

models possess similar conceptions of political representation. Where they are likely to differ from one another is in relation to the interpretation of the act of voting. Proponents of constitutional democracy, like Riker (1982), criticize the Westminster model for resting on the false notion that it is possible to identify a popular will to which public policy should conform. Instead, according to Riker, the key function of elections is to provide the opportunity to 'throw the rascals out'. On this view, therefore, the electorate does not mandate a prospective political programme, but rather makes a retrospective judgement about the tolerability of past performance. The relevant notion of political representation is then one of retrospective accountability rather than of prospective accountability operating through the influence of the dominant strand of public opinion on the election of a governing party.

Although electoral laws are crucial in distinguishing different models of democracy, the evaluation of their relative merits in full raises more issues than can be considered here (see Grofman and Lijphart, 1986). Accordingly, rather than consider the case for and against proportional representation as such, I shall simply consider the merits of alternative views of political representation that fit, to some extent at least, different types of electoral law. It is clear that a general theory of political representation will have implications for the way in which we evaluate electoral rules, for on some accounts of representation the effects of the first-past-the-post electoral system are seen as desirable, whereas on other theories of representation the more broadly based view of representation is seen as preferable. But how far are we able to make a principled choice among the competing conceptions of representation?

Representing Interests, Opinions or Characteristics?

Before looking at competing conceptions of representation, it will be useful to consider the concept of representation itself. The general concept of representation is that one thing 'stands for' another. Contour lines thus represent hills, in the sense that they stand symbolically for the hills on the map. Similarly, plastic pieces on a board can represent armies, navies and the like. In cases where one physical system represents another, the only thing that needs to be established, by convention, is a one-to-one correspondence between

selected elements of the represented system and the elements in the representing system that are designated to correspond. Provided we know that the lines are supposed to be contours standing for points of equal height above sea level on the land, we shall not mistake them for footpaths.

When we turn to representation in politics, however, the situation is more complicated, since the notion of 'standing for' is ambiguous. If we seek to remove the ambiguity, we can identify at least three different senses of representation. The first we can think of as 'standing up for', that is representing the interests, either of a constituency of electors or of the country as a whole. On this account of representation, for example, political representatives, like political parties, are seen to represent interests, and the model of the representative is assimilated to other examples where, according to the principles of the division of labour, somebody acts on our behalf, as when a lawyer represents us in a legal dispute.

The second type of political representation we can think of as 'standing out for' in the sense that a person might stand out for a particular belief or view. Here we have the notion of representation as being about the putting of opinions, rather on the model of someone who attends a meeting to put our point of view and vote on the business at hand.

Thirdly, we can think of representation as 'standing in for' in a strict statistical sense, and conceive of political representation not as something that is carried on by individuals, but rather as a feature of a certain sort of institution, one in which the composition of the institution mirrors society at large. If a representative body is an exact microcosm in this sense, it could be said to stand in for that which it represents.

It should be clear that these three conceptions of representation will not always coincide in their practical implications. The best advocate of an interest will not always be the person who is drawn from the most typical sample of a group. Indeed, if we are looking for vigorous proponents of our interests, we would rationally expect to find them among people who were rather untypical, for example with a higher propensity than average to be good bargainers. Similarly, those who are the best exponent of an opinion may not always be the best people to bargain over the compromises that are usually necessary in politics.

How then should we choose among these differing conceptions of political representation? It will highlight the issues involved in making this choice if we contrast the interest and opinion theories of representation with that of the mirror conception.

Suppose we wanted a parliament or legislative chamber to be a mirror or microcosm of the political community, and so be representative in that sense. The simplest way to do this would be to have a representative sample of citizens chosen randomly or by chance to stand for the community at large. Such a random sample would represent the range of major social characteristics (age, sex, occupation, race, religion, family circumstance and so on) that one finds in a community. Moreover, the members of such a representative sample would also be similar to the community at large in the sense that they could be expected to have a wide range of views about the importance of politics, whereas political representatives who compete for office in elections are presumably unrepresentative of the population at large in the interest they display for public affairs.

The notion that ordinary citizens, chosen by lot, should undertake major political tasks is an old one, and was an important part of the practice of ancient Athens. Indeed, Manin (1997) has argued that modern methods of election and principles of government by consent evolved from practices and theories that were originally opposed to democracy. When representative government came to replace direct democracy, there were still those who argued that the legislative body should be a microcosm of the community at large (see the anti-federalist arguments cited in Fishkin, 1995, pp. 60–3). More recently, Burnheim (1985, pp. 110–13) has argued for representation by randomly selected volunteers put in control of functionally specific organizations. Yet, what is striking about the notion of representation in this statistical sense is how distinct in logical terms it is from notions of representation resting on ideas of accountability or even the representation of political opinions.

