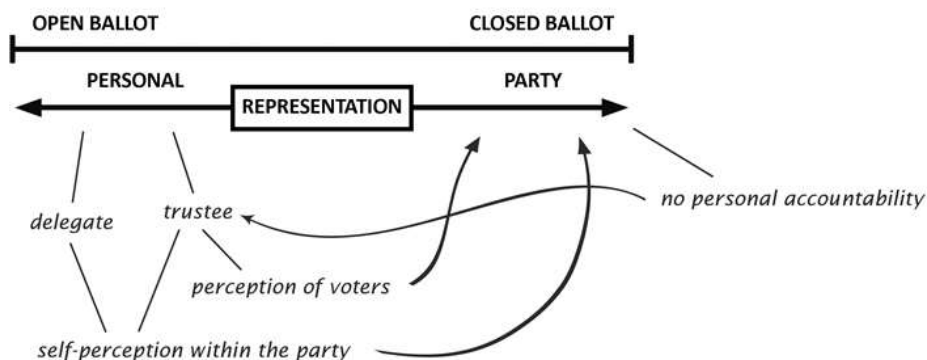


Figure 4: The dynamics of representative performance

In Kosovo, MPs portray themselves as independent of party constraints as the electoral studies literature predicts, but at the same time they comply with party directives because they perceive voters as instrumentalised by political parties:

In the end, the party directs the votes. It is impossible that you as an individual do it all by yourself. Of course, you get some votes based on your personality, but the party is the one that says: in Štrpce we vote for these people, i.e. these five people because you have the option to vote for the party and five candidates. And then you have an obligation towards the party and these people. For example, I won 3.000 votes from Štrpce which were completely directed, meaning that voters in Štrpce had a directive of the party to vote for me. And I won these 3.000 votes. Of these 3000 votes, I myself would probably get only 100 (Miletić, Interview, 2014).²⁵

This claim suggests that elections serve to silence the voters rather than giving them a voice. Similarly, another MP claims that “people vote automatically, not according to perspectives” (Kostić, Interview, 2014). It does not surprise then that some of the Kosovo MPs claim that how active they are and what they claim in parliament is only a matter of their “conscience”, particularly because “they are not paid by minutes of speaking” (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

To sum up, I have argued that in both Serbia and Kosovo MPs seem to act in accordance with electoral system incentives. Yet, presenting themselves as party delegates allows MPs in Serbia to act according to their own convictions without giving account to their constituents. What we see in Serbia is that electoral incentives are deployed as resources, which enable a certain course of action rather than causing MPs to act in a certain way. In Kosovo, on the other hand, the hold of the party over representatives and represented alike

²⁵ I myself also witnessed a similar situation during the 2014 parliamentary elections in Kosovo. Some of the voters I spoke to in one of the Serb villages told me that they voted for those candidates they were told to vote for by their local leaders. They were only told the ordinal numbers on the electoral list they should select. In most cases, they did not even know which candidates they were voting for.

greatly exceeds what the electoral system as such would predict. In addition, MPs in Kosovo claim to be both independent and constrained by political parties. Seeing both themselves and their constituents as powerless in respect of the political parties encourages party disciplined behaviour despite opposing electoral incentives. Hence, MPs in both cases shift their positions from delegates and trustees to party delegates and back. This speaks about why it is important to look at representation from the perspective of representative claims. While previous literature aims to predict the behaviour of representatives based on the institutional setting, my analysis indicates that even when representatives behave according to the prediction, there is still space for variation.

6.3. Acting for minorities: voice vs. outcome

The two previous chapters also show that MPs construct substantive representation differently. Substantive representation refers to claims to act upon and know minority interests. Representatives do not simply identify and promote pre-existing interests, they also articulate group identity and associated interests in what is essentially a creative activity. *Claims to know minority interests* are a deliberate attempt to legitimize the representative by concealing the constructedness of interest. Similarly, while much of the previous literature in the field of minority representation understands *acting for* as congruence between representatives' votes and voter preferences, I argue that representatives also discursively construct what it means to *act for* minority interests. Hence, substantive representation depends on the ways representatives perceive not only group interests but also what it means to act for these interests.

In Serbia, MPs claim to act for minorities by raising a voice about minority issues but at the same time staying outside the decision-making processes: "We are not in this Assembly for power and the fact that we have no ministers is the best proof of this statement. That is why we simply cannot be bargained with" (László Varga, PT, 03.12.2008). Although they make amendments and propose legislation, they downplay any hopes of their proposals being adopted. They construct themselves as outsiders in parliament who are excluded from decision-making. But while, an outsider "is usually someone who does not experience either socio-cultural or political belonging" and "feels culturally 'out of space'" (Hage, 2006, p. 1), in this case, MPs in the Serbian parliament construct their outsidership as a lack of influence and non-recognition of the decisions made there. In constructing themselves as outsiders, MPs suggest to their constituents that despite being in the same space as the Other, they are still

one with their groups and belong to the powerless. This is evidenced by the claim that their efforts are not recognised in the parliament but only outside, among their own:

[My parliamentary work] has some effect only in the streets, although I rarely go out. People recognise me. Many of them are interested to talk to me, others sometimes swear at me, but most of them are interested to talk to me a bit about the issues they watch on television. I think that, for now, this is the only effect (Halimi, Interview, 2014).

MPs suggest that the quality of such representation stems from not compromising their ideals even when some compromise would allow for more policy influence. MPs from the Bosniak and Albanian parties argued that the Hungarian party, as the largest among the minority parties in Serbia, was the only one that managed to have some policy influence in situations when the ruling party was struggling to secure parliamentary majority for a particular proposal (Džudžo, Interview, 2014). Nevertheless, the Hungarian party also conveyed an image of intransigence during plenary sessions²⁶. This image was carefully portrayed for their constituents because policy achievements necessarily include compromise, which is usually seen as “a “giving up” of pure principle and commitment to rights and truth, demonstrating weakness or lack of integrity” (Menkel-Meadow, 2016, p. 1). Portraying themselves as intransigent, even when actually compromising, speaks about their legitimacy and comparative authenticity compared to those Hungarian representatives who are members of majority parties, and hence co-opted into majority politics. Yet, while minority MPs believe that their “legitimacy” before their constituents depends on their showing a principled position that is not open to concessions or compromise, they also believe that they need to “show results” by obtaining things for their constituencies. Where negotiating sides conflict over ideas and principles, goals related to political legislation, public policy or services to the constituents can only be accomplished if each side gives up on and gains at least some of what they want. Hence they show themselves to be Janus faced: make concessions behind closed doors while playing the role of the uncompromising agent in floor debates.

On the other hand, Albanian and Bosniak parties are effectively too weak to get any deal that could be publicly shared. Hence, the only way for them to play at ‘force’ is to adopt an uncompromising posture. For example, in the interview, the Albanian MP spoke about an agreement signed with the government in 2009 after more than six months of negotiation. The agreement referred to the inclusion of Albanians in the work and decision making of the administrative and executive body that aims to provide security, economic investment and the

²⁶ Although this requires further research, I suggest that this is because they wanted to use televised plenary sessions to convince their intended constituency of their legitimacy and comparative quality. The message they send is that they are not co-opted compared to those Hungarian representatives who are members of majority parties and who aspire to Hungarian votes.

respect of human and minority rights in the Albanian-inhabited areas. After the agreement had been signed, the Albanian MP started voting for the government's legislative proposals as a sign of good will, but it turned out that the government did not implement the agreement:

The government made a decision to employ 54-55 Albanians in order to improve the ethnic structure of the customs authorities... That was part of the 2009 agreement, but when they opened a call, it was evident that there was no cooperation because Albanians did not have the 'experience' that was added without consultation as one of the essential requirements for the position... Since then I have not been entering the parliament during voting. If you are there, people tend to manipulate whether you voted or not (Halimi, Interview, 2014).

Effectively powerless, the only way for the MP to avoid admitting failure to get results was to hide negotiations from public view and act the part of a principled and noncompromising posture.

On the other hand, minority MPs in Kosovo claim that they protect minority interests by achieving outcomes rather than merely raising a voice:

We as minorities are a deciding factor. Absolutely no law can be adopted without our votes. And that feels really good to know... I understand the Albanian community. That strength feels really good. You know how you feel in a moment when before voting 50 people from the parliament call you and tell that something is important for the Albanian community. And then you tell them to wait. It is very important to be a deciding factor and we as a community, all communities in Kosovo are a deciding factor (D. Balje, Interview, 2014).

Rather than influencing policy-making at national level, the interviews suggest that MPs in Kosovo use their powers especially for "constituency work": that is, to provide services to the constituents and bring public investment to their communities:

We have focused a lot on infrastructure. We have also provided sixty-three houses, sewerage and electricity to the socially vulnerable... My priority now is to return home those who were after the war, after the conflict, internally displaced in the camps of the north of Mitrovica (Kinolli, Interview, 2014).

In the current parliamentary term I've focused on helping individually those in need. We have employed a lot of people. I've made contact with many communities, that is, people in my community (D. Balje, Interview, 2014).

