

The Politics of Presence

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Political Equality and Fair Representation
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Abstract and Keywords

Considers whether a case for ensuring the equal representation of women and men or proportionate representation of ethnic minority groups can be extracted from the twin democratic principles of political equality and popular control. It argues that it is necessary to move beyond these to an alternative justification grounded in existing structures of political exclusion. Four key arguments are explored: the importance of symbolic representation; the need to tackle the exclusions inherent in the party#political packaging of ideas; the need for more vigorous advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups; and the importance of a politics of presence in opening up a wider range of policy options.

Keywords: advocacy, democracy, ethnic minorities, exclusion, party politics, policy options, political equality, political representation, symbolic representation, women

One common definition of democracy presents it as a matter of 'simple majority rule, based on the principle "one person, one vote"': this, indeed was the working definition suggested by Jon Elster in a recent discussion of the relationship between constitutionalism and democracy. ¹ For the purposes of his argument, Elster construes the notion of democracy in broad terms: so much so that it includes regimes 'in which, for instance, slaves, foreigners, women, the propertyless or minors are excluded from the electorate'. ² Outside the purposes of his argument, such a definition is self#evidently limited, failing to address either the composition of the citizen body or the problems associated with simple majority rule. A more useful definition is that supplied by the Democratic Audit of the UK, which identifies popular control and political equality as the two key principles of democracy, and takes these as the benchmark against which to evaluate contemporary democracy. ³ No system can claim to be democratic if it does not recognize the legitimacy of these two goals; and democracies can be located along a continuum depending on how well these principles are realized in their practice.

The first principle of popular control is intrinsic to any notion of democracy. A system is not regarded as democratic just because it proclaims itself as pursuing the needs or interests of the people, for (p. 28) democracy always implies that the people themselves take some part in determining political decisions. Democracy is not paternalism: it is not only government 'for the people' but government 'by the people' as well. Democracies have varied enormously in the mechanisms through which people get to exercise this influence or control—just as democracies have varied enormously over who gets included in 'the people'—but no conceivable definition could omit some element of popular control.

The basis for this is partly prudential: a reminder that political decisions are not grounded in unquestioned or absolute truth; and that any form of government that cedes authority to some subgroup of the population is likely to generate tyrannical rule. If the art of good government were comparable to the art of captaining a ship (a parallel first suggested by Plato), we might well choose to be ruled by those trained in its founding principles. But, while most of us would prefer to see experts in charge of navigating the oceans or designing aircraft that fly, we do not normally consider politics just as a matter of technical expertise. We have become accustomed, on the contrary, to quite fundamental disagreement over priorities and principles and goals, and this makes us more resistant to the claims of self-appointed 'guardians' who believe they know what is in our best interest. As has already been noted, diversity has become a central organizing theme in the history of liberal democracy: initially the diversity of religious belief, and later the diversity over secular goals. Against a background of disagreement and difference, popular control is then partly a precautionary measure, grounded in healthy scepticism towards the pretensions of political élites. In its more theorized versions, the argument stresses the fundamental fallibility of human reason; ⁴ in common-sense formulations, that no one can know better than I do what are my preferences and priorities and needs. ⁵

Popular control is also, however, thought to have an independent value, and this links it with the second principle of political equality. Consider here the arguments for universal suffrage, which are only partially grounded in the dangers of tyrannical rule. It is not, on the whole, thought relevant to the case that the interests of women or (p. 29) black people might be better served by an enlightened despotism composed of nice white men. Those who argued for universal suffrage certainly contested the validity of such claims, and they had plenty of evidence to hand to demonstrate that under such conditions the interests of women or black people were not well served. But the real substance of their case lay elsewhere, and did not depend on calculating the consequences. In contemporary theories of democracy, the prudential (or negative) case always combines with a more positive assertion of the equal capacity for self-determination, and the equal value that should then be given to all in deciding the issues that affect their lives.

This second principle has become particularly definitive in the development of modern democracy, for, while the roughly equal capacity for reason is more a matter of faith than of empirical confirmation, it translates into what Dahl calls a 'roughly equal qualification'⁶ for government. The burden of proof then shifts to those who want to argue for exceptions—and where such proofs are attempted they typically involve the notion that certain categories of people are more like children than adults. This infantilization of entire sections of the adult population has become increasingly hard to swallow, and, while people continue to disagree about the age at which children turn into adults, their arguments about those who are obviously adult move within a more bounded range than before. There are not many who will now declare themselves as opposed to women's right to vote, and, while plenty can be found who would like to see off their country's ethnic or racial minorities, hardly anyone will argue for two classes of citizenship, defined by the colour of one's skin. People differ substantially in their attitudes to immigration, to policies of multiculturalism, or to what is an appropriate division of labour between women and men. But they do not differ much over the equal rights of those now recognized as citizens, or the equal weighting that should be given to each. The kind of plural voting that John Stuart Mill proposed as an antidote to the idiocies of mass democracy is not at all popular today. Extra votes for college graduates have definitely gone out of fashion, and so too have the overtly discriminatory literacy tests that kept so many black Americans off the electoral register. Whatever else we disagree on—and (p. 30) there is little sign of consensus on matters of social or economic equality—political equality between adults has come to set the terms for modern democracy.

On the face of it, at least, these two principles of popular control and political equality provide a good basis for the politics of presence. Control is just a pious aspiration unless people are actually there; equality is hardly achieved when some groups have so much more leverage than others. It would be comforting to leave it at that (and would save both reader and writer from much additional work), but this easy deduction is hampered by two major preliminary problems. The first relates to the status of representative democracy, and the way this has changed the conditions for popular control. In the framework of direct democracy, control is a function of presence; for the capacity to influence political decisions depends quite simply on attendance at the relevant meetings, and those not present at the meeting lose their chance of exerting control. But the development of representative institutions has fundamentally altered this equation—has changed it, indeed, quite deliberately, in order to cope with the enlarged citizenry of the modern state. Does this development then undermine the importance of political presence, detaching it from the conditions for popular control?

The second set of problems relates to the status of political equality, a term so slippery in its implications that Charles Beitz, for one, wishes we could drop it from our

vocabulary altogether. ⁷ One standard for mutation of political equality is that 'everyone should count for one, and none for more than one'; compared with 'some people should count for more than the others', this looks self-evidently right. The appealing simplicity is, as always, deceptive. 'Count for one' sounds like a broadly procedural matter, to be achieved by ensuring that each individual carries the same voting weight as the next. But what of those individuals who form a permanent minority, whether in their constituency or in the society as a whole? What if their preferences are always discounted, because they happen to vote in the wrong place? Does counting equally refer only to our starting positions, or does it extend to our influence on outcomes? Does the emphasis on individual equalities also extend to equalities between social groups? As arguments about electoral systems amply confirm, (p. 31) political equality can lend itself to a wide range of interpretations, some of which focus on equalizing the size of different voting constituencies, others on equalizing the probability that each voter will cast the deciding vote, others still on ensuring that each voter has equal influence on the composition of the government elected. ⁸ If political equality is itself so indeterminate, how could it be the basis for anything as provocative as a politics of presence?