In what sense would political representation be inadequate if we simply allowed a random sample of the electorate to stand for the whole? The most obvious source of inadequacy would be that there was no mechanism of accountability linking the representatives with those whom they are supposed to be representing. Since the standard form of accountability is given by teams of putative representatives standing as political parties and seeking office by

standing for election, there would be little institutional capacity or incentive among randomly selected citizens to explain or account for their decisions. The price of social representativeness would be a loss of accountability. In being a substitute for the community, the sample would not have to be accountable to the community.

A parallel point can be made with respect to the representation of opinion. To represent an opinion is more than simply to hold an opinion. It is a process of engaging in argument, criticism and exchange of opinions with those who hold a different view. This too requires the organization of opinion into broader programmes or at least principled understanding of what is involved in politics. The organization of political opinion in the form of political parties certainly narrows down the range of views that are standardly expressed in politics, and in this sense politics is always the mobilization of bias. But it is this narrowing down of all the possible opinions that could be expressed that is the condition under which any coherent opinion can be expressed at all. One way of seeing this is to note the importance of political parties in reducing the weight of information with which the individual has to cope. The form of proportional representation favoured by J. S. Mill was the Hare scheme under which voters would be allowed to vote for any candidate who might be standing in the country. Clearly, under such a scheme, there could be hundreds of candidates, and it would be almost impossible for even a committed voter to make an intelligent choice among them. Since politics is about choice, this is a severe limitation, and so conversely the narrowing of the range of possible opinions by party systems should not of itself be considered a disadvantage.

Someone may urge at this point that accountability and the representation of opinion are unnecessary, since the microcosm of society that is the representative sample can simply stand for society as a whole. There simply would be no need for the members of the sample to explain their decisions to citizens at large, as current political representatives attempt to do, since the statistical basis of selection means that any decision that is taken just would, by definition, emerge from a body that was representative of society taken as a whole. The problem here is that such a body would be taking decisions not simply for itself but for society as a whole. Its choices would therefore be binding on those who were not party to the process, and it is difficult to see how those who

were not party to the decision would feel obliged to accept it, if there were no explanation or account forthcoming at all.

If these arguments are right, they establish that, although political representation arises from the need for a division of political labour, its existence means that it is not purely a matter of the division of labour. Instead, its existence calls into being the need for distinct principles of evaluation and assessment. One of these principles concerns the extent to which the political system is representative in the sense of being authorized by the people. As well as 'standing for', in its three variants, there is also a sense of representation which is that of 'acting in the name' of someone, and in a democratic community such acting by one person in the name of someone else requires processes of authorization through mechanisms of accountability.

If we cannot see political representation on the model of a statistical sample, how should we assess the alternative competing models that stress, respectively, accountability for the representation of interests and the representation of opinion? As we have seen, this distinction is in turn related to the differences between the Westminster system, where the notion is that of responsible government, and representational systems in which a representative assembly is seen to contain a large number of political parties expressing a range of public opinion. Thus, in evaluating the competing conceptions of representation, we are in effect evaluating competing models of government.

In comparing these two conceptions of political representation, we need to look at a range of questions that are at issue between the two views. How far do we conceive of the activity of legislation as deliberation to a common point of view, versus bargaining to an agreed outcome? How far do interests, opinions and social characteristics coincide? What is the appropriate notion of accountability in looking at political representation? And how far should we aim at inclusive representation?

The notion that legislation is about deliberation to a common purpose was famously expounded in Burke's account of the function of the political representative. As Birch (1972, pp. 37–40) has pointed out, it was a Whig theory of representation that found clear expression in Burke's address to the electors of Bristol in 1774, when he said that representatives owed electors not merely their industry but also their judgement. On this account, representatives

are not delegates, but persons whose function is to deliberate about the good of the whole. This view came to be widely accepted during the nineteenth century as stating the correct view of the functions of parliamentary representatives, as is partly illustrated by the fact that Sidgwick (1891), who was the epitome of progressive, but moderate, common sense, defended it in his account of democracy. Even Schumpeter can be read as endorsing something like this theory in his five conditions for democratic stability, identified in the last chapter: a high quality of personnel drawn from a social stratum for whom politics is a vocation; a small effective range of political decisions; state control of a well-trained bureaucracy; democratic self-control by the people; and tolerance of differences of opinion (Schumpeter, 1954, pp. 290–6). There are various ways of understanding these conditions, but taken together they bear a remarkable resemblance to the Whig theory of representation as it emerged in Britain in the eighteenth century.