They argue that this has been possible because of MPs' readiness to compromise and negotiate: "A conflicting approach and vocabulary is wrong because it does not bring substantive benefits for the community. The solution is to try and use side channels such as contacts in committees, government, etc. to try to solve the problems." (Milosavljević, Interview, 2014). In contrast to Serbia, it seems that minority MPs do not perceive compromise negatively. While compromise usually includes giving up on some of their moral principles or political beliefs, in a war-torn society compromise is seen as more valuable as it ends conflict

and brings peace (Menkel-Meadow, 2016). This particularly applies to Serb MPs, who can legitimise their position only by legitimising the ethics of compromise. If they did not value compromise as such positively, their presence in the parliament would make no sense. By merely participating in Kosovo institutions, Serb MPs could be seen as giving up on their integrity and principles of Kosovo's non-recognition. To justify their position, they have to argue that giving up, at least partly, on such important moral and political beliefs serves a higher cause.

These examples demonstrate how acting for minorities, i.e. substantive representation, may be understood differently depending on circumstances. In the Serbian case, substantive representation is performed as knowing minority interests and vocalising them even if the effort is futile, while in the Kosovo case substantive representation may be construed as providing benefits for constituents.

The existing literature would explain these differences with reference to the different institutional strength of the minority parties in each case (Birbir, 2007, O'Malley, 2010, Tsebelis, 1995, Tsebelis, 1999). Minority parties in Kosovo have veto powers, which guarantee them influence on decision making in issues important to their communities. In addition, since their votes are necessary for the government's survival, it is argued that they can successfully achieve at least some of their goals through the ruling party's policy or office concessions (Birbir, 2007, O'Malley, 2010, Tsebelis, 1995, Tsebelis, 1999). Based on this literature, minority parties in Serbia cannot be expected to exercise significant influence since they do not have power-sharing guarantees and their votes are not critical for government stability (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: The influence of a party's institutional strength on MPs' positioning

However, what I observed by analysing both claims made in interviews and those made in plenary speeches is that MPs in Kosovo perform influence behind the scenes, while in the plenary they tend to position themselves as powerless. In other words, an institutional incentive does not automatically cause a particular type of representation. Instead, MPs evoke their institutional strength as a resource in performing representation behind the scenes, but

not publicly. Although they claim that “nothing important for our country and related to the rights of minority communities can be changed without the votes of two thirds of MPs from minority communities” (Kinolli, Interview, 2014), it seems that their institutional powers are particularly used “on the ground”:

We have certain ministries where we can directly and specifically help, on the ground, in our municipalities to strengthen their capacities. Of course, even if a Serb is a head of that institution, that is still not a Serb ministry, but a ministry of all Kosovo residents, but still, still, it is different, the approach is different, and a Serb as the head of an institution can predict and identify certain problems more easily (Kostić, Interview, 2014).

In parliament, however, their strength is not as visible:

Our strength is actually in political activities outside parliament, in communication with what we call the international community, which I would say refers to the EU, the embassy of the USA, and the Office of the ICO. Because, it would be easy to outvote us in the parliament, but simply because of our political activities and understanding of the international community, we manage to prevent some things (Miletić, Interview, 2014).

My mission is to use all opportunities to achieve what I want, and I know how big these opportunities are. These opportunities are usually zero if we do not make other factors care about it, primarily the international community (Stojanović, Interview, 2014).

Plenary sessions were, hence, used “to express their opinions and present in the most realistic way a picture which reflects most authentically the state of Serb community in Kosovo today” (Goran Marinković, PT, 24.05.2012). Although they have veto powers and guaranteed seats in the executive, MPs do not perceive them as such powerful tools. Rather than enabling them to achieve their goals, they see these institutional incentives as merely tools to cause instability through gridlock, and consequently choose not to use them:

Government falls, another one is formed. Is that a guarantee that a new government will lead us towards progress and work differently? I do not think so... If we do not have a government, what are we going to have?! Anarchy. Are we going to achieve anything for Serbs thereby? I do not think so (Živković, Interview, 2014).

Similarly, MPs in Serbia perform powerlessness, although all minority parties were part of the government, with two of them delegating ministers to the government. They portray their participation in the government as merely symbolic:

We cannot expect that those who come from a minority community will by their mere presence contribute to improving the position of national minorities and that national minorities will profit from their presence. This is not true. This is more about symbolic benefits, a form, the ability to say that in our country national minorities are part of the government (Popović, Interview, 2014).

Another MP makes a similar claim about the participation of minority parties in the government:

It is about sending a good message that the government is composed also of the representatives of our country who have minority backgrounds and that these minorities are absolutely treated equally as the majority nation (Mihajlović, Interview, 2014).

One could argue that they did not have to be part of the government if they were not satisfied with its decisions, and in particular if they claim that the government is responsible for “serious manipulation and serious violations of human and minority rights of minorities” (Esad Džudžo, PT, 21.07.2009; 28.12.2011). By claiming powerlessness, they release themselves from responsibility for government actions or lack thereof and perform marginalisation in order to claim authenticity. Since minority parties in government are often accused of being “self-interested ethnic leaders, who become enmeshed in the clientele networks of the ruling party” (Bird, 2014, p. 19), constructing themselves in opposition to the government serves to convince the audience of their credibility and genuine willingness to act for minorities.

The literature does not pay sufficient attention to this performative shift, which depends on the scene and audience. It suggests that MPs either have or do not have influence. My approach, however, allows me to argue that MPs do not possess power; power is rather a performed and relational force that construes meaning and produces discourses; it is a verb not a noun (Foucault, 1980). MPs strategically construct themselves sometimes as powerless, sometimes as influential, thereby using the resources at their disposal such as constitutional veto powers or minority status. In addition to positioning themselves in particular ways, MPs in their claims also portray minorities and their interests. I focus below on how ethnicity is constructed, keeping in mind the audience and cultural background of these claims.

6.4. The construction of ethnicity: unity vs. difference

I have argued in the previous chapters that representatives in Serbia aim to unite minority groups around shared culture and language, while in Kosovo unity is constructed through difference from the majority ethnic group (see Figure 6). In other words, the identity of minority groups in the former case is constructed through internal attachment, while in the latter case group identity is created in relation to the Other as its constitutive outside. Not a single claim by minority MPs in Serbia, either in the plenary sessions or in the interviews,

evokes the majority ethnic group, while in Kosovo the ethnic majority is often evoked for creating minority group boundaries. There were occasions when minority MPs in Serbia made claims about difference, for example, when portraying groups as ghettoised and discriminated against. However, rather than directly blaming the ethnic majority for the situation, minority MPs blamed the government for the asymmetrical distribution of rights and privileges that allegedly created it: “[The government] continues with authoritarian imposition and even anti-civilizational solutions by providing privileges to only a part of population based on ethnic background” (Riza Halimi, PT, 12.12.2009).

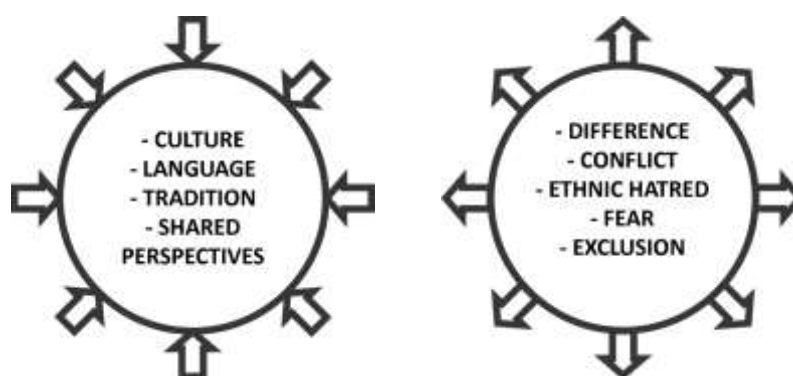


Figure 6: The construction of ethnicity: internal attachments vs. difference

In Kosovo, on the other hand, inter-group conflict is sometimes invoked openly, namely through war-related claims but more often it is performed through silence and boycott.

Antagonistic claims were made by one of the Serb MPs in particular:

I do not see anyone more competent than the Prime Minister, Mr Thaqi and Slobodan Milošević’s ex spokesman, i.e. Dačić, who can tell us directly and clearly about the fate of the missing and kidnapped. Mr Thaqi, you were on the ground, the leader of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army. And you know from the ground where murdered and kidnapped Serbs are... When it comes to border crossings, I want to share my personal experience because I often travel and cross the border at Merdare because I was born there. I really strive for normalisation. I want Serbs who enter and leave Kosovo and Metohija to move freely (Rada Trajković, PT, 16.11.2012).

In this claim, the MP considers the Serbian and Albanian leaderships equally responsible for war crimes, suggesting thereby that she does not recognise Albanians as victims and liberators and Serbs as aggressors. Moreover, while other minority MPs avoid even mentioning war and responsibility for war crimes, she directly blames the Kosovo prime

minister as the head of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Furthermore, by using the term “Kosovo and Metohija” she suggests that she does not recognise Kosovo’s independence and treats it still as part of Serbia²⁷. This claim legitimates the resistance of the Serb population to integration into the new Kosovo state. Majority MPs reacted strongly to such claims. On several occasions, the Speaker turned off the microphone when she was using the term (RTV, 07.03.2011).

