

Intergenerational Justice Review



Issue Topic:
Youth Quotas

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While other instruments to prevent the marginalisation of certain population groups – such as gender or ethnic quotas – have been investigated and discussed substantially in research and politics in recent years, the concept of “youth quotas” has not received any attention of this kind in the literature so far. This is why this journal will serve as a useful source of information for anyone who is interested in this topic and who sees the currently insufficient level of youth participation in parliaments, business, academia, and other public institutions, as a phenomenon that should be remedied, no matter to which generation one belongs. Since “youth” is a far-reaching term that might give rise to misunderstandings, it is important to clarify that, in this journal, it refers primarily to the 15–30 year olds among the population.

The contributions analyse in depth whether youth quotas are an effective means to remedy the underrepresentation of youth in parliaments, to create more “youth-friendly” policies that focus on future trends and developments with which the next generations will have to cope, and to counteract the changes in age demographics that are already visible today. The latter is particularly pertinent in the context of youth quotas, since evidence suggests that in many Western countries the percentage of young people among the whole population is constantly decreasing. For instance, Eurostat figures for population projections from 2011 indicate such a development: while in 1960, in all 27 EU countries as well as in the four EFTA countries the average percentage of the population aged over 65 was only around 9%, this proportion will increase to more than 19% in 2020 and to over 29% by 2060.

Some other key issues addressed in this journal pertain to the following questions. Can the introduction of youth quotas be justified in a democratic system? Would they really bring about intergenerationally fairer outcomes? Will young representatives necessarily defend and respect the interests of the youth? And are there more effective and justifiable instruments to enhance youth participation in parliament or other institutions? In the opening article, Juliana Bidadanure claims that the implementation of youth quo-

tas in parliaments would produce fairer outcomes for the current young generation as well as for future generations. She justifies this thesis with two different possible effects of youth quotas, namely substantive representation and symbolic representation. Substantive representation refers to the belief that young representatives in parliament may represent the interests of youth better and therefore implement more policies that have a long-term view, e.g. with regard to the environment. With the model of symbolic representation, Bidadanure also suggests that youth quotas might play a symbolic role when it comes to promoting a community of equals with the same political rights. Indirectly, this might improve political participation of youth as a whole.

In the subsequent article, Ivo Wallimann-Helmer tries to find an answer to the question of whether youth quotas will help to avoid future disasters, for instance those related to public debt or the environment. Trying to find a possible justification for youth quotas, he draws four conclusions. First, quotas are not a normative goal in themselves, but only a means to avoid unjustified discrimination. Second, in a democracy quotas are used to guarantee that the interests of different population groups are effectively translated into policy, hence they are most important for the legislative assembly. Third, in the light of recent demographic changes, youth quotas can be justified to avoid the marginalisation of young people’s interests. In this context, Wallimann-Helmer also discusses which design of quotas would be appropriate to achieve this goal. The last and most convincing argument for the implementation of youth quotas, according to the author, is that they might ensure better legitimacy of the long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today.

The third article, by Marcel Wissenburg, brings the social justice perspective into the discussion on whether or not to introduce quotas for the young. According to Wissenburg, the social justice discourse retains numerous questionable underlying assumptions, seven of which he addresses from a libertarian perspective. By adopting this perspective, he concludes that the theory of temporal justice makes clear that responsibil-

ity cannot only be borne by the young or future generations, but that it has to be shared by the population as a whole. Even though this conclusion provides him with a possible justification for youth quotas, he draws the attention to another instrument he considers more appropriate to ensure youth participation: the concept of veto rights.

In our special section, entitled “Country Report: Youth Quotas in Peru”, Christian Pardo Reyes tells the story of how he successfully started a campaign in Lima, Peru, to introduce a quota system reflecting the need to involve youth at all levels of government power. His organisation became known as *Internacional Juvenil*. In order to achieve its goals, it established strong relationships with other youth organisations, state agencies and influential political leaders. Today, its work continues in other countries of the world, such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico and Spain, where a “Youth Tithe” similar to the Peruvian model is being promoted.

The topic of youth quotas raises political, philosophical, legal, demographic, environmental and sociological questions. Interdisciplinarity is central to this new topic, which has been neglected so far by researchers in these disciplines. We hope that this issue kicks off the intensive debate that the theme deserves.

We wish you an insightful and rewarding read.

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Better Procedures for Fairer Outcomes: Youth Quotas in Parliaments

by Juliana Bidadanure

Abstract: In this article, I put forward an instrumental justification for the introduction of youth quotas in parliaments on grounds of justice between co-existing generations. I provide a two-fold argument drawing on the distinction between “substantive representation” and “symbolic representation”. I argue that these jointly provide a good basis for a “politics of youth presence” in parliaments. In the first section, I evaluate the impact that youth quotas can have on enhancing the chances of fair youth policies (substantive representation). In the second section, I show that youth quotas can play an important symbolic role in the promotion of a community of political equals, with potential implications for youth political participation (symbolic representation).

Introduction

The question of the political representation of young people in parliaments is particularly relevant to the topic of intergenerational justice. As the ratio of young to elderly people decreases in most wealthy countries, some are concerned that young people may get sidelined, and that our democracies may become gerontocracies.¹ In European countries, very few MPs are under 40 years old and close to none are under 30 years old. In this context, the option of introducing youth quotas in parliaments seems appealing. And yet, there is very little research available on the topic and politicians have not yet acknowledged it as a relevant reform to consider. How should we explain this lack of critical engagement with a policy that seems fairly relevant at first sight? Whether we believe in representation as the ideal of democracy or as the second best option after participatory democracy, it seems that the possibility of implementing quotas in order to prevent some social groups from being marginalised or excluded is now broadly acknowledged. Gender and ethnic quotas are studied, deliberated, tested or implemented. Why aren't age quotas, in general, and youth quotas, in particular,

being discussed, too?

One response to this question is: “because age is special.”² If women and ethnic minorities are not represented in parliaments, they will have been treated unequally in comparison with other citizens. On the contrary, if you adopt a diachronic perspective, if young people are not represented, they will not have been treated unequally over their complete lives, when compared with other age groups who were young themselves at some point. Inequalities between age groups can be considered as *prima facie* less problematic than inequalities between other social groups. As Axel Gosseries puts it, “a society that heavily discriminates between people on grounds of age can still treat people equally, if we consider their access to given resources over their complete lives. Everyone's turn will come.”³ This specificity of age partly explains why the absence of young people in parliaments is not seen as an injustice like inequalities in representation between other social groups. As Anne Philips argues in a brief paragraph on the underrepresentation of young people in politics: “The situation of women looks more obviously unfair [than that of young people] in that women will be under-represented throughout their entire lives.”⁴

It is your own convictions which compels you; that is, choice compels choice.

/ Epictetus /

There is another relevant distinction to be made between the justification of gender or ethnic quotas and the discussion on the need for youth quotas. If women are not represented in parliament, then it is likely to mean that they do not stand a fair chance in the competition for these social positions. The history of gender domination and exclusion substantiates the suspicion.⁵ Gender and ethnicity are not relevant grounds for exclusion from such positions. On grounds of fair equality of opportunity therefore, and

against unfair discriminations, one may support the introduction of quotas in parliament for these groups to restore equality of opportunity. However, this argument is unlikely to work for young people. Indeed, the main explanation and justification for the absence of young people in parliament is likely to be their lack of experience. Experience, unlike gender or ethnicity, is a relevant feature of the position of being an MP. In other words, it is not the case that the exclusionary criterion in the case of young people is irrelevant to the position of being an MP.

For these two reasons at least, it is likely that the best defences of youth quotas will rely on an instrumental justification. Rather than arguing, as for gender, that the inequality in representation is *prima facie* unfair, one may want to insist on both the negative consequences that the absence of young people in parliaments causes and the positive outcomes that introducing youth quotas could bring about. This article provides this instrumental justification and claims that youth quotas, insofar as they can indeed help in bringing about intergenerationally fairer outcomes, deserve to be seriously considered. I will thus not consider more direct justifications for quotas so as to exclusively focus on instrumental justifications.

In the literature on quotas, two kinds of grounds for quotas are often emphasised: on the one hand, the policy level or “substantive representation” and, on the other hand, the symbolic level or “symbolic representation”.⁶ The first is about the impact that quotas can have for the policies that will be discussed and implemented. The second is about the impact that the implementation of quotas could have, beyond the parliamentary room, for social cohesion. In this paper, I put forward two instrumental arguments for the introduction of youth quotas and argue that they jointly provide a good basis for a “politics of youth presence” in parliaments.

Substantive representation: What can youth quotas do for deliberations?

Jane Mansbridge argues that one key ground for supporting the introduction of “descriptive representatives” – that is, representatives from selected marginalised groups – is that it enhances “the substantive representation of the group’s interests by improving the quality of deliberation.”⁷ In this section, I evaluate the kind of impact the introduction of youth quotas can have on parliamentary deliberations – that is, on the ideas discussed and ultimately on the policies implemented. I argue that a correlation between a youth presence in parliament and fairer intergenerational outcomes is likely.

Knowledge which is divorced from justice, may be called cunning rather than wisdom.

/ Cicero /

In *The Politics of Presence*, Anne Philips puts forward a justification for gender and ethnic quotas based on “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.”⁸ My defence of youth quotas formulates two arguments which draw on Philips’ first two arguments. Mitigating the underrepresentation of young people, I argue, is desirable: to prevent the exclusion of some age-related concerns from “the party packaging of political ideas” – for instance concerns related to affordable housing and education, and unemployment; and to increase the chance of “more vigorous advocacy” on behalf of the young – for instance through speaking out against misrepresentations of the young as lazy and self-deserving (both will be discussed in the following sections). But I will briefly start with two important limitations of the substantive argument for quotas.

Narrowing the scope of the substantive representation argument

The idea of “substantive representation” presupposes that there are such things as “group interests”, such as “women interests”. In my case, assessing the potential impact of youth quotas on the substantive representation of “youth interests” presupposes such a group-based conception of interests. However, this approach risks unduly essentialising groups: “Essentialism involves assuming a single or

essential trait, or nature, that binds every member of a descriptive group together, giving them common interests that, in the most extreme versions of the idea, transcend the interests that divide them.”⁹ In the case of young people, we may too quickly assume that they have common substantive interests. We may also presuppose that older MPs cannot represent young people’s interests adequately. We may disregard more important differences, such as those stemming from class membership.

Appealing to such an overly essentialist understanding of the category of young people in order to justify quotas is likely to be far-fetched. The impact of age on political ideas is not prevalent. In the UK, in the 2010 General Election, for instance, young people voted equally for the three dominant parties: 30% of young people between 18 and 24 years old voted for the Conservative Party, 31% Labour and 30% Lib Dem.^{10,11} As attested by the solidarity demonstrations in France in 2010, young people often support the pension claims of the elderly.¹² Promoting an essentialist conception of age groups is also potentially counterproductive because, given that society is ageing anyway, the last thing we want is for institutions to reinforce the view that one should only vote for what is best for one’s own age group. This would in fact ensure that institutions would be age-biased because the majority age group would be encouraged to shape institutions in a way that meets their own temporal interests as they age.

However, one does not have to be in the grips of an overly essentialist view of age to make a successful argument for youth quotas. One merely has to assume that there are *some* age or cohort-related interests, concerns or goals that have *some* impact on people’s voting behaviours. Age seems to have at least some impact on people’s views on which policies should be implemented: “voting at referenda on long-term ecological issues such as whether or not a country should abandon nuclear energy has been shown to be strongly related to age.”¹³ For instance, Van Parijs uses the example of a 1990 referendum in Switzerland organised for a phase-out on nuclear energy: 64% of the 18–29 age range and 57% of the 30–39s supported the proposal, but it was rejected since only 47% of the overall population supported it – the favorable votes of the youngest were outweighed by the negative votes of older voters. More recently, Craig Berry showed that age has some impact on how people

vote, too. For instance, drawing on Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel’s research based on the British Election Survey 2009/10, he showed that “unemployment” was an issue that concerned the members of Generation Y (15–30 years old) substantially more than members of the baby-boomers generation. The topic of “health care” was seen as a priority over unemployment by both the baby-boomers and the “silent generation”.¹⁴ One simply needs to recognise that age groups, because of their position in the lifespan and their cohort membership, share a series of common concerns, goals and experiences. I will only appeal to this weak understanding of youth interests in the remainder of this section.

Another important limitation of descriptive representation as substantive representation must be raised here. There is a fundamental distinction to be made between the underrepresentation of young people on the electors’ side, on the one hand, and on the representatives’ side, on the other. The possible correlation between age, cohort, and voting power does not seem to provide evident reasons to consider modifying the composition of representative bodies. All Van Parijs, Longman and Berry seem to claim is that there is a correlation between “voting” and age. The problem would then be the ageing of the electorate, not the age of parliamentarians per se. Young MPs may find themselves victim of the problem of having to meet the short-term interests of their electorates too, just like older MPs. If anything, population ageing may give us reasons to consider a number of voting reforms, but not directly to bring more young people into parliaments. This is an important limitation to establishing what quotas alone can do if the young remain relatively disenfranchised. The aim of this section is precisely to establish the special significance and hopes of descriptive representation itself, in isolation from what voting can do.

The Youth of a Nation are the trustees of posterity.

/ Benjamin Disraeli /

Preventing the exclusion of youth interests from the party packaging of political ideas

Regardless of the party young MPs may be from, they may contribute in expanding the party policy package available through pushing for a better inclusion of youth concerns in political agendas. Anne Philips identifies such party packaging as a fundamental ar-

gument for quotas.¹⁵ It does not rely on too substantive a conception of what youth interests consist of. Some groups may have common concerns but its members may interpret them in different ways based on their goals, values, party lines or social class. Quotas can help in making sure that political parties include those concerns, whatever their responses may be. They may therefore promote more complete deliberations in parliaments on these issues. This seems particularly relevant when studies show that the young do feel that politicians do not take their concerns seriously. In a survey on young people's attitudes towards political parties, for instance, Hen and Foard showed that only 7% of 18 year olds thought that political parties were interested in the same issues that concern young people.¹⁶

No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.

/ Abraham Lincoln /

Older MPs were once young too and can thus relate to such concerns. However, they are not young "now" and may thus miss some cohort-related concerns. Indeed, there is an important difference between period effects on the one hand and age effects on the other hand.¹⁷ The period effect designates the impact of an event at a given time: for instance, the effects of a financial crisis can be described as period effects. Arguably, many people suffer its consequences, regardless of their age. However, there are also age effects, which designate the impact of age and membership in a generation on given outcomes. Poverty or unemployment as a result of the same financial crisis will be experienced very differently if experienced at a young age or towards the end of one's career, for instance. For young people, youth unemployment and poverty can lead to dependency on one's parents, including for accommodation and income. Youth unemployment may also lead to the postponement of projects young people might value, such as starting a family or buying a home. In parliaments, younger MPs may thus pick on specific problems relating to housing, education and unemployment in a different way than older MPs would. The 28-year-old MP Jo Swinson, in 2009, complained about the lack of age diversity within the UK parliament:

"There are a huge number of Oxbridge-educated lawyers elected as MPs when they are

middle-aged. There is not a single MP who has paid tuition fees. We have a large part of the population with debts from these or who face working well into old age because of pension changes, but there is no person in Parliament who shares, or will share, their experience."¹⁸

The absence of age diversity, Swinson suggested, has an impact on the kinds of social experiences represented. One may thus hope that a more age-diverse parliament could better account for the age and cohort-related plurality of experiences. The virtue of shared experience thus offers an important ground for descriptive representation, as Mansbridge argues. One first argument for youth quotas, therefore, is that more age-diverse parliaments will be better able to represent the range of concerns that constituents may have. Youth quotas would introduce more experiential diversity into deliberations.

Increasing the chance of more vigorous advocacy on behalf of the young

We may also defend the introduction of youth quotas on the ground that there is an important risk that policies and debates will be driven by misrepresentations if conducted solely within some age groups and to the exclusion of others. If an age group is absent from the debates, its aspirations and problems may become distorted. French and British youth policies, for instance, can be said to have been driven, to a large extent, on false representations and often unfair prejudices.¹⁹ There is a tendency in the media and amongst politicians alike to emphasise personal desert and render young people responsible for their own situation. Discourses on youth tend to revolve around their alleged laziness, bad attitude, and strong sense of entitlement.²⁰ As the writers of the *Jilted Generation* argue, there seems to be a resurgence of a Victorian ideology that sees laziness where there is poverty and disadvantage, and lack of personal commitment where there are structural and systemic issues: "More than anything we're vulnerable and yet the attitude of much of the society towards us is that we're lazy and undeserving."²¹

The Intergenerational Foundation recently published a report on the perception of young people in European countries. The results are quite compelling and account for the poor perception of younger people in the UK: "British people in their 20s achieved the lowest scores of any country in relation to being viewed with respect. [...] In terms

of contempt, British people in their 20s came first."²² Because of these misrepresentations, as Furlong and Cartmel argue, "when issues emerge that have a core relevance for young people, they are often tackled from a paternalistic and condescending 'we know what's best for you' perspective." An example they put forward is unemployment policy: politicians "tend to focus not so much on creating opportunities, but on tackling a perceived skill deficit and motivating young people who are presented as feckless and even as 'inadequate citizens'."²³ An example of the impact such misrepresentations may have would be the denial of a means-tested minimum income guarantee to French citizens under 25 years old. Since its introduction in 1988, the access to a minimum income guarantee in France has been restricted to citizens over the age of 25 years old. In 2009, the scheme was finally reformed to include young people under 25 years old, but with much more restrictive requirements: to be entitled to benefits, they must have already worked for at least two full time years in the past three. As a result, only a few thousand young persons have access to a minimum income when they need it, while over 20% of French youth live in poverty. In fact, most arguments that were provided were either infantilising or paternalistic: young people do not deserve it, they will be idle and lazy if they receive it, they do not really need it and they should not be given something for nothing.²⁴ If young persons had had a stronger voice, including stronger representatives, when this age-based discrimination²⁵ pertained, it would possibly have found more resistance. We may hope that bringing more young persons into parliaments can have the modest impact of not leaving the misrepresentations unchallenged.

A young man idle, an old man needy.

/ English proverb /

Youth quotas can thus have the second important benefit of increasing the chance of "more vigorous advocacy" on behalf of the young, for instance by speaking out against misrepresentations of the young as lazy and self-deserving. We may hope that the young will be fiercer challengers of some misrepresentations and can act as watchdogs for age-based discriminations.