If we take this line, it would seem that we have the rationale for either the Westminster or the constitutional account of democracy, but not the representational account. However, the jump to this conclusion moves a little too quickly. Burke in effect draws two contrasts: that between deliberation to a common good and the pursuit of interests on the one hand; and that between representatives as delegates and representatives as having some independence on the other. It is important not to confuse these two sets of categories if we are to understand their implications clearly.

It may seem that the representational theory of democracy went along with an interest bargaining account of democracy, but as I pointed out when discussing the models, all accounts in fact had to leave scope for deliberation. The notion that any democratic political system can simply operate without some internalization by major social groups of the common interest – even if that interest is only a high-level one in the maintenance of procedural rules for settling group conflicts – was seen to be a myth. Conversely, however, the notion that political decision-making can entirely dispense with bargaining, substituting only deliberations orientated towards the common interest, is also a myth. The practical context of political decision-making will impose constraints on how far political decisions can depart from the articulated interests of major actors. In short, all forms of representative democracy will have to perform both the deliberation function and the interest aggregation function.

Turning now to the second distinction, that between representatives as delegates and representatives as exercisers of independent judgement, we can also see that this does not map straightforwardly on to the different types of model of representative democracy. To be sure, it seems more plausible to think of representatives in the broadly based representational system as being delegates than it does in the Westminster system. After all, with a large number of political parties, each political party can be thought of as representative of a distinct segment of opinion, perhaps related to a particular interest or perspective of different social groups. With this institutional arrangement, it might then seem natural to think that constituents might wish to bind their representatives rather closely as delegates. However, such an approach does not seem to be *entailed* by a representational account of democracy. Constituents might hold that for a number of reasons it was better to allow their representatives some freedom of manoeuvre in order to achieve agreed goals. Thus, while it would be possible to hold a delegate view alongside a representation account, there is no logical necessity to do so. The merits of delegation, such as they are, are independent of the merits or otherwise of having representatives who are broadly reflective of the population in some sense.

However, someone at this point might argue for an asymmetry between the Westminster system and the representational system on the issue of delegation. There is this important difference between Westminster and representational systems: whereas, tight control cannot be exercised by electors over their representatives in the Westminster system, representational systems will at least allow, even if they do not require, the possibility of delegation. So, although it does not follow that a commitment to representational democracy is *ipso facto* a commitment to a delegate theory of representation, it is still true that if the delegate theory were the most plausible, then a representational system is the one that would be needed.

Are there independent reasons for having a delegate theory of democracy therefore? It is difficult to see that the case is a strong one if deliberation is to play a role in policy-making. A delegate goes to a meeting to state a position and register a vote, not to be influenced by the debate (compare Pitkin, 1972, p. 151). Once the notion of deliberation is introduced, it follows that representatives

ought to be able to listen to what is being said, and make a final commitment in the light, partially at least, of the arguments that are advanced. At a more empirical level, it can also be argued that the closer systems approximate to ideas of delegation, the less good they are at dealing with the collective problems that legislation is needed for in the first place. King (1997) has shown, for example, that as US politicians have had to become more responsive to every modulation of their constituents' concerns, so their ability to deal with long-standing collective problems (economic policies, budget deficits and crime) has been undermined.

If the notion of delegation is not much help in choosing between competing models of representation, how far can we get by considering the distinction between interests and opinions? After all, one thing is clear in a democracy. There can be no ultimate distinction between the representation of interests and the representation of opinion. That is to say, whilst, given the division of political labour, political representatives will typically be more familiar with the considerations that bear upon the choice of political alternatives, the way in which they seek to advance common interests must be subject to a test of public opinion. Indeed, this requirement was built into our very definition of democracy.

If we allow that, even on an interest theory of representation, there has also to be a test of public opinion, then the choice of interests versus opinions in fact again relates to the question of how much latitude representatives should be allowed in the representation of their constituents' interests, and hence brings us back to the objections to a simple delegate account of representation.