In the following two sections I explore these questions in more detail, and argue that the case for political presence cannot be viewed as a transparent deduction from either popular control or political equality. These two principles certainly set the framework for any politics of presence, but the core of the argument lies in a more historically specific analysis of existing structures of exclusion and existing arrangements for representation. The central sections then set out these arguments, which can be briefly summarized in terms of the importance to be attached to symbolic recognition, the need to tackle those exclusions inherent in the party packaging of political ideas, the need for more vigorous advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups, and the importance of a politics of transformation in opening up a fuller range of policy options. In the final sections, I address the status of experience as an alternative 'guarantee', and take issue with the essentialism implied in this.

I

The first issue is best approached by considering the differences between political participation and political representation, for, while equality of presence is already implicit in the former, it is not so obviously implicit in the latter. The literature on democracy and participation takes as its starting point the notion that political equality involves some degree of equality in participation, and it treats the systematic absence of particular social groups as a self-evident failing of democracy. The literature varies, of course, in the groups it considers worthy of attention. Numerous political scientists have pondered the disturbing correlations between social class and levels of political participation, but many of these passed over without comment what have

been equally disturbing correlations (p. 32) between political participation and gender. Too many feminists, perhaps, have repaid the inattention with interest, and have dwelt exclusively on the over#participation of men without exploring additional class or racial dimensions. But in either case, political equality has been taken as implying a rough equality in levels of political participation. Significant deviations from this have been treated as cause for concern.

This is not to say that everyone must be equally enthralled by the political process: the interest in politics is unevenly distributed, as is the interest in sport or in jazz; and a free society is usually thought to imply a freedom not to engage in politics.⁹ We certainly cannot assume that a society is undemocratic just because its citizens are bored by its politics. But where levels of participation and involvement have coincided too closely with differences by class or gender or ethnicity, this has been taken as *prima facie* evidence of political inequality, even without further investigation of where this imbalance might lead.

When Sidney Verba and Norman Nie wrote up their major studies of political participation—the first in America, the second in a seven#nation comparison¹⁰—they took it almost as axiomatic that inequality in participation meant inequality in political influence; and their careful documentation of bias in participation contrasted with a more casual set of assertions about the effects this bias might have. What they discovered was a consistent skewing of participation in favour of those from the higher social classes, with some minor corrective to this when the less advantaged were organized on a group basis. This participatory bias was then said to give the political advantage to those who were already better off, though the bulk of the evidence for this derived from some survey responses suggesting that the actives and inactives had a different set of preferences and priorities, combined with Lord Lindsay's observation that only the wearer of the shoe will know if it pinches.¹¹

Fifteen years later, Geraint Parry, George Moyser, and Neil Day (p. 33) were noticeably more circumspect in saying why inequalities in participation might matter, stressing only the 'plausibility' of the argument that democracy is 'adversely affected' when those who are active are highly unrepresentative of the population as a whole, and the general likelihood that, when 'certain groups or classes are consistently more active than others, the élites are in some danger of mistaking the pressures of these groupings for the views of the citizenry as a whole'.¹² These cautious words might suggest that inequality in participation is not such a serious concern, but it is equally legitimate to view them in the opposite light. Participatory equality—in the sense of a rough equality between all relevant social grouping—has entered sufficiently deeply into our understandings of democracy to stand almost independently of what we might later discover are its political effects. If subsequent scrutiny established that an under#participation of

women or an over#participation of the middle classes had no observable consequences (an unlikely outcome, but still in principle possible), this would not significantly alter the judgement that such inequality is undesirable. Empirical information about actual consequences is regarded as largely beside the point.

The same presumption does not, however, operate in the sphere of representation, and those who see political equality as implying a roughly proportionate distribution of political activity rarely extend the argument to this higher realm. There is no comparable expectation of equality when it comes to the distribution of people on representative bodies—and there is some basis for this differential treatment. Representation is not, after all, just another aspect of participation, to be judged by identical criteria. The activities we group together under the rubric of political participation are ones that every citizen could, in principle, do. We could all vote in the election, and indeed in some countries this is compulsory. We could all sign the petition; we could all turn up at the meeting (though the organizers would not know where to put us if we did); we could all join a political party (though political parties would lose their meaning if we all chose to join the same one). Everyone could in principle be present, and it is a relatively easy step from that to the notion that those who do turn up or out ought to be a representative sample of (p. 34) the population as a whole. There is no such ease of transition in relation to representation, which has been built on the opposite principle of choosing some few to represent the rest.

Equality of presence—a rough approximation to the social groups that make up the society—is already implicit in the notion of participation. It is not so obviously implicit in the notion of representation, which was, if anything, dreamt up to get round this bothersome condition. The two are related, and a society that provided genuinely equal access to participation in meetings and pressure groups and parties would almost certainly produce the same kind of equality among the people elected. In principle, however, they are distinct, for, in distancing itself from participatory democracy, representative democracy has distanced itself from physical presence as the measure of political equality. As applied to political participation, it might seem entirely appropriate that those who are most active should in some way mirror the composition of the population as a whole. There is no such compelling reason when it comes to representation.

This is indeed the burden of Hanna Pitkin's critique of mirror or descriptive representation. In her influential work on *The Concept of Representation*,¹³ she suggested that the metaphors of descriptive representation were most commonly found among those who regarded representative democracy as a poor second#best, and who therefore looked to more 'accurate' or pictorial representation of the electorate as a way of approximating the older citizen assemblies. Instead of recognizing the qualitatively

new element that entered into democracy with the development of representative institutions, these defiant romantics continued to pursue criteria that were more appropriate to an earlier age. In the 1780s debates on the American Constitution, for example, Federalists and anti-Federalists differed not only on the appropriate division of power between federal and state government but also in their understanding of what it was to 'represent'. In this context (as in many others), the Federalists were the modernizers who had more fully grasped the spirit of their time. As Edmund Morgan puts it, they saw representative democracy as superior to direct democracy precisely because it 'enabled the people to delegate power to persons as unlike most of themselves as possible, to persons distinguished by their abilities and talents, by the (p. 35) very talents that would lead voters to favour them'.¹⁴ The best political leaders would then inspire by their integrity and merit, and they would be people who could see more widely and deeply than those whose future they were chosen to guide. The anti-Federalists had little confidence in this—partly, of course, because they knew they would not dominate the federal assembly—and they were deeply agitated by what they saw as the dangers of remote government. They included in this not just the remoteness of federal government, but the growing gap between representatives and people. Hence their preference for state over federal assemblies, but hence also their support for more frequent elections and their attempts to ensure some rotation in office. 'They accepted the unfeasibility of direct democracy, but they regretted its unfeasibility and wanted government to resemble it as closely as possible by making the few who governed resemble in every way the many they governed.'¹⁵

