Surrogate Representation by Parties: A Cross-National Perspective

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Abstract

A citizen can usually vote for one representative, but may feel represented by multiple ones. How do voters perceive representation by multiple agents? What factors affect these perceptions and what are the implications for support for democracy? To investigate these questions, we propose the concept of party surrogation – the sense of being represented by a party for which one did not vote. Taking surrogate representation beyond the American context in which it was conceived, we utilize CSES module 3 (2006-2011) to establish cross-national and individual variations in party surrogation. Our analysis explores different combinations of elected and surrogate parties among voters and the implications of party surrogation for citizens' support for democracy. Our findings demonstrate different pathways to party surrogation. We also show that party surrogation compensates for deficits in representation when electoral representation is lacking and adds to it when electoral representation exists.

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Introduction

Citizens can usually vote for only one representative but may feel represented by multiple ones. In such cases, they have multiple representatives – those for whom they voted and those for whom they did not. Jane Mansbridge (2003) conceptualized representation by non-elected representatives as *surrogate representation* "by a representative with whom one has no electoral relationship" (p. 522). Her concept has attracted theoretical and empirical interest (Wolkenstein & Wratil, 2021) but the focus in the literature remained on the individual representative, neglecting the role of another actor who represents the public: the political parties. In this paper, we focus on surrogate representation by parties. We ask: Do voters indeed feel represented only by their elected party, or do they feel represented by a variety of parties? How do they perceive representation by multiple parties? Who are the voters with party surrogation? Finally, how does party surrogation affect their satisfaction with democracy?

Over the years, representation has been conceptualized and studied mostly as the dyadic relationship between elected representatives and their constituency (Dovi, 2018; Mansbridge, 2020; Miller & Stokes, 1963). In Mansbridge's conceptualization of surrogate representation, inspired by the American context, the focus is also on the individual representative. Constituents may feel represented by a legislator from another district or state based on shared attitudes toward policy issues or their interests as a group (e.g., minority groups, workers). However, we contend that political parties can also provide surrogate representation. In many advanced industrial democracies, parties - not individuals - are the main carriers of political representation (e.g., Adams, 2001; Dalton, 1985; Ezrow, 2008; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012; Thomassen, 1994). Despite their decline, national parties play a major role in political identification (Dalton, 2014; West & Iyengar, 2022), representation (Blais et al., 2003), and voting (Bartels, 2000), even in

electoral systems where citizens vote directly for individual representatives. Surrogate representation by parties is therefore crucial for understanding representation by multiple agents. Consequently, our study focuses on parties as surrogate agents, examining party surrogation from a cross-national perspective.

There are limited theories about and studies of surrogate representation by parties. Most of the research on surrogate representation has focused on individual representatives (Angevine, 2017; Clark Wilson & Curtis Ellis, 2014; Tate, 2004; Tillery, 2011). Recently, Wolkenstein and Wratil (2021) discussed *partisan* surrogation, "which occurs when a constituent considers as her representative a specific elected representative of a party for whom she did not vote" (p. 869). While acknowledging the partisan context of representation, the representative agent in this conceptualization is still the individual representative, rather than the party. Parties have yet to be conceptualized as surrogate agents of representation and no study, to the best of our knowledge, has examined this type of surrogate representation.

We address this gap and contribute to the literature on parties and representation in several important ways. First, we move away from the focus on dyadic representation by an elected individual, investigating instead the party as the representative agent. We highlight that democracies contain multiple representatives – politicians and parties. Thus, representation is not restricted to an electoral relationship with one individual or one party only. Second, by developing a theoretical framework of parties as surrogate agents and testing it empirically, we add to the growing interest in representation as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond an electoral, dyadic relationship (De Mulder, 2022; Wolkenstein & Wratil, 2021). In addition, we contribute to the understanding of the role of parties in democracies and their meaning for voters. Parties have suffered a decline in public support for the past 50 years. At the same time, technology

and the trend of personalization have fundamentally changed their role as representatives of the public (Fiorina, 2002). Taking a broader view of parties as representative agents, we look beyond their electoral relationships with voters.

In this study, we conceptualize surrogate representation by parties and examine citizens' perceptions of their representation by parties – the ones they voted for and those they did not. To do so, we build on Mansbridge's and Wolkenstein and Wratil's concept of surrogation and introduce the concept of party surrogation. We develop theoretical expectations about voters with party surrogation, the pathways to this representation, the combinations of elected and surrogate parties, and the implications for voters' satisfaction with democracy. We utilize CSES module 3 (2006-2011) to identify the surrogate representation of political parties in 37 elections across 31 countries. We find that despite the decline of public trust in parties, most citizens in a majority of countries feel there is a party that represents their views. We also find that the share of people who feel represented by a party for which they did not vote (party surrogation) varies across countries, with up to 20% party surrogation among voters in some countries. We discuss specific cases of party surrogation to flesh it out in different contexts. Furthermore, we examine who are the voters with party surrogation and identify the common combinations of representation they have. With regard to the implications of party surrogation for democratic attitudes, our findings show a compensating effect of party surrogation: voters with surrogate representation by a party are more supportive of democracy than those who do not feel represented at all, but less supportive than those who feel represented by the party they voted for. Furthermore, among voters with a surrogate party, those who also have electoral representation by a party they like are more supportive of democracy. Taken together, our findings indicate that surrogate representation by a party is the

result of multiple pathways. Such surrogacy compensates for deficits in representation when electoral representation is lacking and adds to it when electoral representation exists.

Surrogate representation by a party – A theoretical framework

Surrogate representation highlights that citizens may be represented by multiple representatives, including those they themselves did not elect (Mansbridge, 2003, 2020). Mansbridge stresses that surrogate representation takes place in the absence of electoral representation, that is, when one is not represented by the elected representative in her district and finds representation in a representative from another district. Conceived in the context of American democracy, the concept of surrogate representation focuses on territorial-based representation by an individual representative. It does not refer to a party as a representative or to a situation in which one feels represented by both representatives – the elected and the surrogate.

Empirical studies of this concept have similarly focused on individual representatives in the American context. Some of these studies have examined the representatives' side (Angevine, 2017; Clark Wilson & Curtis Ellis, 2014; Tate, 2004; Tillery, 2011). They found that representatives from minority groups such as women and Blacks are more likely to represent out-of-district and even out-of-state constituents who belong to their group. While there are no formal electoral relationships and accountability, these surrogate representatives sometimes feel responsible for their surrogate constituency. A woman representative, for example, may feel she represents the interests and perspectives of women within and outside of her district (Tremblay, 2006).