Other minority MPs tend to show their disagreements with the Albanian majority by silence or boycott. Minority MPs reply with silence in particular when majority MPs accuse minority groups for war crimes or when minority legislation sponsored by the international community is on the agenda: “Goran Marinković is the only one who eventually dares to speak. Others let it go in one ear and out the other. I swear this is the case. You will see how much each of them spoke” (Marinković, Interview, 2014). Another MP agrees: “It has happened that they speak against Serbs, against Serbia and Serb nationality, but for some reason we remained silent” (Bontić, Interview, 2014). In addition, minority MPs tend to boycott parliamentary sessions when their demands are not fulfilled. Rather than making antagonistic claims, they perform their disagreement by not participating in the plenary sessions. For instance, Serb MPs boycotted the ceremonial session on the occasion of the termination of the supervised independence phase. The boycott was intended to make a claim that they do not recognise Kosovo’s independence from Serbia. While a few days before they had given way to international pressure and supported it by their vote in parliament, they wanted to symbolically keep their distance from the decision (Kostić, Interview, 2014). Similarly, they boycotted plenary sessions for a month in spring 2014 because the parliamentary majority adopted a draft law on general elections according to which minority parties will no longer be granted a lower threshold but only guaranteed seats (B92, 2014).

The question is what explains the difference in how MPs in the two cases construct their groups. I have argued until now that MPs in Kosovo tend to construct their groups through conflict with Albanians as the majority ethnic group. The conflict is performed either through direct provocation or more often through silence and boycott. In contrast, MPs in Serbia choose a subtler approach: they tend to construct their groups through invocations of shared identity and internal unity rather than through direct opposition to the majority ethnic group. This resonates with studies that suggest that positive cultural attitudes and a high level of inclusion of minority groups lead to more moderate behaviour by group representatives, while exclusion and structural discrimination may politicise ethnicities and produce conflictual

²⁷ The term “Kosovo and Metohija” refers to Serbia’s southern province. After the declaration of independence, Kosovar Albanians refer to the area as Kosovo or Kosova. Albanians connect the term “Kosovo and Metohija” to Serbian rule over Kosovo.

behaviour (Bird, 2003, p. 28). In addition, the existing literature suggests that representatives may not be willing to express their views publicly if they feel excluded and discriminated against, either in parliament or in society at large (Celis and Wauters, 2010, p. 387, Childs, 2006, p. 154, Inglehart and Norris, 2003, Ruedin, 2013, p. 28). A political and social environment hostile to ethnic minorities may make representatives uneasy and unlikely to raise minority-related issues (Dodson, 2006, p. 17, Fine and Aziz, 2013). As I will show below, the differences in how successfully included MPs are in each case explain partly why enmity is present in the representations of minorities in Kosovo, but not in Serbia. Yet I offer an additional and, I would argue, a more convincing explanation of these differences. The felicity of claims depends on them resonating with the audience. Since MPs want to persuade the audience of their authenticity, they need to frame their claims in such a way that the audience understands and interprets them in the intended way. Hence, I argue that the cultural context of war and inter-ethnic distrust in Kosovo explains much of MPs' silence and the way they frame their claims.

My study has produced ample evidence that MPs in Kosovo feel excluded *from* and even *in* parliament, perceiving the parliamentary scene as fundamentally hostile to minorities and their interests. Their representative claims hinge around this sense of outsidership, which they dramatise, at the same time as they downplay any powers they might hold at the negotiation table: "When a Serb MP speaks, it happens that Albanian MPs do not pay attention. They talk to each other and I see this as a sign of discrimination" (Bontić, Interview, 2014). This, they claim, feeds on an atmosphere of rampant distrust that affects the normal functioning of institutions. These assume and seek to reproduce the belief that social conflict can co-exist with reciprocity among free and equal members of the political association. However, this becomes an impossibility when some such members are cast away as outsiders to society and its legal order (i.e., as criminals):

When MPs start talking about how bad we are, that affects you ... the rhetoric about Serb criminals: Serb criminals in the North, Serb criminals here, Serb criminals there, they did it, they are chetniks, they are like this, they work for the Serbian state security service. All of this affects public opinion later (Marinković, Interview, 2014).

Similarly, a majority MP²⁸ speaks of minorities as self-excluding and as a "foreign" or alien "body" within the body representing the body politic:

It is very strange to see them. They don't get along with Albanians. They would rather stay isolated somewhere as if they feel bad in their skin. You have no idea how

²⁸ Berat Buzhala is an MP from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), a party that was a leading party in the government coalition, which minority parties were also part of.

foreign a body they look in that assembly room when they are there (Berat Buzhala, Interview, 03.03.2014).

The metaphor is strikingly violent in its portrayal of the visible discomfort of exclusion. Minority representatives come here depicted as self-consciously out of place, or what Puwar (2004, p. 8) describes as 'space invaders':

There is a connection between bodies and space, which is built, repeated and contested over time. While all can, in theory, enter, it is certain types of bodies that are tacitly designated as being the 'natural' occupants of specific positions. Some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually), circumscribed as being 'out of place'. Not being the somatic norm, they are space invaders (Puwar, 2004, p. 8).

In Serbia, on the other hand, MPs seem to fit into the institutions and play by the rules of what constitutes acceptable antagonism: they positively value their constituency's difference, and invoke the need for it to be protected for itself, rather than against the other's. In interviews, MPs are willing to recognize they are more integrated in parliament than they would otherwise have been:

At the beginning when I was the second youngest MP, a woman and a Hungarian, I thought that it was terrible to be a minority in so many categories. But then, when you work hard, i.e. make amendments, participate in the discussions, engage in committee work, and create informal networks – because informal networks are the most important in the parliament – and have contacts in all the parliamentary groups, and in the meantime you are at one point in opposition, then part of the ruling majority, then have a representative in the government, people will recognise you and being a minority will not matter. So, today, I think that people see me as a member of parliament with a lot of experience, who has had a lot of roles, experiences, ups and downs (Kovács, Interview, 2014).

Another MP also suggests that he feels respected in the parliament:

I was respected because of my political career because I came [to the national parliament] from the regional government with a good reputation. On the other hand, the profession of doctor is also very respected both here and worldwide. Maybe these are the reasons I have never felt like a member of a national minority and have not experienced either positive or negative discrimination, which pleased me a lot (Lodi, Interview, 2014).

These MPs acknowledge that insidership is an asset, since you cannot represent to an audience that does not even recognize your presence in parliament and the legitimacy thereof: "it is necessary to be an insider to some degree to even be allowed in, to exist. And you have to be even more of an insider to rise through the hierarchies of institutions (Puwar, 2004, p.

119). This legitimacy gives access to power roles within institutions and is construed through the internal professional socialization.

Successful inclusion in institutions in Serbia, and the normalized antagonism they favour, explains much of what I am seeing in my cases, but it does not explain it all. For example, why is conflict in Kosovo performed through silence rather than the spoken word? Why do many MPs not actively challenge the ethnic majority in parliament? I argue that the ways MPs shape their claims depend on their primary audience. For their claims to be successful it is not sufficient for them to behave in accordance with their own feelings; their claims need to resonate with the audience. To convince the audience of the authenticity of their claims, MPs need to frame them in a way that enables their audience to understand and interpret them in their desired way. To be interpreted as felicitous, a representative claim needs to speak the same language as the audience, that is, it must share cultural context and codes with the audience. In addition, MPs need to conceal any role they have in constructing the constituents and their interests. Claims are successful if they create “fusion between speaker and audience. When performances fuse, we endow them with verisimilitude. They seem real. We think the words of politicians are true and their selves are authentic” (Alexander, 2011, p. 105).

The interpretation of meaning is, however, never straightforward: depending on the contextual differences, MPs’ acts may produce different effects upon different audiences. This applies particularly to the nonverbal utterances, which lack explanation and allow the audience to ascribe their own meanings. Furthermore, individual MPs may have divergent motivations to be silent, but the audience may attribute a certain meaning to their collective silence as a group. Hence, the international audience and Kosovo citizens, who do not share the same cultural context, may attribute different meanings to the same MPs’ gestures.

For example, I argue that MPs may intend that the international actors present during plenary sessions read their silence as a sign of cooperation. The immediate presence of international actors during the plenary sessions serves to prevent the escalation of conflicts and ensure the realisation of secret agreements. During interviews, minority MPs claimed that they relied heavily on the support of the international community to realise their goals:

It is very hard to speak openly with colleagues - Albanian MPs - about any issue important for the Serb community. Hence, MPs mostly speak to the international community, EU, embassies, which are influential in Kosovo and literally ask for help and actually all this time, it would be hard to reach any specific agreement without intervention of the international community (Živković, Interview, 2014).

For this support, MPs need to demonstrate cooperation and an orientation towards peace and inter-ethnic reconciliation. Hence, by being silent and not confronting the ethnic majority MPs,

minority MPs convey the meaning of cooperation and obedience to the international audience.

Their silence, however, carries a different layer of meaning for minority constituents. Some of the minority MPs argued that there was no point in confronting Albanians when they “live in their state” (D. Balje, Interview, 2014). One of the Serb MPs explained this:

The moment I became part of the institutions... I sobered up and realised a reality. And I believe that from 2011 until now many things have changed and some issues have been publicly imposed. The same way I sobered up in 2011, the majority of Serbs sobered up through the process of the Brussels agreement and realised where they live and which institutions they depend on (Stojanović, Interview, 2014).

