

Introduction

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That representation is a highly problematic aspect of contemporary political life is beyond doubt. Contemporary challenges from both the political right and the political left to “politics as usual” are underpinned by profound doubts about the democratic legitimacy of the dominant forms of political representation. From the right, direct democracy is often presented as a partial remedy for failures of representational accountability and the purported power of “special interests.” From the left, social movement activities, outside parties and legislatures, are seen as a response to party failures of inclusion and recognition, and to the power of corporate interests in public life. Both right and left claim that “ordinary people” are excluded from and disadvantaged by existing institutions and processes of representation. Virtually all media commentators and many incumbent politicians speak of a mounting “democratic deficit,” and even superficial assessment of these claims uncovers at least some significant alleged shortcoming on the part of elected representatives or in the processes through which they act on the public’s behalf. Academics and new social movement activists, on the other hand, speak of the failures of conventional democratic politics and institutions and of the need to engage nontraditional civil society actors in a re-energized and democratic public life, but seldom do they employ the language of representation to make their cases.

One could reasonably ask whether there is additional analytical or practical value in understanding the challenges and complaints of contemporary democratic politics with reference to the language and normative potential of representation. Directly or indirectly, contributors to this volume believe the answer is “yes.” One of the key purposes of this collection is to show why we need to, and how we might, broaden the theoretical reach of representation by anchoring the political significance of popular and theoretical discourses of rights, citizenship, justice, equality, inclusion, and multiculturalism in understandings of representation and its discontents. Most chapters demonstrate the analytical necessity of relying far less

on the link between representation and “institutional/legislative representative” than is typical of conventional liberal democratic theory and practice.

As a group, the chapters that follow show that, to productively engage a diverse landscape of intersecting identities, interests, associations, and institutional complexities, representation must be reconceived explicitly and carefully against a new social, political, institutional, and conceptual backdrop. This does not mean abandoning attempts to understand the procedural and normative aspects of legislative representation. Instead, the reconceptualization of representation in this volume seeks to connect the logic and purposes of this conventional representation to the representation of identities, social difference, cultural conflict, minority disadvantage, and discourses of social justice and to the searches for common citizenship that characterize the associational life of civil society outside legislatures, political parties, and competitive elections. It is not simply a random or coincidental fact that all of the contributors here have reached beyond the areas of legislative representation to indicate how contemporary democratic theory can make normative or even empirical sense of dynamic efforts to link citizens to political associations or policy determinations. They have reached into areas of public life where discontent with the processes and products of conventional representation is palpable and dramatically expressed. In their efforts to make theoretical sense of current attempts to address problems of contested citizenship, multiculturalism, social justice, and group recognition, the authors show how and why representation cannot realistically be understood in isolation from these attempts. The collection thus addresses important lacunae in academic political theory with respect to representation, while the contributions themselves typically return readers to broader issues related to citizenship, democracy, and civil society. Rather than simply accept that conventional representative institutions are not up to the job assigned to them by their nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century legitimizers, the authors believe that re-invigorating the civil society and participatory background conditions of representation and/or its up-front, policy-shaping processes is crucial to the validation and value of democratic politics.

In addressing contentious issues in the public life of modern Western societies, the contributors bring fresh approaches to theorizing the changing face of political representation and attempt to provoke further debate on the relation of representation to democratic citizenship. Some tackle the dynamics and problematic dimensions of representation head on, while others explore democratic participation, multicultural pluralism, contested citizenship, or other background conditions of contemporary representation. They relate majority and minority group rights, multiculturalism, justice, gender, citizen deliberation and democratic participation,

the structuring power of language, and the dynamics of inter-regional conflict to current debates in democratic political theory. In this introduction, I broadly situate representation within the domain of contemporary democratic theory to set the stage for the more detailed analyses that follow.

Democratic Theory and the Problem of Representation

Understood in simple yet broad terms, political representation means “the arrangements by which some persons stand or act for others”¹ in public life. In one of the earliest and most poignant moments of modern democratic theory, Jean-Jacques Rousseau condemned such acting for others as a stake through the heart of popular sovereignty.² But since the latter part of the nineteenth century, most democratic theory has broadly supported representation as a necessary condition of whatever “rule by the people” can be made feasible within political systems that serve mass societies.³

In most democratic regimes since the mid-nineteenth century, representation has been widely accepted by rulers, citizens, and political theorists alike as the mainspring of governance involving elected legislatures. Yet prior to this, and notably at the founding of representative government in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, representative government was seen as an alternative to democratic government. These early supporters of representative government believed that it could both retain the aristocratic principle of election and ensure that the voice of the people was safely mediated by the deliberations of their elected betters.⁴