Other studies have focused on the citizens' side of surrogate representation. Schildkraut (2016) investigated whether Latinos in the United States feel they are represented by co-ethnic

surrogate representatives. She found that surrogate representation is not based merely on descriptive representation. Rather, perceptions of having a linked fate, identification with one's national origin group, and less acculturation increase surrogate representation. Departing from group-based surrogate representation, Baker (2020) reported that Americans donate to surrogate representatives outside of their state to substitute for losing in their district and to gain additional representation beyond that provided by their elected Congressional representative.

Even studies examining surrogate representation outside of the United States – some of whom do not use the term explicitly – have remained focused on individual representatives. Wigginton (2021) studied Nova Scotia's protected electoral districts as a case of the institutional surrogate representation of Blacks and Acadians. These non-proportional districts allow for better representation of members from these communities across the country. Using the Canadian case as well, Blais and Daoust (2017) reported that 9% of the electorate experience "incongruent representation," favoring a local candidate not from their preferred party.

Recently, Wolkenstein and Wratil (2021) called to further develop and study surrogate representation beyond its American-inspired territorial form, as other electoral systems give rise to other types of surrogate representation. They identified one such type as *partisan* surrogation, "which occurs when a constituent considers as her representative a specific elected representative of a party for whom she did not vote" (p. 869). They claimed that this type of surrogate representation could be found in both proportional representation (PR) and first past the post (FPTP) systems. However, an electoral connection between a voter and an individual representative does not exist in all electoral systems. In closed-list PR systems, for example, voters vote for parties, not candidates. Therefore, there is no direct *electoral* representation by individuals in such systems. This idea is partially reflected in Wolkenstein and Wratil's aforementioned

partisan surrogation. It is also reflected in their concept of *party list* surrogation, namely, representation by a representative from the party for which the voter did vote but who is not the head of the party. Nevertheless, these types of surrogation focus on individual representatives and do not treat the parties themselves as representative agents.

We fill this gap and broaden the scope of surrogate representation by theorizing the concept of *party* surrogation – surrogate representation by parties. Party surrogation occurs when voters feel represented by a party they did not vote for and, therefore, have no electoral relationship with. Consequently, they have two parties representing them – the elected and the surrogate. For example, if constituents voted in their district for candidate X from party A, then party A is the elected representative of these constituents in the parliament. If, at the same time, these constituents feel represented by party B, they also have a surrogate party representing them. Insofar as both parties are in the parliament, the constituents have multiple representatives – the elected representative (party A) and the surrogate representative (party B).

To the best of our knowledge, the meaning and implications of representation through a combination of multiple parties have not been theorized or studied thus far. In what follows, we outline and examine surrogate representation by parties and its consequences for voters' support for democracy.

Multiple representatives and support for democracy

Party surrogation: Voters, pathways, and combinations of representing parties

What are the pathways to surrogate representation? Who are the voters with party surrogation? What combinations of representation by elected and surrogate parties do they have? Party surrogation extends representation beyond the electoral relationship between voters and

parties and could have numerous reasons and motivations, both at the macro and individual levels. While identifying all of these determinants is beyond the scope of this paper, we suggest and explore some pathways to party surrogation and flesh out the combinations of representing parties and the implications for voters' satisfaction with democracy.

Insincere voting is the first pathway to party surrogation. When voters vote for a party they believe can win rather one that they prefer, they can feel represented by a party other than the one for which they voted. Thus, strategic voters can have party surrogation in addition to the party they voted for. We maintain that some voters with party surrogation – those who engage in insincere voting – will prefer the surrogate party to the party they voted for. At the electoral system level, strategic voting occurs in both FPTP systems and PR systems and can lead to party surrogation (Abramson et al., 2010). In FPTP systems, the most expected pattern would be feeling represented by a small party while voting for a larger one (Cox, 1997). In PR systems, the prevalent behavior of coalition-directed voting (Duch et al., 2010; Kedar, 2012) can lead to party surrogation. In addition, PR systems usually have a larger effective number of parties (ENP) (Herron et al., 2018), providing more opportunities for voters to have multiple parties as agents of their representation. Tremblay (2006) argued that proportional systems are especially suitable for creating a critical mass of surrogate representation for women, one that will ensure their substantive representation.

While we expect to find party surrogation among insincere voters, we do not expect this to be the sole pathway to surrogate representation by parties. Socio-demographic and political characteristics can also lead to party surrogation. Descriptive representation, especially for women and minority groups, is particularly prevalent in the existing literature on surrogate representation (Angevine, 2017; Schildkraut, 2016; Wigginton, 2021). In such cases, ethnic and sectorial parties can also serve as surrogate parties for voters who belong to specific demographic groups but

choose not to vote for these parties. A woman may vote for one party while also feeling represented by another party because it has a larger number of women on its list. We thus expect that party surrogation will be more common among women. With regard to individual-level political characteristics, we speculate that surrogate voters are more politically informed. Identifying a party as representing one's views suggests that a voter with surrogate representation is politically knowledgeable. We thus expect that party surrogation will be more common among voters who are politically sophisticated and involved.

Voters may have still other considerations leading them to have a combination of surrogate and elected parties as their representatives. For example, those who vote for large parties may feel represented by small niche, sectorial, or one-issue parties. On the other hand, those who vote for small parties may feel represented by a large party because of its leader. We, therefore, posit that party surrogation will result in a mixture of large and small parties. Yet another pathway for party surrogation can be multiple ideological spectrums or issues – a voter may feel represented by one party on one policy issue but choose to vote for another party due to another issue. Still, given political identification, in terms of ideological position and distance, we expect that elected and surrogate parties will usually belong to the same political bloc and be ideologically close to the voter. In addition, surrogate representation may result from policy representation. If a voter's elected party is not part of the coalition, s/he may feel represented by one of the parties in the coalition. Even if the elected party is part of the coalition, voters may feel that another party in the government represents them even though they did not vote for it. Accordingly, we expect to find voters with surrogate parties in the coalition and elected parties either in the opposition or the coalition.

The outcome of these pathways is that voters with party surrogation have a combination of parties that represent them – elected and surrogate. In the following empirical analysis, we examine three types of these party combinations by their size, ideological distance, and coalition status. Since surrogate representation could result from different pathways, as described above, we do not expect these combinations to exclude each other. Rather, we explore these combinations and see them as evidence of the multifaceted nature of party surrogation and the different pathways leading to it.

Party surrogation and democratic attitudes

How do voters perceive party surrogation and how does it affect their support for democracy? Voters might see this situation as undesirable due to the incongruence between the party they voted for and the party they feel represents them. Alternatively, voters may feel satisfied with having multiple agents representing them, because they can feel represented on different issues, dimensions, and considerations. Surrogate representation may thus come instead of or in addition to electoral representation by the party the constituent voted for. Therefore, in some cases, party surrogation is suboptimal, compensating when voters do not feel represented, while in other cases it creates a surplus of representation by multiple representatives.