This claim taps into the atmosphere in society, and the acceptance of Serbs that they no longer live in Serbia and are an ethnic minority in an Albanian state. Sharing the same context, minority constituents are able to read the silence in the way intended: as an acceptance of defeat. Even if they do not want to accept it, let alone recognise it publicly, they are aware that any rebellion would be impossible. The associated costs are simply too high, and there are few associated benefits. As one Serb MP puts it, the only outcome to be expected would be that “those Albanians would break our heads outside” (Marinković, Interview, 2014). Hence, they “personally try not to provoke anyone’s feelings by any word or to give an opportunity to anyone to misuse one’s feelings” (Petar Miletić, PT, 23.04.2014). MPs’ silence does more than merely expressing the atmosphere in society: it also reinforces feelings of defeat and exclusion.

Fear of provoking the majority explains why Serb MPs were, for example, silent on the issues of war crimes and missing persons. Despite this being one of the most addressed issues in parliament, and despite the fact that representatives of other groups spoke about their victims and requested that the cases of missing persons are solved, the silence of Serb MPs was rather remarkable. Portrayed as aggressors, any claim about Serb victims would only induce anger and an avalanche of accusations rather than empathy and understanding. As Langton (1993, p. 315) argues:

At the first and most basic level, members of a powerless group may be silent because they are intimidated, or because they believe that no one will listen. They do not protest at all, because they think that protest is futile. They do not vote at all, because they fear the guns. In such cases no words are uttered at all.

Yet, the meaning of their silence is more ambiguous. As Gray (2015) reminds us, silence may signify a whole spectrum of meanings from acceptance to passive disaffection with the democratic system, to principled resistance to specific decisions. In the case of Kosovo, silence not only conveys a sense of acceptance but also of disaffection and resistance. While

Serb MPs claim that they have accepted the new reality, they still choose silence instead of exercising their voices and actively participating in the institutions. This leaves space for the audience to interpret their silence also as a way of resisting Kosovo institutions: while we have to put up with your victory, it does not mean we embrace and recognise it. For Serb MPs this seems an important message to send to the audience since their mere appearance in Kosovo institutions, prior to any speech act, could be read as a sign of Kosovo's recognition. By being elected according to Kosovo rather than Serbian legislation and participating in passing legislation, they may be perceived as contributing to building the institutions of the new state and hence recognising its existence. Since such meanings can be read into their presence, by their silence they intend to persuade the audience of the opposite: while they are physically present in parliament, by choosing to exit rather than speak they deny legitimacy to the institution and thereby to the state itself. This meaning is directed towards Serbia, which does not recognise Kosovo's sovereignty and did not publicly support Serb participation in Kosovo institutions until 2013, but also to Serb constituents in Kosovo, who despite accepting that they are governed by the laws of Kosovo rather than Serbia would still not recognise Kosovo because the recognition of defeat is culturally unacceptable. Sharing the same cultural background enables the intended audience to interpret the message in the 'right' way.

Similarly, in the example mentioned earlier, by saying "Kosovo and Metohija" or raising three fingers, a Serb MP in the Kosovo parliament conveyed more explicitly a sense of resistance and insubordination. The term "Kosovo and Metohija" refers to the Kosovo's territory as a Serbian southern province. By using the term, the MP suggests that for her Kosovo is still part of Serbia. Her claim has an additional perlocutionary effect: by denying legitimacy to the Kosovo state, she encourages the resistance of the Serb population to integration in the Kosovo's institutions. For the claim to be successfully received, the audience had to know what the term refers to. Indeed, the term reminds Albanians of Serb repression and suggests that Serbs have the right to rule over Kosovo. Furthermore, by turning off the microphone, the Speaker conferred legitimacy on the claim and further confirmed its meaning.²⁹

By raising three fingers, the same MP performs a similar meaning, using gesture in a powerful way. Nonverbal utterances are powerful tools to convey meaning; they "are not merely an accompaniment to spoken ones, but rather function on their own as illocutionary

²⁹ The ethnic majority's sensitivity towards anything that reminds them of the times when Kosovo was part of Serbia and Yugoslavia was also visible on several other occasions. For example, the Social-Democratic Party of Kosovo and Metohija (Socijaldemokratska stranka Kosova i Metohije, SDSKiM) had to change its name because of the use of term Kosovo and Metohija (Marinković, Interview, 2014). Furthermore, the central electoral commission did not approve the registration of the party United Gorani Union (Jedinstvena unija Goranaca, JUG) because its abbreviation is reminiscent of Yugoslavia (in Serbian: Jugoslavija) (Blic, 2014).

acts—a gesture, symbol, or sign does in fact *do* something separate from any spoken explanation of it” (Liou, 2016, p. 359). The three-finger salute originally symbolises the Holy Trinity but is used today to express belonging to the Serbian nation. It also represents the Serb Orthodox religion, which distinguishes them from their Catholic Croat, Albanian, Slovenian and Hungarian neighbours and Muslim Bosniaks and Albanians. Yet, the salute was also used during wars, which in time extended its meaning to encompass Serbian rule and Serb resistance. The gesture does more than suggesting the MP’s ethnic identity; by being performed in the Kosovo parliament by a Serb minority MP, we may assume that the gesture was used to convey a second set of meanings. Similar to the way that placing a flag symbolises the conquest of a territory, the three-finger salute in the Kosovo parliament may be interpreted as suggesting that Kosovo (still) belongs to Serbia. It is important to note the following:

A gesture cannot independently effect change and a hand sign cannot independently deter unless the receiver already recognizes that sign as imbued with a certain meaning; nonverbal utterance does not a priori communicate, but relies on a shared system of references and signs, that is, language, that has been previously established. For illocutionary acts to function successfully, the receiver must be able to hear the utterance, interpret it and attribute meaning to the act (Liou, 2016, p. 356).

If the audience did not know what the three-fingers salute was, the gesture would not have produced the intended effect upon audience. Yet, we can see that the claim resonated with the audience, since Albanian MPs showed they felt provoked and offended by this act.

The issue of Kosovo’s independence also explains some of the silences observed in the Serbian parliament. I have argued that a lack of inter-ethnic conflict there may be partly explained by the successful inclusion of minority MPs in the Serbian parliament. Yet in the years after 2008, i.e. after Kosovo’s proclamation of independence, the ethnic majority in Serbia felt increasingly threatened by minorities and their acts were easily interpreted as a sign of separatism. For their claims to be successful, minority MPs had to respond to the atmosphere in society. Hence, we can read the lack of spoken utterances that articulate inter-ethnic conflict not only as a sign of inclusion, but also as a sign of fear. For these reasons, Hungarian MPs portrayed themselves as moderate:

Unfortunately, sometimes an illusion is created and representatives of the Hungarian coalition, that is SVM, are attacked, saying that we want to create a so-called Hungarian region. This is not the case. We just think it would be commonsensical and realistic that the municipalities Ada, Kanjiža and Senta are united with Subotica rather than Kikinda (Elvira Kovács, PT, 04.05.2009).

In this claim, a Hungarian MP defends herself against accusations of separatism. This claim is embedded in the cultural background: there is fear that Hungarians in Vojvodina might follow Kosovo's example. Hence, while claims about decentralisation of Hungarian municipalities and the administrative unification of municipalities with Hungarian majority, or territorial autonomy in itself do not have to be signs of separatist tendencies, they essentially produce such effect upon a Serbian audience because of possible contagion. Consequently, any such claims are unspeakable for minorities in Serbia when they are addressing the majority population. In contrast, in electoral campaigns when they aimed at addressing their minority constituents, many of the minority representatives advocated territorial autonomy (Beljinac, 2012, p. 226-227).

The importance of cultural context for the framing of representative claims is evident when we compare Kosovo to Serbia. While in Kosovo Serbs are seen as aggressors, in Serbia they are portrayed as victims of Albanian separatism. In Kosovo, these accusations induce silence and exit by minority MPs. In Serbia, on the other hand, minority representatives exploit this for their own purposes, thereby reinforcing the cultural code:

Everyone knows that exodus and grave crimes were committed against the majority nation [Serbs], but crimes were committed against Roma as well... I want to say that Roma in Kosovo also do not live in a democracy, they do not have freedom of movement, social and pension coverage, or employment. There is a very serious and dramatic situation there and I can openly say that they live in a ghetto.... I called Mr Stefanović and offered, as a representative of Roma community, to speak about crimes committed by individual Albanians against Roma. I have a list of 154 murdered Roma in Kosovo" (Jovan Damjanović, PT, 27.04.2011).

Finally, in contrast to Kosovo, minorities in Serbia are constructed as an aggrieved party entitled to demand justice and the implementation of their rights. Accordingly, minority MPs in Serbia insisted on reassessing and solving any crimes committed against minorities in Serbia since the First World War and asked the government to give account of what has been achieved in this matter. Moreover, they did not hesitate to accuse the government of politicisation and lack of interest in the crimes committed against minorities. By making such claims, minority MPs portrayed their groups as oppressed and discriminated against. Expecting that their constituents would be receptive to such portrayals, they hoped in return to be recognised as authentic representatives.