The broad consensus on the inevitable importance of elected representatives in democratic institutions that exists in most Western polities can easily disguise profound disagreements over how particular “arrangements by which some persons stand or act for others” can advance the purposes of democratic self-government. These are not just normative disagreements over such purposes but also empirical disagreements about how or whether elections make representatives accountable to electors and how or to what degree citizen deliberations and expectations should shape representatives’ decisions.⁵ As Bernard Manin pithily expresses it, “we do not know either what makes representative government resemble democracy, or what distinguishes it therefrom.”⁶

Deep disagreement also occurs over how instances or patterns of “representational failure” can be remedied by nonrepresentational yet still democratic action and decision making. Contemporary advocates of direct democracy often come close to accepting Madison’s sharp distinction between representation and democracy, even though they line up for the latter and against the former, contrary to Madison’s preference. Such advocates may also appear to endorse Rousseau’s strictures against representative government on behalf of popular sovereignty, even if they reject

the logic that Rousseau employed to support popular sovereignty against representation.⁷

Finally, we need to acknowledge dramatically diverse answers to the question of how (and whether) the agenda of representational practices should be set by our ranking and operational blending of basic normative goods such as liberty, equality, rights, justice, solidarity or community, citizenship, and pluralism. These normative mainstays of most variations on contemporary democratic theory may seem to contain the seeds of unambiguous support for democratic representation. But on closer inspection, there is a large variety of connections between the methods and especially the purposes of representation, on the one hand, and particular commitments to liberty, equality rights, and other foundational democratic values, on the other hand. There is nothing like a consensus around a “democratic theory of representation,” either within modern political theory or among public groups with distinctive ideological commitments that they perceive as unambiguously democratic.

One way of thinking about the relationship of representation to these basic values is to think in terms of regimes of representation. A representational regime includes not just the participants in and structures of elections and legislative activities or decisions but also, obviously, the full range of executive decision making and whatever division of labour, or checks and balances, exists in the formal distribution of power and authority. Such a regime also includes, perhaps not so obviously, the activities of various organized interests in deliberations within various “policy communities” as well as the participation of various associations and organizations in public dialogue within the often “nested” spheres of civil society.⁸

Representational regimes are not merely institutional but also and unavoidably normative in character. They require but are not restricted to expressions of a general consensus about some aspects of basic political values and a consensus about means of facilitating peaceful resolution of disagreement over policy choices that reflect these values. Such realms of consensus typically include and condition public discussion about disputed elements among these values. Liberal democracies, for example, have a broad consensus on a minimum set of basic rights and liberties, share a minimum understanding of equality as formal rights for all citizens under the rule of law, agree that justice requires at least equal protection and civic rights under this rule of law, and make legal and institutional provision for pluralism within civil society and within some selection of state agencies. All of these values are reflected in a representational regime and contribute to its basic functioning.

But more precise expressions of beliefs about how basic normative values are to be politically instantiated and institutionally embedded also

become a focus of debate within various decision-making institutions and political practices in any regime of representation. This is true of debates over such key political questions as liberty and its social preconditions, equality and its social scope, configurations of individual and group rights, the institutional architecture and programmatic reach of distributive justice, the nature of community and its interplay with social and political pluralism, and the character of citizenship. As the balance of public sentiments concerning these beliefs changes over time, successive governing parties and coalitions integrate provisional patterns of policy decisions related to these debates into the political order. Such changes are reflected in the design and operation of elements within the representational regime. This is seen in matters as obviously political as the extension of the franchise and other political rights. The political relevance of other expressions of institutional power – such as mandatory inclusion of workers in large firms' health and safety committees or the representational implications of campaign finance legislation – becomes clearer when seen from this angle. Even expectations about “normal” forms of communication by legislators and group spokespersons in various public policy forums take on significance within representational regimes, as Iris Marion Young shows indirectly in her analysis of the preconditions of inclusive democratic deliberation.⁹

It is now a truism that political legitimacy in modern politics relies on authoritative democratic decision making with at least some representative features, even if we are still much in the dark about how this legitimacy is linked to ideas and mechanisms of electoral mandates, government accountability, and citizens' expectations.¹⁰ Thinking of “representational regimes” is a shortcut to acknowledging not just the practical centrality of representation to modern democratic decision making but also its centrality to the ways in which specific institutions and practices of representation crystallize provisional and practical meanings over a range of basic political values. In light of this truism and this intellectual shortcut, it is both surprising and instructive to reflect on how little direct attention representation has received in recent Anglo-American political theory.