If representatives underestimate, at best, and misrepresent as laziness, at worse, the challenges that young people are facing, then

policies are likely to be inadequate. Norman Daniels imagined a procedure, the prudential lifespan account, where planners are placed behind a veil of ignorance, so that they ignore their age. They are then asked to distribute a given bundle of resources throughout their lives so as to maximise lifespan efficiency: “How should that lifetime expectation of enjoying a certain level of primary social goods be distributed over each stage of life so that lifetime well-being is maximised?”²⁶ The outcomes of this procedure tell us what investments and distributions are fair, and eventually which inequalities between age groups are acceptable. As Daniels suggests, the best way to establish the requirements of justice between age groups would be to appeal to a veiled representative body, as this would preserve impartiality and prevent age bias. In practice, it is of course impossible to reproduce the age-neutrality of the prudent planners. However, in non-ideal circumstances, it seems that the least we can do is to make sure that deliberative bodies do include representatives from all age groups to limit the risk of age bias. Drawing on previous discussions, we may therefore argue that, in non-ideal circumstances, the “politics of prudence” requires a “politics of presence”, defined by Anne Philips as the need to increase the political representation of disadvantaged groups through quotas.

The only free people are those who cultivate their own thoughts... and strive without fear to do justice to them.

/ Berthold Auerbach /

A certain kind of presence is no “guarantee” as such of certain kinds of ideas being expressed and of certain policies being implemented. I have started this discussion with two limitations of descriptive representation: we cannot over-essentialise the young and assume that young MPs will be radically better at promoting youth concerns; and even if they do, it will not directly affect imbalances in power at the voting level. The impact of quotas on substantive representation is thus potentially not as radical as one may hope. This does not mean that youth quotas will have no impact on intergenerational fairness. As I have shown, there are several reasons to believe that the introduction of quotas will have a positive impact on deliberations. However, this limitation shows that the substantive case for quotas may not pro-

vide a sufficient basis for youth quotas in parliaments on its own. This leads us to another important argument in favour of youth quotas. I will now show that, regardless of the impact that descriptive representation can have on the quality of deliberations, youth quotas can also be defended on symbolic grounds.

Symbolic representation: promoting a community of equals

The symbolic value of representation is, in Philips’ account, one of four legitimate grounds for a politics of presence. “If subsequent scrutiny established that an under-participation of women [...] had no observable consequences (an unlikely outcome, but still in principle possible),” Philips argues, “this would not significantly alter the judgment that such inequality is undesirable.”²⁷ The symbolic value of descriptive representation is such that, even if there were only little evidence that quotas affect the substantive representation of the marginalised group’s interests, there would still be independent reasons to advocate a politics of presence. Jointly, the substantive and symbolic arguments provide a good basis for the introduction of youth quotas in parliament.

The demonstrative symbolic value of youth quotas

In his 1986 Tanner lectures on the significance of choice, Tim Scanlon distinguishes three reasons why we have to value individual choice: choice has “predictive” value, “demonstrative” value, and “symbolic” value.²⁸ If I order my own food at the restaurant, instead of letting someone else choose for me, then the order is likely to match my preferences better than it would otherwise.²⁹ This way, choice has predictive value – in many circumstances, the fact that I choose for myself predicts that the results of my choices will accurately match my preferences. However, Scanlon argues, the predictive value of choice is relative and conditional: I may not know much about the cuisine in this given restaurant or I may be drunk. In this case, someone else may be better than I am at ordering the right thing for me. This often justifies paternalistic policies. The predictive value of choice, however, is not the only value of choice. In other words, it may be valuable for me as a person to choose for myself even if I am not the best judge of what my own interest is. Indeed, Scanlon argues, choice also has demonstra-

tive and symbolic value.

Scanlon illustrates the demonstrative value of choice by appealing to the following example:³⁰ when you buy a gift for someone, the best way to make sure that they get what they prefer is often to let them pick what they want or to give them money. However, getting them exactly what they prefer is partly beside the point. Gift giving is an opportunity to demonstrate care, affection and knowledge. Likewise, the symbolic value of choice is unrelated to the predictive value. In a situation where people are normally allowed to make their own choices, Scanlon argues, “I may value having a choice because my not having it would reflect a judgement on my own or someone else’s part that I fall below the expected standard of competence.”³¹ In some circumstances, if I am not allowed to make a choice, it may mean that I am considered as “inferior”. This matters all the more, Scanlon argues, if the members of my group are systematically questioned in their capacity to choose for themselves. The demonstrative and symbolic values of choice are both unrelated to the “predictive” value of choice precisely because they are non-instrumental. Regardless of whether I may get the results wrong, my choice may have demonstrative and symbolic value.

How do these distinctions relate to the symbolic value of descriptive representation? Scanlon is primarily concerned with individual choices, not with the representation of these choices by suitable people. There is a big stretch between saying that my individual choice matters for demonstrative and symbolic reasons, on the one hand, and saying that my being politically represented by people who look like me has demonstrative and symbolic value, on the other hand. In fact, Scanlon’s discussion of the symbolic value of choice already makes some claims about groups, categories and norms.

All the citizens of a state cannot be equally powerful, but they may be equally free.

/ Voltaire /

Scanlon is partly concerned that paternalistic policies respect the multiple ways in which choice matters: “even when people are not able to decide what is best for themselves, part of what must be taken into consideration is whether some particular groups are ‘being held inferior in the argument for legal regulation’.”³²

In many circumstances, group identity has

a meaning for whether given individuals are acknowledged as equals or not. In this way, descriptive representation may be considered as contributing to the self-image of marginalised groups. If there are no women in parliaments, this has negative value for women's self-image as political equals. If there are women in parliaments, this has positive demonstrative value for women's self-image. Scanlon's two non-instrumental concepts thus seem to work together in the case of descriptive representation. I will thus keep the distinction between predictive value on the one hand and symbolic and demonstrative values on the other hand, but collapse the two latter non-instrumental values into one.³³ Descriptive quotas may thus be said to have what I henceforth refer to as "demonstrative symbolic" value – they attest that the relevant groups are political equals, regardless of their potential substantive contributions to parliamentary deliberations. Robert Goodin draws a parallel distinction between self-interests and self-image. Irrespective of the substantive impact quotas can have for the representation of the interests of marginalised groups, political representation matters for self-image as well: "people's self-images are, at least in places and in part, tied up with politics."³⁴ Goodin highlights this distinction between self-interest and self-image to contradict studies that quotas have no value if they have no impact on substantive representation. Against social scientists who object to quotas on the ground of its having little impact on the substantive representation of the group's interests, Goodin argues that demonstrating the inapplicability of one argument (self-interest) does not dismiss the other (self-image).³⁵ Similarly, Anne Philips emphasises the importance of the composition of parliaments for attesting the political equality of women.³⁶ Some men may be better at advancing the cause of women than some women will, for ideological reasons. But this is unlikely to exhaust our reasons for thinking that the absence of women in parliaments is a problem for political equality. We need women in parliaments regardless of whether they will advance the cause of women. We need ethnic minorities regardless of whether they will in fact have a concrete positive impact on anti-racism. We hope that it will be the case and this gives us extra reasons for implementing quotas in general, but the justification based on the politics of ideas is not the only reason. Diversity of geographical origins, ethnic

backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and occupation likewise have an important symbolic value. As Mansbridge argues, descriptive representation is likely to play a key role in creating "a social meaning of ability to rule" for groups that are not considered as fit for politics.³⁷

How people keep correcting us when we are young! There is always some bad habit or other they tell us we ought to get over. Yet most bad habits are tools to help us through life.

/ Friedrich Nietzsche /

Drawing on this demonstrative symbolic value of quotas, one may argue that youth quotas would consist in a "public acknowledgment of equal value",³⁸ to borrow Charles Taylor's expression. It would signal to society and young people that their contribution is valued and that they are considered with equal respect. Their status of equal citizens would be attested, recognised and emphasised. The absence of young people in parliaments, on the contrary, may signal the opposite and creates a social meaning of inability to rule.

It may contribute to an apolitical self-image of young adults and generate a sense that the young are of lower social, or at least political, status, and reinforce the sense that older people are more fit to rule.

If we care about the goal of a community of equals, in which people relate to each other as equals throughout their adult life, and regardless of their age, then the existence of such social meaning of political inferiority is problematic and must be undermined. Representation is significant symbolically because it attests political equality. Youth quotas could thus participate in a redefinition of young adulthood. They could contribute to the construction of a social understanding of the young as able to rule and reinforce their image of equal citizens. Gender and ethnic quotas contribute to undermining the view that only white men are able to be in parliaments. Youth quotas have the potential to undermine the age norm that young citizens under 30 years old, or in some countries people under the age of 40, are not fit to rule and thus contribute to the political equalisation of young people.

Like Philips, Mansbridge does not consider the case of young people. She only mentions young people as needing "role models" as diverse as possible in positions of authority, including parliaments.³⁹ Goodin, however,

elaborates his argument about the importance of self-image in the context of the 1972 Democratic National Convention, where quotas had been introduced for women, blacks and also for young people in each state legislature. Quotas were introduced to remediate the critical underrepresentation of all three groups in previous Conventions. In the context of the Vietnam War, the absence of young people was considered all the more concerning in that their age group was disproportionately affected by the war. The idea that the young would not be included as part of the political deliberators and did not enjoy an equal status of authority thus exacerbated the perceived generational tension. The value of quotas could thus be expressed partly in this symbolic demonstrative vein of symbolically attesting the political equality of marginalised groups. Legislative bodies, as figures of political authority and power, are particularly suitable contexts for the symbolic demonstration of political equality.

In this section, I claimed that descriptive representation in general, and youth quotas in particular, can be said to hold "demonstrative symbolic value". The introduction of youth quotas would explicitly attest young people's political equality thus contributing to a "social meaning of ability to rule".

The arrogance of age must submit to be taught by youth.

/ Edmund Burke /

The symbolic instrumental value of youth quotas

The presence of descriptive representatives, as Mansbridge argues, is likely to have some positive effects on the feelings of inclusion of politically marginalised groups. "From this perspective, if the costs are not too great, we should promote diversity in positions of authority and excellence."⁴⁰ Age diversity may be an important kind of diversity, especially if some age groups, like the young, but maybe the very old as well, are politically marginalised. More age diversity in parliament may be particularly instrumental in bringing about a more cohesive society, e.g. where no one feels set aside.

Youth quotas could thus indirectly play a role in encouraging young people to vote, for instance. As Shiv Malik argues, it would be too simplistic to believe that young people plainly do not want to engage to explain the fact that their voting turnout is so low: "When, before the 2005 general election,

the Electoral Commission launched a campaign to persuade young people to vote with the shout-line: 'If you don't do politics...there's not much you do do', they missed the point entirely. It's not that young people don't do politics, it's that modern politics doesn't do young people.⁴¹

We may hope that quotas contribute to increasing young voters' turnout. To reply to Shiv Malik's quote, one may hope that youth quotas may send the following explicit message: "Politics does young people now." The presence of some young people in parliaments may thus act as a strong symbolic gesture to reengage young people in political communities, potentially impacting their voting turnouts.

The worst part of the punishment is that he who refuses to rule is liable to be ruled by one who is worse than himself.

/ Plato /

Youth quotas also have the potential to increase the vertical communication between constituents and their MPs. Increased diversity amongst MPs, Mansbridge argues, can have an impact on people being more likely to visit their MPs if they feel more experiential closeness to them.⁴² She draws on studies that suggest that black people in the US are more likely to go see their Congressperson if they, too, are black. Age membership is very different from other identities, but one could speculate that older people may feel more confident in sharing their concerns with an MP from their generation. Similarly, we can imagine cases in which young people may feel more comfortable communicating their concerns to representatives roughly their age instead of people the age of their parents or grandparents. They may fear, for instance, paternalistic or contemptuous responses.

There only need to be a few young MPs for this to work. Mansbridge argues that one of the advantages of descriptive representation is that it can allow communication beyond formal constituencies.⁴³ Women representatives may act as surrogate representatives for women who share their views across various constituencies. So the vertical communication may be improved, through an increased communication between populations and surrogate descriptive representatives, even if they are not their representatives. This way, age diversity could contribute to enhancing the vertical communication between con-

stituents and MPs. The absence of young representatives, on the contrary, prevents such opportunities for vertical communication between young people throughout constituencies and young surrogate representatives.⁴⁴

Notice that the introduction of youth quotas may also have effects on youth participation in politics that do not result from the symbolic effects of quotas. Quite straightforwardly, the introduction of youth quotas would have to be followed and supported by the introduction of other pre-required measures. Upstream, the young will have to be trained earlier and this may involve better civic education in schools. Parties will have to actively engage in recruiting young people and in developing their youth wings, to meet the quota requirements. Governments may have to fund campaigns and educatory programmes and to design training. De facto, the introduction of youth quotas would thus have to be followed by a series of other measures to enhance youth participation. Youth quotas must therefore be understood in light of this institutional ripple effect. As such, this is an argument for focusing on the introduction of quotas since it presupposes a series of other measures to be put in place. It is properly radical in this sense because its implementation necessitates an entire rethink of how to train and integrate more young people into politics.

Notes

- 1 See Chauvel 1998; Griffith 2011; Howker/Malik 2010; Tremmel 2006; Tremmel 2009; Willetts 2010.
- 2 See Daniels 1988; Gosseries 2007; McKerlie 1989.
- 3 See Gosseries 2007.
- 4 Philips 1995: 63.
- 5 See Philips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Williams 1998.
- 6 See Philips 1995; Mansbridge 1999.
- 7 Mansbridge 1999: 628.
- 8 Philips 1995: 37.
- 9 Mansbridge 1999: 637.
- 10 Cracknell/McGuinness/Rhodes 2011: 36.
- 11 Note that, although young people were equally likely to vote for the three parties, 44% of voters aged over 65 years old were likely to vote for the Conservatives and only 16% were likely to vote for the Lib Dems. However, 31% were likely to vote for Labour (just like the 18-24 year olds).
- 12 Although comparable claims, put forward by pensioners' organisations, were

roundly criticised by young people in Germany.

- 13 Van Parijs 1995: 298.
- 14 Berry 2012: 13.
- 15 See Philips 1995: 27-57.
- 16 See Hen and Foard in Berry 2012: 40.
- 17 See Chauvel 1998: 286-289.
- 18 See Swinson in Parkinson 2009.
- 19 See Buckingham 2012; Howker and Malik 2010; Intergenerational Foundation 2012.
- 20 See Jones 2011.
- 21 Howker and Malik 2010: 69.
- 22 See Leach 2011.
- 23 Furlong and Cartmel in Berry 2012: 16.
- 24 See Bidanure 2012.
- 25 The first version of the scheme, which completely excluded young people under 25 years old, was considered an illegitimate discrimination by the French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission (Haute Autorité de Lutte Contre les Discriminations 2008, 8-10).
- 26 Daniels 1988: 62.
- 27 Philips 1995: 33.
- 28 See Scanlon 1986: 177-185.
- 29 See Scanlon 1986: 177-179.
- 30 Scanlon 1986: 179.
- 31 Scanlon 1986: 180.
- 32 Scanlon 1986: 181.
- 33 See Scanlon 1986: 180-181.
- 34 Goodin 1977: 259.
- 35 See Goodin 1977: 260.
- 36 See Philips 1995: 27-57.
- 37 See Mansbridge 1999: 648-650.
- 38 Taylor in Philips 1995: 40.
- 39 See Mansbridge 1999: 651.
- 40 Mansbridge 1999: 651.
- 41 Howker and Malik 2010: 154.
- 42 See Mansbridge 1999: 641-643.
- 43 See Mansbridge 1999: 642.
- 44 Note that this is potentially also a point that falls into the substantive representation argument. If there is a better vertical communication as a result of youth quotas, this is also likely to improve the substantive representation of youth concerns in parliaments. In fact, Mansbridge classifies enhanced vertical communication under the category of substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999, 641-643).

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Can Youth Quotas help avoid Future Disasters?

by Ivo Wallimann-Helmer

Abstract: In this paper, I argue for the following conclusions. First, quotas are not normative goals in themselves, but only a means to achieve non-discriminatory selection procedures. Second, in a democracy quotas are most plausibly used as a means to fill offices in those bodies which have a major impact on how well interests or discourses are translated into policy. Third, quotas for the young can be justified since, due to demographic development, their discourses tend to be marginalised. Fourth, youth quotas cannot be a means to ensure long-term policy-making, but they can enhance the legitimacy of long-term impacts from policy decisions taken today.

The problem

In an insightful comparative study, Peter Vanhuyse showed that many OECD countries, especially developed democracies, score rather badly with regard to the demands of intergenerational justice.¹ These democracies not only score badly on factors such as absolute child poverty, or child poverty in relation to old-age poverty, but also have a bad score on the public debt they leave per child and their ecological footprint. Although this study is comparative and allows for no absolute measures, it shows that democracies tend to favour the interests of older age-groups and have a tendency for unsustainable policy decisions.

If we follow Dennis F. Thompson, these findings can be explained by four more theoretical reasons.² First, there is the human tendency to prefer immediate gains to those in the far future. In consequence, it is more probable that, in democracy, policy decisions showing immediate measurable results will be taken, with a rather short-term perspective. Second, policy decisions should be responsive to the judgements of citizens about the effects of laws on their interests. As a consequence, there is a tendency that a democracy will only accept policies which correspond, in at least a minimal sense, to the (potentially short-term) interests of the currently living. Third, political power is temporal; short election cycles are necessary to avoid autocracy. Thus, democracies provide an incentive structure favouring short-

term policy with immediate gains for the living because these enhance the chance of staying in political power. Fourth, in democracy there is a tendency to favour older age groups and their interests, which leads to a focus on present needs that neglects ensuring similar benefits for the future. This reason can be substantiated empirically. Due to demographic development, the old are increasing their majority in democracies, which leads to the consequence that they have more voting power and are better represented in the political bodies. Accordingly, policy decisions tend to be biased towards the interests of the older members of the population.³

All our efforts to defeat poverty and pursue sustainable development will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural resource depletion continue unabated.

/ Kofi Annan /

In the light of anticipated environmental disasters, especially the impacts of climate change, this tendency of democracy to short-term decisions becomes a problem, since the negative impacts of these decisions will have to be borne by those who today are young (let us say those who are under 25 or 30 years old). To counteract this tendency, one can imagine three different ways to change decision-making processes in democracies, either to ensure more sustainable policy-making or to shift political power from the old to the young. First, one could introduce institutions to represent future generations. Thompson, for instance, proposes trustees to secure the possibility of democracy in the future. The role of these trustees would be either to fill specific seats in the legislative assembly or to be part of a commission. In both cases, their task would not be to propose new policies but to voice the interests of future generations and to challenge those policy decisions which seem to undermine the democratic capacity of future generations.^{4,5} Second, the voting system could be adjusted. As a consequence of his research, Vanhuyse argues in line with others that the time might have come to intro-

duce proxy votes for parents. Each parent should receive an additional half-vote per child.^{6,7} Such a system would shift the voting power from the old to the young and might have as an effect that political parties would try to change their programmes in a way to cope better with family interests and perhaps with sustainable policy-making. Third, one could introduce quotas for the young in representative, executive, judicative or administrative bodies in democracy.