In contrast to previous research, my research framework allowed me to explore a rather complex and dynamic relationship between background setting, representatives, constituents, and audience. While previous research suggests that MP can choose either moderate or conflictual behaviour, my research suggests that the interplay between background incentives and representative process is more complex. MPs may act out both

conflict and cooperation depending on the audience they address. The differences in how successfully included MPs are in the two cases explained the individual motivation of MPs to exercise either moderate or conflictual behaviour. Yet, they were not sufficient to explain the effects representative claims produced upon their audience and the meaning of the silence that was employed on so many occasions. I argued that knowing the cultural context helps explain this puzzle. In order to persuade, representatives frame their claims in a way that resonates with their constituents and audiences. For this to be possible, representatives, constituents and audiences need to share the same cultural context, meanings and codes. Knowing this context also enables a researcher to interpret the meaning of representative claims.

6.5. Conclusion

Arguing that “not just any representation will do at any time” (Geenens, Decreus et al., 2015, p. 519), in this chapter, I looked at how MPs use background incentives as resources in performing representation. In line with the previous literature, I suggested that background incentives such as the electoral system, the institutional strength of political parties, conflicts in society, and perceptions of inclusion and belonging to institutions can affect the performance of representation. Yet, in contrast with the previous research, I suggested that these incentives do not fully explain and allow us to predict representative behaviour. Instead of seeing political agents as simply acted upon or reactive, I argued in this chapter that representatives actively negotiate and sometimes challenge the incentives they face.

In contrast to the previous literature, I have shown in this chapter that the electoral system does not constrain MPs to act in a certain way. MPs employ institutional incentives both strategically and creatively in pursuit of the courses of action they favour. In Serbia, MPs use electoral incentives as a resource to present themselves as party delegates, thereby throwing off the burden of account giving. This in return, opens a space for them to act as trustees accountable only to their beliefs and principles. In Kosovo, on the other hand, MPs portray themselves as independent of party constraints, while at the same time being weak and powerless with respect to parties.

Second, in accordance with the previous literature my findings suggest that institutional guarantees such as guaranteed seats in the executive and veto powers enable MPs in Kosovo to claim influence on decision-making. My analysis, however, suggests that they

claim to perform influence only behind closed doors, while publicly, in front of their constituents, they position themselves as powerless and excluded. On the other hand, MPs in Serbia use the lack of power-sharing guarantees as a resource to present themselves as outsiders. Although they are part of the government coalition, they claim that they have no other opportunities to act for minorities except raising their voices in parliament and educating the audience about minority issues. In doing so, they release themselves from responsibility for government actions or lack thereof and perform inferiority in order to claim authenticity. Hence, it may be concluded that rather than possessing or being deprived of power, MPs strategically construct themselves sometimes as powerless, sometimes as influential, thereby using the resources at their disposal such as constitutional veto powers or minority status.

Third, I have argued in this chapter that cultural context helps explain the effects representative claims, gestures and silence produce upon audience. Depending on the contextual differences, representatives' claims may produce different effects upon different audiences. Sharing the same cultural codes allows the representatives to frame their claims in a way that enables the audience to understand them and interpret them 'correctly'. As demonstrated in this chapter, fear of separatism in Serbia affects much of the silence of minority MPs there and produces the lack of articulation of inter-ethnic conflict. Similarly, the cultural context of war and inter-ethnic distrust in Kosovo explains much of MPs' silence and the way they frame their claims. At the same time, these claims reinforce a sense of exclusion among minority constituents and construct them antagonistically as both defeated and resistant.

Previous research that aims to draw a causal link between institutional factors and types of representation tends to neglect cultural incentives and the shape-shifting I observed in my cases. Aiming to explain representation by looking just at the relationship between institutional factors and the positioning of representatives, the literature fails to grasp the complexity of representative relationships, i.e. the interplay between institutional and cultural incentives, audience, the positioning of MPs and claims about ethnicity. My approach allowed me to argue that MPs use diverse incentives strategically in front of different audiences. Even when MPs behave as expected based on institutional incentives, they may do it for different reasons or their claims may vary to a certain degree in other aspects, which are neglected if the analysis remains focused on institutional incentives.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

We'll sing the anthem and we'll raise the flag. - Which anthem now? - What which anthem? - Our anthem - Why shouldn't we sing our anthem? - Because our anthem is the main one. - Main to you, but not to us. - Aha, so now it's "you and us" again. - Come on people, it's just a few verses, some music, it doesn't matter. Or does it matter to you? - It matters to me. - It matters to me too. - It matters to me twice as much.

Excerpt from the play *Beton Mahala* [Concrete Hamlet]

In this dialogue from the play, the anthem produces controversy because of the meaning attached to it and the emotions it arouses. It impacts upon the ways members of a particular group perceive themselves and others. As the above quote suggests, it matters whose anthem is performed and whose flag is raised because "a few verses" and "a piece of cloth and the three colours on it" symbolize much more to the audience. They speak of belonging and power relations in a city divided by Bosniaks and Serbs. Similarly, as we have seen in this thesis, representative claims about ethnicity are more than just words: words do things. They produce meanings projected onto the evoked constituents and the wider audience. By making a particular portrayal of ethnicity and ethnic identity, representatives help create what they claim to merely present, and thus treat it as being already there and there to stay. This thesis has featured examples of minority MPs performing minority identity in a way that re-produced patterns established in the course of a complex and long political and cultural historical process. But we also saw them challenging such images and offering new ones, which, should they have felicitous uptake, would most certainly have a transformative effect upon the constituents. In so doing, they engaged in constitutive acts, that is, performed utterances that are also performatives, which despite their capacity for producing ontological effects, have been broadly neglected in previous studies on minority representation. In focussing on the performance of representative claims and in discussing their performativity I have sought to move beyond analyses that focus on attributed legal status to consider the political and social discursive forces that construct and normalise the political practice of ethnic minority representation. The performative aspects of representative claims have also been visible in the ways MPs constructed themselves and their positions depending on the audience they

addressed and the specific goals they aimed to achieve. In their performances, representatives exploited the institutional and cultural resources at their disposal to make their claims more successful, but at the same time they challenged their audiences' perceptions and beliefs about themselves and their relations in the world that were influenced by established social conventions and institutional and cultural backgrounds.

By drawing all these together, in this chapter I present my final conclusions. I summarise the main findings of the thesis following the logic and questions at the basis of this thesis: 1) how representatives construct themselves; 2) how representative claims perform and contribute to the construction of ethnic groups and their interests; and 3) how representatives engage with institutional and cultural incentives in order to make their claims resonate with their audiences. In addition, I discuss the main contribution of the thesis to theory and practice, acknowledge the limitations of the study and suggest how they could underpin future research in the field.

7.1. Summary of the findings

Conceptualising representation as a performative activity that constructs both the representatives and the constituents, this thesis offered a novel way of researching minority representation. The relevance of this theoretical shift was demonstrated by empirical evidence from the two ethnically diverse cases. The combination of a more constructivist theoretical approach with empirical data allowed me to grasp the complexity and dynamics of representative performance. In addition, this approach enabled me to acknowledge and explore the relational and constitutive aspects of identity and interests, which played a minor role in previous literature.

Drawing on Seward's claim-making approach to representation, in Chapter 2 I reconceptualised descriptive and substantive representation to make them usable and attractive for empirical research on minority representation. I reconceptualised descriptive representation as a claim-making process whereby the representative activates and performs her identity in order to produce ethnic identification with the evoked constituency. Claim-makers exploit this self-identification as a resource to legitimise their claims about groups as if they were merely natural presentations rather than representatives' portrayals. I further argued that substantive representation is better conceived of as the performance of claims to act upon true and objective minority interests. In this process, representatives construct

minority groups and their interests and themselves as those who know these interests and are capable of acting upon them.

Empirical findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate the relevance of the more constructivist understandings of descriptive and substantive representation. First, these chapters show that descriptive representatives are not merely there but have to make themselves. This was particularly visible in the claims of MPs from majority parties in Serbia. Some of them did not evoke their legitimacy as based on ethnicity, either because they did not feel ethnicity was a relevant feature to represent in parliament, or because they felt no particular attachment to a minority group. Others who wanted to act as descriptive representatives had to make a more explicit effort to convince the constituents that they were one of them and one with them. Their ethnic resemblance to the constituents was not self-evident, and they were not automatically perceived as descriptive representatives. Their ethnic belonging was rather a doing, at which they had to work. However, as Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate, the mobilisation of ethnicity does not always have to be done explicitly. The minority party MPs' claim to representation based on ethnic resemblance was almost unspoken as they relied on social convention and the supposed naturalness of the identity link.

Second, Chapters 4 and 5 offer three different understandings and performances of substantive representation. Substantive representation has been traditionally understood as "acting for another" in a way responsive to her interests. In my case studies, we have seen "acting for" being variously performed as: an advancement of minority rights through legislative outcomes; securing material resources and benefits for constituents, such as employment or infrastructure investment; raising minority-related issues in public fora, such as parliament, which despite its seeming immediate ineffectiveness might contribute to advancing minority interests in the medium to long run by making the public more aware of minority problems and thereby pressing the decision-makers to change policies in the interest of minorities. While the existing literature tends to treat substantive representation as consequential action, these different performances of substantive acting invite us to look into the "how" of representation, i.e. how representatives *claim to act for* their constituents, and what they claim might count as "consequent" action, rather than pre-supposing what actions might count as legitimate actions in the interest of the represented and going after evidence of these having been performed.