A quick review of the Humanities and Social Sciences Index, and of the *Political Theory* journal since 1980, shows that representation has been a far more important theme in formal (rational choice), empirical, and comparative political science literature, and in contemporary literary criticism and theory, than it has been in normative political theory. Waves of democratization or at least decolonialization in the 1990s help to explain the recent political science boom in comparative empirical studies of political representation. And poststructuralism has certainly boosted, but is by no means the sole inspiration for, literary attention to representation. But why has representation been allotted relatively scant attention, and

second-order conceptual status, in recent normative political theory? Here it is possible simply to broadly suggest how attention to several other themes has overshadowed and in some cases subsumed concern with representation by political theorists.

For those who have attempted to shed light on the role played by representation in political theory, Hanna Pitkin's 1967 *The Concept of Representation* is foundational. Her accounts of formalistic, descriptive, and symbolic representation, of the mandate-independence divide, and of the role played by interests in conceptualizations of representation set new and high standards for contemporary theorizing about representation. The problem, in retrospect, is that this study appeared to be almost too definitive at a time when momentum quickly shifted to questions of rights and distributive justice. With the publication of *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls moved a whole host of institutionally anchored conceptual problems in political theory to the back seat. For over two decades, democratic theorists' hopes of helping to steer the vehicles of academic political theory were typically contingent on their using distributive justice-oriented maps and employing rights-based arguments as theoretical fuel.

Communitarian theorists' challenge to rights-based liberalism did not typically address issues of representation, in spite of their growing concern with citizenship. Indirectly, however, with their attention to group "recognition" as an antidote to community-disintegrating effects of individualism, communitarians such as Charles Taylor created theoretical space within which representation could have a more transparent, prominent, and practice-oriented home within democratic theory, even if this home was built largely by noncommunitarian theorists.¹¹

Since the early 1990s, theorists of citizenship, justice, deliberation and associative democracy, equality, and the politics of difference have raised important questions about representation within democratic theory. Yet in acknowledging and exploring issues of representation in such contexts, political theorists have seldom awarded the problem of democratic representation a high theoretical profile or sought its normative footings, as they do for justice, citizenship, deliberation, difference, or equality.¹² Even when democratic theorists such as Ian Shapiro conscientiously and perceptively take power relations as a "central object of study" and offer a "focus on institutional redesign [that] takes institutions and practices as we find them,"¹³ the issue of representation can easily slip through their theoretical nets.

When it comes to sidelining representation, the work on citizenship and deliberation is revealing and somewhat surprising. According to Kymlicka and Norman, citizenship theory blossomed as a way of finessing potentially conflicting concerns among political theorists about justice and community that had arisen in the 1970s and 1980s. Concern with citizenship

arose in response to several broad phenomena: widespread alienation from “politics as usual” in both established Western democracies and Eastern Europe, concerns about supposed pathologies of the welfare state, and evidence that governability in democratic polities relies more on shared civic attitudes than theorists had tended to acknowledge since the 1960s.¹⁴

Yet neither Kymlicka and Norman’s review of citizenship theory nor other contributions to the volume in which it appeared afforded substantial attention to representation as an expression or conduit of citizenship. Nor did these theorists of citizenship attend seriously to relationships between representation and other instruments of democratic participation. Will Kymlicka influentially addressed thorny problems of descriptive and substantive representation for Québécois and Aboriginal peoples in the context of his influential adaptation of liberal rights theory to the needs of multicultural citizenship.¹⁵ But it seems to be significant that the second edition of his *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, which includes an updated account of citizenship theory, has no index entries under representation.

On the more radical shores of citizenship theory, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have tended to accept Michel Foucault’s dismissal of anything resembling conventional representational politics. In their place, they endorse expressive politics by new social movement actors operating outside existing representative institutions and organizational vehicles.¹⁶ Similarly, James Tully bids us to look beyond restrictive representative practices to discover the potential for “practices of freedom” that will constitute the “‘democratic’ side of practices of governance” in a period of globalization.¹⁷

Many contributions to citizenship theory over the past decade have adapted and appropriated it to show its relation to everything from post-modern extensions of feminist theory, to cosmopolitan democracy, to human rights promotion in international civil society, to neo-Gramscian formulations of radical democracy. On the empirical side, political scientists consider representation and “representational failure” through parties, corporatist institutions, new social movements, organized interests, policy networks, and even international regimes dealing with environmental or other regulatory issues. To such researchers, the disconnection between political theory and evolving political practices related to innovative representation and representational failures alike must reinforce the abstract character of political theory.