Analysing each of these three ways to counteract democracy's tendency to short-term policy-making needs a paper-length discussion. In this paper, I will only be concerned with the last of the three proposals. My aim is to answer the following two questions.

(1) Can quotas be justified as a democratic means to secure better representation of the interests of the young? (2) Are youth quotas an effective means to ensure that decisions are taken with the degree of attention to environmental sustainability issues that they demand? I will answer the first question with a qualified "Yes!" Although quotas may be justified to secure the proportional political representation of the young in the wake of demographic development, what I call "political affirmative action programmes" – the weakest form of quotas – are better suited to securing the political power necessary for the young to decide on the future they will have to face.⁸ The second question I will answer with a qualified "No!" Since there is a human tendency to favour immediate gains over ones that are more distant in time, it is implausible to believe that the young will fare better than the old. But ensuring more adequate representation of the young enhances the legitimacy of the long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today. Those who have to face the consequences should be appropriately included in the decisions taken.

Undeservedly you will atone for the sins of your fathers.

/ Horace /

To answer my two questions more fully, we first need to know what quotas are and what

they can achieve. In the second section, I will introduce quotas as they have been discussed in political theory with regard to the principle of equality of opportunity. I argue that quotas can only be justified as a means of reaching less discriminatory selection procedures for social positions, but that they cannot be justified as a normative goal in themselves. We also need to be clear about the role quotas could probably serve within a democratic institutional framework. In the third section, I show under what conditions quotas can be justified in democracy as a means of achieving proportional representation of all the different interests in society. These clarifications allow section four to answer the question of whether quotas for the young can be justified in democracy. Answering this first question enables us to move on in section five to my second question, whether youth quotas can be an effective means to secure environmentally sustainable policy-making.

What are quotas and what can quotas achieve?

The 1970s witnessed a heated debate not only among politicians but also among political theorists about whether and on what grounds quotas can be justified in the job market and the educational system. This question has often been dealt with as if quotas were either a normative goal in themselves, or necessary to understand the principle of equality of opportunity.⁹ I oppose both these understandings of quotas.¹⁰ Instead, I argue in this section that quotas can only be understood as a means either to realise equality of opportunity or to serve a goal beyond non-discriminatory selection procedures.

Selection procedures for jobs, educational places, or social positions more generally always discriminate, since from the pool of candidates they select the number of individuals needed to fill the positions in question. According to a formal understanding of equality of opportunity, such discrimination is justified under the condition that only characteristics of candidates who are suitable are considered to fill the position under consideration. In other words, only those characteristics of candidates which enhance the prospect of successful performance of a social position should be taken into account.¹¹ All other criteria which might play a role in selecting candidates are a form of unjustified discrimination. Women, for example, are unjustifiably but

not explicitly discriminated against by selection procedures which demand that one must have worked without any breaks for the last five years in the company to gain a position in management. This discriminates against all those women who are of child-bearing age. Furthermore, as Mary Anne Warren argues, such selection procedures reinforce social structures which expect women to stay at home and maintain the

Prejudice is a great time saver. You can form opinions without having to get the facts.

/ E. B. White /

household.¹²

Understanding equality of opportunity in this way allows us to expect that, if formal equality of opportunity is fully realised for the educational system and the job market, then both genders and all different ethnical, religious and other social groups are proportionally represented in all different kinds of social positions. Put differently, assuming that a society can be divided into different social and economic strata to which specific social positions are attached, then members of all different social groups in a society with full formal equality of opportunity fill positions in proportion to their number in the society as a whole.

Such an understanding of equality of opportunity has been proposed most explicitly by Onora O'Neill. According to her, the fairest selection procedure is a lottery, since in a lottery all have equal chances of success. Thus, to be a fair procedure of selection, equality of opportunity should guarantee equal chances of success in education and the job market.¹³ As a consequence, nothing other than proportional representation of both genders and all social groups in all social positions attached to the different socioeconomic strata of society can result.

To ensure that such a proportional distribution of social position is the case, O'Neill proposes to reformulate the principle of equality of opportunity more substantially. Equality of opportunity should be understood as demanding that social positions be divided between all social groups of society in a proportional way.¹⁴ This understanding of equality of opportunity establishes a first and strongest understanding of quotas: rigid quotas. Rigid quotas demand that educational places and jobs are distributed in a strictly proportional way. Such an understanding of quotas presupposes that unjusti-

fied discrimination is in place and that equality of opportunity is only realised if a proportional distribution of social positions on all social strata of society occurs. To make this presupposition more concrete and not to use a probably biased language, it is useful to have a closer look at the famous example of a warrior society introduced by Bernard Williams.¹⁵

Imagine a society in which high prestige is attached to the status of warrior. Traditionally, these warriors have been selected from certain wealthy families of society but not from the poor majority. Such a procedure of selection is certainly unjustifiably discriminatory against the poor majority if we presume that wealth and membership of a certain class of families is irrelevant to performing well as a warrior. It would be more appropriate, Williams suggests, to introduce a competition to test the physical strength of those who want to be warriors. If such a selection procedure is adopted and no explicit or implicit unjustified discrimination against the majority of society occurs, then it is reasonable to assume that after some time the warrior class will consist of members of the wealthy families and of the poor major-

Equality of opportunity is an equal opportunity to prove unequal talents.

/ Herbert Samuel /

ity in proportion to their number in society. However, as O'Neill has already noted, there are two difficulties involved in this argument.¹⁶ First, it may not necessarily be the case that members of both parts of society have the capacity to develop the equivalent attributes required to be successful in the competition. From an egalitarian point of view, it would certainly be objectionable to depend on wealth, social class, religion or ethnic differences to justify unequal capacity. However, differences in wealth and social circumstances can become relevant for how well people are able to develop their natural talents. A wealthy family can provide better training, equipment and assistance. Social circumstances can be more or less supportive. These are reasons to justify a more substantive understanding of equality of opportunity. But this understanding – most commonly, according to Rawls, called fair equality of opportunity¹⁷ – does not justify quotas in a rigid sense. It only denotes the conditions which must be secured for all to have a fair chance of success at the outset of

the competition. What must be ensured is that social and economic circumstances do not constrain, in any relevant sense, the opportunities available to all members of society.

Second, it is not at all clear that the willingness of all members in society to become warriors is distributed evenly over all social groups. There might be a significant proportion of the majority who hold pacifist convictions. If this is the case, members of this social group neither will be motivated to prepare for the competition nor will they necessarily take part unless coerced to do so. Therefore, although it might be the case that fair conditions to prepare for the competition are given, if the willingness to become a warrior is unevenly distributed in society, it is very likely that a disproportional distribution of warrior positions will be the result. Only as many members of the majority can be successful as are willing to apply for warrior positions. Since in a liberal order no one would be ready to justify coercion to apply for social positions in higher social and economic strata of society, it seems to be more reasonable to propose a less rigid, to wit a weaker form of quotas.

This weaker form of quotas, “weak quotas” for short, takes into account the fact that the willingness to achieve positions of higher and the highest social and economic strata is unevenly distributed among the different social groups in society. But it also assumes that unjustified discrimination against some social groups still occurs. Therefore, it must be ensured that successful applicants from the pool of candidates are proportional to how many individuals have applied from the different social groups in society.¹⁸ To use Williams’s example once more, if it is the case that for 120 positions as warriors 80 candidates from wealthy families and 160 from the poor majority of society apply, then these 120 positions should be divided in a ratio of 1:2. Forty warrior positions should be assigned to candidates from wealthier families, and 80 should go to candidates from the poor majority. When such a distribution does not occur, it could be argued that unjustified discrimination is the case.

All people are equal, it is not birth, it is virtue alone that makes the difference.

/ Voltaire /

Thus, this understanding of quotas once again presupposes the occurrence of unjustified

discrimination, but it takes for granted that not all members of society are equally willing to apply for warrior positions. Such a justification of quotas, however, faces a further difficulty which would also be faced by rigid quotas. If it is demanded that a strict proportional distribution of positions among successful applicants must be secured, then it might be the case that the positions would have to be assigned to members of a particular social group even if they are not as well qualified to fill the positions as applicants from other social groups. This is the problem of reverse discrimination. To ensure a more proportional distribution of positions, a selection procedure would have to unjustifiably discriminate against candidates from those social groups which in the past were unjustifiably advantaged.¹⁹

This must be judged as an unjustified discrimination, since what becomes relevant to realise the requirements of weak quotas are characteristics which are deemed irrelevant for the successful performance of the position. Discriminating against better qualified candidates in the name of quotas means to take into account characteristics such as gender, ethnicity or religion, which, for example, are not relevant for becoming a warrior. Warriors need to display sufficient physical condition. For physical condition, at least in principle, gender, ethnicity and religion are irrelevant. This holds true, however, only when physical condition is not shaped in a significant sense by these aspects of the candidates’ backgrounds. Indeed, it could be argued that gender, ethnicity and perhaps even religious socialisation significantly constrain the physical condition of candidates. But if only physical strength is relevant for becoming a warrior, then it becomes difficult to argue that unjustified discrimination occurs even if the distribution of warrior positions is not proportional to the genders, ethnicities and religious groups in the warrior society.

There are two further arguments, though, to justify quotas which would not be in trouble with this last challenge since they justify quotas with a purpose beyond selection procedures for social positions. First, it can be argued that role models are a suitable means to change discriminatory attitudes in society and to motivate members of disadvantaged social groups to apply for social positions in higher social and economic strata.²⁰ According to this argument, quotas are justified to create these role models to

reach both projected outcomes. Second, it can be argued that quotas are a justified means to enhance the quality of decisions taken in higher ranked social positions. In this sense, quotas are understood as a means to improve the economy or society as a whole.²¹ Neither of these arguments, however, necessarily justifies rigid or weak quotas, since to be in accordance with these demands it would also be appropriate to select in favour of disadvantaged social groups if they are equally qualified for a social position. This would be a claim for an even weaker form of quotas than those discussed above. For the purpose of this paper I will

A kingdom founded on injustice never lasts.

/ Seneca /

name it “affirmative action”.²²

Either way, whatever form of quotas we believe to be appropriate, I think they can only be justified as a means to overcome unjustifiably discriminatory selection procedures. The main reason for this belief can be found in the presumption I mentioned. For quotas to be justified, more or less explicitly unjustifiably discriminating practices must be in place. If this condition is not given or at least counterfactually presumed, it is not possible to argue for quotas. If a selection procedure is fair and does not display any explicit or hidden form of unjustified discrimination, then whatever distribution occurs must be accepted as fair. Furthermore, the arguments from role models and an improved economy or society show that quotas are only justified if they arrive at the projected goal. Role models have to be an effective means to change discriminatory attitudes in society and more diversity in higher-ranked social positions must be shown to be an appropriate means to improve the economy or society. This can certainly be correct, but it is only under these conditions that quotas are justified. And since these arguments take quotas to be a means to reach these ends, they are instruments – but seem not to be normative goals in themselves.

In addition, arguing for proportional representation of all social groups of society in all different social and economic strata in society presupposes that the willingness to apply for these positions is evenly distributed among all social groups. This makes it necessary to ensure substantial conditions to secure that neither social nor economic differences have a significant impact on how

successful members of different social groups are in education and the job market. However, these conditions do not depend on the distributive result but the pre-conditions securing fair preparation for all to be successful. Thus, they cannot justify quotas, but they do justify an understanding of equality of opportunity which also secures these conditions. With these considerations in mind, let us now turn to the question of how quotas could become relevant in democracy.

In what sense can quotas become relevant in democracy?

To address this question, it is necessary to be clear about the proper role of quotas in such an institutional regime. For this purpose, I think it is helpful not to dig too deeply into different understandings of what democracy is and what institutional framework it demands. I think it is enough to consider a rather formal understanding of democracy and, more specifically, of representative democracy. As we will see in this section, quotas are only appropriate if applied to political institutions and their offices but not to policy decisions themselves. But what is democracy and how can its institutional framework be justified?

To understand what democracy is, it is helpful to introduce the description of democratic government expressed in Lincoln's famous phrase in his Gettysburg address that democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people."²³ Although it remains unclear in Lincoln's statement who exactly legitimately constitute the people and on what normative grounds one may be considered part of the people, it clarifies how political theorists usually understand democracy. Democracy is an institutional regime in which the whole citizen body, the people of society, governs itself by making and executing decisions and taking respon-

Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequal alike.
/ Plato /

sibility for their consequences in a body.

The liberal Western tradition of political theory has found several different ways of normatively justifying the right to democratic government. What all these theories have in common, however, is the presumption that human beings are and have to be respected as free and equal. To respect human beings

as free, their right to liberty cannot be restricted without giving them a say in the political process leading to such restrictions. To respect them as equal, it is necessary to ensure fair chances for all to participate in this decision-making process. How having a say and a fair chance to participate in the decision-making process must be secured is a matter of theoretical dispute. But nowadays, it is almost impossible to defend any political institutional framework without accepting the right of all citizens to be respected as free and equal.²⁴

Indeed, to argue for quotas it is necessary to assume a more substantial goal of democracy beyond securing formal conditions of free and equal participation in political decision-making. Without such a substantial goal it becomes difficult to see what unjustified discrimination in the process of democratic decision-making means.²⁵ Thomas Christiano for example suggests that, in a democratic regime, it must be assured that all human beings are equally respected in their interests. This is only possible if all members of society "on whom the rules [the policy decisions] have a major impact" are equally involved in determining the decision.²⁶ It must be possible for all to participate in political decision-making, and they must be able to see that their interests are respected; what is necessary for policy decisions to be legitimate, therefore, is their public justifiability. Following Christiano, democracy is the best institutional framework to guarantee this condition of public scrutiny, at least partially.²⁷ In this sense then, a democratic institutional order not only secures formal participation in collective decision-making for all citizens but also serves the purpose of balancing interests and of avoiding policy-making biased in favour of some interests at the cost of others. Thus, in democracy unjustified discrimination means a tendency for biased decisions in favour of some interests and neglecting certain others.

Following on from this, one would expect that, provided the formal conditions to secure free and equal citizenship are present, repeated policy decisions will display the different interests existing in society proportionally. In a society with ten pacifists and five warriors, we expect that every third policy decision will be in favour of the warriors whilst two of the three decisions are in favour of pacifism. However, to argue that quotas for the interests served by policy decisions are appropriate if this is not the case seems to be a misconception of what democ-

ocracy is. First, although democracy can be viewed as a system to prevent biased policy, it still remains a process of collective decision-making which ideally leads to consent or compromise about what is in the common interest of all members of society. Second, according to Lincoln's description of democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people" it must be the citizen body that decides in its own right. Any substantial criteria prescribing in what proportion policy decisions have to display existing interests in society would be in conflict with this description of democracy. According to these two arguments, therefore, it seems to be inappropriate to apply quotas to policy decisions themselves. It is more reasonable to apply them to the com-

Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions – it only guarantees equality of opportunity.
/ John Dryden /

position of political bodies steering a society. If it is the composition of the political bodies of democracy to which quotas must be applied, we have to understand in what way it can be justified that only a certain number of citizens fill the relevant offices. I think here it again proves helpful to return to Lincoln's description of democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people." According to this statement, policy decisions in a democracy are legitimate only on the condition that it is the whole citizen body that governs in its own right. Whether a model of democracy is a model of direct or representative democracy depends on whether the *whole* citizen body or only part of it is conceived as necessary to make policy decisions.²⁸ Models of direct democracy argue that the people who should make policy decisions must be coextensive with the whole citizen body. In representative democracy, the assembly making policy decisions can be smaller. Thus, to capture the understanding of representative democracy, Lincoln's phrase needs a slight reformulation: democracy is government of *all* the people, by *some representatives of* the people, for *all* the people. Representative institutions thus understood are an institutional way to operationalise the process of collective decision-making among all the people so as to make it more efficient and even, according to some views, qualitatively better.²⁹ According to this formal description of representative democracy, legitimate represen-

tation must take into account all interests present in the citizen body.³⁰ Furthermore, the members of the legislative assembly must be accountable to the people forming the citizen body since they should decide in the name of the citizen body as a whole. In democracy, accountability is usually ensured by election cycles, because these allow those representatives who performed well in representing interests to be re-elected and those who performed badly to be deselected.³¹ Thus, representation in democracy can only be legitimate if it is supported by the interests actually present in the citizen body. Therefore, the function of the legislative assembly is to represent the interests present in proportion to their weight in the citizen body. The function of an individual representative, by contrast, is to stand or act for those whom he or she represents. This means that, in a society with 1,000 pacifists and 500 warriors, an assembly of six individuals would be legitimate if it contained four representatives of the pacifists and two representatives of the warriors. In consequence, it can be argued that in representative democracy, unjustified discrimination occurs if such proportional representation of interests is absent or, at least, if certain interests are permanently marginalised.

The legislative assembly is certainly the most obvious institution in a democratic framework to proportionally represent the interests of the citizen body, since in the end all policy decisions must be confirmed by this institution. However, it is not only the legislative assembly which has a major impact on how the interests of the citizen body are taken into account and enforced. Executive, judiciary and administrative bodies also have significant impact. Since the legislative assembly must represent the present interests in society proportionally, and these other institutions have a major impact on how well they are translated into policy, then these institutions would also have to fulfil this rep-

For nothing is more democratic than logic; it is no respecter of persons and makes no distinction between crooked and straight noses.

/ Friedrich Nietzsche /

resentative requirement.

But there are two practical reasons why the legislative assembly is not only the most important but also the most plausible political body for which to demand proportional representation of interests. Admittedly, these

reasons do not exclude a justification of a proportional representation of interests in executive, judiciary and administrative bodies.

First, with regard to the judiciary and the administrative body, individuals in these offices not only have to be regarded by the citizens to best represent their interests. For successful performance in these offices, other competences are needed. Lawyers need to have sufficient knowledge of jurisprudence; a specific function in the administrative body demands specific qualifications for its fulfilment. Therefore, it would not only be the case that those filling these offices have to perform well in representing interests present in the citizen body but they must also display the relevant competences. How this necessity of competence should be balanced with the fact that individuals filling these positions should also serve certain interests is a complicated question that I cannot answer here.

Second, there is a different practical difficulty with regard to the executive. Executive offices are not as numerous as seats in the legislative assembly. This makes it difficult to demand that executive organs should represent all interests present in society proportionally. However, if a society is divided into large ethnic, religious, linguistic or geographic groups with conflicting interests, it seems reasonable to argue at least for proportional representation of these groups in society. But this makes it necessary to be clear about the relevance of these groups and their interests. To justify the proportional representation of interests in the executive organs, it has to be shown why the conflicting interests of certain social groups bear such high relevance that the executive should be divided accordingly. This is a central question to be clarified in the next section, in which I try to answer the question whether youth quotas can be justified.