In the original conceptualization, Jane Mansbridge (2003) assigned surrogate representation a key role in compensating for the shortcomings of American democracy: "The situation has changed from the time when territorial representation captured many of a voter's most significant interests," she observes, "but in the United States the representational system has not changed with it" (pp. 522–523). Surrogate representation, argues Mansbridge, is "crucial to democratic legitimacy" because it provides representation to voters whose candidate lost in their own districts or voters whose preferred policies attract a minority in their districts (p. 523).

Surrogate representation by an individual representative thus offers non-territorial options for representation and may give citizens – especially from minority groups – the feeling that they are being represented when they do not have electoral representation (Mansbridge, 2020, pp. 38–39). In this case, surrogate representation *compensates* for conditions where the constituents lack representation – their preferred candidate lost in the district, or their preferred candidate ran in a different district.

A similar compensating effect is implied from Wolkenstein and Wratil's (2021) conceptualization of partisan surrogation. They observe that while Mansbridge highlights surrogate representation in cases where the voters cannot vote for a candidate outside their district, in their partisan surrogation, "the constituent may have had the opportunity to vote for the representative" (p. 869). Voters may not vote for the party that they feel best represents them for the multiple reasons mentioned above, so a surrogate party may compensate for the lack of representation by the elected party. In such cases, surrogate representation results from voters' considerations and their choices when casting their ballots.

Our theoretical framework of party surrogation offers an alternative perspective on the role of surrogate representation in promoting democratic legitimacy. We maintain that party surrogation can add to rather than compensate for the voter's representation. Recall the constituents who voted for candidate X from party A, but felt represented by party B they did not vote for. They had the opportunity to vote for both parties and may feel that their representation by party B comes *in addition* to their elected representative from party A. Even in the American context, surrogate representation may be additive because both parties comprise the Congress. Therefore, the voters may vote for a candidate from one party based on some issues and feel represented by the other party on other issues. This situation is true not only for party surrogation

but also for individual representatives. In Mansbrdige's (2003, p. 523) example of Barney Frank, who considered himself a surrogate representative for gays and lesbians across the U.S., surrogation can add to electoral representation, not necessarily replace it. Gay and lesbian voters may feel represented by Frank on issues related to the LGBT community *and* by the elected candidate in their district on other issues such as housing. In Baker's (2020) aforementioned study, donation-based surrogate representation substitutes for or adds to the donors' representation. Thus, surrogate representation – by politicians and parties – can enhance representation and potentially increase citizens' support for democracy.

The compensating and additive effects of party surrogation on voters' attitudes toward democracy lead to different theoretical expectations and to different answers to the questions that opened this section. If surrogate representation by a party compensates for the shortcomings of representation, we expect citizens who have surrogate representation to be more satisfied with democracy than those who do not feel represented at all. We also expect them to be less satisfied than citizens who feel represented by the party they voted for. If, however, party surrogation adds more representation, we expect citizens with such surrogate representation to have a surplus of representation and hence to be more satisfied with democracy than other citizens, both those who feel represented and those who do not.

Data and measures

To explore our questions, we utilized the CSES data module 3 (2006-2011), which includes a question about feelings of representation by a party. We excluded countries with no available data on this item, and cases with no data on voting for the lower house. In total, we included 37 surveys from 31 countries in the analyses (a list of all cases can be found in List A in the Appendix). We used several items in our analysis as follows.

Feelings of representation by a party and party surrogation

We first used the item that asks: "Would you say that any of the parties in [country] represents your views reasonably well?" The answers to this question are "yes" (1) or "no" (1). Then, there is a follow-up question that asks the respondents which party represents their views best. For those who answered "yes" to the first question, we compared the identity of the party that the respondents mentioned in the follow-up as representing them to the party that the respondents reported voting for in the vote-choice item. Party surrogation is defined as the discrepancy between the party people voted for and the party they mentioned best represented them. For mixed systems with two ballots, we considered full representation if the respondents felt represented by either the party on the list or the district ballots.

Country-level variables

We used the following measures from the CSES dataset: *Freedom House Index, Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP), Electoral system* (majoritarian, proportional representation, or mixed), and *Age of current regime.*

Individual-level variables

Education is measured on a 9-point scale. Household income is based on a 5-point scale denoting five income quantiles. Women are denoted by 1 and men by 0. We also included a control for the respondent's age. Additionally, we used an item measuring campaign involvement, which asks, "How closely did you follow the election campaign? Very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or not closely at all?" Lastly, we examined the effect of the respondent's ideological position on a left-right scale ranging from 0 (left) to 10 (right). We coded this item into three major categories: Left (0-4), Center (5) and Right (6-10). We also coded this item to measure ideological

extremism on a 0-5 scale, with the center defined as zero, and 5 as the most extreme position (either 0 or 10 on the original left-right scale).

Party-level variables

We included three party-level variables in our analyses, all taken from the CSES data. The first was the party's seat-share in the lower house. The second was the ideological position of the party on a left-right scale (0 denotes left and 10 denotes right), as indicated by the CSES experts. The third was information regarding the party's participation in the government based in an item indicating the number of cabinet posts (portfolios) held by the party after the election. We coded this number as a dummy variable indicating whether the party participated in the government after elections (when the number of cabinet portfolios was greater than zero) or not (zero cabinet portfolios). For all party-level variables the CSES includes data and ratings for the five to nine largest parties in each country. Therefore, all of the analyses using these variables are limited to those who voted for both the voted-for and the surrogate party included in the list of these parties.

Satisfaction with democracy and democratic attitudes

CSES has few indicators about support for democracy. We used satisfaction with democracy, a question that asks: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [COUNTRY]?"

We also used two questions that we interpreted as indicators of the principles of representative democracy. The first question asks: "Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens. Using the scale on this card, (where ONE means that voting

won't make any difference to what happens and FIVE means that voting can make a big difference), where would you place yourself?"

The second question asks: "Some people say that it doesn't make any difference who is in power. Others say that it makes a big difference who is in power. Using the scale on this card, (where ONE means that it doesn't make any difference who is in power and FIVE means that it makes a big difference who is in power), where would you place yourself?"

Results: What does party surrogation look like and what are its implications?