The same sense of disconnectedness has hovered over much of the literature on deliberative democracy. There are important exceptions. Iris Marion Young has recently attempted to address this by initiating a theoretical dialogue between deliberative and activist democrats, noting that such discussions are both difficult and necessary in societies with structural inequalities whose power relations are not amenable to change through

deliberation alone.¹⁸ James Fishkin and several colleagues have designed and implemented experiments in “national deliberative polls” in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia.¹⁹ Mark Warren has offered a systematic theorization of the conditions and effects of associational life outside state institutional settings. In showing how complicated the associational foundations of deliberative politics are, he suggests many hypotheses concerning potential linkages between “second-order” representational practices by associations and the more conventional representational work of parties and legislatures.²⁰ And some political theorists have become involved in practical efforts to combine grassroots political organizing with empowerment through local-level deliberation.²¹ But those most influential in delineating the philosophically distinctive foundations of its democratic potential – John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas – came close to ignoring how innovative representative practices and institutions might aid deliberative democracy.

One consequence of ignoring these synergies is that many cases for democratic deliberation are hard to penetrate in any but exceptionally abstract terms. We should acknowledge that several other foundational contributions to deliberative democratic theory, especially in the work of Joshua Cohen²² and Jane Mansbridge,²³ have been less abstract. They have been concerned with demonstrating a fit between institutions and practices that facilitate deliberation, on the one hand, and its conceptualization as an expression of “public reason” and reflexive will formation, under conditions of social justice, on the other. Over the past several years, Mark Warren,²⁴ Iris Marion Young,²⁵ Robert Goodin,²⁶ Nadia Urbinati,²⁷ Michael Saward,²⁸ and Melissa Williams²⁹ have given substantial attention to the deliberation/representation interaction. But it remains true that most deliberative democratic theory has not explored how an unavoidably large range of the practices of public deliberation and representation would shape one another, were deliberation to play a more substantial role in contemporary democratic public life.³⁰

Some of this inattention can be accounted for in terms of the perception and reality of widespread representational failures in Western polities, of the kind noted in the first section of Mark Warren’s contribution to this volume. Clearly, these failures have motivated deliberative democratic theorizing by political liberals and radicals alike. Why return to the scene of democratic deficits if they are obviously bred by experience with faulty institutions? Shouldn’t alternative approaches to democratic will formation be theorized independently of existing representative practices and in relation to distinctive first principles such as “public reason,” or nondomination in deliberative interaction, before the inevitable accommodations with “actually existing representation” are theoretically negotiated? Perhaps the independence of representatives’ decisions from the

preferences of their electors is not the main reason for democratic deficits. But don't deliberative theorists still have good reasons to believe that public reason and thoughtful reconsideration of commitments will both be undermined by the clear distance between citizens and elected representatives in modern "polyarchies"?

These are understandable reasons for innovative democratic theory to maintain a healthy theoretical distance between deliberative democracy and the failure-strewn, legitimacy-deficient landscape of contemporary representational politics and institutions. It is hard not to be attracted by Rousseau's antirepresentational spirit when we reflect on the compromised institutions, and citizenship disempowering outcomes, of many conventional modes of representation in Western public life. Yet it is also unavoidable that in modern politics representative institutions will structure and provide many of the necessary, even if not by a long stretch wholly sufficient, conditions for vindicating deliberation and other dimensions of democratic participation. The citizenship and the broader democratic community that deliberation is meant to enhance will always develop in complex institutional settings.

Carole Pateman contended over thirty years ago that innovative participatory democrats had to understand their preferred and specific practices as supplements to, not replacements for, representative institutions and processes.³¹ In a similar manner, deliberative democrats and citizenship theorists could creatively engage the real world of representation that frames deliberation and the goods of citizenship, public reason, and justice. While not the last word in democratic reform politics, representation can be made to serve these goods of citizenship, public reason, and justice far better than our current experiences suggest.

Taking such a stance need not entail accepting representative institutions, processes, and vehicles as they are. As will be evident in the remainder of this volume, there are many long-standing as well as reasonably recent reasons for discontent concerning "actually existing representation." But as recent work by Iris Marion Young, Anne Phillips,³² Melissa Williams, Mark Warren, and others demonstrates, such discontent is no warrant for eschewing theoretical innovation in responding to the challenge of representation.