Against the background of the considerations concerning democracy thus far, we can now see in what sense quotas can become relevant in a democracy. They can become relevant to ensure that all interests in the citizen body are represented proportionally. Quotas can be seen as justified means if it becomes apparent that some interests are permanently marginalised within election procedures for the legislative assembly or selection procedures for other offices in other democratic institutions. Such marginalisation represents a sort of unjustified discrimination against those holding these interests.

However, as we have seen in the last section, this does not mean that quotas are a justified normative goal in themselves. They are only justified as a means to prevent more or less explicit unjustified discrimination in the election and selection procedures for the offices in question. If no such discrimination occurs, whatever distribution of offices results must be accepted as legitimate. Furthermore, since in a democracy these procedures are the only way of legitimising the representation of interests, the resulting distribution of offices has to be accepted as proportionally representing the interests in society.

Can youth quotas be justified?

As I have introduced the relevance of quotas in democracy thus far, they are only justified as a means to bring about election and selection procedures which do not unjustifiably discriminate against some interests in society. This makes it necessary that a marginalisation of some interests is actually occurring. If this is not the case, then it is not possible to argue for quotas. To assess whether in democracy quotas for the young can be justified to ensure appropriate representation of their interests, we need to deal with another complication. It must be possible to show that the young indeed constitute a relevant social group with specific interests. Otherwise, it becomes difficult to argue for youth quotas as a means to ensure policy-making that is less biased against the

Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.

/ Benjamin Franklin /

young.

In light of Vanhuysse's study, it seems reasonable to argue that the young are marginalised in their interests. In addition, due to demographic development and the conceptual condition that democracies have to be responsive to the interests of the citizen body, it is also reasonable to assume that democracies tend to favour the interests of the old rather than the interests of the young. Both these empirical arguments justify the conclusion that democracies tend to marginalise, to wit unjustifiably discriminate against, the interests of the young. However, this argument only holds under the condition that the young applying for offices are or have unjustifiably been discriminated against in the selection or election proce-

dures for the offices in question. If this were not the case, then quotas as a means to bring about non-discriminatory election or selection procedures could not be justified.

If this pre-condition is a given, then it is possible to explore further whether and under what conditions youth quotas can be justified. As mentioned above with regard to executive bodies, to argue for quotas for specific social groups in democracy makes it necessary to specify which kinds of social groups can become relevant here. According to the definition of democracy I draw on here, it seems to be unjustifiable to make mere membership of a social group more relevant for the right to proportional representation than the interests present in society potentially crossing the borders of these social groups. In consequence, to argue for proportional representation of social groups rather than the weight of interests present in society, it must be possible to show that membership in a social group is a necessary condition for representing the special interests of that social group. Furthermore, it must be the case that a social group is sufficiently homogeneous to be ascribed certain specific interests which are not represented by non-members of these groups.³²

This challenge is especially pertinent considering the young as a social group. It is not at all clear that being young is a necessary and sufficient condition to have certain specific interests, for the two following reasons. First, similarly to other social groups divided according to gender, ethnicity, language or geography, it is difficult to show that membership of such a group is sufficient to denote certain specific interests. Second, the interests that the young will have will highly depend on their various social, economic, cultural and educational backgrounds. These backgrounds will not necessarily lead to a set of interests shared by all who are young but to various kinds of interests not specifically linked to their age. Therefore it becomes difficult to argue that being young is a significant condition to represent specific interests. However, if we take into account that it is not interests by themselves which ground specific political opinions and ideals but the discourses within which one is involved, it is possible to argue that the young form a social group united enough to justify their proportional representation. John Dryzek and Simon Niemeyer have argued in this direction.³³ According to them, what is relevant in democracy is not that interests are proportionally represented but discourses,

because discourses are the basis on which interests are formed. Since the young have their own specific discourses, it seems to be plausible that they form a social group that can be represented proportionally. They have their own way to communicate and articulate their hopes and fears, and they consider political challenges their own way. If one argues along these lines, therefore, it becomes possible to view the young as a relevant so-

Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you.
/ Pericles /

cial group to be represented proportionally.³⁴ Once the young or other groups are established as relevant social groups to be represented proportionally, a further difficulty arises. For their representation to be legitimate, that is to say not in conflict with Lincoln's description of democracy, social groups can only demand representation in proportion to their weight in the citizen body. Larger social groups or parts of society are entitled to more weight in political bodies than smaller groups. The reason for this is simply that representation of interests in democracy must be proportional to the weight these groups have in society. To argue for more than such proportional representation would need further arguments leading beyond the relevance of quotas in democracy I have argued for thus far. Thus, according to the justification of quotas up to now, quotas to ensure non-discriminatory selection and election procedures for offices can demand nothing more than the proportional representation of discourses or interests and, if possible to justify, of social groups. This challenge proves to be especially pertinent with regard to quotas for the young, since their justification not only stems from the fact that their discourses tend to be marginalised but also because demographic development reinforces their marginalisation. Quotas, as justified thus far, cannot solve this problem. This shows why it is especially important to carefully assess which form of quotas would be most appropriate for the young.

With regard to the three different forms of quotas discussed in the second section, it is not at all clear that quotas in democracy should always be rigid. Which form of quotas is appropriate depends on circumstances and especially on the motivation of members of social groups. Rigid quotas are only

justified if the groups to be represented proportionally can always nominate enough candidates to effectively fill the positions. If this is not the case, rigid quotas would demand coercive practices for those groups which are not able to nominate enough candidates to conform to the proportional requirement. As in the case for rigid quotas with regard to equality of opportunity, this makes it seem more plausible to propose weak quotas which only demand that the different relevant groups are elected and selected in a proportional way from those applying for offices.

How effective such weak quotas can be to transfer interests into policy, however, depends on the weight of those groups for which proportional representation is ensured by quotas. If a social group does not have enough weight to significantly influence policy decisions, quotas for proportional representation cannot serve the purpose for which they are proposed. Although quotas can serve small minorities to better voice their interests (stemming from their discourses), it is not at all clear that this has a relevant impact

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.
/ Mark Twain /

on the policy decisions taken.³⁵

With these considerations in mind, we see that in certain circumstances political affirmative action programmes and securing substantial assistance for political activity prove more promising than rigid or weak quotas. Political affirmative action programmes would demand that whenever two candidates or parties gain the same or similar votes, the candidate or party belonging to a disadvantaged social group, or proposing more candidates from these groups, is preferred. Substantive assistance, on the other hand, would mean that potentially marginalised social groups are assisted by society in their development of political programmes and financially to be able to voice their views on an equal footing with those interest groups which are economically better situated.³⁶ Both measures would not only increase the likelihood that the interests of these minorities are heard; they would also allow these minorities to gain more political influence than they would be proportionally entitled to, since if minorities are able to better voice their beliefs, this also increases the likelihood of their political success when applying for offices.

I think that – especially for the young – both these kinds of measures will prove the most promising. Political affirmative action programmes will provide incentives for older political leaders and parties to support the young in their political career earlier and with more intensity than they tend to do now. With political affirmative action programmes it becomes interesting for parties to have younger candidates on their lists since that increases the likelihood of being successful in cases in which they have equal or similar citizen support than other parties. Furthermore, if candidates on the lists are elected individually, political affirmative action programmes enhance the chance of gathering more seats. In any case in which two candidates, from whatever party they are, gain an equal or similar number of votes, the younger candidate will be given advantage. Substantial assistance for the young, by contrast, would allow the young to politically organise and to campaign for their interests in a way they would not be able to without this help, since it is certainly a fact that older people have more experience in how to organise and have more capital at their disposal for political campaigning.

Taken together, the considerations of this section allow the following conclusions. Quotas for social groups can be justified in democracy if there is marginalisation or unjustified discrimination of the specific interests or discourses of these groups. This presupposes that specific interests or discourses and the ability to voice them are sufficiently closely linked with being a member of that social group in question. Against this backdrop, quotas for the young can be justified since the young are obviously discriminated against, and if they in fact constitute a discrete social group. Whether rigid or weak quotas or political affirmative action programmes would better serve the purpose of avoiding the marginalisation of the young and other social groups, however, remains a question to be answered depending on the motivation for political action of members of a social group and especially on the kind of social group in question. In the case of the young, I suggested, political affirmative action programmes and substantial assistance might prove more effective than rigid or weak quotas.

Are quotas a means to avoid future disasters?

Thus far, I have argued that quotas for the

young can be justified, but that what form of quotas is appropriate depends on circumstances. If enough young people are motivated to engage in politics, then rigid quotas for representative bodies can be justified. To avoid potential coercion to fulfil this proportional requirement, however, it seems more appropriate to propose weak quotas. Furthermore, since young people tend to be outnumbered due to demographic development, it might be better to adopt political affirmative action programmes favouring young candidates whenever they have equal or similar votes to older candidates. These programmes would allow a greater shift in political influence to the young than their number in society. However, whatever form of quotas is adopted, can they ensure that not only the interests and discourses of the young are better represented but also that the goal of more long-term policy-making is

The disruption of the world's ecological systems...from the rise of global warming [...] to the depletion of ocean fisheries and forest habitats – continues at a frightening rate. Practically every day, it becomes clearer to us that one must act now to protect our Earth, while preserving and creating jobs for our people.

/ Al Gore /

addressed?

To begin with, there are two obvious reasons to doubt that this question can be answered in the affirmative. First, it is not necessarily membership of a social group that makes individuals better suited to represent particular interests or discourses.³⁷ It is not only warriors who can represent the interests of warriors. Pacifists can do the same if they care sufficiently enough for the interest of, say, adequate housing for warriors. And warriors can certainly represent the interests of pacifists if they argue against the duty to become a warrior. Thus, although the concerns Vanhuyse expresses are concerns of the young, it is not at all clear that young citizens will care for them once in office. It is far from certain that young representatives will represent their interests in lowering public debt and sustainable policy-making. Young people might be preoccupied with other things – things which are relevant to their current situation of life. Therefore, it might be the case that older people will take better care of what is in the long-term interests of the young. This makes it possible to

conclude that quotas do not necessarily serve the purpose of ensuring more sustainable policy-making.

Second, as argued in the last section, if quotas only serve the purpose of ensuring proportional representation and outweigh the marginalisation of interests or discourses, then greater representation of social groups than their proportion in society cannot be justified. Since, due to demographic development, the young are increasingly a minority, there is no guarantee that their proportional representation will alter policy decisions in a significant way. This might even be the case if political affirmative action programmes are adopted, because they leave it open to whether the young will be successful in transferring their interests into policy. Thus, even though the young might care strongly about long-term policy-making and their proportional representation allows them to better voice their beliefs, it is not a given that quotas will lead to more sustainable policy decisions.

In light of these two arguments, to enhance the capacity of the young to ensure long-term decision-making, it seems more appropriate to bring further arguments to justify quotas in democracy than those provided up to now. Two of these further arguments rely on two justifications of quotas introduced in section two, both leading beyond the goal of ensuring non-discriminatory selection procedures. First, parallel to the argument for role models, it could be argued that quotas could serve the purpose of motivating members of disadvantaged groups to engage more in politics, since once some members of a social group are elected they could serve as role models. If these role models care for sustainable policy-making or lowering public debt, then the young as a group might care more for these questions and influence policy-making accordingly. Second, it could be argued in favour of quotas that more diversity in political bodies enhances the quality of policy decisions, whatever they might be. Third, and going beyond the arguments introduced in section two, it would also be possible to argue that the long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today would be better legitimised if those who have to bear them shared proportional decisive weight.

What we must be clear about in applying these arguments, however, is that they shift the purpose that quotas should serve. As I have discussed up to now, youth quotas have been justified as a means to prevent or avoid

marginalisation or unjustified discrimination of the young as a social group. In contrast, quotas in these arguments become a means to different ends. Quotas for the sake of role models are a means of achieving more political sensitivity, and if these role models care for long-term interests, then they can enhance awareness of these challenges. In the case of the second argument, quotas are introduced as a means of enhancing the quality of policy decisions. More diversity, it is argued, will lead to more creative policy outcomes and to decisions that better mirror what is in the common interest.³⁸ Third, better representation of the young can serve as a means to better guarantee the legitimacy of policy decisions and their long-term impacts.

As plausible as these arguments sound by themselves, I do not think that they can justify more than proportional representation of social groups. Whatever purpose role models are able to serve, quotas are only justifiable in a democracy up to the point at which positions are filled in relation to the proportion that interests or discourse are present in society. To demand more would mean to subvert the ideal of democracy as I have expressed it in this paper. The same is true with regard to the argument that quotas might help enhance the quality of policy decisions. Although it might be correct that more diversity enhances the quality of policy decisions, demanding more than proportional representation of social groups would once again mean subverting the idea of legitimate representation in democracy. These considerations become especially relevant with regard to the last argument since, if quotas are a means to enhance the legitimacy of the long-term impacts of policy decisions, then they have to be proportional. According to Lincoln's description of democracy, to argue for quotas in any other

Posterity! You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom! I hope you will make a good use of it.

/ John Adams /

sense would be illegitimate.

Furthermore, these three additional arguments in favour of quotas also face the second challenge mentioned above. It is not necessarily the case that young role models will care about those interests denoted by Vanhuyse as the interests of the young. And although more diversity might lead to a bet-

ter quality of policy decisions, it must remain an open question what such better quality would be. In democracy, it must be the citizen body as a whole who should decide what good policy decisions are, since it is the political body which is accountable to itself. Any qualitative criteria prescribing how a society has to decide would be in conflict with the conditions of legitimacy in democracy. Therefore, although proportional representation of the young might enhance the legitimacy of long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today, this does not mean that the decisions must and will further be specific and especially long-term goals.

With regard to the last additional argument for quotas, there is at least one reason which only justifies a qualified "No" to answer the second question I have investigated here. Since the long-term consequences of policy decisions have to be borne by today's young, enhancing their legitimacy is important. Those who have to bear these long-term consequences should also have appropriate weight in deciding whether or not to take the risks involved in these decisions. This makes it reasonable to argue that youth quotas are justified because they enhance the legitimacy of long-term policy consequences. But they cannot be justified with regard to any substantial policy goal, such as lowering public debt or sustainability. Once again, whether enhanced legitimacy in this sense is best realised via rigid or weak quotas or via political affirmative action programmes depends on how the motivation for political engagement is distributed among the young. As argued in the last section, with regard to demographic development, there is good reason to argue for the last and weakest form of quotas in combination with substantial political assistance for the young. If the young are successful in politics, both of these measures would facilitate more than the proportional political influence of the young, which would enhance the legitimacy of the long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued for four conclusions. First, quotas are not normative goals in themselves but only a means: first and foremost a means to ensure the absence of more or less hidden unjustified discrimination. Second, in democracy, quotas are most plausibly used as a means to fill offices in those bodies which have a major impact on

how well interests or discourses are translated into policy. Quotas for the legislative assembly are therefore the most important. Third, quotas for the young can be justified since, due to demographic development, their discourses tend to be marginalised. What form of quotas is most appropriate to serve this purpose remains an open question. Which form best serves their better integration in the political process depends on the motivation of the young for political engagement. I suggested that political affirmative action programmes together with substantial political assistance for the young might prove most promising. Fourth, quotas cannot be justified as a means to ensure long-term policy-making, but they can ensure better legitimacy of the long-term impacts of policy decisions taken today. In the light of challenges such as high public debts, environmental disasters and climate change, it is this last argument which best justifies quotas for the young.

Notes

- 1 See Vanhuyse 2013.
- 2 Thompson 2010: 18-20.
- 3 I draw here on Vanhuyse 2013, 23-24. Interestingly enough, demographic development and an increasing number of older people do not have only negative effects. As Dyson 2012 shows, the ageing of the citizen body tends to increase democratisation.
- 4 Thompson 2010: 26-30.
- 5 Another example to understand the role of representatives of future generations is provided by Ekeli 2005.
- 6 Vanhuyse 2013, 41-43.
- 7 For a critical normative assessment of this and other proposals to secure intergenerational justice in democracy, see van Parijs 1998.
- 8 I explain in the section headed "In what sense can quotas become relevant in democracy" what I understand by "political affirmative action programmes". In short, they select candidates from disadvantaged social groups for offices if they gain equal or similar voting power, rather than a candidate from an advantaged social group.
- 9 For a helpful overview of the debate see Rössler 1993.
- 10 For a more developed argument to justify my view see Wallimann-Helmer 2013: esp. chap. 2.
- 11 See Sher 1988.
- 12 Warren 1977: 245-249.
- 13 O'Neill 1976: 338.
- 14 O'Neill 1976: 339-340.

15 Williams 1973: 244.
 16 O'Neill 1976: 339-340.
 17 Rawls 1971: 73-74.
 18 Warren 1977: 251-253.
 19 For two classical texts discussing reverse discrimination see Newton 1973 and Dworkin 1977: 269-288.
 20 This argument has been made in various forms. The first philosopher stating it was, to the best of my knowledge, Thomson 1973.
 21 One of the recent statements of this argument with regard to education is provided by Anderson 2007.
 22 In calling this weakest form of quotas "affirmative action" I come close to at least some aspects of what Pojman discussed under the label "weak quotas" (Pojman 1998). However, I am also aware that "affirmative action" broadly understood could denote any kind of preferential treatment of disadvantaged social groups, which is not necessarily linked with the idea of quotas.
 23 See Brooks Lapsley 2012.
 24 Kymlicka 2002: 3f.
 25 Of course in democratic theory it is a contested issue whether democracy should be understood only in procedural or also in more substantive terms (e.g. Buchanan 2002; Brettschneider 2005; Christiano 2004; Brettschneider 2005, 2007; van Parijs 2011). In this paper it is not possible to justify the view that genuine democracy should also incorporate a more substantive goal. However, as should become clear in the following, a more substantive goal of democracy like the one suggested by Christiano is a necessary presumption in order to make possible an argument for quotas in democracy. I would like to thank Nenad Stojanovic for raising this issue.
 26 Christiano 2010: 56.
 27 Christiano 2004: 275.
 28 Christiano 2010: 246.
 29 See e.g. Christiano 2010: 105; Pettit 2004: 60-62; Dobson 1997: 127.
 30 See Dovi 2011; Mansbridge 2003.
 31 See Rehfeld 2006.
 32 A more developed discussion of this problem can be found in Stojanovic 2013: 133-140.
 33 See Dryzek/Niemeyer 2008.
 34 In addition, an argument along these lines implies that one would have to alter the understanding of democracy and its relevant representative institutions overall. It would not only have to be the discourse of the young which would have to be represented proportionally; it would also have to be all

kinds of discourses present in society and not interests.

35 Dryzek and Niemeyer by contrast argue that the frequency with which interests can be and are voiced have a major impact on policy decisions (Dryzek/Niemeyer 2008: 484). If one assumes that voiced beliefs alter political discourse, then – irrespective of the proportion of society minorities constitute – any kind of proportional representation will improve their situation. However, although voicing beliefs can have an impact on the formation of policy decisions when the chips are down, for final decisions the decisive power still lies with the larger social groups and not minorities.