Given the subsequent divergence between direct and representative democracy, the politics of presence might well appear as a curious replay of that earlier, now outmoded, debate. The equal right to participate is a natural enough extension of the equal value allocated to all citizens, and any deviations from rough proportionality do then seem to give legitimate cause for concern. Taking such deviations seriously already raises controversial questions about the relationship between formal and substantial equality. (Is it enough to give people formal equalities, or do we also need to address the structural obstacles that prevent certain groups from making full use of their equal rights?) But as long as the emphasis is on political *participation*, the argument moves within relatively well defined territory inherited from the practices of direct democracy. Representation, has however, significantly altered the political terrain, and a proportionality that might have been quite appropriate in previous contexts no longer seems such a major concern. As Pitkin has quite adequately established, the equation of fair representation with proportionate representation follows from only one among many versions of what representation is about. And while that particular version may be perfectly legitimate, it cannot be said to (p. 36) follow automatically from the equal right to participate in politics. Political equality does carry with it an equal right to

participate in politics—an equal right to be politically present. Translating this into an equal right to serve as a representative simply presumes what has yet to be established.

II

The questions raised around representation take us into the second area of ambiguity, which relates to the very meaning of political equality. When it is taken out of historical context, the general aspiration to political equality can give only moderate guidance on the institutions that best meet its requirements. Political equality does not specify just one kind of treatment. It can be taken to mean that all citizens should have equal power over outcomes, that all political preferences should be given equal weight, or (somewhat less plausibly) that all citizens should have an equal chance of voting for a winning candidate. There is no guarantee that these different objectives will coincide, which means we often have to make judgements between them. It may be, for example, that in order to give people equal power over outcomes we have to weight their preferences unequally; or that in order to protect minorities we have to give their votes some additional weight. Simplistic appeals to political equality leave the most difficult questions unanswered, for there is little that flows directly and unequivocally from the meaning of political equality.

Part of what is at issue here is the ambiguous nature of equality: an ambiguity that has been widely rehearsed in feminist explorations of the difference between being treated as equals and being treated as if we are the same.¹⁶ When we think of equality as what Charles Beitz terms a 'simple univocal principle',¹⁷ we turn it into a unique set of prescriptions that must apply regardless of historical context. We then lose the flexibility and sensitivity that enable us to judge between different situations—and we may become baffled by the most ordinary of questions. Some feminists in the USA, for example, (p. 37) treats women differently from men. Faced with the prospect of differential legislation that distinguishes—and then potentially discriminates—between the sexes, they have preferred the gender-neutral policies that equate pregnancy with a 'temporary disability', and can apply more evenhandedly between women and men.¹⁸ Treating women as different, even in respects in which they are patently different from men, has been regarded as too much a hostage to fortune. And yet the solution to this dilemma seems simple enough. In some circumstances equality means differential treatment; in other circumstances it means treating people the same—there is no logical or political requirement to stand by just one of these two options. What prevents people from seeing this is precisely that 'univocal principle' of equality that Beitz criticises: an overly rigid understanding of equality that abstracts it from any meaningful context.

In exploring the forms of democracy most appropriate to an egalitarian society, Ronald Dworkin draws attention to two very different approaches.¹⁹ The first he

describes as a *dependent* interpretation of democracy: one that makes the choices over mechanisms and procedures depend on the kinds of outcomes they are likely to produce and, more specifically, on whether they will treat all members of the community with equal concern. The alternative, *detached*, interpretation tests things by input rather than output, conceiving of democracy as the equal distribution of power over political decisions. Though this is the version that lies behind most common-sense understandings of democracy as 'one person, one vote'—and is by far the more favoured approach—it is, in Dworkin's view, incoherent. Equal power must be taken to imply equal influence (otherwise there is no basis for criticizing the unfair influence of wealthier citizens); but equal influence can be achieved only by eliminating politics itself. As long as people are allowed to act, some will have more influence than others, if only by virtue of their personal charisma or their greater experience in political argument and debate. The more controversial emphasis on equality of outcomes then emerges as (p. 38) stronger than it initially seemed, and Dworkin argues for a dependent interpretation of democracy that can take account of consequences as well as original conditions.

Charles Beitz addresses a similar range of issues when he considers the tension between establishing an equal power over outcomes and achieving an equal weighting of political preference. The first concentrates on the input (get the procedures right and leave the results to themselves), while the second deals with the output (are citizens treated fairly in the policy results?). In any legitimate understanding of democracy, both must surely be taken into account. 'Citizens must be treated equally as participants in the political process; but they must also be treated equitably as the subjects of public policy.'²⁰ Beitz then argues for what he terms 'complex proceduralism', in which fair terms for participation are determined by what can be made justifiable to each citizen in the light of both aspects of equal treatment. This moves us away from absolute notions of equality, which hold for all time and all place, and may be thought to legitimate what is currently believed or accepted rather than what is independently 'right'.²¹ But we cannot deduce what is politically fair from abstract principles of political equality: we have to draw on empirical judgements of what is likely to happen as well as what seems in principle to be fair.

Both arguments note the ambiguity at the heart of political equality, and both clarify the role of consequentialist considerations in determining what counts as fair and just. The case for equal or proportionate presence cannot be derived simply from general principles of political equality; but neither can the case against. We have to look at how political representation works in existing conditions, and whether arrangements that might seem to embody general principles of fairness none the less favour particular groups. The politics of ideas takes its stand on abstracting from social difference; the political influence we wield will depend on how many others we persuade to adopt

our particular beliefs. What are the alternative arguments that provide the basis for a politics of presence?

(p. 39) III

The underrepresentation of certain categories of people is in one sense just empirical fact: they are not present in elected assemblies in the same proportions as they are present in the electorate. But the characteristics of those elected may diverge in any number of ways from the characteristics of those who elect them, and this is not always seen as a matter of democratic consequence. In a much cited article on representation, A. Phillips Griffiths argued that some divergences are regarded as positively beneficial. We do not normally consider the interests of lunatics as best represented by people who are mad, and 'while we might well wish to complain that there are not enough representative members of the working class among Parliamentary representatives, we would not want to complain that the large class of stupid or maleficent people have too few representatives in Parliament: quite the contrary'.²² Feminists may find the implied parallels unconvincing, especially when they recall the many decades in which women were classified with children and the insane as ineligible for the right to a vote, but the general point remains. Establishing an empirical underrepresentation of certain groups does not in itself add up to a normative case for their equal or proportionate presence. It may alert us to overt forms of discrimination that are keeping people out, but it does not yet prove the case for more radical change.