However, we can go beyond this point, and say that if a democracy is founded on the idea that it is a mechanism of collective choice about common interests, then opinion should play a central part in our concept of representation. To put forward a conception of the common interest is to put forward a particular view or opinion. Naturally, in advancing an opinion, any elector or group of electors hopes that the view advanced will come to seem the right one. However, at the stage at which it is advanced, all such views will be one opinion among many. It might seem from this perspective that the representational view were more suited to this understanding than the responsible government model.

In fact, it is more difficult to move from considering the idea of democracy to favouring one particular account of representation

than this argument suggests. It confuses a necessary condition for a practice with the most important feature of such a practice. It is certainly true that the test of public opinion is one that governments in a democracy need to face. But the form in which they should face it is not resolved simply by appealing to the bare idea of democracy. As I shall argue in the next chapter, in choosing between the different forms of representative government we are in effect choosing what meaning we assign to the notion of majority public opinion. Only when that argument has been developed shall we be in a position to choose between competing conceptions of representation.

In making notions of the accountability of governments and the representation of public opinion central to the idea of representation, I have contrasted what these notions share with the social characteristics view of statistical representation. However, at this point we meet the argument that the best people to express an opinion are those who actually share the social characteristics of those who are being represented. Does this lead us back to social characteristics and, if so, how?

Back to Social Characteristics?

I have argued that there are problems with the idea that it is only social characteristics that we care about in political representation, and that we need to insist that opinion is an essential element of democratic accountability. But to say that it is not only social characteristics that we care about is not to say that we do not care about social characteristics at all. There is a way of understanding opinion such that the best expressions of opinion will only come from certain sorts of people. If this is the approach taken, what is the implication for the relationship between the representation of opinion and the representation of social characteristics?

Clearly, the representation of opinions need not entail that those doing the representing share the same characteristics as those whom they represent. You do not have to be sick to speak up for those who favour more spending on hospitals, nor old to think that retirement pensions are too low. However, it may be that without there being some political representatives who share certain interests, certain points of view will simply be ignored. John Stuart Mill put the point well back in the 1860s:

'In this country, for example, what are called the working classes may be considered as excluded from all direct participation in government. I do not believe that the classes who do participate in it, have in general any intention of sacrificing the working classes to themselves ... Yet does Parliament, or almost any of the members comprising it, ever for an instant look at any question with the eyes of a working man?' (Mill, 1861a, p. 246)

Some years previously, Tocqueville had had a similar thought, arguing that though the ruling English aristocracy was perhaps the most liberal that had ever existed, under its government it 'cannot escape observation ... that in the legislation of England the interests of the poor have often been sacrificed to the advantages of the rich' (Tocqueville, 1835, p. 250). So while it may be true that to represent someone's opinions you do not have to share their social characteristics, there has to be some assumption that it helps to have patterns of political representation that broadly reflect that statistical distribution of politically salient characteristics in the population.

In effect, this is a sort of negative conclusion. It amounts simply to the thought that political representatives who are drawn exclusively from a limited social stratum are unlikely to be able to represent all points of view fully. In a way, it is a sort of protective argument, akin to our earlier assumption about political equality, that no one group of people can be guaranteed to be politically competent on behalf of others. Is it possible to go beyond this rather negative statement of the case to a more positive view, which says that there is a definite virtue in having a representative chamber that contains the representatives of a wide variety of social groups, and in that sense represents the distribution of social characteristics within the community? As Anne Phillips (1995) has put it: how far do we need to complement a politics of ideas with a politics of presence?

The question is pertinent because representative chambers are often highly unrepresentative in a statistical sense of the populations from which they are drawn: they are more male, better educated, from more prestigious and better paid occupations and older than the average. John Stuart Mill argued for the extension of the franchise to women and working-class men as a way of ensuring that certain points of view were articulated within parliament.

Subsequent experience would appear to show that the mere formal inclusion of groups in the process of electoral competition is insufficient to secure the representation of those groups in the process of legislation. Thus, even in systems of proportional representation, which are better than first-past-the-post systems at securing the presence of women in parliament, it has proved necessary to supplement the voting rules with rules about the party selection of candidates to increase the number of women MPs. Similarly, in the US redistricting has been necessary in order to ensure that African-Americans could be represented by members of their own ethnic group (Tribe, 1988, chapter 13). But, of course, these extra rules would only have a justification if there really were a case for the politics of presence.