In tackling questions of representation head on, Young, Phillips, Williams, and Warren have shown that normative democratic theorizing is strengthened by considering concrete empirical cases of representational failure. Their studies have revealed how questions about particular regimes of representation can be intertwined with an interrogation of practical stances taken on issues of justice, rights, gender, and the normative and associational dimensions of meaningful citizenship and democratic will formation. In doing so, they acknowledge how this intertwining has developed

within historically contingent but typically multicultural and otherwise pluralistic communities. An attractive additional consequence of their attention to actual cases has been construction of bridges between empirical political science and political philosophy in ways that assist others who wish to straddle this unproductive divide.

Over the past two decades, much of the most politically and theoretically innovative and influential bridging work of this type has been undertaken by feminist theorists. From our perspective, there are several striking things about this body of work. One is that the concerns with representation are intimately connected to concerns with and conceptualizations of social justice, equality, and valorization of difference that have clear roots in women's movement experience over the past generation. In making these connections, feminists learned much from earlier civil rights struggles and discourses and theoretically prepared much of the ground worked by theorists of multiculturalism over the past decade.

Another notable aspect of feminist theory that directly engages the problem of representation is that its social movement roots are especially strongly reflected in the transition from second-wave emphases on the similarities of women's experiences under patriarchy to the emphasis on women's difference since the advent of third-wave feminism. Three prominent authors whose work illustrates the theoretical importance of this transition are Jane Mansbridge,³³ Iris Marion Young,³⁴ and Anne Phillips.³⁵ One sees in their work increasingly sophisticated accounts not just of women's need for group representation but also of the considerations that must shape something beyond essentialized, simple descriptive representation to do justice to the variety of women's experiences, interests, and perspectives. All three see the practical importance of a "politics of presence," through group representation in legislatures and other key decision-making institutions, to provide meaningful citizenship and social justice for women. Nonetheless, Young³⁶ emphasizes more than Phillips and Mansbridge the need for accommodations to the variety of ways that women (and other disadvantaged groups) communicate and thus find their voices and places in deliberative public life. In contending that such accommodations characterize not just formal, institutional politics but also informal political interactions in civil society, Young illustrates the potential normative and conceptual reach of a revised understanding of representation.

All three authors, joined now by the vast majority of feminist political theorists, insist on taking account of overlapping and sometimes conflicting identities when they inquire into how representational processes, institutions, forums, and communication must be improved to offer social justice and equal citizenship to women. In doing so, feminist theorists over the past twenty years have done much to reveal the complex conditions under which citizens develop and pursue interests, perspectives,

and identities and the ways in which representation of these interests, perspectives, and identities becomes a cultural and associational as well as electoral/institutional matter.

Feminist theory continues to break theoretical ground in our appreciation of democratic politics, especially for theorists and activists involved with other disadvantaged groups. Melissa Williams, for example, has built on her widely regarded 1998 book *Voice, Trust, and Memory* to suggest, in this volume, how we might understand and institutionally remedy Canadian Aboriginal peoples' struggles for equal citizenship and effective representation. Like earlier feminist theorists, Williams sees such group-based remedies to women's and Aboriginal under-representation as a duty of justice. While many feminist theorists do not share her view that "descriptive representation with a difference" can generate just outcomes for oppressed minorities within a liberal philosophical or political framework,³⁷ they tend to share her view that few solutions will avoid enhancement of group-structured representation within legislatures and other policy-deliberating bodies. With their strong foundations in and connections to social movement activity, feminist contributions to theorizing representation are one of the best sources for reminding students of democratic theory that, with few exceptions until the rise of the "new right,"³⁸ the push for better representation has typically come from socially nondominant groups and has involved expanding the political realm in ways that harness rather than ignore the group associational differences that characterize modern societies.

Feminist theorists are not alone in seeing heightened roles for groups as crucial to the development of both more robust and more effective deliberative citizenship, on the one hand, and socially just policy, on the other. Just over one decade ago, Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers initiated a normative and empirical exploration of the contributions that group-based "secondary associations" might make to "associative democracy" within an expanded framework of democratic governance that reaches well beyond legislatures into specific policy fields such as occupational health and safety and vocational training.³⁹ Paul Hirst has extended this case to fit a "changed conjuncture" in the political, social, and economic dimensions of contemporary welfare states, building on his exploration of early-twentieth-century British pluralism.⁴⁰ These associative democratic theorists make normative and policy-specific cases for applying the logic of Scandinavian-style "democratic corporatism" to Anglo-American policy development processes. Finally, Mark Warren's theoretical account of the democratic effects of associational structures and activities within contemporary civil society has opened up substantial space for both empirical investigation into these effects and normative consideration of the implications of such "democratic associational ecologies" for new representational structures in both

civil society and the state.⁴¹ It is easy to predict that feminist theorists and associative democratic theorists will soon find more common ground in their efforts to sketch innovative justifications of and designs for group associational and representative activity.