36 Such a proposal along these lines is for example made by Young 1990.

37 Mansbridge 1999: 638.

38 For this argument see for example Dryzek/Niemeyer 2008: 484; Young 1990.

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Temporal Justice, Youth Quotas and Libertarianism

by Prof. Dr Marcel Wissenburg

Abstract: Quotas, including youth quotas for representative institutions, are usually evaluated from within the social justice discourse. That discourse relies on several questionable assumptions, seven of which I critically address and radically revise in this contribution from a libertarian perspective. Temporal justice then takes on an entirely different form. It becomes a theory in which responsibilities are clear and cannot be shifted onto the shoulders of the weak and innocent. I shall only briefly sketch some outlines and general implications of such a theory, arguing that

it offers too little guidance for our imperfect world. While that implies more tolerance for quotas, I nevertheless propose an alternative more suited to a representative, deliberative democracy: veto rights.

Representation, justice, and youth quotas¹

No political system, democratic or other, can function successfully without some degree of representative consultation, for starters because politics must be based on adequate information not just about objec-

tive facts but also about actual and potential support and resistance.² Adequate representation can take many forms, but in a classic typology Hanna Pitkin distinguished two types that are definitive of a fundamental dilemma for democracies: *representation as acting for* versus *representation as standing for*.³

Representation as acting for demands that representatives defend the opinions and further the interests of whomever it is they represent. While perhaps in an ideal democracy, the representative can be expected to

be able to act for any citizen, the real world is obstinate and obstructive. It is unlikely that a white, religious, healthy male octogenarian knows what it is like to be a black, atheist, handicapped young female; it is also unlikely that any member of any of the latter sociological groups would trust their representative to be able to adequately represent them.

Both because of the objective obstacles the representative faces, and because of the subjective hesitations of the represented, modern democracies increasingly pay attention to representation as standing for. On the latter view, representatives are expected to reflect the (relevant) sociological categories that make up the electorate. Thus, one expects parliaments to contain percentages of women and men, colours, creeds and educational and professional backgrounds more or less similar to those among the population at large. Of course, since one cannot expect a female representative to represent emancipated women's interests merely because she is female (she may well be an orthodox Muslim), democracies are continually trying to square the circle, hoping to offer both adequate sociological and ideational representation.

Justice is indiscriminately due to all, without regard to numbers, wealth, or rank.

/ John Jay /

Both forms of representation may be empirically necessary for the smooth and stable functioning of political systems, but – together with democracy – they have also become part of the normative framework of liberal democracies. Guaranteeing adequate representation of all relevant groups and categories in society has become a matter of justice, more specifically of distributive social justice. And one of the most popular and widely used instruments of justice in representation is the institution of quotas⁴ – which is ultimately the subject of this article. Quotas are on everyone's minds these days, both when we select people and when we elect them. When we, or at least the more or less experienced administrators and politicians among us, select members of a committee, we never ever pick people at random. We select them, and we do so on the basis of knowledge and experience, political or social interests, gender, culture, ethnicity, and any other trait or characteristic that might be relevant to the legitimacy and effective-

ness of the choices that the committee is expected to make. These days, it does not happen often that groups have to publicly remind us of their exclusion with large, intensive and sometimes even violent campaigns like the feminist and coloured movements of the 19th and 20th century needed in order to be heard. As a sort of preemptive strike against formal quotas, we have become our own thought police and have assimilated a directive demanding universally fair sociological representation as part of our standard operating procedure.

Quotas are also on the minds of many of us in the election booth, who, already having picked a party, subsequently find ourselves unable or unwilling to express a strong preference for any particular candidate. We – the undecided – then often ask ourselves whether we should vote for a woman, for an academic, for someone from our home town or region or from a particular ethnic or religious group. And sometimes we really cannot choose. I admit that, for want of a more sensible criterion, I once decided to vote for the candidate most closely related to me by family ties – a politician with whom I share a four-times-great-grandfather. Any *random* criterion, however offensive, will do when no *relevant* criterion applies.

Several countries have, in recent years, introduced quotas in politics. Most of these quota rules aim to reduce the underrepresentation of women in politics – in parties, parliaments and governments – and most are voluntary, for example where parties agree internally to either put up a minimum percentage of women to be elected, or reserve for each sex only the (un)even positions on candidate lists. Other quota rules, again mostly voluntary, guarantee representation of particular creeds, sexual preferences, regions, native languages and ethnicities. One of the latest additions to the list is quotas for the youngest generations under the banner of temporal justice.

For the sake of simplicity, I shall assume that we are only talking about youth quotas in parliament, although most of what I have to say applies to other institutions as well, *mutatis mutandis*. Even so, we are talking about two fundamentally different youths, two different quotas, and two quite different forms of temporal justice.⁵ One refers to intergenerational justice between *existing* generations or age cohorts, to ensure the proper representation of the presently young, which I shall refer to as intergenerational justice. The other type of quota would have to allow the

young to represent currently non-existent future generations – I will call this justice towards future generations.⁶

It does not take a majority to prevail ... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men.

/ Samuel Adams /

Quotas are almost always developed and evaluated from a broadly social liberal perspective – as has also happened in the case of youth quotas. That is to say, many among us assume that societies ought to be – broadly speaking – constitutional liberal democratic societies, that they should have governments controlled by representative institutions, that governments have tasks other than defence against enemies abroad. And at home, and they, you, we, assume that there is a sort of collectively owned hoard, a stock of resources that has to be distributed over society in a fair, just and impartial way, so as to enable all of us to enjoy the greatest freedom to live our lives in accordance with our own convictions, as long as that freedom is compatible with a similar freedom for others – in John Rawls' words.⁷ I usually share these convictions,⁸ but for the sake of academic sincerity, one occasionally needs to take some distance from these standard views and adopt a more libertarian perspective on society and politics.

Libertarianism defends as just a society based on and religiously respectful of voluntary association among consenting adults; no other form of association can be compatible with respect for humans as autonomous moral agents (as deontological libertarians argue) and no other society can as efficiently and effectively guarantee both individual freedom and collective prosperity (as consequentialist libertarians argue).⁹ There is no role for a state in libertarianism except as a guarantor of the freedom of association and no room for taxes except to that purpose. Libertarians reject the idea of social or redistributive justice as it requires the existence (and creation) of a common stock, and that is impossible without violating individuals' property rights. That said, a young branch of the libertarian tree called left-libertarianism believes that nature is common property, and argues that since private property equals work mixed with resources taken out of nature, a redistributable tax to correct the deprivation of others from natural resources can be justified.¹⁰

I choose a libertarian critique of social liberal thoughts over other popular schools in political philosophy because libertarianism comes closest to functioning as a conscience for social liberalism. My argument will be that, by unquestioningly adopting a social liberal perspective in the context of temporal justice, we run the risk of importing and overlooking several quite dubious assumptions. Now if the assumptions of a model are flawed, then the standards by which we evaluate the desirability and permissibility of policies and institutions will be flawed too. In less abstract terms: if we want to know whether or not youth quotas are a morally good idea, we need to be sure that we measure right and wrong, just and unjust, by an arguably legitimate standard.

All men have equal rights to liberty, to their property, and to the protection of the laws.

/ Voltaire /

I shall identify seven dubious, usually unseen and unquestioned assumptions – and for brevity's sake I shall refer to them as misunderstandings. Some of these have to do with intergenerational justice, some with justice towards future generations, and some with the way resources and the environment are conceived of in the temporal justice discourses. Having shoved these seven dwarfs aside, we discover we are left with a perhaps theoretically consistent, intellectually challenging and morally sincere view of temporal justice – but also one that is highly unpractical. So I will then move on to develop a more pragmatic analysis of our two-headed sleeping beauty, youth quotas.

Seven misunderstandings about temporal justice

(1) The first and most important misunderstanding in temporal justice theory is that there must be future generations. It is very common to assume that humanity will, indeed must, procreate, either because children would be a collective or public good, or because it is a moral and religious duty. The command to ensure the survival of humanity is, quite tellingly for our cultures, the topic of one of the most classic flirtation strategies and even more, it is part of the ultimate and most definitive rejection: “I would not go out with you even if you were the last human being on Earth.” In circles more directly related to my own sub-discipline, green political theory, it was Hans

Jonas¹¹ who effectively put justice towards future generations, particularly environmental justice, on the political agenda – and it was also Jonas who explicitly stated that humanity has a duty to ensure the continued existence of the species.¹² The grounds Jonas quotes for this duty remain a bit vague but the gist of his argument is that it is a Christian duty, a divine command implicit in our creation.¹³

Most current authors in the field of temporal justice, even those working on questions of population growth, do not take the trouble to offer an argument but simply assume that humanity must continue to exist, simply by never discussing the alternative, the passing or fading out of humanity. Whether or not religion has a place in a polite society, that is a moot point – but it will be clear that this idea has no place in a social liberal context. For social liberals, there can be no recourse to religious or other unreasonable doctrines as foundations of the public good. And that precludes the possibility of arguing that there can be a duty to ensure the continued existence of humanity. To whom, after all, would we owe this duty? Let us take a moment to consider this question seriously.

First, it cannot be a duty towards future generations or future individuals themselves – that would be a case, straight out of the handbooks, of circular reasoning. Secondly, it cannot be a duty towards our fellow citizens either – that would make our reproductive organs, our wombs and testicles their property, to be used at their discretion (by majority vote or government directive). More precisely, it would make our bodies the property of the collective, and thereby turn us into mere tools and test tubes in the service of an alleged common good.

Thirdly and finally, ensuring the continued existence of humanity, a.k.a. having children, cannot be a duty to ourselves either. That would imply one of the most invasive paternalistic limitations imaginable on the individual's freedom to formulate and execute his or her own authentic plan of life and theory of the good. By making parenting a necessary element of a life worth living, it would also be an insult to, and a failure to recognise the existence of, those who cannot procreate – as much as those who are by law excluded from parenthood. I mention in that connection in particular more or less civilised people in parts of Europe who opt for openly supporting a truly antediluvian, barbaric attitude towards homosexuality in

their societies.

So no duty to procreate, then. What is instead consistent with a liberal worldview is the idea that having children can be part of an *individual's* plan of life, if he or she so chooses, and if the execution of that choice does not harm anyone else. It follows that if any social or political duty in relation to future generation exists, it is a *prima facie* duty towards the prospective parent: other things being equal, we may have duties (and I will assume that we do have those duties) to tolerate the wish to procreate, and to enable him or her (the parent) to enjoy the same liberties, to have the same opportunities and means to create a new human, that we grant to contemporary others.

(2) Moving on more rapidly and succinctly to the second major misunderstanding in temporal justice discourses: there is no collective responsibility for future generations. Or more precisely: any collective responsibility taken on behalf of future generations is a political convention, not a moral obligation.

This follows logically from our observation that we have no duty to ensure the continued existence of humanity, only duties to give individuals who want to procreate as fair opportunity to do so as others, including those who do not, or do not want to. There are a couple of provisos that have to do with duties towards the incompetent and the abandoned. But in general, the proper liberal attitude in the area of justice for future generations should be that it is the responsibility of the procreating parent or consenting parents to ensure their children will have a life worth living, and that does not even seem to have to include the option of enabling them to create a third generation.

Let me next discuss three misunderstandings that are relevant to both types of temporal justice, misunderstandings that have to do with environmental sustainability, or environmental management or however you want to call it.

Justice is not a prize tendered to the good-natured, nor is it to be withheld from the ill-bred.

/ Charles L. Aarons /

(3) Our third temporal justice misunderstanding is to believe that, because planet Earth is not any individual's property, it would therefore be the exclusive property of humanity as a whole. Traditional libertari-

ans stress that nature is unowned before what is called “original acquisition”, the appropriation by individuals of natural resources with an eye to using them.¹⁴ So-called left libertarians and virtually all social liberals assume that before exploitation, natural resources are the collective property of a people, a nation, a state or the whole of humanity.¹⁵

The difference between these two positions is crucial: from the traditional libertarian point of view, any act of acquisition, any intrusion on sovereign nature, has to be positively justified – and though admittedly the average libertarian’s standards for justifiable acquisition are abysmally low, they do *have* standards and are not *principally* opposed to raising them.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.

/ Mahatma Gandhi /

On the collective ownership view, however, what has to be justified is not *that* nature is turned into resources but *how*, and for what purpose. It is assumed beforehand that there is a legitimate use for each and every bit of nature – the question is how to identify a precise legitimate purpose and legitimate user.¹⁶ Yet social liberals offer no justification for the primary assumption that a people or humanity are the initial owners of nature.

The social liberal position is internally inconsistent. Either property rights are derived from natural law, or they are conventions. If derived from natural law, then we must justify acquisition in broadly Lockean terms, assuming initial non-ownership. If property rights are based solely on convention, then nature is by definition unowned before appropriation. In either case, the onus of proof lies with whoever intends to exploit nature.¹⁷ More down to earth, the social liberal attitude towards nature does not protect nature itself against exploitation, which implies a bias towards turning nature into resources now rather than later, which in turn precludes future generations from developing other resources based on the now exploited rather than protected bits of nature. It is this attitude that, in the pursuit of improved welfare for the presently worst-off and their descendants, is for instance willing to sacrifice currently useless animal and plant species.

(4) A further mistake is to assume that prop-

erty rights, private or other, necessarily include the right to destroy with impunity. A property right to an object *x* is in fact a whole series of rights – rights to use *x* in this or that way, in this or that context, and to this or that purpose; rights to delegate and transfer, rights to mould and shape, and so on. But none of those rights is a priori absolute; they are all limited by other people’s rights, including but not limited to property rights in other objects. And this implies that, while arguably the crucial difference between ownership and possession is the right to destroy *x*, that right too is a priori never unlimited. It furthermore implies that one of those limits may be a duty to provide compensation to those now deprived of the public benefits of the destroyed good *x*.¹⁸

One typically social liberal objection to private property, and thus one classic argument for the legitimacy of taxation or collective ownership and government-controlled redistribution, is that individual owners can destroy their property with impunity, to the disadvantage of the rest of humanity – say, the owner of a gorgeous historic mansion can tear it down and replace it with a Koolhaas skyscraper. While laws may allow that, morality – as we have just seen – does not support such an automatism. In addition, if the justification of taxation and redistribution is that private property would otherwise be destroyed for no good reason, it seems the same should apply to collective property – there too we risk wanton destruction by the owner to the disadvantage of the excluded, such as future generations.

(5) A further mistake follows from the previous four: it is the mistake to believe that the collective has any rights over my property or over my use of it in relation to my offspring. It is admittedly my duty to provide any offspring I choose to create with the means to live a life worth living (indeed a duty undermined by pre-emptive welfare state interference on behalf of an unborn collective), but anything above that is at my discretion – I am not morally obliged to provide for my neighbour’s children, nor for my children’s children, nor for future generations in general.

Moving on, let me now address a final pair of mistakes specific for intergenerational justice.

(6) The sixth mistake is to assume that there is a special relation between intergenerational justice and justice towards future gen-

erations. Hence the idea that specifically the young would be in a good position to represent future generations, and hence quotas.

Much of the literature on temporal justice assumes that justice between presently existing generations and justice between those generations and the one coming after is much the same. Those who are up and coming cannot speak for themselves but have to be represented, but what, after all, is the real difference between them and the 0–5 year olds who are basically equally silent? If we accept that the next unborn generation does not differ in any morally significant way from existing children, putting all further future generations on a par with our youngest offers no further moral challenges, only practical ones – like how to predict their numbers, tastes and technologies. Or so one might think.

The planting of a tree, especially one of the long-living hardwood trees, is a gift which you can make to posterity at almost no cost and with almost no trouble, and if the tree takes root it will far outlive the visible effect of any of your other actions, good or evil.

/ George Orwell /

Yet as we have seen above, there is no duty to create future individuals; their existence is a choice, not a given. While we can procreate and thereby create duties that arise at the moment of birth, we cannot owe anything to non-existing entities as long as we can choose not to create them. And reversely, we *do* have obligations to the existing young and we cannot “unbirth” them.

(7) The final mistake is to assume, as many democratic theorists seem to do these days, that egoism – that is, representing and promoting one’s own interests – is either necessarily good or morally neutral. It can be, but it need not be; it can under circumstances also be immoral. In the context of intergenerational justice, of justice between existing generations, and in defence of youth quotas as an instrument of intergenerational justice, we *must* assume egoism to be good. Quotas are there to ensure that the interests of a potentially underprivileged or underrepresented cohort are protected and defended; this cannot be justified without presuming that it is morally good to represent and promote those interests, which is the definition of egoism.

Now to understand democracy as the repre-

sensation of selfish interests is a very old and respectable, or at least aristocratic and anti-democratic, view. It dates back to Aristotle, who actually defined democracy as mob rule, as rule by the many in their private interests rather than in the interest of the community.¹⁹ It is precisely for its pure and undiluted promotion of egoism that philosophers throughout the ages have always rejected democracy, or in their most permissive moods have sought to counterbalance it by adding elements of rule by the neutral, the wise or the better – as indeed Aristotle already did. While Machiavelli was perhaps the first to appreciate egoism neutrally, it took until Adam Smith to develop a *positive* understanding of self-interest as “enlightened self-interest”, the rational man’s understanding of his best interest given the necessities of social cooperation and of therefore having to take others’ interests into account as well.²⁰

Now if we could trust the young to be *this* kind of egoists, this kind of enlightened individuals who define their self-interest on the basis of their needs as much as of those three or four generations that will come after them, *then* youth quotas will contribute to justice for future generations. But not only is the jury still out on whether or not they are in empirical reality sufficiently capable of doing this, and more capable than others – it is also already in theory evident that the interests of distinct generations may not always coincide. It is in fact because of such conflicts of interests that cohort quotas have been suggested. However, if one sees youth quotas as a means to defend the “partial” interests of one cohort against others, one cannot at the same time task that lucky cohort with the “impartial” defence of the interests of another generation, existent or non-existent.

I knew, as every peasant does, that land can never be truly owned. We are the keepers of the soil, the curators of trees
/ Lisa St Aubin de Terán /

Libertarian temporal justice: orthodox and pragmatic versions

With these seven mistakes eliminated, what room does libertarianism leave for quotas? At first sight, one would have to say: none whatsoever. I will analyse and defend this first sight observation in detail momentarily, but please keep in mind that first sights are often deceptive.

Libertarian views on temporal justice do of course, as a matter of principle, leave little room for state intervention. Natural resources are not the state’s to distribute or redistribute, procreation and population policy is not its concern, and since government is there only to catch thieves and protect sovereignty, a parliament’s task will be light too. Instead, individuals have the clear, undivided and exclusive responsibility to decide on whether or not to procreate, limited only by the obligation to ensure a life worth living for their immediate offspring – and limited by nothing else.

In such a world, it is obvious that quotas have no place. They would not just be redundant, they would be considered straightforwardly unjust, expressions of a deeply perverted notion of morality. Two versions of the veto on quotas exist: one is consequentialist, the other deontological.