It does, however, provide a basis for the first part of the argument for political presence, which relates to what Hanna Pitkin described—and rather speedily dismissed—as symbolic representation. When those charged with making the political decisions are predominantly drawn from one of the two sexes or one of what may be numerous ethnic groups, this puts the others in the category of political minors. They remain like children, to be cared for by those who know best. However publicspirited their mentors may be, this infantilization of large segments of the citizenry is hardly compatible with modernday democracy, and it becomes particularly burdensome when associated with popular ideologies that have presumed the inferiority of the excluded groups. Claims on political representation then figure as one of many avenues for challenging (p. 40) existing hierarchies of power; as Lani Guinier puts it in a discussion of black representation in the USA, '[b]lack cannot enjoy equal dignity and political status until black representatives join the council of government'.²³ Including those previously excluded matters *even if* it proves to have no discernible consequences for the policies that may be adopted. Part of the purpose, that is, is simply to achieve the necessary inclusion: to reverse previous histories of exclusion and the way these constituted certain kinds of people as less suited to govern than the rest.

This more symbolic element in representation is sometimes linked to arguments about making political institutions more legitimate, more obviously and visibly representative of those they pretend to represent. But this is an explicitly pragmatic argument, aimed at the weak spots of those who prefer to keep things as they are. The case for equal or proportionate presence is not, on the whole, about making liberal democracies more stable, or pre#empting the mass alienation of citizens who might otherwise take to the streets. What is at issue, rather, is what Charles Taylor has called the 'politics of recognition'.²⁴ Because the modern age makes identity more problematic (much less taken for granted), it also makes recognition far more important to people's well#being; and if your way of life is not recognized as of equal value with others, this will be experienced as a form of oppression. The required recognition has been widely interpreted as including a more public presence in political life: a public acknowledgement of equal value.

This first part of the argument could of course be met in other ways than through changing the composition of elected assemblies. If what is required is a public acknowledgment that differences exist, and that all groups are equally part of the political community, this might be better achieved through changing the curriculum in universities or schools, or funding the cultural activities of different social groups, or redesigning the national flag. But the argument for a fuller public presence for those currently marginalized, infantilized, or excluded nearly always carries with it additional expectations about how this will alter the direction of policy or the content (p. 41) of the decisions that are made. It is at this point, rather than in the emphasis on public recognition, that it more directly challenges existing notions of representation.

IV

That representation is a muddle is accepted by most political theorists. If we could transport ourselves into a simpler political universe where citizens had only two choices (say, between tending the fields or preparing the country for war), then, assuming a reasonably satisfactory electoral system and representatives who do what they say, the outcome would reflect majority feeling, and the democratic process would be nicely assured. But not only do we doubt the integrity of our representatives and the transparency of our electoral systems, we also know there are more than two choices that will have at some point to be made. The way these get packaged by the different political parties already introduces one element of difficulty, for we may like what one party proposes on health provision, but prefer what another says on education. And even when we work out some rule of thumb for deciding which issues most matter, what of all the other choices that did not even appear on the political agenda? The importance of these may not become apparent until long after the election, and it will then be too late to pass on any message about what we would prefer our representatives to do.

At this point, we can of course resort to the various contacting, campaigning, and pressure group activities which enable citizens to pass on their preferences in the gap between the elections. But most commonly, we fall back on the vague expectation that representatives who share our views on one set of issues will share our views on another set too. It hardly needs saying that this expectation makes most sense when politics is organized around binary oppositions, or when political beliefs and objectives fall into coherent clusters of congruent ideas. When class was the central organizing principle defining a left#right political spectrum, this presumption looked more plausible than it does today. But positions on the ownership of the means of production or the distribution of income and wealth were never very good predictors of positions on sexual or racial equality; and nor were positions on sexual equality such good predictors of attitudes on class or race. The American suffragists who (p. 42) campaigned for women's right to vote often arrived at their commitment through what they saw as a parallel involvement in campaigns against black slavery; but many of them later opposed the enfranchisement of black men as a further obstacle to women's inclusion. Several years later, British suffragists found some of their strongest supporters as well as their most obdurate opponents within the ranks of socialist men, many of whom perceived the obsession with women's equality as a dangerously middle#class diversion from the more pressing concerns of class. Political positions on these most fundamental aspects of social and political equality do not necessarily coincide; political positions on lesser matters can be even more diverse.

The example of the suffrage movement makes it clear that politics never did fit a single 'left#right' spectrum, and that the compulsory packaging of what can be very diverse goals or beliefs never did much justice to their subtlety or range. The often binary alternatives have, however, become particularly inappropriate to the complexity of contemporary identity and belief, and the declining salience of class is best understood in this context. It is not that problems of class inequality and deprivation are any less pressing than before, but that class can no longer operate as the organizing symbol for such a multiplicity of political concerns. And yet the pattern of representation that is most characteristic of contemporary liberal democracies still assumes that beliefs and concerns can be packaged in relatively straightforward ways—and, in many instances, into only two parcels.

In most parts of the liberal and social democratic world, there is just enough congruity between different kinds of issues for this to retain some rough plausibility. (If there were *no* such connection, political parties could hardly exist in their current form.) Thus, parties on the left and centre of what is still a largely class#defined political spectrum have tended to take the initiative in introducing measures for women's social and political equality; these same parties have also tended to be more responsive to the claims of multiculturalism or the demands of ethnic minorities. There is, to that extent,

some semblance of a connection between different kinds of issues. But no one studying the history of policies on immigration or the development of apartheid in South Africa would end up overly optimistic on the convergence of interests between differently subordinated (p. 43) groups; just as few of those comparing the history of liberal and socialist traditions would find themselves in total and consistent agreement with only one of these two.

The lack of fit between different sets of issues poses a major problem for existing conventions of representation, and it provides the second part of the argument for a different politics of representation. If we were to be strict in our definitions, we would have to say that representatives only 'really' represent their constituents on the issues that were explicitly debated in the course of the election campaign. On everything else, the representatives have to fall back on their own judgement or their own prejudice. And though some of this could be averted by fuller discussion of a wider range of issues, citizens have neither the time nor the knowledge to extract a comprehensive statement of what candidates might think on every issue that might conceivably arise. They then have to fall back on some more general notion of the ways in which they are being represented. Failing that more innocent political spectrum which would enable them to predict views on abortion from views on nuclear defence, they have to turn to other aspects of the candidates which might serve as a complementary protection. Whether these candidates are male or female, black or white, recent or long#ago migrants, can then become of major significance.