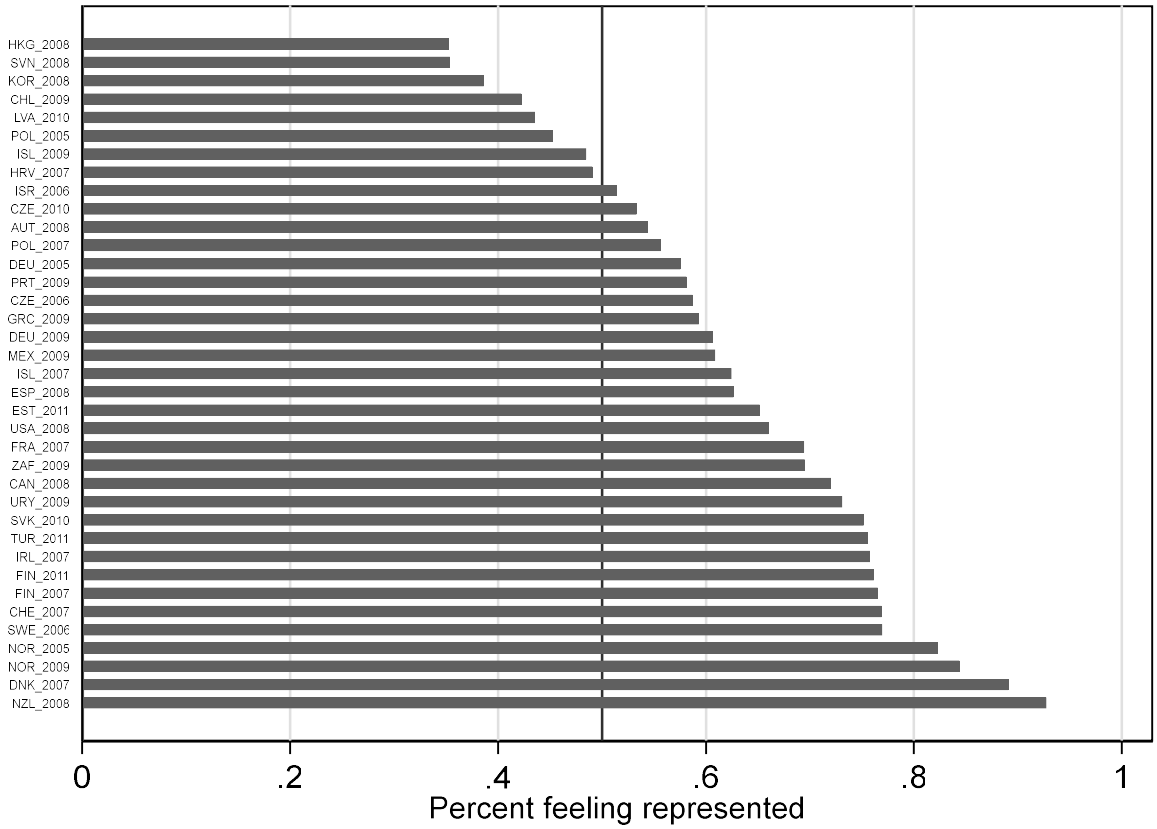
Feeling represented by elected and surrogate parties: The country level

Party surrogation exists when citizens feel represented by a party they did not vote for. We begin with a descriptive analysis of citizens' feelings of representation by parties in different countries and the percentage of party surrogation among them. Using the CSES item described above, we examined how many voters see parties as representing them. When asked if there is any party in their country that represents their views reasonably well, 60% of the respondents said "yes," 34% said "no," and 6% said they do not know. Thus, when asked about parties as representative entities, most voters identified them as such.

Of course, the percentage of voters who feel represented by parties varies between countries. Figure 1 presents the share of respondents saying that there is a party that represents their views (out of those who answered "yes" or "no") for each survey year. The largest percentage of citizens reporting that they feel represented by a party are in New Zealand, Denmark, and Norway, while the smallest percentage are in Hong Kong, Slovenia, and South Korea. Overall, in most countries in our data, more than half of the respondents stated that they felt represented by a

party in their country. Even in countries like the U.S., where the number of parties is small and voting is for candidates, a majority of respondents felt represented by a party.

Figure 1. Percentage of voters who feel represented by parties



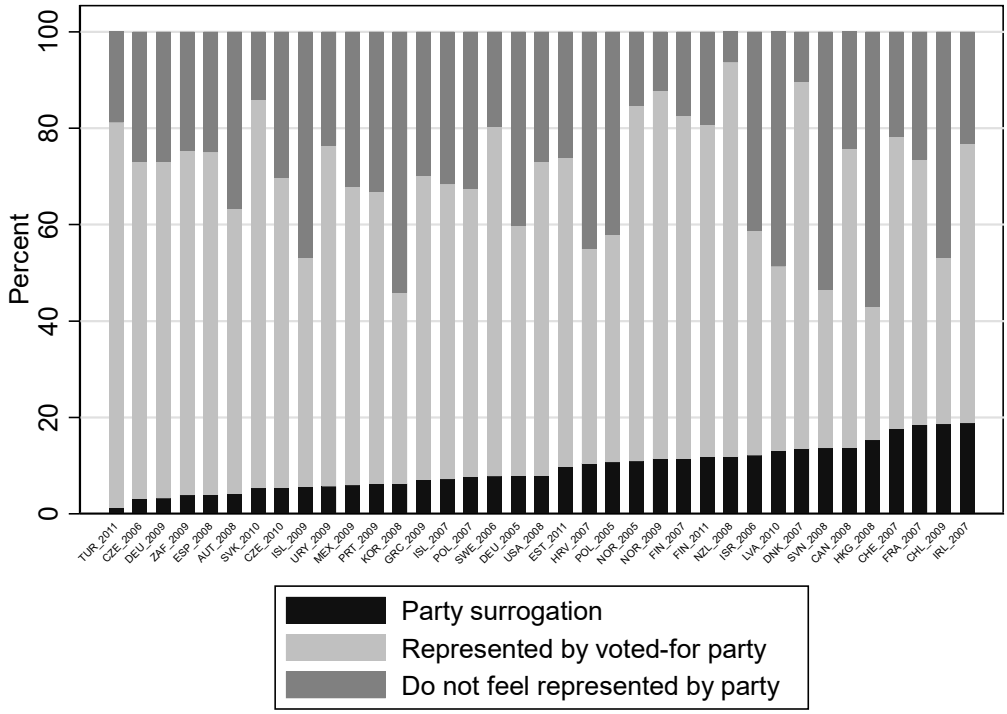
Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The graph presents the share of respondents saying that there is a party that represents their views reasonably well.

After establishing that citizens view parties as agents representing them, the question now is: by which parties do they feel represented? Voters can feel represented either by the party for which they voted (electoral representation) or by another party, which we defined as a case of party surrogation. In the following descriptive analysis, we focus on respondents who reported casting a ballot in the last elections and divided them into three categories: (a) voters who do not feel

represented by a party, (b) voters who feel represented by the party they voted for, and (c) voters who feel represented by another party, namely, party surrogation.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of the three groups in each country-year. Black bars indicate party surrogation, while the light-colored bars are for those who feel represented by the party they voted for, and the dark gray bars denote those who say there is no party that represents them. The graph is sorted by the percentage of party surrogation. On average, 9.4% of voters experience party surrogation, that is, they feel represented by a party they did not vote for. In some countries, such as Switzerland and Chile, party surrogation accounts for 17%-18% of voters, while in other countries, such as Austria and Spain, only 3%-4% of the voters are represented by a surrogate party. Indeed, most voters feel represented by the party they voted for. However, in some countries a considerable number of voters experience party surrogation, as they feel better represented by a party they did not vote for.