Some libertarians of the consequentialist persuasion would argue that quotas, if effective, are instituted when the cultural battle for recognition of an excluded group is already won, i.e., when quotas have in fact already become all but superfluous. Support for existing quotas thus shows their political legitimacy but not their philosophical, moral legitimacy. The consequentialist libertarian would warn us not to commit the democratic fallacy of believing that what a majority believes must be true or good. It suffices to point to the 19th century’s majority views on women’s rights, race, slavery, etc. to reject democracy as the ultimate source of ethics.

Quotas are also immoral, from the deontological libertarian’s point of view, for the simple reason that any cooperative venture should be the result of free and unrestrained individual choices. Democratic decision-making, majoritarianism, is nothing but dictatorship or tyranny, unless and as long as a decision is unanimously, voluntarily and in full reason agreed to.²¹ A self-proclaimed democracy, where a collective (majority) choice can be pushed through with the support of overrepresented groups, is even more evidently tyrannical. In a genuinely libertarian society, democratic decision-making is pre-empted by individual rights.

Now, while a libertarian perspective on temporal justice is helpful, refreshing and perhaps even liberating, the libertarian theorist’s attitude towards quotas is also predictable, unpractical and unhelpful – regardless of whether it is correct or not. The problem is that libertarianism, like utopianism, assumes

a context that does not yet exist; like Carl Baron von Münchhausen, libertarianism has to tear itself out of the swamp by its own bootstraps. It offers a choice between ultimate good and ultimate evil, between a perfect libertarian society – where autonomous individuals know their responsibilities, take them seriously, and respect those of their neighbours – and every other world, each of which would be equally unjust and oppressive. Like utopianism, libertarianism offers no guidelines for choices between the fifty shades of grey that our evil real-existing world offers.

Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither, in my opinion, is safe.
/ Edmund Burke /

I would therefore like to suggest a more pragmatic answer to quotas, still inspired by libertarianism, if not orthodox. I would suggest that quotas for the young can be tolerable in the context of justice between existing generations, since they may, under the right circumstances, limit the risk of use and abuse of power in negotiations between the free and autonomous individuals who wish to enter into voluntary associations. That would make them the lesser evil. Here, quotas might imaginably guarantee a fair representation of interests, and thus prevent the construction of exploitative institutions, that is, oppressive institutions – institutions limiting the individual’s negative freedom. What then is the lesser evil in temporal justice? First, as far as intergenerational justice is concerned, we must recognise quotas for what they are: on the one hand, vessels of Smithian comprehensive egoism, to which no libertarian can object; on the other hand, an unrealistic (unrepresentative) redistribution of bargaining power. If there can be an argument in favour of deliberately misrepresenting the distribution of power in society, it cannot be an argument in favour of youth quotas specifically – it must necessarily be one in favour of any cohort or group requiring and deserving a bit of extra power. Perhaps that implies a permanent special provision for those born from 1990 to 1999; and perhaps in fifteen years those born between 1960 and 1970 will turn out to deserve an advantage.

The question is, of course, if there is such an argument, a reason why a libertarian, forced to live in a parliamentary democracy under (from his or her point of view) the tyranny

of social liberalism, could tolerate cohort quotas. There may actually be one such argument, though it will only find favour in the eyes of a very small part of the libertarian tribe. A deontological libertarian might accept skewed representation of group interests if that creates a level playing field – that is, if quotas help to protect the inalienable rights of autonomous individuals against abuse of power advantages. In more precise and therefore less legible terms, given any starting point or baseline in negotiations, quotas may counter the unproductive effects of the involuntary creation of circumstances under which the relatively powerless no longer have a viable exit option back to the baseline.

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

/ Aristotle /

That is not to say that youth quotas are an obvious choice. Where justice towards future, non-existing generations is concerned, and remembering the distinction made earlier between representation as acting for and as standing for, it is rather quotas ensuring a minimum representation by the elderly, or better still the elderly without offspring, that would be appropriate. And tied to that idea, probably outright exclusion of the middle-aged and young would also be defensible. If the aim of a quota rule is to represent the authentic interests of absentees, then it would be rational to seek to remove all temptation to deviate from the absentees' enlightened self-interest. Given that the interests of generations may always clash, this points beyond any form of representation as acting for by potentially self-interested parties. The most sensible candidate for representation is, after all, he or she whose personal interests are least likely to be hurt by the represented. And that is the man or woman on his or her way out, with no offspring to be partial to.

This said, the average libertarian would still maintain that representing future generations in the process of resource distribution is to put the horse behind the cart. Even in a social justice-based political system, a libertarian will argue that there are better, and more legitimate, instruments available to protect the interests that particular groups in society feel deserve protection. The inter-

ests of future generations are like the interests of endangered species, a beautiful landscape, a language, a religion or an art form: they are private preferences. Such private preferences can and will be defended, and may be promoted, as long as they do not infringe upon or prescribe other people's tastes and preferences, and the way to defend and practise those private preferences is by the execution of individual rights. Whoever wants to protect a forest against development can join forces with others, buy it and thereby veto any development plans even if supported by a majority; whoever wants to protect resources in general on behalf of a future generation or an endangered species or any other private fancy, is free to do likewise.

Notes

1 This is an extended, revised and improved version of my more informal afterword 'Justice and Youth Quotas: Libertarian Hesitations' in: Tremmel et al. 2015.

2 Crick 2000: 17-19.

3 Pitkin 1967: 59.

4 There are alternatives, of course. For example, for a period between uncompromising Apartheid and the post-Apartheid regime of Mandela, South Africa's parliamentary system consisted of several separate Chambers reserved for representatives of the white, coloured and black populations – based, obviously, on the Apartheid regime's own myopic definition of relevant sociological categories.

5 See Juliana Bidadanure's contribution to Tremmel et al. 2015.

6 Only when I refer to the two together will I use the term temporal justice.

7 Rawls 1999: 266. Other famous social liberal formulations of the social justice paradigm are Ackerman 1980; Barry 1989, 1995; Galston 1980, 1991; Miller 1999.

8 See Wissenburg 1999.

9 Famous formulations of the libertarian credo include Narveson 2001; Nozick 1974; Rothbard 2002, 2006; Simon 1996.

10 See e.g. Steiner 1994; Otsuka 2003; Valentyne 2007.

11 Jonas 1979.

12 Jonas 1966.

13 This is the cornerstone of Hans Jonas' (1979, 1966) arguments for justice towards future generations, for the responsible management of nature and natural resources, and for sustainability as a standard of responsible management. It is interesting to note that while most social liberal defenders

of intergenerational justice acknowledge an intellectual debt to Jonas as the source of the idea that future generations are a given, none acknowledge his deeply illiberal reason for believing so: a religious duty to ensure the continuation of the human species.

14 See e.g. Anderson / Leal 1991; Feser 2005; Miron 2010; Narveson 1998; Nozick 1974; Rothbard 2006; Scriven 1997. The original acquisition theory goes back to John Locke's 1689 social contract theory (Locke 1924).

15 See note 10; see also Hale 2008.

16 See Wissenburg 2013.

17 Aside from the question which collective (humanity, state, people, tribe, family), collectives have to explain their intentions and justify their action just like any other "legal person". Note also that, by implication, the property of one dead intestate reverts to nature, not by default to the state.

18 See Hadley 2005; Hale 2008; Wissenburg 2012.

19 Aristotle 1962: 1297a, 22-24.

20 Smith 1984.

21 And even then the deontological libertarian would hesitate to accept voluntary slavery in any form – because that is, obviously, what democracy is. For a further, consequentialist critique of democracy, see Hoppe 2011.

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A Democratic Revolution for Youth: The “Youth Tithe” as a Doctrine

by Christian Pardo Reyes – President of the *Internacional Juvenil (IJ)*

On 31 August 2001 in Lima, Peru, Christian Pardo Reyes started a campaign – operating through events and publications – to introduce a quota system to reflect the need to involve youth at all levels of government power. His organisation became the *Internacional Juvenil*. To achieve its goals, it established strong relationships with other youth organisations, state agencies and influential political leaders. Here Christian Pardo Reyes tells the story.

Initially, the talk was about the importance of adopting a Youth Quota Act to somehow “balance” the situation in the political activities of young people compared to adults. On 5 September 2001, the proposal was put before the Congress of the Republic of Peru that the lists of candidates competing for public office at all levels of government (national, subnational and municipal) should have a minimum of 10% of people under 29 years old.

The proposal continued its course in the Congress of Peru, but it evolved over time and became a public policy proposal that sought to strengthen the democratic system with the active participation of young people, regarding them as an important part of the full exercise of power, leading them to the public sphere, and achieving increasingly greater involvement in the destiny of our people. In Spanish, this became known as the *Diezmo Juvenil*, which is translated as the “Youth Tithe”.

The origin of this expression is that historically the “Tithe” was a tax of 10% on the value of certain goods, especially the one paid to the king; however, in this case the meaning does not relate to a tax, but rather to the political sphere, with “Youth” referring to the new political generations. A “Youth Tithe” Act has actually been adopted in Peru and promoted in other countries.

A growing movement, promoting youth empowerment

The *Internacional Juvenil (IJ)* was founded on 12 January 2002 in Guayaquil, Ecuador. This youth organisation brings together leaders from various other countries and it

is forging a new generation of leaders – transformers capable of playing a leading role in the social, economic and political development of our nations and of designing a new world order with freedom, justice and solidarity. The *Internacional Juvenil* organises their networking and it has focal points in various countries. It conducts youth advocacy and provides training for youth. It also represents the youth in different forums, both regional and global, and has representatives in various countries. Immediately after its foundation, it established its headquarters in Lima, Peru.

The “Youth Tithe” is now a doctrine that seeks to give real power to the youth by promoting a culture of intergenerational dialogue (between adults and young people). It does so by advocating for the implementation of a public policy on youth empowerment which would try to ensure effective participation of youth in all levels of government, in government decision-making spaces, as well as in public administration. It also encourages the active participation of young people in the processes of social audit.

The “Youth Tithe” is gaining strength in opposition to the traditional perception that experience and ability are associated only with older people and not the young, and is an alternative to the gerontocratic political and administrative system that dominates today. Because of the latter, age discrimination occurs, in addition to other forms of discrimination against the young, so as to prevent them from exercising their rights, especially political rights. It is imperative that the gerontocratic system collapses and opens the way for a political system in which young and old can have equal opportunities.

Real results in Peru and Ecuador

In July 2006, the “Youth Tithe” was included in the National Youth Plan 2006–2011 of Peru, at the end of the government of Alejandro Toledo. At the beginning of the government of Alan Garcia in August 2006, it was possible to implement it with Act No. 28869, which promotes youth participation in municipal elections and stipulates that

there must be a minimum of 20% young candidates on lists for municipal councillors. Act No. 29470 was approved in December 2009, establishing the same minimum rate of young people for candidates in the lists of regional councillors (subnational). These Acts are unique in their type, and when they came into force it became possible to increase by more than 100% the number of young elected officials in the areas of government decision-making at the municipal and regional level in Peru.

It should also be mentioned that in Ecuador’s Executive Decree No. 002 of 15 January 2007, approved by President Rafael Correa, it was decided that half of the lists of candidates participating in the elections for the Constituent Assembly in Ecuador should be reserved for persons between 25 and 45 years. President Correa then issued Executive Decree No. 054, dated 23 January 2007, which reduced the minimum age of participation to 20 years. Next the National Congress of Ecuador, through Resolution R-28-038 of 13 February 2007, eliminated even this provision, although it remained 20 years old (it was 25 years before) for an Assembly candidate. This was a precedent for the inclusion of a chapter dedicated to youth in Ecuador’s new Constitution.

For these initiatives, the *Internacional Juvenil* – as the promoting organisation – won the World Bank award for “Best Practices of Youth in the Andean Region and Central America – Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru”. The award was presented in Lima in June 2009. It had similar success in the contest for “Best Practices in Youth Policies and Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean” coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Youth Programme of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), receiving the award in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in November 2009. These successes were recognised and acclaimed by the Congress of the Republic of Peru.

World figures such as Jorge Sampaio (former President of Portugal and appointed by Ban Ki-moon (Secretary-General of the United

Nations) as UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations) have saluted this campaign for intergenerational and intercultural understanding.

Work continues in other countries of the world, such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico and Spain, where a “Youth Tithe” is also

being promoted.

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Report on the Academic Symposium: Youth Quotas – The Answer to Changes in Age Demographics?

25/26 October 2013, Stuttgart (Germany)

by Igor Dimitrijoski

Summary

The aim of this academic symposium was to provide an answer to the question whether “youth quotas” offer a solution to changes in age demographics and a looming gerontocracy. Based on the premise that young people have the potential to act as change agents, especially with regard to ecological sustainability, it was the aim to stimulate a societal discussion and to raise public awareness on the topic of youth quotas, whilst providing the discussion with a scientific basis.

The question of a power shift between generations is already discussed in many facets in the literature. Many commentators state that a shift is already visible and that the problem requires careful political management. In light of this, the implementation of youth quotas could be a possible method of protecting the interests of younger generations in politics and beyond. The symposium was investigating a topic that is greatly under-researched.

Some key questions to be addressed at the symposium were: Should youth quotas be limited to the political arena (political parties, parliaments, etc.) or should they also be implemented in other fields (economic activity, companies, associations, organisations, etc.)? Can youth quotas ensure that a greater sense of urgency is applied to the problem-solving process of future concerns like global warming? Can young people really be relied upon to represent the interests of the young generation as a whole, or will they just follow their own individual interests? Are youth quotas in general an effective instrument to strengthen the rights of the young generation

or do we need other and more effective instruments?

Intense debates arose on the question of whether or not youth quotas are an effective means to strengthen the rights of future generations. Some junior researchers suggested that young people can be thought of as the “trustees of posterity” as they tend to be fiercer defenders of long-termist policies especially regarding the environment, since the environmental crisis will have a more concrete impact on their lifespan. But other speakers rejected the inference that young people will have a stronger determination to solve future problems, or will necessarily add a new “young” perspective in the epistemic process of finding solutions to future problems. The inclination of these latter speakers was that environmental issues are not the top priority of young people.

Regarding the composition of party lists, one

speaker pointed to the problem of legitimacy in the outcome of an election. The positive discrimination of youth within a societal group has to be justified because other groups could feel disadvantaged by the implementation of such a strong instrument. Some speakers challenged the analogy of youth quotas to quotas for women or ethnic minorities, because women and ethnic minorities can't change their status whereas today's young people, in the normal course of life, will be old in the future. This means that the disadvantage of a person in his or her young age is just temporal. Generational effects were pitted against age effects in this context.

Some experts pointed to alternatives to youth quotas. In their view, lowering the voting age and having better political education in schools, in particular, would produce better results. Another proposed strategy was the implementation of proxy votes for the parents.



A vote at the end of the symposium sparked interesting results. Although several reservations were noted, most of the speakers voted in favour of the implementation of youth quotas. All speakers voted for lowering the voting age. The conclusion reached by this academic symposium was that a package of measures is required to give adequate answers to demographic change. Youth quotas could be part of this package. The organisers have collected the outcomes of the symposium in a recently published anthology (*Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies*. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer 2015; see book review in this issue).

The debates in brief

It was a major challenge for the participating researchers to find a viable approach to the topic, given that, up until then, the issue of youth quotas had remained completely un-researched. However, during the symposium this circumstance proved to be advantageous because the different approaches and priorities illustrated the manifold aspects of youth quotas.

A presentation by Dieter Birnbacher, of Düsseldorf University, opened the symposium. He focused on youth quotas in parliaments. Professor Birnbacher is of the opinion that youth quotas within parliaments are insufficient to incorporate and represent the interests of young people. He doubts that young representatives (representatives of the young generation) would represent the interests of their age group thoroughly, which is the strongest argument in favour of youth quotas. Therefore, Birnbacher advocated for a larger package of measures. As a first step, the voting age should be lowered; furthermore, parents should get a proxy vote for their children. According to Birnbacher, a parental proxy vote would enable parents to represent the interests of their children. In the ensuing discussion, the assumption that young representatives of the young generation do not necessarily represent the interests of their generation was affirmed, but at the same time it was questioned that parents would use their additional voting right to vote in the interests of their children. Some participants stated that the proxy vote would rather strengthen the parents' interests than their children's (and those of youth generally). Nevertheless, lowering the voting age was considered necessary by all participants of the workshop.

Alexander Bagattini, also from Düsseldorf University, introduced the >concept of

"ageism" into the discussion. The term defines the unequal treatment of people because of their age (age discrimination). In a first step, he compared "ageism" with other negatively-charged "-isms", such as sexism and racism. Dr Bagattini holds that "ageism" carries a similarly negative connotation and thus should be rejected. From his point of view, youth quotas have to be classified as ageism because a certain population group will be privileged (in this case young people). This should be rejected in our liberal-democratic society. Furthermore, he thinks that lowering the voting age is not necessary. In the following discussion, doubts were raised that the introduction of youth quotas or the lowering of the voting age – which privileges young people at the cost of older population groups – counts, in fact, as "ageism". It was suggested, rather, that these measures reduced the existing inequalities between young and old society members.

In the next presentation, Jörg Tremmel, of Tübingen University, the history of democracy and the extension of suffrage. He focused on the exclusion of minors from elections. Professor Tremmel argued that the inclusion of more and more previously excluded groups (women, dependent people, people aged 18–25) has made it possible that nearly all societal groups are allowed to vote nowadays. But there is one big exception: minors are still not allowed to vote. According to Tremmel, the main argument for the exclusion of the minors is their alleged "lack of maturity" or the "lack of political judgement". Tremmel argued that this is epistocratic and contradicts the normative foundations of the very concept of democracy, that is, the rule of the (entire) demos. In order to overcome this deficiency, he suggested a "voting right by registration". Every person should be allowed to vote; minors interested in voting, however, should first be required to register as official voters. An age limit is thus replaced by an expression of will, but this model would not imply a voting age from zero years onwards.

In her presentation, Dr Anja Karnein (Frankfurt University) focused on the notion that today's young people, being more affected by climate change than previous generations, have a greater interest in curbing its potential impact. The assumption is that an increased participation of young people in politics, for example guaranteed by youth quotas, will produce a better framework for climate and environmental politics. Dr Karnein doubts these notions. Just because today's young

people will be affected by the effects of climate change for longer, they are not per se more interested in a solution to this negative process. In addition, future "climate-friendly" behaviour cannot be assumed. And although in the U18 elections (recording how young people in Germany might have voted if they had the vote) the Green Party got a higher percentage of votes than in the "real" federal elections, these votes also clearly showed that the established parties (CDU/CSU and SPD) received the vast majority of votes, just like they did in the real elections. Although youth quotas for other areas could be useful, they are not helpful in the context of environmental policy; and although young people, admittedly, are more idealistic than older generations, Karnein does not see any evidence that environmental policy is the top priority of young people. Politicians tend to make snap decisions, the impacts of which will be felt in the near or distant future. They also tend to reflect the concerns of the older population more than the concerns of youth. But politics must also take into account the problems of the distant future, e.g. climate change, when decisions are made.