This edges into the third argument for changing patterns of representation, which is that people from disadvantaged groups need more aggressive advocates on the public stage. Not that people never act for anyone other than themselves: some of the existing political parties have established a worthy record of policies against discrimination or programmes for disadvantaged groups; and wherever such policies are implemented, it is by legislative assemblies in which those discriminated against have a negligible presence. Politicians are elected on party commitments, which might include any number of policies relating to sexual or racial equality or the fairer treatment of minority groups. If there is a clear mandate for these policies, does it really matter who the politicians are? Why not put the effort into establishing the commitments, rather than bothering about the characteristics of the people who implement them?

Part of the answer to this refers back to symbolic representation, for there is something distinctly odd about a democracy that accepts a responsibility for redressing disadvantage, but never sees the (p. 44) disadvantaged as the appropriate people to carry this through. The other part is grounded in a rather sober pessimism about the limits to binding mandates. As any reasonably diligent observer of the political process will confirm, policy decisions are not settled in advance by party programmes or election

commitments. New problems and issues always emerge alongside unanticipated constraints, and in the subsequent weighing of interpretations and priorities it can matter immensely who the representatives are. When there is a significant underrepresentation of disadvantaged groups at the point of final decision, this can and does have serious consequences. However strong our attachment to the politics of binding mandates (people of course vary in this), representatives *do* have considerable autonomy, which is part of why it matters who those representatives are.

These arguments then combine with the last, which stresses those ideas or concerns that have not even reached the political agenda. The problem of representation is not just that preferences refuse to cluster around a neat set of political alternatives, or that the enforced choice between only two packages can leave major interest groups without any voice. There is an additional problem of the preferences not yet legitimated, the views not even formulated, much less expressed. As Cass Sunstein has argued, there are serious risks attached to taking political preferences as fixed or finite givens, and one of these is that preferences are always formed in relation to what has been set as a norm. ²⁵ Though many of us will rail against what we see as an unjust allocation of the good things in life, many more of us will adjust our expectations downwards in order to survive and remain sane. People adapt themselves to 'undue limitations in available opportunities or to unjust background conditions', ²⁶ and, as Sunstein notes, 'poverty itself is perhaps the most severe obstacle to the free development of preferences and beliefs'. ²⁷ Those more favoured by fortune may, by the same logic, have exaggeratedly high expectations, and they may far exceed the requirements of justice in what they consider to be theirs by right. If we take the preferences that are expressed through the mechanism of the vote as the final word on what governments should or should not do, we may be condemning large sections of the community to persistently unjust (p. 45) conditions. It is no real justification for this to say that it is what people said they wanted.

In the marketplace paradigm which sees citizens choosing between packages of political ideas, there is little space for further development. People become consumers of existing products, and cannot do much to alter the range. They can pressure political parties to take up issues that no one party has so far addressed, and once these issues are on the agenda they can use the ballot box to 'punish' those who still ignore them. They may not, however, even be able to formulate these new issues if they are not first drawn into the political process. It is only when people are more consistently present in the process of working out alternatives that they have much chance of challenging dominant conventions. The argument for a more equitable distribution of representative positions is very much bound up with this.

These arguments are the cornerstone for any politics of presence. The first part relates to the symbolic significance of who is present, and the independent importance that has to be attached to including groups that have been previously denied or suppressed. The second and third refer more directly to the policy consequences we can anticipate from changing the composition of elected assemblies. Political preferences do not fall into the neat packages of party politics, and in order to achieve more fair and adequate representation of those interests that were not explicitly consulted or debated during election campaigns, as well as more vigorous advocacy at the moment of final decision, it is vital to achieve that additional element of representation which arises from the presence of previously excluded groups. These first arguments are reinforced by the last, which stresses a politics of transformation. Since all the options are *not* already in play, we need to ensure a more even-handed balance of society's groups in the arenas of political discussion. The social construction of political preference means that some possibilities will have been opened up and other ones closed down, and relying only on what is registered through the vote (through the initial choice of representatives) will then reinforce what is already dominant. If fair representation also implies fair representation of what would emerge under more favourable conditions, we have to address the composition of the decision-making assemblies as well as the equal right to a vote.

(p. 46) V

There are two standard objections levelled at these conclusions, and the first invokes that notorious slippery slope which stretches from women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled to take in pensioners, beekeepers, and people with blue eyes and red hair. Once the characteristics of the people are acknowledged as relevant, there is said to be a potentially endless list of groups that will all claim the same kind of attention, and no legitimate basis for distinguishing between some of these groups and the others. The implication, it hardly needs saying, is that we would do better to keep off the entire terrain.

Though often delineated with deliberately deflationary intent, this supposed chain of connections does have some logic behind it. If fair representation simply *meant* proportional representation, there would be no guiding principle for deciding which things most mattered, and we would soon find ourselves mapping each and every variable, from the most to the least significant. The task would prove beyond us, for not only is there an infinite number of possibilities, but even the most obvious candidates for mapping will be very likely to conflict. Imagine a society in which women were twice as likely as men to support the free-market policies of the Centre-Right Party, and men twice as likely as women to support the environmentally sensitive policies of the Greens. Do we go for the election of two women for every one man as representatives

of the first party, and two men for every one woman as representatives of the second? Or do we go for equal numbers within each party, and prioritize gender over gender#plus#beliefs? The absurdities can multiply, but they soon lose their sustenance if we just drop the initial abstraction. Political equality does *not* require proportionality according to each and every characteristic: political equality *per se* cannot settle the outstanding arguments. The case for a different system of representation depends on more historically specific analysis of the existing arrangements for representation and the existing conditions of political inclusion.

This is an important qualification to the arguments for changing the composition of elected assemblies, for, while these draw obvious sustenance from principles of equality and fairness, they do not depend on any simple extrapolation from them. The case for gender parity in politics, or for a more even#handed balance between the (p. 47) different ethnic groups that make up the society, or indeed for a greater than proportionate representation of numerically small groups, ²⁸ always depends on analysis of existing structures of exclusion. It is never simply 'required' by the meaning of political equality or the nature of fair representation. It is representation, that is, with a purpose; it aims to subvert or add or transform. The underlying preoccupation is not with pictorial adequacy—does the legislature match up to the people?—but with those particularly urgent instances of political exclusion which a 'fairer' system of representation seeks to resolve.