Figure 2. Percentage of party surrogation



Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The graph presents the share of three groups of voters within each country-year: 1. Voters who do not feel represented by a party (dark gray). 2. Voters who feel represented by the party they voted for (light gray). 3. Voters who feel represented by another party – party surrogation (black). Cases are sorted by the share of party surrogation.

As Figure 2 shows, there is considerable variation in the share of party surrogation across countries. What factors can explain this variation? Are some countries more prone to surrogate representation than others? To examine this question, we performed an analysis at the country level using an OLS regression, with the share of voters with party surrogation in each country as the dependent variable. We examined the effect of several country-level factors: the electoral system (majoritarian, PR or mixed), the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP), the age of the current regime (logged), and the level of democracy using the Freedom House Index. For ENPP, the idea is that the more parties in a system, the more opportunities voters have to find parties that represent them. While voters have multiple considerations when casting a ballot, sometimes idiosyncratic ones, the rule of thumb is that the more parties there are on the political

menu, the more voters are likely to see other parties as representing them. At the same time, the electoral system might have a separate effect on party surrogation. Systems such as majoritarian systems that put pressure on voters to vote strategically are more likely to promote party surrogation.

Table 1 presents the results. Model 1 shows a positive and statistically significant effect of ENPP on party surrogation, so that the more parties in the parliament, the greater the share of party surrogation among voters in that country. As for the electoral system (Model 2), PR and mixed systems have less party surrogation than majoritarian systems (the reference category), but these effects are not statistically significant. One explanation for this result might be that PR and mixed electoral systems provide other pathways to surrogate representation, such as coalition-directed voting and a larger number of parties. Table 1 also presents the results for models using the age of the regime (logged) and the level of democracy in predicting party surrogation by country. Model 3 shows that the older the current regime in a country is the more party surrogation there is. Older regimes have more established parties that may represent voters on various issues and hence elicit a sense of representation by parties they did not vote for. The scores on the Freedom House Index (Model 4) do not matter for party surrogation at all. This lack of effect of an objective, macro-level indicator of the quality of democracy is an important finding, as we will later connect party surrogation with individual perceptions of the quality of a country's democracy.

Table 1. Factors affecting the level of party surrogation at the country level

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ENPP	0.014*				0.014
	(0.006)				(0.007)
PR		-0.039			-0.046
		(0.028)			(0.031)
Mixed		-0.063			-0.060
		(0.034)			(0.036)
ln(Age of regime)			0.021*		0.009
			(0.009)		(0.010)
Freedom House				-0.007	-0.010
				(0.013)	(0.017)
Constant	0.042	0.133***	0.022	0.103***	0.065
	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.033)	(0.019)	(0.059)
N	37	37	34	37	34
R^2	0.140	0.092	0.142	0.008	0.312

Note. Source: CSES Module 3. OLS regression models at the country level with the share of party surrogation as the dependent variable. Reference category for electoral system: Majoritarian. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Who are the voters with party surrogation and what are the common combinations of representing parties?

Voters who elect one party but feel represented by another party have a combination of representatives. Who are these voters and what are the common combinations of representing parties that these voters have? We first evaluate several individual-level factors that might affect the probability of voters' feeling represented by a surrogate party.

Table 2 presents the results of three logistic regression models with the dependent variable of party surrogation (1) compared to feeling represented by the voted-for party (0). Model 1 includes several socio-demographic characteristics, while Models 2 and 3 also include political factors – campaign involvement (Models 2 and 3), ideological extremism (Model 2), and political orientation (Model 3). All models include country-year fixed effects. The results show that,

generally, socio-demographic characteristics do not have a significant relationship with surrogate representation by a party. Thus, voters with party surrogation do not differ from those who feel represented by the party they voted for in terms of their age, gender, income, and education. The result for gender is particularly important, as it shows that, contrary to our expectation, women are not more likely to see a surrogate party as a representing agent.

Table 2. Factors affecting party surrogation at the individual level

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age			
31-50	0.095	0.147*	0.147*
	(0.065)	(0.068)	(0.068)
51 and above	-0.022	0.044	0.042
	(0.064)	(0.067)	(0.067)
Female	-0.015	-0.027	-0.038
	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.043)
Income	-0.031	-0.035*	-0.029
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Education	0.007	0.009	0.011
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Campaign involvement		-0.058*	-0.067*
		(0.029)	(0.029)
Ideological extremism		-0.064***	
		(0.014)	
Center			0.060
			(0.061)
Right			-0.147**
			(0.049)
Constant	-2.605***	-2.336***	-2.410***
	(0.218)	(0.234)	(0.236)
N	21618	20282	20282
R^2			

Note. Source: CSES Module 3. Models are based on logistic regressions with party surrogation as the dependent variable. Reference category for age: 18-30. Reference category for political identification: Left. All models include country-year fixed effects.
Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Moreover, the results of Models 2 and 3 show that party surrogation does relate to political characteristics. Voters with a surrogate party are less extreme and less politically involved. In

addition, we find differences in the political orientation of surrogate voters, with less surrogation among right-leaning voters compared to left-leaning ones. Perhaps voters in the center of the ideological spectrum have more parties located close to them. Therefore, they have more opportunities for feeling represented by a party other than the one they voted for. Regardless of the reason, this finding calls for further investigation.

To gauge the pathway of insincere voting, we compared the party thermometers of voters with surrogate representation for both the party they voted for and the surrogate party. Who do these voters prefer, the party for which they cast their ballots or the one they feel represents them? Possibly, they like the two parties to the same degree. If these voters prefer the party that best represents them rather than the one they voted for, their vote is insincere. However, if they prefer the party they voted for or like both parties to the same degree, this would indicate another pathway to party surrogation.