One argument that can be advanced at this point that political presence may be necessary in order to establish a symbolic move away from exclusion. Seeing members of one's own social group participating as representatives in the process of government is a way of enhancing one's own sense of dignity and political status (Phillips, 1995, p. 40). Where previously social groups have been denied the vote or effective political representation, then it seems right that great importance is attached to members of those groups seeing people like them exercising political power.

Phillips cites three closely related arguments supporting this point of view. The first is that those representatives who share the social characteristics of their disadvantaged constituents are likely to be better advocates on their behalf, particularly under conditions of deliberation in which delegative mandates are weak or inoperative. The second is that such representatives are also needed to see beyond the limitations of the present political agenda, by raising issues that are not salient to those who are used to exercising political power. And the third is that groups need to be explicitly represented because the coalition of groups within political parties may form around clusters of opinions that are only partial.

An example may illustrate this last point. Suppose working men and women as a group share an interest in high standards of working conditions. They would naturally then support a political party that campaigned on that issue. However, they might not share opinions on another set of issues (say, abortion). Since a political party will only be built on a subset of opinions of its supporters,

there will be issues that some supporters would like pursued but which will be marginalized or ignored by the party in question. Thus, any party mandate is partial, and group representatives are necessary to put the claims that would otherwise be ignored.

The logic here is that parties have to campaign on combinations of issues. But since there are many issues, and only few parties, the combinations of issues that are actually represented in the political system at any one time will only be a small subset of all the issues that could be represented. Political parties, even in representational systems where they may be present in relatively large numbers, will substantially narrow down the range of views represented, since political parties may be regarded as organized bodies of opinion. The only way to overcome this organizational bias, it is said, is to have broader group representation within political parties, say by a system of quotas.

Notice, however, that, though the above are arguments for a politics of presence, they are arguments for there being some representatives who share the social characteristics of the previously disadvantaged, not arguments for statistical representation in the sense we have previously discussed. Indeed, as Phillips (1995, p. 67) points out, the upshot of these arguments may well involve non-proportional representation in the statistical sense. Certain groups may be under-represented statistically in the population, but may still need to have threshold representation in the political process if the need for symbolic representation and associated advantages is to be addressed. If these arguments are accepted, they become reasons for favouring certain practices in the selection of representatives, most notably the use of quotas for women and ethnic minority groups in the selection of parliamentary candidates and the arrangement of districts in single-member constituency systems that ensure that certain designated groups are able to elect members who represent them in certain respects (on this see Rogowski, 1981).

The problem with these conclusions, as Phillips herself notes, is that such practices appear to cut across the formal principle of political equality, to the effect that members of all groups should compete for political office on the same terms. If political equality is to be taken seriously as a value, how is it possible to allow one group or set of groups an advantage in the selection of members? For example, if quotas for women are used in the selection of parliamentary

candidates, does this not mean that men are placed at a disadvantage when they run for office, and, if so, is this unfair? In reply to these sorts of questions, Phillips argues that we ought not to take the principle of equality in an abstract way and that we cannot deduce a politics of presence directly from the principle of equality. Instead, 'the core of the argument lies in a more historically specific analysis of existing structures of exclusion and existing arrangements for representation' (Phillips, 1995, p. 31).

Let us agree that the formal interpretation of the equality principle is not much help here, as it is often not much help in many situations in which original disadvantage has to be overcome. Even treated as a procedural notion, the rule that everyone should be treated the same is at best a defeasible concept, which can easily be shown to be inappropriate given some initial inequality (Weale, 1978a, pp. 16–17). Where there is no clean sheet, clean sheet non-arbitrariness is not applicable. However, it is not clear that the relevant alternative is to place so much weight on the notion of 'an historically specific analysis', not least because no matter how historically specific one is, this will not decide the principles that should determine choice.

Suppose someone were to say that the objection to the practices implied by a politics of presence was that it violated a principle of impartial or non-arbitrary treatment. What could be the reply to this question? One obvious reply is that the practices were necessary to overcome existing discrimination or disadvantage. But one reply in turn to this view is that part of the lack of representation may arise from the failure of members of certain groups to put themselves forward, and that empirical research shows that there is less discrimination in, say, party selection procedures than the assumption appears to warrant. For example, Norris and Lovenduski (1993) show that it is supply-side factors (the absence of women putting themselves forward) rather than demand-side factors (prejudice and bias on the part of selectors) that accounts for the low number of women party candidates.