It is worth noting, in this context, that, while Charles Beitz remains profoundly sceptical on the general arguments for proportional representation, he gives some moderate backing to the redistricting arrangements that have created what are effectively 'safe seats' for black Americans. He argues this, not on the more general ground of a proportionality that is always and everywhere required, but because there are 'predictable kinds of injustice' that have been built into American history, which provide a more contingent basis for adopting proportional techniques. ²⁹ Iris Young's argument for group representation can be seen to follow a similar pattern. She never suggests that all groups would qualify for additional group representation (beekeepers, Christians, members of the Ku Klux Klan), but argues that those groups that can be identified as oppressed within the wider society need some guaranteed route to public policy#making that will counter their more normal political exclusion. ³⁰ This is not a general argument about fair representation being proportional representation; indeed, in Young's case it is an (p. 48) argument for *more* representation than is strictly proportional to one's numbers.

VI

The second objection recognizes that there is indeed a problem of political packaging, but sees this as more adequately dealt with by measures to ensure the proportional representation of political ideas. 'Who' is present is then redefined as a problem of 'what', and the emphasis shifts to ways of achieving legislative assemblies that will mirror the full range of political preferences as expressed in the popular vote. This then leads into a more technical investigation of the competing merits of the single member, winner#takes#all, systems that operate in Britain or the USA, and those systems of proportional representation that are more common outside the Anglo#American world. These debates have been contentious enough, but they work within a relatively uncontroversial understanding of proportionality as a matter of proportionality to the citizens' ideas.

Many commentators regard this as less problematic than any further matching to characteristics such as gender or ethnicity: partly because it is already practised in a majority of contemporary democracies (what already happens rarely seem very contentious); partly because it seems less socially divisive; partly because it is more in keeping with the dominant politics of ideas. In the debates around the new constitution for South Africa, for example, a system of proportional representation for political parties was widely supported as a way of achieving proportionality between the different ethnic groups without actually specifying ethnic 'rights' to office. 'Ethnicity must not be rewarded politically', as Gerhard Maré has put it, ³¹ but ethnicity was seen as too fundamental to political loyalties to be safely—or fairly—ignored. In this context, what was seen as a relatively uncontentious practice of matching the composition of legislative assemblies to the overall levels of party political support was preferred over a more dangerous and troubling alternative that would give ethnic politics too much power. The distribution of representatives would then, it was hoped, roughly reflect the country's (p. 49) ethnic composition, but it would do this without giving explicit legitimacy to ethnic and racial divisions.

Interestingly enough, Hanna Pitkin made no particular distinction between these two kinds of proportionality when she explored what she saw as the limits to 'mirror' or 'descriptive' representation. In her analysis, descriptive representation is something that aims to capture, in some pictorial way, the nature of the nation or of public opinion, and it is this underlying obsession with composition that interests her rather than the kind of painting people might choose. In most of her discussion, she elides the mapping of opinion with the mapping of people, not really distinguishing between a representative sample that might more adequately capture the range of ideas, the range of interests, or the range of socially significant groups. Thus, she moves from a general commentary on descriptive representation as seeking to 'secure in the government a

"reflex" of the opinion of the entire electorate', ³² to a supposed illustration of this in Sidney and Beatrice Webb's critique of the composition of the House of Lords. But the Webbs were talking about class and gender composition—'absolutely no members of the manual working class; none of the great class of shopkeepers, clerks and teachers; none of the half of all the citizens who are of the female sex' ³³ —and it begs some rather important questions to treat class and gender composition as just a proxy for opinion and ideas. Arguments for the proportional representation of ideas (or, more modestly, of the distribution of party political support) are not the same as arguments for the proportional representation of workers or women. The former, indeed, could be said to undermine any additional importance attached to the latter.

When John Stuart Mill lent his weight to the electoral reforms proposed by Thomas Hare, ³⁴ he defended Hare's system of proportional representation as something that would raise the intellectual calibre of parliamentary representatives (this was always one of Mill's concerns), while simultaneously enabling voters to choose representatives who really shared their own interests and views. Hare's system treated the entire country as if it were a single (p. 50) constituency, and required voters to rank candidates in order of preference, regardless of the area in which they lived. All these preferences then accumulated towards the final outcome, and any candidate who reached the requisite number, no matter how dispersed his support, would be duly elected. This system of 'personal representation' operated almost independently of party labels, and presumed a far more intimate knowledge of each candidate's virtues and opinions than we can aspire to in conditions of mass democracy, but it did in principle offer a way through the false packaging of political opinion. Minority interests and concerns would have far more room for manoeuvre than under the sway of a few major parties, and would be freed from the constraints of geographical districts in which they might be just a tiny minority. Such a system of proportional representation might not significantly alter the gender or racial composition of the final assembly, but it would certainly allow for more sustained representation of currently excluded perspectives and concerns.

Subsequent developments have adapted these principles to the later practices of party politics, generating such variants as the party list system, which is widely used across northern Europe, or the additional member system, which operates in contemporary Germany. What characterizes these diverse mechanisms is a greater attention to the *overall* level of electoral support for each of the competing parties, and a greater emphasis on matching this to the final makeup of the legislative assembly. This may indeed satisfy those aspects of the politics of presence that are about the false packaging of political views, but it leaves untouched those other aspects which revolve around the symbolic element in political representation, the importance of ensuring more vigorous advocacy for hitherto excluded groups, and the way that presence can transform the nature and content of the political agenda. Minority concerns can perhaps expect a

better hearing inside a proportionally constituted legislative assembly, but any group that has a history of political exclusion will still face problems in transforming the political agenda—and any group that is in a numerical minority will still have trouble getting its preferred policies in place.

In his critique of proportional representation electoral systems, Charles Beitz argues that there is not a great difference between having the full range of current opinion reflected inside the legislature, (p. 51) and having it reflected at an earlier stage in internal party debate.³⁵ Minority groups and opinions will still make their preferences felt even in non-proportional systems: they just do it at an earlier moment, when they argue about party programmes or the choice of party candidates. Systems of proportional representation may be said to encourage a wider range of ideologically distinct political parties, each of which can win enough support to get representatives into the legislative assembly. In contrast to this, the single-member, first-past-the-post, system is more likely to generate a smallish number of viable parties, each of which will probably end up as a 'broad church' coalition that incorporates a variety of political views. What exactly is at stake in preferring one of these over the other? We might be ideological purists, who disdain the muddle and compromise that takes place in broad church parties. Or we might be guardians of political stability, whose worst nightmare is an unstable proliferation of minority parties and who cannot bear political extremes. But the choice hardly seems to come down to high-minded issues of political equality, and it is not really clear that one is more 'fair' than the other. Beitz puts this in particularly strong terms: '[A]lthough it is true that proportional representation achieves one kind of equality that will not normally obtain in district systems, it is a kind of equality in which there is no general reason to take an interest.'³⁶