All in all, among voters with party surrogation, about half – 53% – like the surrogate party more than they like the party they voted for. For these voters, insincere voting is a probable pathway to their surrogation, although other pathways are possible as well. Interestingly, this group is especially prevalent in majoritarian systems. In such systems, 71% of voters with party surrogation like the surrogate party more than the party they voted for. In contrast, in PR systems, only 49% of voters with party surrogation like the surrogate party more than the one they voted for. This difference indicates that strategic incentives within majoritarian systems can lead voters to vote for a party that does not best represent their views, which results in higher levels of party surrogation. The other half of voters with party surrogation like the two parties to the same degree (25%) or like the party they voted for more than the party they feel represents them (21%). These

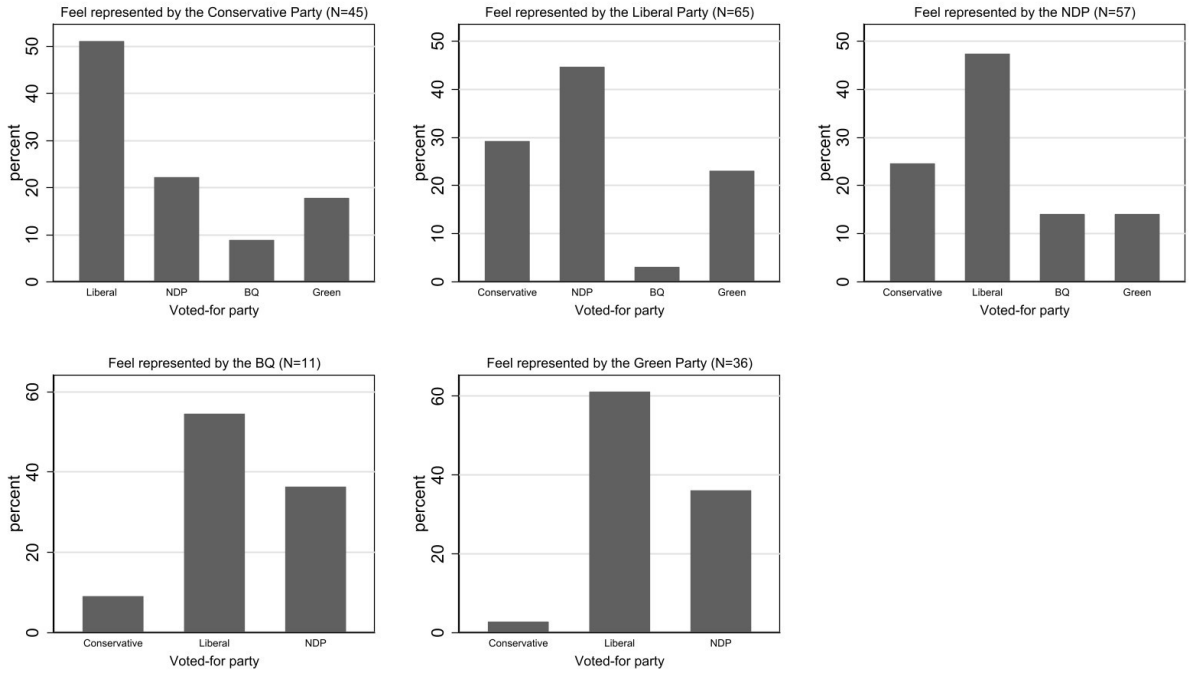
voters had other pathways such as identity-based voting, leading them to have surrogate representation by a party.

After exploring the voters' side, we now examine the common combinations of representing parties these voters have. We do so first by delving into several cases in order to learn about party surrogation in specific contexts. Then, we explore the combinations of representing parties in our data in terms of their size, ideological distance from the voter and coalition status. These two perspectives should provide a closer look at the party surrogation phenomenon and shed light on the mixture of parties that voters with party surrogation have.

We begin with the Canadian case. Figure 3 depicts party surrogation in Canada's 2008 election, one of the cases with the most voters with party surrogation in our data. Each graph in the figure is devoted to a group of voters who feel represented by a certain party. The graph shows who these voters voted for, with the bars representing the share of voters who voted for each party. Given that these are voters with party surrogation only, by definition, they voted for a different party than the one they feel represents them. Using an electoral system with single-member districts, we might expect that in Canada voters feel represented by a medium size or a small party, but cast their ballot strategically for a large party (the Liberal or Conservative party). However, the figure shows that the combinations of elected and surrogate parties are not necessarily of small and large parties: 50% of the voters who feel represented by the Conservative Party voted for candidates from the Liberal Party and almost 30% of the voters who feel represented by the Liberal Party voted for candidates from the Conservative Party. For these voters, both the elected and surrogate parties are one of the two large parties. Voters who feel represented by smaller parties in Canada – the New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Québécois (BQ), and the Green Party – tend to vote for the Liberal Party. These voters have a combination of a large elected party and a small

surrogate party, indicating that given the electoral system, strategic incentives may have been the pathway to surrogate representation.

Figure 3. Percentage of voters who feel represented by another party, Canada 2008



Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The figure presents voters with party surrogation only (those who feel represented by a party other than the party they voted for).

A similar analysis of the 2007 first round of elections in France and Finland's elections also show multiple combinations of large and small parties (see Figures A1 and A2 in the online Appendix). Voters who feel represented by the two large parties but voted for other parties are scattered across multiple parties. Much like in the Canadian case, voters with surrogate representation who feel represented by small parties tend to vote for large parties. However, there are also cases in which both parties – the elected and the surrogate – are small. This variation

suggests that in some cases insincere voting may be the pathway to party surrogation, but other pathways are possible too, varying by contexts and motivation.

We now turn to a systematic examination of the various combinations of representing parties.[2] First, we examine the size of the elected party and the surrogate party. We calculated the difference in seat share between the surrogate party and the elected party, such that positive values indicate a larger surrogate party and negative values indicate a larger elected party. Do surrogate parties tend to be smaller than the elected parties, or vice versa? We assessed the skewness of the distribution of these gaps for each country-year and did not find a clear pattern of more positive or negative gaps in these distributions. Generally, the analysis shows even distributions in most of the cases, meaning no systemic difference between elected and surrogate parties in their size (see the country-year histograms and skewness values in Figure A3 and Table A1 in the online Appendix, respectively). The most skewed cases are Greece (2009), Portugal (2009), and Slovenia (2008), with a positive skewness of 1.12, 1.04, and 1.72, respectively. These results indicate that a larger share of voters with party surrogation voted for large parties but feel represented by smaller parties.