Third, my findings demonstrate the interdependence of the resources that representatives use in constructing their legitimacy. Throughout the thesis we saw representatives shifting their positions from descriptive to substantive representation, from delegates to trustees, sometimes even in the same speech. MPs not only evoked their ethnic resemblance to convince the audience of the legitimacy of their claims, but also used it as a

resource that enabled them to portray themselves as those knowing about essential minority interests and having the capacity to act upon them, based on shared ethnic background and experiences. These findings illustrate how descriptive and substantive representation can be – and most often are – closely inter-connected. They are, therefore, better understood as dynamic and intertwined positions that representatives construe and take to pursue their goals, than as independent or even competing representative forms.

Fourth, while representatives shifted their positions between descriptive and substantive representatives, delegates and trustees, we were able to detect some patterns of their behaviour. For instance, minority party MPs positioned themselves as descriptive representatives throughout the analysed periods, but we saw majority party MPs evoking their ethnic identifications strategically depending on the audiences and their specific goals. Following Saward (2014), we could argue that minority party MPs had fewer structural options for shape-shifting because of the institutional and cultural construction of their constituencies around ethnicity and less individual motivation to shape-shift because of their electoral dependence on such positioning and presumable strong ethnic self-identifications. This encouraged “shape-accordance” pattern of representation (Saward, 2014, p. 728-729). Majority party MPs, on the other hand, could be more motivated to shape-shift by their stronger civic versus ethnic identifications, more diversified electorate and particular political goals they aimed to achieve.

Even when representatives were discouraged from shifting some of their positions, they combined a more stable positioning with other positions that were more open to shape-shifting. For instance, we saw that representatives, whose self-portrayal as descriptive representatives was stable, were at the same time shifting their positions between delegates and trustees. This finding challenges our understanding of political parties as less prone to shape-shifting and more rigid with the clear-cut identity and electorates. Since MPs are constrained by political parties, elections and institutions, we tend to assume that they do not have many opportunities for shape-shifting. Furthermore, perceived as rational actors, their motivations tend to be reduced to reelection, which suggests that they do not have a strong desire to shift their positions. In contrast, my findings show that the behaviour of representatives is lead by diverse and often mixed motivations. For instance, MPs could be motivated by feelings of attachment to the group they claim to represent, ideology, personal interest in a particular policy issue, career advancement, or other motives which then lead to the construction of specific goals such as reelection, policy influence, etc. While the claim-making framework has particularly been used to extend representation to non-elected actors, where notions of accountability and authorisation are more fluid (Montanaro, 2012, 2017), my

findings show the relevance of the shape-shifting representative framework even within parties and even within representation of ethnicity that seems to be so naturalised.

This thesis, further, shows that representatives, by making claims about the group's characteristics and experience, paint a picture of what it means to be a member of a particular ethnic group and invite the audience to accept that particular portrayal of the group. To see oneself in that portrayal is to embrace a particular form of ethnic identification, with significant consequences for the formation of self- and group identity. Most of the MPs in both Serbia and Kosovo spoke about ethnic groups as unified and culturally specific identity groups and bearers of fixed interests, which are endangered by majority domination. Portraying minority groups as being denied the right to their own identity, representatives suggested that the most vital interests of minorities are the survival and protection of group identity. Such depictions were to be expected in the context of Serbia and Kosovo where strong ethnic boundaries and inter-ethnic distance have been created through historic events, notably the experience of war and its cultural transmission. Hence, MPs' claims resonated culturally with the audiences' expectations. At the same time, however, they not only reinforced this legacy, but helped re-produce a vision of ethnicity and ethnic identity that has been historically consolidated and politically created. In other words, they not merely expressed inter-ethnic cleavages but also additionally strengthened inter-ethnic boundaries and inter-ethnic distance.

Representative claims also offered explicit examples of how MPs actively contribute to the construction and reconstruction of ethnic groups and their interests. MPs did not necessarily speak about and for their groups in ways that were culturally expected but created alternative visions, which were offered to the audience as more authentic. For instance, MPs from the majority parties in Serbia portrayed minorities as citizens of Serbia, an integral part of the Serbian state and society rather than as separate groups with firm, entrenched boundaries. Rather than advocating for the protection of group culture and tradition as an essential group interest, these MPs argued that *true* minority interests are socio-economic and therefore comparable to those of other citizens of Serbia. If the question is utility rather than identity, they claimed, the pursuit of such interests need not be a zero-sum game: they can all stand to win from the advancement of certain material interests through policy. Through claims like these, they literally dis-integrated minority groups and re-called their members into being as individual citizens of Serbia, in whose interests they equally partake. Their claims suggest that identity is not given but open to construction and contestation, a process to which MPs actively contribute with their claims.

Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 show that representatives frame their claims differently depending on the intended audience. Publicity was a major reason for these differences. For instance, some MPs spoke differently about their identity and their constituents in interviews

and in plenary speeches. Issues that would not pay off in a political sense were not brought out in the plenary speeches, but were addressed more freely in interviews. But it was not only the degree of publicity that mattered; equally important was before whom the claim was being made. In addition, the representatives shaped their claims differently depending on whether they were addressing their constituents, the government or international actors. While they were more inclined to evoke conflict and inter-ethnic distance in claims made for the constituents, a more conciliatory approach was reserved for the government and international actors. These findings demonstrate why the audience makes an important part of representative claims and why any analysis of representative performance also needs to pay attention to the nature of the audience.

While my research has focused on the performance of representative claims, I argued in this thesis that it is not sufficient that the claims are made: they also need to be effective. Their effectiveness depends on audiences' recognition. To this end, representatives exploit institutional incentives, social conventions and cultural resources to shape their claims in a way that invites recognition and positive identification from the audience. I took a different approach from that used by previous researchers in the sense that I offered a more dynamic understanding of institutions and culture and their effect upon representative performance. I acknowledged that institutional and cultural backgrounds, at least in part, set up the structure of opportunities open to representatives. Yet they do not determine their behaviour. Representatives can and do often also actively engage with these constraining but also enabling factors: conforming to them, and challenging or modifying them to construe the positions from which they make their claims and give them a good chance of success.

Chapter 6 focused in particular on these issues. I explored how MPs engage with the following incentives: ballot structure, the institutional strength of minority parties, and the depth of ethnic divisions. My analysis showed that MPs employed institutional incentives as resources which allowed them to legitimise certain courses of action. Hence, for instance, when the electoral system encouraged stronger independence from their parties, they used this to legitimise their claims as based on a direct link with the constituents, but at the same time they employed their ethnic identification as a resource to deny any need for accountability to the voters despite the existence of opposing electoral incentives. In Serbia where the electoral system encourages stronger dependence on the political party, MPs used it to avoid accountability or claim the position of trustee as the only position from which they could free themselves from any ties and effectively act for the benefit of their constituency. Similarly, my findings show that MPs strategically constructed themselves sometimes as powerless, sometimes as influential, thereby using institutional devices such as constitutional veto powers or minority status as resources to obtain their goals and legitimise their actions.

I further showed how the cultural expectations of the audience affect the process of representative claim-making. The cultural context of deep inter-ethnic divisions encouraged MPs in Kosovo to perform conflict and depict their constituents in terms of inter-ethnic difference. Such behaviour is constrained in Serbia by the majority's fear of minority separatism and the wider perception of minorities as a threat to territorial integrity. Yet, similar to institutional incentives, my findings show that while culture affects representative claim-making opportunities, it does not determine the behaviour of representatives. For instance, MPs in Kosovo presented themselves as non-cooperative and resistant for the minority audience by employing silence rather than direct confrontation, which at the same time enabled them to frame themselves as moderate and cooperative before the international audience.

To conclude, my thesis has suggested that representation is performed as a dynamic relationship between the representatives, the represented and diverse audiences, within which representatives at least partly construe the identity and interests of their constituents in the process of enacting them. Representatives furthermore exploit diverse institutional and cultural resources to construct themselves as legitimate and authentic representatives of the evoked constituents. While performing representation, representatives shape their claims differently depending on the audience they address and shift between different positions, because assuming different positions enables them to do different things.

7.2. The contribution of the thesis

The new conceptualisation of minority representation advanced in this thesis has implications for both theory and practice. I offer a more dynamic understanding of representation that enables us to acknowledge the constructed and relational quality of ethnic identity and explore what is going on in representing it. In doing so, the thesis feeds into the growing debate on representation, marked by the representative and constructivist turn.

Previous literature on minority representation has focused on either the presence of minorities in representative institutions or the relationship between presence and responsiveness to essential minority interests. In this thesis, I argued that such an approach has several shortcomings: first, perhaps unintentionally, it takes ethnic groups and their interests as pre-given and objective categories, neglecting their internal heterogeneity and the relational and dynamic quality of identities and interests; second, it reduces representation either to mere presence or to a unidirectional relationship between representatives and the

represented, failing to acknowledge its dynamic and creative aspects; third, aiming to explain the conditions under which responsiveness to minority interests increases, the literature focuses too much on institutions as potential explanatory variables, which prevents it from observing how pre-given institutional roles can be moulded and re-directed, conferring new meaning in the process of representing. The theoretical approach and method of analysis offered in this thesis enabled me to avoid these shortcomings and address the representation of ethnic groups in a novel and enlightening way, thereby filling a significant gap in the literature. Following Saward, I argued that a distinction has to be made between referents and objects of representation, i.e. ethnic groups and representatives' ideas and portrayals of these ethnic groups. In line with this, there is a difference between claim-makers and their portrayals of representatives (i.e. subjects of representation). This enabled me not only to acknowledge the constructed nature of identity and interests, but also to explore how ethnic groups are constituted as political subjects within the representative process. I argued in addition that representation is a relational activity that does not only include representative's portrayals of the constituency but also needs audiences' recognition to be successful. To achieve this, representatives construct themselves as having a right kind of relationship with the constituents that enables them to know who their constituents really are, what their needs and interests are and how to advance them.