Beitz's comment reflects his more general argument against deducing political institutions and practices from abstract principles of equality or fairness, but it also suggests some of the limits to what can be expected from establishing proportionality according to political ideas. The arguments for political presence have moved in close association with the arguments for electoral systems based on proportional representation: women, for example, have viewed such systems as considerably more favourable to the achievement of gender parity; while recent contributions to the politics of minority representation in the USA have developed a strong case for adopting proportional representation rather than district systems.³⁷ But when part of the project of the politics of presence is to achieve the inclusion of previously excluded groups, establishing a proportionate representation of existing preferences will never be enough of an answer. This kind of proportionality leaves to one side all those (p. 52) unresolved questions about the status of existing preferences; it also sidesteps all those legitimate queries about whether ideas can be separated from presence. We can no longer pretend that the full range of ideas and preferences and alternatives has

been adequately represented when those charged with the job of representation are all white or all male or all middle#class; or that democracies have completed their task of political equality when they free up the market in political ideas. The overly cerebral understanding of difference has not engaged sufficiently with the problems of political exclusion, and achieving the proportional representation of the citizens' ideas goes only part of the way towards tackling these problems.

VII

The argument so far establishes the limits of existing procedures of representation, the validity of pursuing some additional or complementary element, and the importance of political presence in preference and policy formation. What it has not yet satisfactorily established is that shared experience can figure as an appropriate, additional, guarantee. A pure politics of ideas may be inadequate, but any simple reversal of this in favour of a politics of shared experience would be equally—if not more—unsatisfactory.

Consider the following very stark assertion, which was the basis on which a group of Frenchwomen laid claim to a place in the Estates General in 1789:

Just as a nobleman cannot represent a plebeian and the latter cannot represent a nobleman, so a man, no matter how honest he may be, cannot represent a woman. Between the representatives and the represented there must be an absolute identity of interests. 38

Shared experience here took precedence over shared ideas: no amount of thought or sympathy, no matter how careful or honest, could jump the barriers of experience. And conversely, it seems, experience was enough of a guarantee: the adequacy of the representation depended on the degree to which that experience was shared. Yet, faced with that confident assertion of an 'absolute identity of interests', most contemporary theorists would shy away from the (p. 53) suggestion of an essential female or authentic black subject that could be represented by any of its kind. We do not see political views as following in some automatic way from the bare facts of experience, and, apart from anything else, we would question which particular experience was supposed to be shared—being a woman? living in the town rather than the country? being born second in a family of seven? being brought up in a particular class? Most people will accept that experience has a formative influence on political beliefs (otherwise there would be no purchasers of political biographies); and some may go one step further and say that past experience sets a definite limit to the shape of future beliefs. But the notion that shared experience *guarantees* shared beliefs or goals has neither theoretical nor empirical plausibility. It does scant justice to what is a multiplicity of identities and experiences, and it seriously underplays the capacity for reflection and transformation.

One way of thinking of this is in terms of the asymmetry between exposing the problems of exclusion and identifying the difference that inclusion brings about. If there were no significant variations in power or experience, we could expect our political representatives to be randomly distributed across all the differences of gender or ethnicity or race. The fact that they are not indicates that some obstacle stands in the way. If the obstacle is deliberate discrimination, it goes without saying that those who currently monopolize positions of power cannot stand in for those they have excluded. And even if the obstacles prove more structural (as in the different locations men and women occupy in the sexual division of labour), it seems equally inappropriate to rely on one group standing in for the other. These locations will generate significantly different experiences, and, unless the range is reflected in the decision-making assemblies, decisions will express the preoccupations of those already there. With the best will in the world (and all too often we cannot rely on this), people are not good at imagining themselves in somebody else's shoes. We may get better at such acts of imaginative transcendence when our prejudices have been more forcefully exposed, but this happens only when the 'other' has been well represented.

There is an asymmetry, however, between what alerts us to a problem and what counts as a satisfactory solution. I can think of no explanation for women's continuing (if now more patchy) exclusion from national legislatures that does not refer to intentional or (p. 54) structural male power. But the reversal of this will not guarantee that women's needs or interests are then fully and fairly represented. Indeed, in the absence of mechanisms to establish lines of accountability, it is hard to know what I could mean by this phrase. I could argue some fundamental unity between women, some essential set of experiences and interests that can be represented by any interchangeable combination of women. But if I prefer to keep off this terrain, in what sense are women represented by women? The exclusion of women proves that something peculiar is going on. Their subsequent inclusion does not guarantee a solution.

Iris Young gives one possible answer to this conundrum in her argument for specifically *group* representation, which would then depend on a range of enabling conditions that allow the members of the group to formulate their 'group' point of view. This lifts the argument off its uncomfortably essentialist grounding in shared experience or shared identity, for, instead of presuming some innate unity of interests (any woman can speak for all women, or any black person for black people as a whole), Young looks to the political context in which groups can develop their specific concerns. She argues for public funding to facilitate group organization: resources that would help provide means of communication, places to get together, opportunities for meeting and deciding group goals. The people representing the group would then be able to refer back to this process of collective engagement. They would be speaking for their caucus, organization,

or group, and they would be conveying the results of what might have been a very contested internal debate.

Young's notion of group representation avoids most of the pitfalls in appealing to shared experience as an automatic guarantee. It makes no claims to essential unities or characteristics; it recognizes the potential diversity and disagreement within any social group; and it provides some basis for the accountability of representatives to those they might claim to represent. But the kind of participatory involvement Young envisages as establishing the priorities and concerns of each group is not yet a serious option at national level; it works best in the context of additional group representation in the process of policy formation. It is perfectly conceivable for the women members of a trade union or professional association to meet together as a caucus and determine their own policy commitments and concerns—though even here, those who involve themselves will be a minority (p. 55) and not fully 'representative' of the women members as a whole. It is virtually impossible, by contrast, to imagine all the women in a country, a constituency, even a neighbourhood, getting together to work out 'their' concerns. This sets far too high a threshold for participation; short of major changes in political culture and practice, it could hardly generate a 'representative' group.

The legitimacy of group representation depends on some mechanism for establishing what the group in question wants or thinks or needs, and there are only two serious candidates for this. One is the implausible essentialism that sees shared experience as enough of a guarantee of shared belief; the other is the organization of some sufficiently representative segment to establish group opinions and goals. If the first is implausible and the second unlikely, then what is at issue in demands for the equal or proportionate presence of members of particular social groups is not strictly 'group representation'. It is more a question of challenging existing exclusions, and opening up opportunities for different issues or concerns to be developed. If it is guarantees that we want, then some form of 'typical' or 'descriptive' representation is hardly the ideal avenue—or, more precisely, it only becomes such when we pursue an unattractively essentialist line.