The unavoidable institutional “embeddedness” of representation may help to suggest why, with the kinds of exceptions noted above, it is typically considered a second-order theoretical problem, successful attention to which is simply instrumental to progress in tackling first-order normative problems such as justice, citizenship, equality, participation,⁴² or individual autonomy. The explanation is not simply that particular problems of injustice, undemocratic or inequalitarian distributions of power, or tensions between majority and minority interests set the agenda for answers to questions about representation, giving these agenda-setting problems normative and conceptual priority. Beyond this, or perhaps because of this, it is notoriously difficult to generalize about solutions to problems of representation across regimes of representation.⁴¹ This stands in contrast to what theorists have attempted when considering problems of justice, with universalizing devices such as original positions, ideal speech situations, or claims about natural and other rights.

Few citizens or political theorists would deny the logistical and functional advantages of representation, as opposed to participation by “all of the people,” for governance of all but the simplest societies. At a normative level, however, one might argue that the problem of representation arises because of the inevitable plurality of answers in any large population to questions about the rank ordering of political goods and values. In this sense, representation is the minimum concession that democratic citizenship makes to this pluralism while acknowledging the impossibility of an overly demanding Rousseauian commitment to public life by all citizens in modern societies. That representation is not the only concession that democratic citizenship needs to make to social and political pluralism is, of course, amply demonstrated by much contemporary democratic theory, including most contributions to this volume.

Representational regimes take their logic and institutional shape from evolving patterns of social, economic, cultural, political, and technological dynamics and systems specific to particular societies. In this sense, democratic representation is a response to the factors of social differentiation and complexity that Mark Warren, in Chapter 10, contends do much to shape opportunities for democratic participation more generally. We can thus theoretically account for the character and implications of such structuring factors for challenges to representation but not necessarily move from this to a comprehensive single theory of representation that can answer all of these challenges.

While democratic theory unavoidably encounters a modesty-enforcing

set of constraints when it confronts issues of representation,⁴² a lot of important work nonetheless remains. Several broad and overlapping dimensions of this work can easily be identified. First, insofar as it provides a crucial point of contact between normative theory and the institutional environments within which this theory seeks to be relevant, representation is a crucial conceptual link between considerations of justice, rights, citizenship, pluralism, and community. This is the intuition that shapes the notion of “regimes of representation” presented earlier and is demonstrated in more or less concrete ways in most of the contributions to this volume. Second, the chapters here show that exploring the problems and contexts of representation illuminates the practical value of democratic theory to political science research and for the (re)design of democratic institutions and practices of citizenship. Such explorations inevitably must also take into account new forms of political action, new expressions of identity, and new sites of political conflict, such as those typical of new social movement organizations over the past generation. And third, in the service of these objectives, theoretical as well as theoretically driven empirical investigations into representation and its discontents can suggest ways of narrowing the gap between the historical promise and the current reality of democratic politics.

The chapters in this volume are organized into three sections, partly to aid an appreciation of the dialogues facilitated by their authors. Part 1 includes chapters by Avigail Eisenberg, Peter Ives, Catherine Frost, and Louise Chappell. They deal with the interaction between minority rights, multicultural social environments, multilevel sovereignty, and institutional responses to the tensions between majority and minority groups. Chapters by Melissa Williams, Susan Henders, and Jonathan Quong in Part 2 contribute to reconceiving the relationships between representation, citizenship, and community, in both national and international settings. Finally, in Part 3, Gerald Kernerman, Greg Pycrz, Mark Warren, and Simone Chambers address pluralist, deliberative, and participatory dimensions of, and challenges to, representation, also in the context of increasingly multicultural national communities and politicized civil societies.

This grouping of papers is unavoidably somewhat arbitrary, since the authors' concerns and contributions frequently and fruitfully cross over these loose categorical boundaries. Taken as a whole, these chapters contribute many provocative questions and compelling analyses in support of a revitalized normative appreciation of the importance of representation to democratic theory and politics.