The thesis's theoretical contribution relates to the redefinition of descriptive and substantive representation. I argued that these categories may be productive for research on minority representation only insofar as they are reconceptualised in light of the claims-making approach. Casting a new light on descriptive and substantive representation has resolved some of the confusion in the recent literature. First, as empirical researchers have started engaging more with Saward's claim-making framework, a confusion has appeared as to whether *claims about* groups count as descriptive or substantive representation. Trying to combine the traditional understanding of descriptive and substantive representation with the claim-making approach, some researchers have treated any claims about or for groups as substantive representation, reducing descriptive representation to mere presence (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008, Gamble, 2007, Schouteden and Wauters, 2017, Toró, 2017). Others have argued that claims *about* count as descriptive representation, while claims *for* account as substantive representation (Piscopo, 2011). This thesis has argued, instead, that both descriptive and substantive representation are better seen as resources representatives use in constructing their position and legitimacy. Hence, an essential difference between descriptive and substantive representation relates to whether representatives evoke (even if just silently, trusting the power of social convention) ethnic resemblance as a resource in performing representation or their capacity to know minority interests and act upon them. In both

instances, representatives may contribute to the constitution of group identities and their interests. Second, depending on the available data, empirical researchers have measured substantive representation in a range of ways, from looking at policy outputs and voting to counting the number of times representatives mention the word “minorities”. Such diverse operationalisations of “acting for” make the concept too vague to be productive and enable comparison. This thesis does not aim to narrow down our understanding of what it means to “act for”, but instead suggests that rather than letting a researcher deliberately decide what counts as “acting for” and seek to measure it, we should ask what actions representatives themselves frame as actions upon minority interests and how convincing their framing is. This allows us to compare how diverse representatives perform substantive representation in different contexts and circumstances.

The thesis, further, feeds into the political science literature that explores the impact of institutional design on political behaviour and contributes to it by offering a more dynamic understanding of institutions. I challenge a common assumption that representatives are merely acted upon by institutional norms and incentives and suggest that representatives also actively engage with these incentives, contributing to their redefinition and reinterpretation. In addition, I have argued for the relevance of cultural background for the performance of representation, a dimension that the existing political science literature has not paid sufficient attention to. The thesis contributes to the literature by showing how cultural “things” such as embodiment, language and collective history are deployed and transformed in the process of representing ethnicity.

Another contribution relates to its geographic reach. While much of the existing empirical research on minority representation focuses on the US, this thesis has filled a gap in the literature by providing a fresh analysis of representative performance in two countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Compared to the rest of Europe, the Central and Eastern European countries are particularly interesting from the perspective of minority representation because of their ethnic diversity, the institutionalised formation of constituency around ethnicity and electoral incentives for a stronger presence of minority MPs (Cârstocea, 2011, Székely and Horváth, 2014). These similarities suggest that my empirical findings could be relevant for the parliamentary representation of ethnic minorities in other countries in the same region, and in particular for the countries of the Western Balkans, which, in addition to similar institutional incentives share the same cultural background. The thesis is also valuable for scholars conducting research on the representation of women or other social groups. Both the theoretical and methodological approach could be more widely applied in any empirical research on representation in other countries regardless of their specific focus in

terms of where representation is performed, or who or what the claim-makers and objects of representation are.

7.3. Limitations of the study

In this section I acknowledge some of the limitations of my study which particularly relate to methodological constraints.

My analysis was limited to the transcripts of plenary speeches because of the lack of video footage of plenary sessions. Appearance, clothing, gestures and other non-verbal language is integral to any performance. Posture, facial expressions or tone of voice, for instance, also convey meaning in addition to the speeches delivered on the floor. Non-verbal utterances express feelings and arouse emotions which are often not detectable by merely looking at the transcripts of political speeches. The availability of such data would have significantly enriched my analysis and allowed me to explore the performance of claims in more dynamic way. However, in the interviews representatives actively pointed to some instances in which body language was particularly important, which allowed me to at least indirectly take some of these aspects into consideration.

Another limitation in terms of data availability relates to the lack of diversity of my data. It would have been interesting to compare claims made before different audiences; for instance, comparing plenary addresses to claims made in committee meeting where the audience is more limited or wider political claims made on MPs' personal websites, blogs or other social media. Yet, as I argued in Chapter 3, these data were not available in my cases: parliaments do not make transcripts of committee meetings and politicians rarely use social media outlets to communicate with their constituents. This limitation was circumvented by combining analysis of the plenary speeches with the interviews, which allowed me to compare the shaping of representative claims before different audiences.

A long-term approach would have allowed me to detect patterns of shape-shifting more clearly depending on the change of structural and cultural incentives. In that case, however, it would not be possible to include all the claims made throughout years. The research would rather have to be limited to a single policy issue, or particular moments such as electoral campaigns.

I argued in Chapter 2 that extending the scope of political representation beyond electoral representation is one of the important insights of the representative turn in

democratic theory. Since non-elected actors also make claims to represent, the analysis of such claims would have significantly contributed to my research. Comparing the claims made by non-elected actors to those made by MPs enables researchers to encompass the diversity of claims about and for minorities but also to explore how diverse actors engage with different institutional and cultural incentives. Since non-elected actors are not constrained by institutional norms and pressures, focusing on their claims would enable us to explore in more detail the ways they exploit cultural resources in the performance of representation. In my cases, however, minority civil society is weak and dependent on political parties. In addition, there is a lack of media attention to any issues related to minorities; the only actors that manage to gain some media visibility are minority parties. This has enabled minority parties to succeed in monopolising the representation of ethnicity. For these reasons I chose to focus on the claims made by MPs. I also had to narrow the scope of my research to include only MPs with minority backgrounds as in the post-conflict context of my cases only those MPs were expected to make claims about and for minorities. However, I did extended analysis beyond minority parties to include all MPs who publicly identified themselves as members of ethnic groups. In this context, if a diversity of claims about and for minorities was to be expected, it could only have been found in different political parties rather than at other stages of representation. However, I believe that even the little there is here on other stages of representation deserves to be explored in future research.

In this thesis I have looked at the ways representative claims contribute to the formation of group identity and interests. Yet, the scope of my research did not allow me to grasp the whole process of identity construction. I have acknowledged throughout the thesis that identity construction and identity contestation go well beyond the walls of parliament. The examples I have offered indicate how the construction of minority identities is a long-term process influenced by many actors (political parties, civil society actors, kin states, international community, etc.) and diverse institutional and cultural incentives. Furthermore, my interviews point to the fact that many of these constructions, that political representatives contribute to, are happening outside parliament; for instance, during electoral campaigns or through direct contact with the constituents on the ground. In this thesis, I have neither claimed, nor intended to suggest, that representation constructs ethnic groups from scratch. The aim of my research was to show the creative and aesthetic qualities of representation, i.e. to show that the performance of representation is also integral to the construction of groups. My findings show that representative claims bring ethnic groups into being as political subjects and contribute to the ways that members of these groups perceive themselves as ethnic minorities and the ways that different audiences perceive them.

In addition to the methodological limitations, several other important issues were outside the remit of the thesis. The existing literature on minority representation has been concerned with normative issues, i.e. how to achieve better, more just and more democratic representation of minorities. My thesis did not tackle these issues. While acknowledging the importance of these questions, I have argued that the research on what is going on in representation is both relevant and fills a wide gap in the literature. Because earlier research has failed to understand and explore the complexity of representation and its dynamics, I decided to open up these important questions in the hope that other researchers will engage with them and push the debate further. The claim-making approach that I have adopted has been criticised for focusing too much on representatives while failing to address the process of claim-reception. Concerned with the quality of representation, these arguments suggest that by putting too much emphasis on representatives' constructions of the represented, the represented are given no independence to hold their representatives to account (Castiglione, 2012, p. 122, Severs, 2010). I agree, and indeed have argued throughout the thesis that the way audiences engage with the representative claims is an essential component of representative relations, but this does not diminish the importance of representative claims for the construction of both the representatives and the represented. Issues of audience reception remain to be studied in future research.

7.4. Avenues for future research

As acknowledged in the previous section, this thesis has covered only some aspects of representative performance which leaves space for it to be developed further.

This research could be extended by including more diverse sources of data in addition to plenary speeches and interviews. While I was restricted by the specific context of my cases, focus on parliamentary committees and social media outlets in other countries would strengthen the research particularly in terms of exploring the diversity of claims and the ways diverse audiences affect the shaping of representative claims. In addition, covering a longer period of time would allow us to better detect processes of identity construction. This could be further strengthened by the selection of cases in which claims by MPs are challenged by non-elected actors. While my focus on parliamentary representation oriented me more towards institutional incentives, claims by non-elected actors would offer additional insight into the processes of identity construction and allow us to engage more with cultural incentives. Further research could therefore be directed at different stages of representative performance

such as media (newspapers, television or social media), or activities performed by civil society organisations. I have argued throughout the thesis that representation is a relational activity. This is an area that requires development. How does the audience engage with the claims made by political parties and politicians? Focus on the claims made by non-elected actors and their comparison with the MPs' claims would allow us to explore how representation works both from representatives to audience and in opposite direction. Public hearings organised by parliamentary committees would, for example, be an interesting case to explore the relationship between elected and non-elected representative claims.