This is the point at which some readers will throw up their hands in disbelief, for, in declining the support of essential group interest or identity, I may be thought to be abandoning the only legitimate basis for equal or proportionate presence. Representation as currently organized may well be a muddle; it may well be failing to give expression to a wide range of existing and possible preferences; it may well reinforce the dominance of particular social groups. But if the proposed changes in the composition of representative assemblies have no secure grounding in the 'guarantees' of group experience, what is the basis on which these new representatives represent anyone other than themselves?

The question arises with particular intensity in the politics around women's representation, for feminists have been much exercised over matters of essentialism, and most have explicitly repudiated an essential identity of woman. Exceptions can always be found, and many who reject the label still find themselves charged as essentialists by others. But the dominant discourse in contemporary feminism stresses differences *between* women almost as strenuously as (p. 56) differences between women and men. What then is at stake in arguing for a larger contingent of women in elected representative assemblies? What do such women represent if not an essential female interest or identity?

Of the three worries outlined in Chapter 1 (the fear of balkanization, the anxieties over establishing accountability, and the risk of strengthening even further the narrow politics of interest-based groups), it is the second that most concerns me in the next chapter on the political representation of women. Fears of balkanization are largely in abeyance when it comes to women; most women live in households alongside men, and even those who have pursued a more separatist politics and life-style still have to reach accommodation with men in their daily lives and their field of work. The fear of encouraging a more partial interest group politics is somewhat stronger, but this is moderated by feminist insistence on a multiplicity of interests, as well as by the strong tendency within feminism to attack the sordid politics of faction and interest. The question of accountability then emerges as the pre-eminent concern in the following chapter, which examines the four most common arguments for enhancing women's political presence, and the gaps that have to be filled in around the nature of representation and accountability. The calls for gender parity cannot be adequately theorized in terms of representing pre-agreed policies and goals; if the policies were laid out in detail, it would be a matter of less moment whether those implementing them were women or men. The case for gender parity rests heavily on outcomes as yet unknown, and this implies considerably more autonomy for the representatives than has been allowed in the radical tradition. This is, I argue, an inevitable consequence of the politics of presence, for, in challenging the standard exclusions practised in current conventions of party politics, it also distances itself from a politics of binding mandates. This is not to say that accountability drops out of the picture. But accountability is best understood in relation to the politics of ideas—which is one of the reasons, of course, for needing both ideas and presence.

Notes:

(1) J. Elster, 'Introduction' to J. Elster and R. Slagstad (eds.), *Constitutionalism and Democracy* (Cambridge, 1988).

(2) Ibid. 2.

(3) This audit has been set up by the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex in combination with the Charter 88 Trust. For a discussion of its founding principles, see D. Beetham, *Auditing Democracy in Britain*, The Democratic Audit of the United Kingdom, Paper I (Charter 88 Trust, London, 1993).

(4) See B. Barber, *Strong Democracy* (Berkeley, 1984), ch. 3 .

(5) This forms an important basis to Robert Dahl's defence of democracy; see his *Democracy and its Critics* (New Haven, 1989).

(6) Ibid. 97.

(7) C. R. Beitz, *Political Equality: An Essay in Democratic Theory* (Princeton, 1989).

(8) J. Still, 'Political Equality and Election Systems', *Ethics*, 91/3 (1981).

(9) G. Parry, G. Moyser, and N. Day, *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain* (Cambridge, 1992), 416.

(10) S. Verba and N. N. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York, 1972); S. Verba, N. N. Nie, and J. Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison* (Cambridge, 1978).

(11) Verba et al., *Participation and Political Equality*, 301–7.

(12) Parry et al., *Political Participation*, 416.

(13) H. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, 1967).

(14) E. S. Morgan, 'Power to the People?' *New York Review of Books* (2 Dec. 1993), 28.

(15) Ibid. 27.

(16) C. Bacchi, *Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference* (London, 1990); M. Minow, *Making All the Difference* (Ithaca, NY, 1990); G. Bock and S. James, (eds.), *Beyond Equality and Difference* (London, 1993).

(17) Beitz, *Political Equality*, 225.

(18) These debates may seem odd from a European context, where maternity leave has long been part of a welfare agenda, but they have perplexed and divided feminists in the USA. See Z. Eisenstein, *The Female Body and the Law* (Berkeley, 1989).

(19) R. Dworkin, 'What is Equality? 4: What is Political Equality?' *University of San Francisco Law Review*, 22 (1988).

(20) Beitz, *Political Equality*, 155.

(21) Ibid. 225–6.

(22) A. Phillips Griffiths, 'How Can One Person Represent Another?' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 34 (1960), 190.

(23) L. Guinier, 'Keeping the Faith: Black Voters in the Post#Reagan Era', *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review*, 24 (1989), 421.

(24) C. Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition', in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton, 1992).

(25) C. R. Sunstein, 'Preferences and Politics', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 20/1 (1991).

(26) Ibid. 4.

(27) Ibid. 23.

(28) Will Kymlicka argues that threshold representation may be more important than proportional representation, and that this could mean more than proportionate representation for groups that are very small and less than proportionate representation for groups like women; see W. Kymlicka, 'Group Representation in Canadian Politics', in F. L. Seidle (ed.), *Equity and Community: The Charter, Interest Advocacy and Representation* (Montreal, 1993).

(29) Beitz, *Political Equality*, 159. It is interesting that Beitz reverses the standard European preference, which has tended to view the proportional representation of political parties with more equanimity than the proportional representation of people by the colour of their skin. This pattern of preference does, of course, mirror American common sense.

(30) I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 1990). It should be said, however, that her list of oppressed groups threatens to embrace nearly all of America's population. The only ones left out, as Will Kymlicka puts it, are able-bodied young white men.

(31) G. Maré, *Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Politics and Ethnicity in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1992), 108.

(32) Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 61.

(33) Ibid. 61.

(34) J. S. Mill, 'Representative Government', reprinted in J. S. Mill, *Three Essays* (Oxford, 1975); T. Hare, *Treatise on the Election of Representatives* (London, 1859).

(35) Beitz, *Political Equality*.

(36) Ibid. 140.

(37) See Lani Guinier's arguments, which I discuss more fully in Ch. 4 .

(38) Cited by S. Vegetti Finzi, 'Female Identity between Sexuality and Maternity', in Bock and James, *Beyond Equality and Difference*, 128.