Would it follow from this observation that arguments from presence had no force? Arguably not. One could still hold that systems that promoted presence had advantages over systems that did not. To see how this might work, consider the following. Suppose we say, for all the reasons that we have already considered, that arguments connected with the politics of presence have force. This

means that if a purely formal application of the equality principle was consistent with an adequate representation of some group, then we would count this a better situation than if application of the same principle led to less representation. But if representation of this sort has independent value, might it not lead us to modify the application of the purely formal equality test? Even if under-representation does not arise from discrimination, we could still judge it to be worth some sacrifice of the formal equality principle to achieve greater representation.

Why favour the representation of certain sections of the population over the proportionate representation of views that would be implied by a system that dispensed with any quotas or other special arrangements? One answer here is that it is people with interests that need the protection of the political system, not any particular set of political opinions. To be sure, if certain opinions were associated with certain groups, one would be concerned, according to the principle of equality, with the exclusion of that opinion, but this would logically seem to arise from a concern lest the interests of that group were being neglected.

Social disadvantage may be the relevant test here, but it does not have to be. One argument that bothers Phillips is what we might term the 'open-list' argument. If we make efforts to ensure that certain groups, like women and ethnic minorities, are included in the process of representation, what is there to stop us saying that people with red hair or blue eyes ought to be represented in their own right? But the answer to this question is that there is no plausible basis of interest on which such groups would organize politically, whereas the characteristics that have been picked out in quota systems for European political parties or applied in the case of congressional districting in the US do reflect clear sections of organized interests.

What is clear is that there is no single criterion of the form 'this group is identifiable by this test, therefore it ought to be represented', but this is true given the nature of the argument. Consider a parallel case. Suppose we thought that there was a public interest in having more people with a training in the natural sciences in the legislature. We might have a number of reasons for thinking this, and we might also note that at present natural scientists are under-represented. Should we be worried by the thought that someone else might point out that water engineers, rat catchers and dentists were

also under-represented? After all, there is no general criterion that distinguishes the one group from the others, except a substantive judgement in each case about the contribution to public deliberation that each group could make.

Moreover, the argument about the representation of specific groups is as much related to concerns about diversity as it is to concerns about disadvantage. One reason for this is that the disadvantage argument would seem to imply only a limited period of time within which rectificatory measures should be taken. If the presence of certain types of representatives is justified in terms of overcoming historic disadvantage, then after a period, which may extend over some time of course, it would seem logical to remove the policy of preference as the legacy of disadvantage is worked out of the system. However, where there are distinct social groups, whatever their relative position in relation to others, then there appears to be a case for a policy of distinct representation.

Conclusions

Where do these arguments leave us in terms of the competing theories of representative government with which I started this chapter? I have argued that a theory of representation cannot simply be based on the notion that key political decision-makers should be statistically representative of the community of which they are a part. Political representatives must also stand in a relationship of accountability to those whom they represent, as well as exercising deliberative skills and engaging in the development of political principles and policy positions.

However, although simple statistical representation is not enough, too narrow a social composition among representatives is unjustified. In part, this is for protective reasons: members of unrepresented groups have their interests undervalued or ignored. Just as important, however, is the symbolic affirmation of political equality comprised in a system of representation that is not exclusive. Moreover, insofar as interests and opinions run along the same lines, considerations of both protection and equality would suggest what Steiner (1971, p. 63) has called the 'proportional' principle of representation, namely that all groups should influence a decision in proportion to their numerical strength. The one

caveat to this conclusion is the recognition that some very small groups may need to be over-represented in order to exercise fair influence.

The proportionality principle contrasts, of course, with the Westminster pluritarian principle, based on a winner-take-all conception of political power. In practice, the sharp edges of this principle have often been blunted in the UK through such extra-electoral devices as broad political representation on various advisory or consultative bodies. When these modifying conventions have been absent in the Westminster system, however, the results have been disastrous, as the experience of Northern Ireland goes to show, where the history is one in which neither protection nor equality has been guaranteed to all citizens.

However, although there is a strong case from first principles for a proportional notion of representation, it is by no means absolute. Broad proportionality is at odds with accountability, as critics of coalition government have often alleged (for example, Downs, 1957, pp. 146–56). Moreover, there may well be circumstances in which the political fragmentation that proportionality induces threatens the functional effectiveness of the political system, as was arguably the case with the Fourth French Republic during the war in Algeria or with Italy throughout the post-war period. Even so, it seems plausible to suggest that some principle of proportionality be used in extra-electoral contexts at least.

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