In the following presentation, Ivo Wallimann-Helmer (University of Zurich) discussed three possible measures designed to encourage politicians to adopt more far-sighted policies. (1) The question whether the votes of higher-educated people should be given a greater weight than the votes of less-educated people. (2) The question whether young people should be given more influence in the elections. (3) The question whether elderly people should be excluded from the elections. Dr Wallimann-Helmer rejects all three proposals because they undermine the normative fundament of democracy. In his view, young people need more help regarding their self-organisation, so as to ensure that they can better articulate and represent their interests. Currently, they lack self-organisation and thus influence. Like Dr Karnein, Wallimann-Helmer does not believe that youth quotas or lowering the voting age will produce greener policies.

During the discussion, it became clear that the other participants agreed with Ivo Wallimann-Helmer's concerns about democratic theory in respect of his three proposals. But by the same token, some participants made it clear that the exclusion of minors from the elections is equally problematic. The same arguments for excluding the young could also be taken as arguments for excluding elderly

people from elections. Young people are said to be politically immature but on the other hand the mental abilities of older people might also decrease the older they get. But none of the participants recommended excluding older people from the suffrage. What is clear is the unequal treatment of young and old regarding the right to vote.

Dominic Roser, of Oxford University, dealt with the question of whether youth quotas could lead to a better climate policy. Central to his argument is the assumption that young people are particularly affected by climate change, and thus particularly keen to miti-

Like Anja Karnein and Ivo Wallimann-Helmer before him, Dominic Roser also did not share the optimistic view that youth quotas would produce a better environmental policy. Most of the participants held a similar position regarding 'green' policies. In return, Roser presented a risk-model which was well received by the participants. Most of them could see the danger that future generations' living standards might not continue to rise, or – in the worst case – might even decline. The main risks were expected within today's environmental, economic and global financial policy as well as the regularly recur-

democracy as well as fiscal regulations such as debt limits, Burret argued.

The participants shared Burret's doubt concerning the possible effects of youth quotas. However, they also questioned the proposed alternatives. Increased direct democracy does not imply that youth will be less marginalised; older voters would still represent their own interests and cast their votes correspondingly. Introducing measures such as debt limits does not guarantee policies that take special care of the interests of youth. Although national debt would not rise, which is in general good regarding intergenerational justice, one cannot predict how the available money will be spent. It could happen that spending for the young would be cut in favour of the old.

Dr Rafael Ziegler, of Greifswald University, discussed whether or not the youth can act as change agents for a sustainable development. In conjunction with his discussion, he presented one of his own projects, the youth campaign "Big Jump Challenge" (www.bigjumpchallenge.net). Children and young people all over Germany organised "bathing activities" in rivers and lakes in order to raise awareness of themes such as water protection and the prevention of water pollution. Ziegler then applied the experiences of this project to a possible introduction of youth quotas. He argued that such quotas are not sufficient and effective enough to achieve more sustainable environmental policies.

Radostin Kaloianov was especially concerned with the ubiquity of quotas (that is, that quotas can be found everywhere). "What can quotas do?" was his key question. Dr Kaloianov attempted to answer this question in two ways. First, he investigated the development and modernisation of Western societies from a modernisation-theoretical approach. He argued that in modern capitalistic societies such as the Western countries of today, quotas are present everywhere, particularly in the labour market. Life as a whole, he maintained, is regulated by invisible quotas. Kaloianov sees quotas as a means to control the occupation of jobs, especially jobs that demand explicit requirements because they are rewarding particular merits and capabilities. Kaloianov was skeptical towards the introduction of quotas for disadvantaged groups, e.g. the youth. He emphasised how everyone in a modern society is already benefitting from the existing quota-policy and existing quotas. Second, Kaloianov discussed the justice of quotas.



gate the consequences of climate change. But this argument is not as strong as it might seem, or so Roser suggests. He argues that young people today have to endure only a small part of climate change; future and yet unborn generations will be rather more seriously affected. Therefore, he altogether rejects the idea of justifying youth quotas on the grounds that they, allegedly, lead to better environmental policy for the young.

Another emphasis of Dr Roser's presentation was on the general quality of life in the future. In the past, the standard of living and the quality of life have both risen steadily. However, there is a serious risk that the standard of living will decline in the foreseeable future. Dominic Roser underscored this view by arguing that there are too many high risks involved in the creation of the future and future policies (environment, economy, etc.). Even though these same risks could provide big improvements for humanity, there is also a real risk that a failure will bring a sharp downturn in the overall quality of life. Therefore, Roser calls for action so as to significantly reduce the risk brought by humanity itself and the way in which shapes its own future.

ring crises. Most participants supported the impulse to limit these risks, even though – as Roser pointed out – this limitation should not tend to zero, because even stagnation can in some way mean a step backwards. A certain degree of risk remains necessary in order to foster certain innovations and developments.

Heiko Burret focused on the consequences of demographic changes, where older generations are "taking over" control of society at the expense of younger generations. He emphasised how politicians, as a rule, first and foremost tend to focus on the interests of voters. Older people nowadays represent the largest group of voters. As a result, politicians are paying more attention to their interests than to those of other voting groups. For the politicians, the consequence of ignoring the interests of large voting groups is not being reelected, or not being elected at all in the first place. Young politicians also have to keep this fact in mind; thus youth quotas in parliaments and political parties will have only a marginal effect. What should be introduced to prevent the strong marginalisation of youth are measures linked to direct

He was critical towards policies where people are favoured in the labour market on the basis of sex, skin colour, ethnic origins, age etc., compared to better-qualified applicants who are not favoured because they do not belong to one of the privileged quota-groups. Rather, he emphasised how quotas are already regulating spheres such as the labour market, because merits and capabilities in the end are rewarded, which, again, also takes the form of a quota.

In the discussion that followed, the arguments of Kaloianov were assessed critically. His argument that specific requirements in a job description are equivalent to a quota was disputed. It was emphasised that explicit knowledge and capabilities are often necessary in certain jobs and positions, but that these can hardly be identified with quotas. Likewise, the argument that quotas are necessarily unfair, and that they ultimately do no bring much to the table, was contested. Several examples have shown that quotas and positive discrimination of certain groups (woman, minorities) unquestionably have led to fairer outcomes. The groups in question have, through quotas, been enabled to compete e.g. in the labour market on equal terms to other groups. However, that youth quotas will have the same effect as gender quotas was disputed.

Pieter Vanhuyse, of the Vienna-based European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, presented the “Intergenerational Justice Index” (IJI) and addressed the question of proxy votes (that is, giving parents the right to vote on behalf of their child/children). First, Dr Vanhuyse presented his study conducted for the Bertelsmann-Foundation. The Intergenerational Justice Index which he created is based on four criteria and compares all OECD-countries with one another. Several of the countries scored low on the IJI-index, depicting profound intergenerational challenges. To counterbalance this trend, Vanhuyse argued for the introduction of proxy votes. He emphasised that a proxy vote system will not only ensure a shift in the power balance between old and young generations in favour of youth, in addition it will also demand more just policies, seen from an intergenerational point of view. Through their parents, children and youth will be given influence in elections.

Several of the participants were skeptical regarding the introduction of proxy votes to improve intergenerational justice. The objections that were already raised against

Birnbacher’s arguments in favour of proxy votes were repeated.

Juliana Bidadanure argued in favour of an implementation of youth quotas and provided an instrumental justification. She claimed that youth quotas in parliaments could contribute to bringing about intergenerationally fairer outcomes. She first presented two core challenges of intergenerational justice: (1) the challenge of justice between non-overlapping generations – or the long-term challenge of treating future generations fairly; and (2) the overlapping challenge of justice between current birth cohorts – or the shorter-term challenge of treating young people fairly. She argued that the environmental and economic prospects of younger and future generations were so dangerously threatened that it was a requirement of intergenerational justice to implement any policies that may increase our chances to improve their set of opportunities.

Bidadanure argued that there are strong reasons to believe that youth quotas can improve the chances to meet both objectives. Young people are keener to implement long-term policies like environmental policies, and they are also more innovative in solving problems. On the other hand, she also rejected the assumption that young people are necessarily “greener” and more prone to promoting the interests of future generations. But youth quotas surely will increase the chance to promote youth interests. And second, a youth presence in parliaments would make it more unlikely for policy-makers to be driven by false representations and prejudices. Finally, Bidadanure claimed that the involvement of each age group in social and political decision-making constituted a crucial aspect of relational equality and that youth quotas could contribute to a symbolic acknowledgement of the equal political value of young people, as members of a community of equals. Beside the introduction of youth quotas, Bidadanure also proposed the introduction of an ombudsman for future generations. The implementation of youth quotas will produce fairer outcomes – that was the final conclusion drawn by Bidadanure. But even regardless of such outcomes, there are strong reasons to find the underrepresentation of young people in politics worrying from the point of view of social cohesion and political equality.

At the end of the workshop, Ashley Seager from the Intergenerational Foundation (IF)

and Bernhard Winkler from the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG) organised a role-play session. All participants took part in a simulated cabinet-meeting. In this session, the different measures presented during the weekend (youth quotas, lowering the voting age to 16, voting age without age limitations, proxy votes etc.) were subjected to a vote. Before each voting procedure, the benefits and disadvantages of each measure were discussed. Despite the numerous objections to youth quotas throughout the workshop, the majority at the end voted in favour of introducing them. Lowering the voting age to 16 was unanimously agreed upon, while half of the group voted against abolishing all voting age limitations. The introduction of proxy votes was rejected.



In his dinner speech, Professor Marcel Wisenbourg, of Nijmegen University, analysed youth quotas from a libertarian perspective and eventually opted for a more pragmatic take on quotas. He suggested that quotas for the young could be tolerable in the context of justice among existing generations, since they may, under the right circumstances, limit abuse of negotiation power, thus guaranteeing a fair representation of interests, and preventing the construction of exploitative (oppressive) institutions. Where justice towards future, non-existing generations is concerned, however, at the very least quotas protecting minimum representation of the elderly, and perhaps even exclusion of the middle-aged and young, would be more appropriate. If the aim of a quota rule is to impartially represent the interests of absentees, the most sensible candidate for representation is, after all, the person whose personal interests are least likely to be hurt by those represented. Finally, he suggested that even in a representative, deliberative democracy, a better instrument than a quota

was available and far more urgently needed: veto rights.

Results and future directions

The numerous presentations and different approaches showed that “youth quotas” are a highly under-researched topic. In contrast to other forms of quotas such as gender quotas and immigration/minority quotas, the challenge with youth quotas is that the characteristic upon which the quota is based (being young) actually changes throughout the course of a lifetime. Thus, a person never remains within the allegedly disadvantaged group (here, young people) for her entire life, as one does when groups are separated on the basis of sex and ethnic origins. This also illustrates the legitimacy problem with youth quotas. To what extent are youth actually a marginalised and disadvantaged group? And is it really necessary to introduce strong measures such as quotas to empower them and enhance their rights? An important question that also needs to be answered is: in what areas should youth quotas be introduced? Would it suffice to introduce quotas in the political sphere – namely in political parties and in parliaments – or should they also be introduced in business, public companies, organisations and associations?

A noteworthy fact is that most of the presenters looked upon youth quotas skeptically, because they questioned whether such quotas would have any real impact. However, this does not imply that they rejected the idea of youth quotas as a possible measure altogether (with some exceptions), but rather that they favoured introducing other measures to strengthening the rights of younger and future generations. Lowering the voting age to 16, or even a voting age without age limitations, were two other measures identified. It was also suggested that organisational activity amongst youth should be stimulated more vigorously. The low participation rate of young people in political organisations was acknowledged as a profound challenge that needs to be addressed in the near future. Another question that was disputed was whether or not youth can be said to have common interests? Several of the presenters doubted that one could hold that all youth shared a common interest. Even though it can be reasonable to assume that the youth take a particular interest in themes such as environmental protection and climate protection (because these themes generally are perceived as especially important for future generations), it was disputed whether youth

actually see this as a top priority. This led to the conclusion that stronger youth participation in politics does not necessarily produce more ambitious environmental politics. This was seen as a strong argument against the introduction of youth quotas.

An important part of the discussion involved further measures to strengthen the rights of youth. Particularly suffrage (and suffrage regulations) was identified as a central instrument. Two changes within suffrage regulations were suggested: on the one hand altering the voting age (lowering the voting age, or even introducing voting without age limitations), and on the other hand the introduction of proxy votes for parents (granting parents extra votes by giving them the right to vote on behalf of their children). Even though everyone agreed that introducing proxy votes would certainly raise the awareness of family- and children-related policies, numerous presenters doubted that parents would use their extra votes with the interest of their children in mind. Rather, it was pointed out that parents might be expected to cast their additional votes for the same party as with their original vote, regardless of the preferences of their children. Consequently, the effectiveness of proxy votes in terms strengthening the political rights of children and youth was considered low. Ultimately, parents would be rewarded, not children and youth.

Lowering the voting age was perceived as a better and more effective measure. It was emphasised that a change in voting age should be accompanied by a greater focus on political issues in schools and the educational sector. Through an extension of the suffrage, youth and children will have increased political power and influence. In addition, politicians would also have to take the interests of young voters into account when they run for election and form policies. Today, the exclusion of youth from the suffrage leads to a situation where politicians do not need to take their interests into account, because the youth do not have any significant influence in elections. If more youth are allowed to vote, their significance will also increase. The most extensive proposal was for voting without any age limitations (that is, everyone is allowed to vote if they want to, regardless of age). The suggestion does not imply that babies and small children would vote, because they do not take any interest in doing so. However, children and older young people would be given a strong incentive to take part in politics and elections, especially if the

educational sector puts more focus on politics and participation in the school system. At the end of the symposium, several of the presenters stated that it had been difficult to define youth quotas as a concept for scientific investigation. After the discussions at the symposium, the concept was more comprehensible. Amongst other issues, the discussions had clarified what areas youth quotas encompass, the complexity of the concept and the fact that it is a highly under-researched topic demanding thorough investigation. A number of the participants indicated that they would continue conducting research connected to the topic in the future. They also announced that they would make contributions for the anthology *Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies*. One of the main aims of the anthology is to provide the first systematic contribution to a topic that seems to be greatly under-researched. As mentioned above, topics such as gender quotas and immigration/racial quotas have been investigated extensively in recent years, while youth quotas have not. No earlier projects, anthologies or books relate directly to youth quotas, hence there is no other academic work that is in direct competition with this project. The anthology will sum up the findings and experiences of the symposium and present them to a broader academic audience, and will hence be important in reaching one of the main goals of the symposium: providing the first firm academic contribution to youth quotas as a topic of scientific investigation.

The demographic changes and the ageing of societies currently taking place in many European countries demand measures to prevent a political and societal marginalisation of youth and future generations. Youth quotas as an instrument have the potential to become one of these measures – but the topic needs to be carefully investigated in the coming years.

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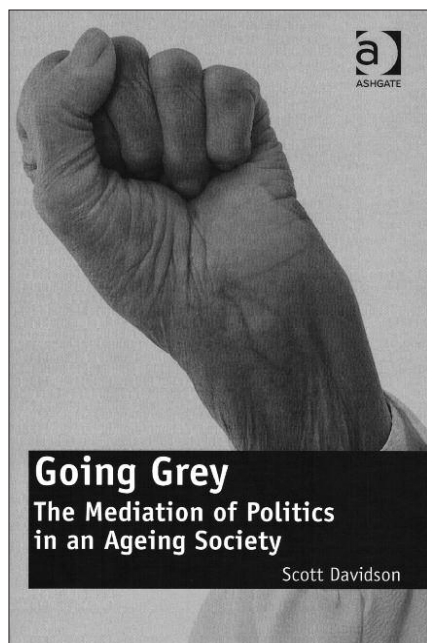
Scott Davidson: Going Grey: The Mediation of Politics in an Ageing Society

Reviewed by Petter Haakenstad Godli

The backdrop to Scott Davidson's book *Going Grey: The Mediation of Politics in an Ageing Society* is the rise of the "Grey Vote" in the electoral markets in Western democracies. Davidson, a PhD and lecturer in Media and Public Relations at the University of Leicester, writes from a UK-perspective. However, the same changes are evident in numerous Western countries, such as for instance the US, Germany and Austria. Hence, his contribution should be seen as highly relevant in a wide international context. The book has an introduction, twelve chapters (both theoretically and empirically based), as well as a list of references and an index.

The rapid ageing of the population and the substantial demographic changes as a result of the ageing process are the main topics of the book. The so-called "baby-boomer" generations, born in the 1950s and 1960s, reach retirement age from 2015 and onwards. Together with decreasing birth rates and increased life expectancy, they substantially alter the age composition of the electoral markets. We live longer, and the share of the population defined as old is increasing, accelerating by the decade. As Davidson writes, "it is reasonable to assume this long-term trend that started in the nineteenth century will continue long into the twenty-first century" (11-12). Statistics show that, in the UK, the share of the population aged 65 years or older was 13% in 1971, while projections show that this will rise to 22% by 2031 and 26% by 2061.

Davidson defines the Grey Vote as voters aged 55 years or older. At first sight, this might seem as a broad definition (he does label this himself as the "wider Grey Vote"), given the fact that the normal retirement age is well over 60. However, Davidson argues that "to fully evaluate the age effect on democratic processes there is a persuasive argument that the definition of the 'grey vote' should be widened to include segments of the electorate who are close to the retirement and, indeed, perhaps to all men and women aged over 55" (84). Davidson justifies his



definition by emphasising that people in their 50s have already started to experience manifestations of age discrimination in the society (e.g. in the labour markets), that they have to start consider retirement and "old issues", and lastly the fact that new emerging family structures are likely to include people in their 50s with old parents, and hence they have direct contact with ageing issues.

Through a case study of the general elections in the UK in 2005 and 2010 (and partly 1997), Davidson wishes to investigate closely the ageing process in the UK, and how it has been framed and dealt with by two of the main sets of actors in UK election campaigns: (1) the major political parties and (2) the mass media. How do the major political parties and their strategic political communications relate to ageing issues and the fact that the electorate is older at each election? How do the mass media (including newspapers, magazines and television) frame ageing issues and their influence on society? As he argues throughout the book, demographic changes relating to these aspects have been neglected by researchers, even though the ageing process is hardly an unexpected phenomenon. The author early on states the strong connection between

these two sets of actors. In order to adapt to rapid social change and changing electoral markets, the parties have applied typical media tools, such as opinion polls and environmental analysis, to map and attract potential voters. Hence, not only are the mass media and the way they frame societal and political questions of great importance to how the major parties are dealing with these questions, they also adapt the methods traditionally used by the media. This is what he perceives as "the mediation of politics", as the title suggests.