My specific focus on the performance of representation ruled out the question of the democratic legitimacy of representation. In my cases, most MPs constructed themselves as true embodiments of their groups, which allowed them to act freely in representing. Being one of them and one with them, they claimed that they need not necessarily consult or be accountable. We have also seen that in many instances minority constituencies did not have the necessary capacity to ask their representatives for reasons. For instance, in cases when representative claims were made in a language they do not speak or when decisions relevant to them were made behind the scene in secret negotiations. These examples invite us to focus in future more on the mechanisms of accountability that work beyond elections, e.g., mechanisms for citizen participation and scrutiny, or the quality of information available (free and competitive press) and communication between representatives and the represented. Both the processes of giving account of, and asking for reasons, should be of interest to empirical scholars as well as the question of the capacity of the represented to ask for reasons.

To conclude, my research has offered a novel way of analysing the representation of ethnic minorities. By combining theory and empirical evidence I have shown that representation works as a performative activity that at least partly creates both the representatives and the represented, and the relations among them. Yet, as with any study, there is space to strengthen and expand the research in terms of case and data selection and the scope of analysis. I hope that both the contributions and the limitations of this study inspire further research that engages more with the constructivist aspects of identity and representation highlighted in this thesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of MPs

MP		Ethnicity	Political Party
Last name	First name		
Džudžo	Esad	Bosniak	SDA
Kovács	Elvira	Hungarian	SVM
Fremond	Árpád	Hungarian	SVM
Halimi	Riza	Albanian	PDD
Omeragić	Bajram	Bosniak	SDA
Pásztor	Bálint	Hungarian	SVM
Varga	László	Hungarian	SVM

MP		Ethnicity	Political Party
Last name	First name		
Kuntić	Petar	Croatian	DSHV
Mihajlović	Vitomir	Roma	SDP
Omerović	Meho	Bosniak	SDP
Poturak	Munir	Bosniak	SDP
Šehović	Bajram	Bosniak	SDP

MP		Ethnicity	Political Party
Last name	First name		
Damjanović	Jovan	Roma	SRS / DLR
Hajdarević	Kenan	Bosniak	LDP
Hamzagić	Šerif	Bosniak	G17+
Hrebik	Jaroslav	Slovak	G17+
Kišmarton	Oto	Hungarian	SRS / SNS
Lodi	Gabor	Hungarian	DS
Magda	Magda	Romanian	DS
Maraci ³⁰	Nandor	Hungarian	DS
Marčok	Marčok	Slovak	DS
Mihajlović	Miletić	Vlach	SPS
Mučenski	Đura	Ruthenian	DS

³⁰ Hungarian MP Nandor Maraci passed away during the term and was replaced by another Hungarian representative, Aniko Žiroš Jankelić in December 2009.

Papuga	Olena	Ruthenian	LSV
Petrov	Zoran	Bulgarian	DS
Popović	Judita	Hungarian	LDP
Samofalov	Konstantin	Russian	DS
Spaho	Sulejman	Muslim	SRS
Toman	Marina	Slovak	SRS
Tot	Tamaš	Hungarian	DS
Zankov	Stefan	Bulgarian	SRS / SNS
Žiroš Jankelić	Aniko	Hungarian	DS
Žura	Viorel	Romanian	G17+

MP		Ethnicity	Political Party
Last name	First name		
Arifi	Etem	Ashkali	PAI
Balje	Duda	Bosniak	DSB Vakaf
Balje	Hamza	Bosniak	BSDAK / CDU
Bontić	Jelena	Serb	SLS
Damka	Fikrim	Turkish	KDTP
Danush	Ademi	Ashkali	PDAK
Demiri	Rasim	Bosniak	DSB Vakaf
Đokić	Saša	Serb	Socijaldemokratija
Haljilji	Murselj	Gorani	GIG
Ivanović	Sreten	Serb	JSL / SLS
Kervan	Enis	Turkish	KDTP
Kinolli	Albert	Roma	PREBK
Kostić	Biserka	Serb	SLS / PDS
Marinković	Goran	Serb	SLS / PDS
Mikić	Vesna	Serb	JSL
Miletić	Petar	Serb	SLS
Milosavljević	Saša	Serb	SLS
Neziraj	Xhevdet	Egyptian	IRDK
Redžepi	Emilija	Bosniak	NDS
Savić	Vesimir	Serb	JSL
Šinik	Müfera	Turkish	KDTP
Stojanović	Milivoje	Serb	SLS/
Todorović	Boban	Serb	SLS
Trajković	Rada	Serb	JSL
Živković	Jasmina	Serb	SLS

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

MP		Ethnicity	Political party	Date
Last name	First name			
Damjanović	Jovan	Roma	SRS/ DLR	22.05.2014
Džudžo	Esad	Bosniak	SDA	27.06.2014
Fremond	Árpád	Hungarian	SVM	07.11.2014
Halimi	Riza	Albanian	PDD	06.11.2014
Kovács	Elvira	Hungarian	SVM	15.05.2014
Kuntić	Petar	Croatian	DSHV	20.05.2014
Lodi	Gabor	Hungarian	DS	27.05.2014
Mihajlović	Miletić	Vlach	SPS	05.11.2014
Papuga	Olena	Ruthenian	LSV	21.05.2014
Popović	Judita	Hungarian	LDP	04.11.2014
Poturak	Munir	Bosniak	SDP	27.06.2014
Samofalov	Konstantin	Russian	DS	21.06.2014
Spaho	Sulejman	Muslim	SRS	05.11.2014
Toman	Marina	Slovak	SRS	23.06.2014
Žiroš Jankelić	Aniko	Hungarian	DS	21.05.2014

MP		Ethnicity	Political party	Date
Last name	First name			
Kostić	Biserka	Serb	PDS	25.02.2014
Marinković	Goran	Serb	PDS	25.02.2014
Redžepi	Emilija	Bosniak	NDS	26.02.2014
Balje	Hamza	Bosniak	CDU	26.02.2014
Miletić	Petar	Serb	SLS	26.02.2014
Trajković	Rada	Serb	JSL	26.02.2014
Damka	Fikrim	Turkish	KDTP	27.02.2014
Živković	Jasmina	Serb	SLS	27.02.2014
Bontić	Jelena	Serb	SLS	27.02.2014
Stojanović	Milivoje	Serb	/	27.02.2014
Milosavljević	Saša	Serb	SLS	27.02.2014
Kinolli	Albert	Roma	PREBK	28.02.2014
Ademi	Danush	Ashkali	PDAK	28.02.2014
Balje	Duda	Bosniak	DSB	28.02.2014
Šinik	Müfera	Turkish	KDTP	28.02.2014
Haljilji	Murselj	Gorani	GIG	28.02.2014

Acronyms and abbreviations

BSDAK	Bosniak Party of Democratic Action Kosovo (<i>Bošnjačka stranka demokratske akcije Kosova</i>)
CDU	Center Democratic Union (<i>Centar demokratske unije</i>)
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
DLR	Democratic Left of Roma (<i>Demokratska levica Roma</i>)
DS	Democratic Party (Demokratska stranka)
DSB	Bosniak Democratic Party (<i>Demokratska stranka Bošnjaka</i>)
DSHV	Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina (<i>Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini</i>)
EU	European Union
EULEX	The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
GIG	Civic Initiative of Gora (<i>Građanska inicijativa Gora</i>)
ICO	International Civilian Office
JUG	United Gorani Union (<i>Jedinstvena unija Goranaca</i>)
KDTP	Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo (<i>Kosova Demokratik Türk Partisi</i>)
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (<i>Liberalno demokratska partija</i>)
LSV	League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (<i>Liga socialdemokrata Vojvodine</i>)
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	New Democratic Party (<i>Nova demokratska stranka</i>)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDAK	Democratic Ashkali Party of Kosovo (<i>Partia Demokratike e Ashkanlive të Kosovës</i>)
PDD	Party for Democratic Action (<i>Partija za demokratsko delovanje</i>)
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo (<i>Partia Demokratike e Kosovës</i>)
PDS	Progressive Democratic Party (<i>Progresivna demokratska stranka</i>)
PR	Proportional representation system
PREBK	United Roma Party of Kosovo (<i>Partia Rome e Bashkuar e Kosovës</i>)
PT	Parliamentary transcript
RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
SDA	Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak (<i>Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka</i>)
SDP	Sandžak Democratic Party (<i>Sandžačka demokratska partija</i>)
SDSKiM	Social-Democratic Party of Kosovo and Metohija (<i>Socijaldemokratska stranka Kosova i Metohije</i>)
SLS	Independent Liberal Party (<i>Samostalna liberalna stranka</i>)
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia (<i>Socijalistička partija Srbije</i>)
SRS	Serbian Radical Party (<i>Srpska radikalna stranka</i>)
SVM	Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarian (<i>Savez vojvođanskih Mađara</i>)

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