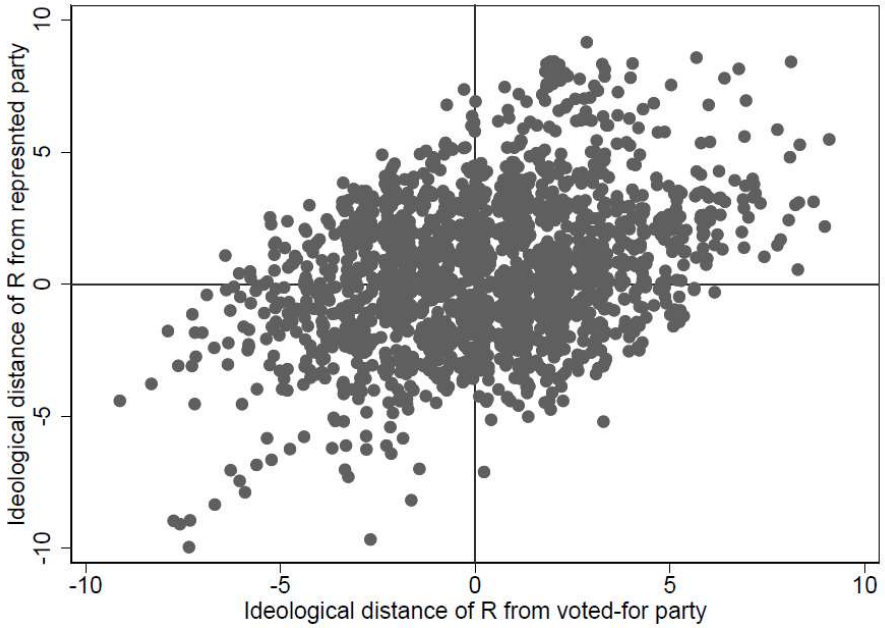
Next, we investigated whether the elected and surrogate parties belong to the same political bloc and whether voters with party surrogation are ideologically closer to one of the parties and if so, to which one. To assess the ideological combinations of elected and surrogate parties, we examined the ideological position of the voter, the voted-for party, and the surrogate party on a right-left scale (0-left; 10-right). Are the three located on the same side of the ideological spectrum? Since parties located in the center of the spectrum (5) cannot be defined as either on the

[2] Cases with mixed electoral systems were excluded from the following analyses, as in these cases there are two potential elected parties.

left or the right bloc, we examined whether the two parties belong to the same bloc – with blocs including parties on the middle point of the scale (5). The analysis shows that for most voters with surrogate representation, 71%, the two parties belong to the same bloc (48% center-right, 23% center-left), while 28% of the voters combine parties from different political blocs, one from the center-right and one from the center-left.

We then examined the ideological distance of the two parties from each voter. Figure 4 presents the ideological distance of the voted-for party (x-axis) and the surrogate party (y-axis) from the voter. The trend in the figure indicates that most voters are close to the voted-for and surrogate party to a similar degree. For most of them at the center of the graph, this distance is small, while for others – in the top right and bottom left squares – the distance is larger. This pattern indicates that for most of the voters with party surrogation, we do not find that one of the parties is ideologically close while the other is distant. Once again, these results suggest that insincere voting is not the sole pathway to party surrogation. Had that been the case, we would have seen voters being ideologically closer to the surrogate party. Thus, in terms of ideological combinations of elected and surrogate parties, when voters have two representatives – elected and surrogate – these representatives tend to be ideologically close to one another and to the voter.

Figure 4. The ideological distance between voters and electoral and surrogate parties



Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The graph presents the ideological distance of voters from the party they voted for (x axis) and from the party they feel represented by (y axis). Ideology is measured on a 0-10 scale with 0 as left and 10 as right. Positive values mean that the party is more to the right compared to the voter, and negative values mean that the party is more to the left compared to the voter.

Lastly, we speculated that voters would have a surrogate party if they felt that the policy of one of the parties in the government represented them, especially if the party they voted for was not in the coalition. To test this speculation, we examined the status of government participation after the election – for both parties. Our analysis revealed that this speculation is true for 26% of the voters with a surrogate party, when this party is part of the post-election coalition but their elected party is not. For another 20%, both parties are in the coalition. However, for 24% of the voters with party surrogation, the voted-for party is in the coalition while the surrogate party is not, and for another 29% of the voters, both the voted-for and the surrogate party are not in the coalition. Thus, policy representation is another possible pathway to surrogate representation for some voters, but not for all.

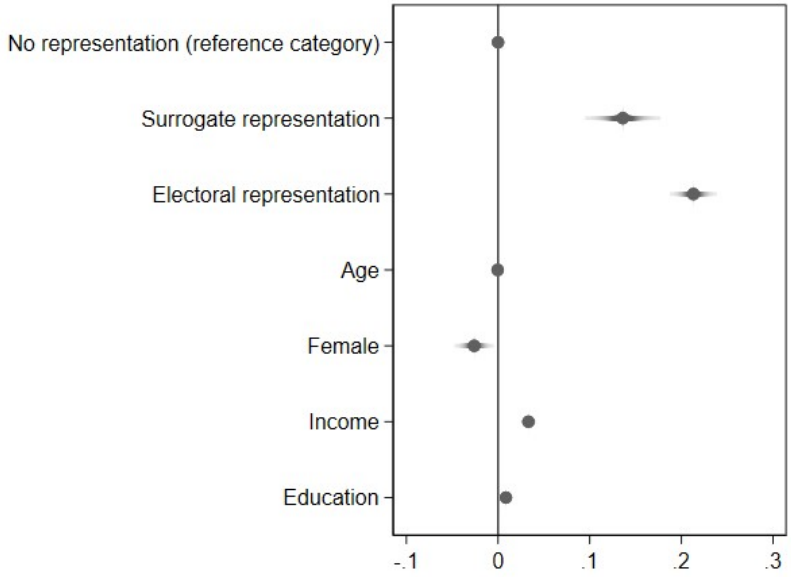
Voters' perceptions of party surrogation and their implications for attitudes toward democracy

What are the consequences of party surrogation for citizens' attitudes toward democracy? While all voters with party surrogation have two representatives – elected and surrogate – their perceptions of such representation may vary. We speculated in the theoretical section that party surrogation can have two possible effects: a compensating effect, if electoral representation is deficient, or an additive effect on top of representation by the voted-for party. We thus examined who is more satisfied with democracy, those who feel represented by the party they voted for, or those who have connections with two parties, their electoral choice and the surrogate party? To answer this question, we ran OLS regression models (reported in Table A2 in the online Appendix) predicting the level of satisfaction with democracy and the two other indicators of attitudes toward democracy. The main independent variable is the three groups of voters (see Figure 3) by their representation type: those who do not feel represented by a party (the reference category), those who feel represented by the party they voted for, and those who feel represented by a surrogate party. The models include demographic controls for age, gender, income, and education, as well as country-year fixed effects.

Based on the results of Model 1, Figure 5 presents the effect of each of the groups on their level of satisfaction with democracy. The results show that those who feel represented by the party they voted for are significantly more satisfied with democracy than those who feel represented by a surrogate party. Nevertheless, these two groups are more satisfied than those who do not feel represented by a party at all. The same pattern holds for support for the principles of democracy (Table A2, Models 2 and 3 in the online Appendix). Voters who feel represented by a surrogate party support these principles to a greater degree than those who do not feel represented by a party at all, but less so than those who feel represented by the party they voted for.

These results indicate that party surrogation has a compensating effect. Voters with party surrogation are more satisfied with democracy than voters who do not feel represented at all but less satisfied than voters who feel represented by the party they voted for. Thus, in terms of support for democracy, party surrogation does not add to citizens' representation beyond electoral representation but rather compensates for not voting for the party they feel represents them.

Figure 5. The effect of surrogate representation on satisfaction with democracy



Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The graph presents the coefficients for OLS regression predicting the level of satisfaction with democracy per Model 1 in Table A2 in the online Appendix. The model includes country-year fixed effects that are not presented in the graph.

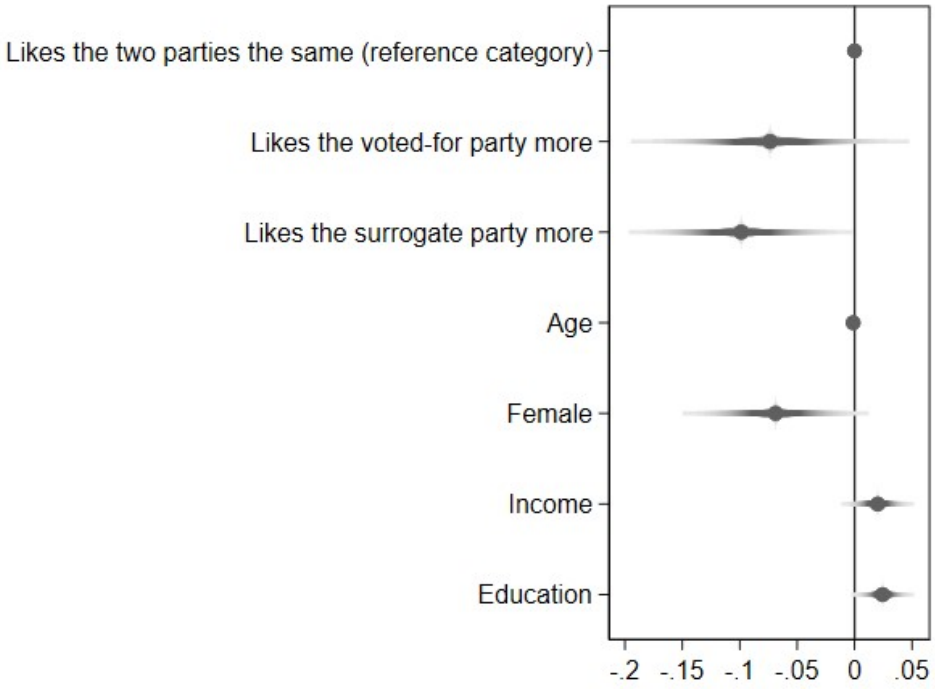
Does this effect hold for all voters with party surrogation? To answer this question, we go back to the groups of voters with party surrogation by the party they like best – the elected or the surrogate. As presented above, 25% of voters with party surrogation like the two parties to the same degree and 21% of voters like the party they voted for more than the party that they feel represents them. For these two groups, we contend, party surrogation should add to their

representation because they already like the party they voted for best or at least to the same degree as the other party. The other half of the surrogate voters, 53%, likes the surrogate party more than they like the party they voted for. These voters may feel that their electoral representation is lacking because they like another party better, and surrogate representation may compensate for this deficiency.

Figure 6 shows the effects of the three groups of surrogate voters on satisfaction with democracy.[3] Our reference category is liking both parties to the same degree. Our results indicate that surrogate voters who like the voted-for party more than the surrogate party are satisfied with democracy to the same degree as voters who like both parties. However, voters who like the surrogate party more than the party they voted for are significantly less satisfied with democracy than surrogate voters who like both parties. These findings suggest that there are two types of voters with party surrogation. The first type can be called “the compromisers.” These voters like the party that they feel best represents them better but compromised and voted for another party. They are less satisfied with democracy. The second type can be called "the multipliers.” They have a surrogate party but prefer the party they voted for (or like the two to the same degree). These voters enjoy representation from multiple parties: the one they voted for and the one that they feel represents them.

[3] The model is detailed in Table A3 in the online Appendix. The effects for the other two indicators are not significant.

Figure 6. Voters with party surrogation: Which party they like more and the effect on their satisfaction with democracy



Note. Source: CSES Module 3. The graph presents the coefficients for an OLS regression predicting the level of satisfaction with democracy per Table A3 in the online Appendix. The model includes survey fixed-effects that are not presented in the graph.

Thus, for voters with two representatives – elected and surrogate – party surrogation can either compensate for or add to their representation, depending on their relations with the elected party. If they prefer their elected party, having a surrogate party adds to their representation. If, however, they prefer the surrogate party, having two representatives indicates that they compromised when casting their ballots. They did not vote for their preferred party but party surrogation compensates for the deficit in their electoral representation.

Discussion and conclusions

This study proposes a theoretical framework for the concept of party surrogation – a voter's sense of representation by a party s/he did not vote for instead of or in addition to the party s/he did vote for. Taking surrogate representation beyond the American context in which it was conceived and studied, our theoretical framework focuses on the party as the representative agent. It posits that party surrogation is shaped by multiple pathways, results in a combination of representing parties, and can add to representation, not just compensate for its lack.

Our findings show that in most countries, more than half of the respondents feel represented by a party. In some countries almost 20% of voters indicate a sense of party surrogation. In addition, it is more prevalent in systems with a larger effective number of parties. Political involvement, extremism, and right-wing vs. left-wing orientations are associated with party surrogation, but general socio-demographic characteristics are not. While previous studies on surrogate representation have focused on women and minority groups, our findings suggest that other individual-level factors may play a role in party surrogation. Indeed, these studies have investigated mainly the representatives, and the few studies that focused on the represented found other pathways to the surrogate representation of minority groups (Schildkraut, 2016). Thus, while women representatives may claim to be surrogate representatives for out-of-district women (Angevine, 2017), female voters do not have more party surrogation than their male counterparts. Our data did not allow us to examine party surrogation among other minority and underserved groups. Future studies could explore whether party surrogation is more common among these groups.

We further show that voters with party surrogation vote for and feel represented by different combinations of large and small parties. These parties are usually close to one another

ideologically and many times to the voters. We also find that feeling represented by a party that is part of the government can be one motivation for party surrogation, but that the combinations of the coalition status of the parties may vary between voters. All and all, we highlight multiple pathways to party surrogation, but surely there can be many more. Our findings suggest that party surrogation is multifaceted, consequently requiring a nuanced perspective and further research on its different pathways.

Our results with regard to the implications of party surrogation for attitudes toward democracy show that citizens are more satisfied with democracy when they vote for the party that they feel best represents them. However, surrogate representation by a party increases satisfaction with democracy compared to voters who do not feel represented by a party at all. The implications of party surrogation also vary among sub-groups of voters. Not all voters with surrogate parties deem this representation a compromise. Such is the case only among those who prefer the surrogate party to the elected party. These results indicate that the role of surrogate representation should be understood in light of electoral representation. Thus, party surrogation is an important part of the repertoire of representation in democracies, giving rise to a mixture of representing entities and having important implications for citizens' attitudes towards democracy.

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