After outlining the main aims of the book, Davidson gives a short quantitative description of the ongoing ageing process in the UK. It is common knowledge that the older voting group is acquiring increased electoral power. However, Davidson states that older voters cannot be seen as one homogenous voting group. Where others have framed the Grey Vote more negatively (for instance contributions such as Willetts (2010) and Howker/Malik (2010)), depicting them as one homogenous group voting on the basis of self-interest (the "senior power model"), Davidson seems to perceive the Grey Vote in a substantially more positive way. This is evident throughout the book.

Trying to explain the position of old people in society, and how they have been/are being looked upon can largely be divided into three (or two) theories. *Disengagement theories* can be shallowly summarised as theories saying that old people should disengage and withdraw from society (especially from the labour markets) and "get ready for death". *Structural theories* focus on how old people through social narratives and notions are being socially constructed as a problem – they are being forced into a position of structural dependency because they are receiving public money, and hence they are, first and foremost, a financial burden. Lastly, *third age theories or active ageing theories*, in contrast to the two other branches of ageing theories, perceive later life as an opportunity to create new identities and a meaningful and active third life as pensioners. Davidson

argues that the media have usually framed ageing and old people using one of the two first theories, that is, negatively. However, as old people are becoming more numerous, considered to be more heterogeneous and also more resource-powerful, the media might be expected (especially since 1990) to frame ageing issues in a more positive light, drawing on third age and active age theories. In chapter four, Davidson claims that, in politics, ageing has traditionally been presented as socially divisive (Turner 1989, Irwin 1996), in terms of framing ageing as a problem creating generational conflict: the interests of young people are sacrificed at the expense of the old generation (e.g. spending public money on state pensions instead of education and family policy). What Davidson labels “*the gerontocracy narrative*” and “*the time bomb narrative*” depict such a development and envisage generational conflict, especially revolving around older people seen as a financial burden because of their heavy use of public welfare services and because they are less productive in the labour market, but still taking up jobs. These negative views are met by more positive-orientated theories claiming that modern societies are more prosperous than ever before and welfare cuts are not the only way to solve the challenges of an ageing population. In fact, the negative-orientated theories are criticised for focusing on solely welfare cuts as a strategy for less public spending and a smaller state, in policies heavily influenced by economic liberalism and conservatism from the US. Also here, it is clear that Davidson positions himself on the “positive side” and not in the tradition of the gerontocratic narratives that present age as politically divisive.

In the two following chapters, Davidson focuses on how the ageing process in general, and older people in particular, are being framed negatively. Chapter five investigates how ageing as a subject is presented, and how older people are depicted. Two key concepts which are introduced here are especially important: *ageism* and (negative) *stereotyping*. Ageism can be described as “systematic discrimination against, and (negative) stereotyping of older people, solely on the basis of their (old) age” (27), while stereotyping happens when attributes (often negative) that may apply to certain members of a group are exaggerated and then applied to the group as a whole. Davidson’s point is that old people are often being stereotyped negatively – in popular culture, in health

and social services, on the labour market, in the media and in political rhetoric – in a way that creates ageist attitudes on a more general basis. Chapter six delves into how the media create ageist attitudes. Although older people consume more media services than young people, and are getting more numerous by the year, they are often portrayed negatively. One of the main reasons is because advertisers pay more for young viewers; hence the media try to distance themselves from older audiences to attract a younger audience. Even though the three main studies Davidson refers to (Midwinter 1991, Groombridge 1999 and Bergström 2001) show that ageing issues have been given greater prominence, at least through the time period 1991–2001, ageing as an issue is largely ignored, and when it is treated, it is largely depicted through negative stereotyping, contributing to ageist attitudes. It is clear that, from Davidson’s point of view, the media in UK in general have taken a position where they frame ageing negatively rather than positively: “There appears to be a broad consensus [in research literature] that older people, although the biggest consumers of media, and particularly news media, are underrepresented in the media and where they are not ignored, they are often portrayed using negative stereotypes” (35).

The next chapters investigate how the ageing processes are influencing how politics is made and marketed. One of the most important questions is: does age actually influence voting behaviour? If age does not matter, demographic changes and their effect on voting results are not particularly interesting. However, studies like Wilkoszewski (2009) argue that age does matter for social preferences, showing that the preferences between younger and older voters statistically deviate from each other in several social policy areas. Different theories have sought to explain the link between age and voting preferences. Davidson separates between structural based theories, dealignment theories and rational choice theories. *Structural based theories* claim that structural background variables – such as sex, social background, ethnicity etc. – determine how we vote. Age is just one variable, and cannot explain everything. These structural or class based theories are becoming weaker, because we know that class voting is in decline and social mobility is steadily increasing. *Dealignment theories* fit better into the emerging electoral trends with higher

volatility and less stable voter preferences. However, the dealignment theories also claimed that these trends were relevant only when investigating young voters. This claim has later been rejected, on the grounds that older voters are not less heterogeneous or more stable than younger voters. Davidson supports this rejection. Lastly, *rational choice theories*, also inspired by economic liberalism, claim that all voters vote according to their wallet and economic preferences, and if older voters gathered together as a homogeneous voting group voting solely on the basis of economic self-interest, they would have a massive impact on voting results. However, Davidson again states that these theories are almost useless when they are not combined with other theories, because, as he repeats, voters actually do not vote only according to their economic self-interest. He also makes a distinction between position issues and valence issues: *position issues* are issues where voters strongly disagree on how policy outcome should look (e.g. tax rates), and *valence issues* are issues where voters mostly agree on how policy outcome should look (e.g. effective health care services). To sum up, Davidson suggests that the Grey Vote is a heterogeneous voting group, and their voting behaviour cannot be explained simply by age, structural based theories or rational theories. However, the Grey Vote still has a huge political power, especially related to valence issues – because large parts of the Grey Vote might shift their party preference according to how the parties treat valence issues important to older voters. Such an impact has already been evident in elections in countries such as Austria and Scotland (51-52).

Chapter eight further investigates the relationship between age and political preference through the classic sociological separation between generational effects and cohort effects. *Generational effects* are differences in voting results between generations that entered the electorate at different times – highlighting that one generation might differ from another due to special happenings, trends, societal changes etc., while *cohort* (or *life cycle*) *effects* are differences in voting results between groups of voters finding themselves in different stages of life (student, parenthood, pensioner). Davidson does acknowledge that age has *some* influence: when you entered the electoral market as well as what life stage you are at when casting your vote might affect political preferences. Hence, although the rejection of

pure rational choice theories and structural theories solely focusing on economic self-interest and/or age as a background variable seems to be central to Davidson, he gives a certain amount of credit to sociological theories drawing on age to explain political preferences.

Chapter nine puts focus on the development of political marketing in relation to ageing processes. Davidson highlights that, even though political parties are still not fully exchangeable with businesses (and likewise voters with consumers), political parties have adapted marketing concepts. The most important concept presented here is the *segmentation of the electorate*. Segmentation means that the electorate is split up into different groups according to preferences and various characteristics in order to target specific groups when marketing politics. Davidson argues that one of the most evident changes over recent years is that the parties are no longer segmenting older voters only on the basis of age. Evidently, the parties have realised that older voters are becoming an increasingly important voting group, but perhaps more importantly that they are not a stable and heterogeneous voting group. Hence, when targeting older voters they cannot simply target them as “old voters”; rather, they have to be segmented just like any other voting group. What Davidson seems to suggest is that political actors, especially the parties, have adjusted themselves to the ageing process and the alterations in – and the new compounding of – the electoral markets to a larger degree than the mass media, among others, through careful segmentation of older voters.

Chapter ten introduces the more empirical part of the book. What he does in this chapter is investigate how the Westminster constituencies (on the basis of the 2010 election) will be ageing in coming years. The general aim is to show how fast and profound the ageing of the electorate is. Davidson shows through projections that the voting group aged 55+ will make up 44% of the electorate in 2015 and 48% in 2025, almost a pure majority, compared to 42% in 2005. Also, he shows how, in 2005, 268 of the constituencies were what he labels “pure grey majorities” (meaning that over 50% of the votes cast were those of voters aged 55+); this number increased to 319 in 2010, and will further increase to 367 in 2015 and 478 in 2025 (see figure 12.2, 105). In other words, already in 2010 a majority of the 632 UK constituencies were “pure grey majori-

ties”. In short, the UK electorate is ageing, and the process is accelerating by the decade. Chapter eleven conducts an empirical case study of one of the few cases where ageing and demographic changes were put high on the agenda in public view and delves into how the media treat ageing issues from an empirical point of view. The case study in question is the BBC programme from 2004 *If ... The Generations Fall Out*, describing the UK in 2024 and the challenges created by the ageing process; it took the form of a drama-documentary played out by cliché characters (pensioners, young students etc.). Davidson’s general findings, which fit well into the theoretical framework outlined above, were: the programme (and its depiction of ageing issues) was ageist, focusing mainly on the negative rather than positive consequences of ageing; the contributing experts (from various disciplines and backgrounds, such as science, journalism and interest organisations) – who tended to show slightly ageist views through negative stereotyping and hence gave support to “negative theories”, such as disengagement theories and structural based theories – were given more time to promote their views than those who highlighted the positive consequences of ageing, and hence gave more support to “positive theories” such as third age and active ageing theories. Also, reviews of the programme tended to be negative, almost mocking the ageing issues that were its main subject. Although putting ageing issues on the agenda, the mass media still seem to frame ageing issues in a negative light.

Chapter twelve focuses on how the political parties – and their strategies and political communication – adapt to the ageing processes. Party documents and speeches from the general elections in 2005 and 2010 are analysed through critical discourse analysis in order to uncover narratives and rhetoric. Investigating the three largest parties (Conservatives, Labour and LibDems), Davidson finds that ageing issues tend to be less important with time as other issues prevail, especially towards the end of the campaigns. Also, they do not focus on the generational conflict. When studying four concrete discourses, he finds that the parties try not to frame old voters as “elderly”, and when they do they try to not relate this to dependency (in order to not alienate older voters). Also, in the second discourse, when using the term “pensioner”, focus is placed on economics – “vote for us and you will be better off economically when you retire.” Still, the

promises are often *conditional*, for instance linked to participation in the labour market (Conservatives and Labour) or even to citizenship (LibDems). Davidson identifies this as “the contributory principle” discourse. Lastly, the parties, generally speaking, always frame ageing issues in a more positive light than media actors do. Demographic changes are never depicted as a problem, merely a challenge. The notion of a generational conflict, as often presented by the media, is always rejected by political actors, who put more focus on intergenerational solidarity and the contribution that older citizens make to families and the civil sector. Hence, in what he identifies as the “active ageing and public burden” discourse, active ageing is emphasised at the expense of old citizens being a public burden. Even when the media put pressure on politicians to acknowledge the negative consequences of ageing processes, they prefer to introduce their own, more positive-orientated framing. As Davidson notes, this pinpoints a strong disharmony in how the media and the political parties perceive the ageing process: “Media narratives are not in harmony with the apparently evolving political discourses analysed in this research” (149).

The last chapter is basically a chapter which sums up the main findings. One obvious reason for the disharmony between how the mass media and political actors frame ageing issues might be the fact that politicians are dependent upon votes, while the media are dependent upon advertising. Hence the parties have to attract the Grey Vote as an increasingly important voting group while the media distance themselves from older media consumers because advertisers pay more for younger viewers/listeners etc. He claims that even though ageing issues are becoming more relevant, they are still widely ignored, and when not, normally negatively stereotyped. In addition, he argues that since the media are still not picking up the positive-orientated “third age and active ageing” theories in the same way as the political parties are, the media have not kept up with the pace of ageing theories, but are still too driven by the negative-orientated theories influenced by liberal and conservative doctrines. This can be understood as a clear criticism of how the media are framing ageing issues, but also as a criticism and rejection of the negative “gerontocracy” and “time bomb” narratives at the foundation of this framing. Davidson emphasises the possibilities rather than the problems connected to

societal ageing, hence being more in line with how political actors frame ageing issues. Interestingly, at the very end, he writes: “elites of both worlds [also within politics] have been slow to adapt, hampered in their response by residual ageist assumptions and fear that in their respective markets that associating with ‘the elderly’ will terminally damage their brand” (174). Knowing that parties have to balance numerous considerations in their campaigning, perhaps the most relevant here being the balance of appealing to both young and old voting groups without repelling any one of them (“age-neutral campaigning”), it seems as if Davidson still wants the parties to do even more to adapt to the changing electoral markets and to attract the Grey Vote. Evidently, he does not perceive the rise of Grey Vote as a problem, merely as an inevitable development which the parties have to face in their strategies to remain electorally powerful. This stands as a vast contrast to other recent contributions, such as Willetts (2010) and Howker/Malik (2010), who portray the rise of the Grey Vote and growing power of the baby-boomer generations at the expense of the young and future generations as a profound problem – because the last group(s) are economically and politically marginalised. According to these latter contributions, political decision-makers should not pander to older voters; rather, they should take active measures to avoid the marginalisation of young voters and future generations and seek to establish more intergenerational justice. What seems to be evident is that subjects such as societal ageing and demographic changes – with reference to media framing, the marketing of politics and policy-making – have gained increased

importance in the literature during recent years, giving these issues the attention they deserve. However, the positions taken by media and political actors stand in strong contrast to each other – and new contributions in the coming years will and should continue to discuss and investigate how media and political actors, in theory and practice, relate to ageing issues.

In investigating issues that until now have not been studied together in such a context, Davidson makes a valuable contribution to the field of demographic changes and ageing in relation to the development of the media attitudes, political strategy and communication, and particularly the interplay between media and politics. This book undoubtedly lays the foundation for future studies. However, I have three criticisms. First, even though the language flows well in most parts of the book, I find it occasionally to be unnecessarily complicated and technical, particularly in the chapters outlining the theories of ageing, age as a political issue, and ageist stereotyping and discrimination. Secondly, Davidson has a tendency to repeat himself. Of course, keeping a narrative thread and consequently making sure that we are not lost in what the book is aiming to do or trying to explain is always a good thing. However, sometimes I find the repetition unnecessary, for instance when he outlines basically the same argument or gives the same explanation over and over again. Two examples are his justification for defining the Grey Vote as all voters aged 55+ instead of all voters aged 65+, and, especially, his reference to the disharmony between how the media in general have framed ageing issues and how the political parties have done it; this is, in various ways, repeated nu-

merous times in the last three chapters. Thirdly and lastly – and this is really an aesthetic criticism – the publishers, and perhaps Davidson himself, should have made the text easier on the eye. Except for chapter ten, which provides the background numbers and quantifies the Grey Vote, the book does not include many tables, figures or illustrations. Obviously, there is no point in including tables, figures or illustrations only for their own sake, but pages filled with text can be tiresome to read. At the very least, the text should have been split into more paragraphs in order to make it more comfortable for the reader.

Scott Davidson (2012): Going Grey: The Mediation of Politics in an Ageing Society. Farnham: Ashgate. 195 pages. ISBN: 9781409433927. Price: £60.

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Claudio López-Guerra: Democracy and Disenfranchisement

Reviewed by Madeleine Pitkin

Even though the topic of enfranchisement might not be considered a defining feature of the contemporary period, debates about whether certain groups of people – such as prisoners or teenagers – should be given the vote are currently taking place all over the

world. In 2011, a voting trial allowed sixteen and seventeen year olds from certain selected municipalities to vote in the local elections in Norway, and the United Kingdom continues to resist pressure from the European Court of Human Rights to allow its prisoners to vote.

Claudio López-Guerra finds that most of these debates take for granted that suffrage is a fundamental individual entitlement. In his seven-chapter-long book, the author first contests this largely accepted notion and presents a system in which most of a population would be randomly excluded as a

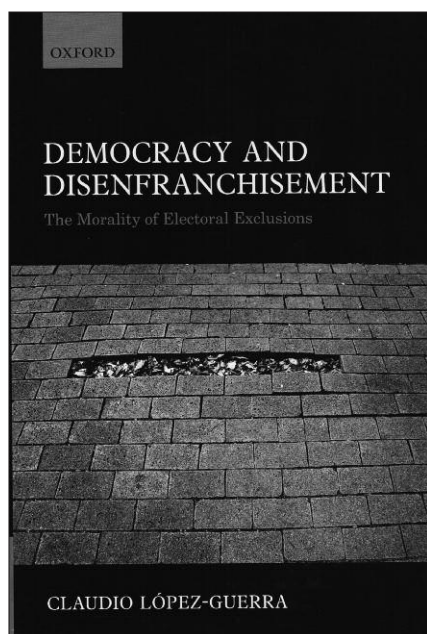
morally acceptable alternative to universal suffrage, before contesting normal conceptions about who may or may not vote and for what reasons.

In the introduction, López-Guerra describes the book's purpose. He intends for it "to shed light on [...] the choice of rules that determine membership of the electorate" (11). He introduces the readers to the "Conventional Suffrage Doctrine" accepted in most countries. The doctrine is composed of the notions that excluding sane residents and citizens residing in another country cannot be justified, whereas excluding minors, the mentally impaired, resident non-citizens and those convicted of felony charges can be (3). He states his intention to reverse these normal ideas; the negative thesis of the book is that the doctrine should be rejected.

In the second part of the introduction, the author defends his plan to achieve his goal through a problem-driven study, by presenting its advantages over a traditional theory-driven study. For example, a problem-driven study draws its information from relevant and ethical resources, rather than relying on abstract theories and principles. Also, unlike a theory-driven study, a problem-driven inquiry does not presuppose that a solution is canned inside a particular philosophical framework.

López-Guerra presents his *enfranchisement lottery* in the next section of the book, by which, before each election, the majority of a population would be randomly excluded, leaving a smaller but demographically identical electorate to that which would exist if a country were to employ the method of universal suffrage. These remaining electors would be required to take part in a competence-building process before being allowed to cast their votes.

The competence-building process is not intended to ensure that all voters have the minimum voting ability to be able to cast a vote; rather, it is intended to give voters "optimal voting competence". By this, the author means that the electors are optimally informed about the choices on the ballot. He rejects the deep-seated idea that it is never acceptable to prevent sane adults from voting, because he holds the belief that optimally-informed voters would make "better" choices and "bad" outcomes would thus be less likely. He presents six potential objections to the lottery. Having rejected each objection, he concludes that the lottery is morally acceptable in certain contexts. We are not required to adopt the enfranchise-



ment lottery in these favourable contexts, but it would be morally acceptable to do so. Chapter three deals with the enfranchisement of children and the mentally disabled. It is argued that we lack empirical evidence to support the notions that young people and the mentally impaired would be influenced by their guardians or that they lack sufficient interest in politics and that they would make random or poor choices at the ballot. Such evidence could be obtained by enfranchising these groups. López-Guerra's second argument in support of their enfranchisement is that, since many members of these groups have the minimum necessary moral and cognitive capacity to vote, fairness requires their inclusion.

The author considers some of the arguments against the enfranchisement of minors and the mentally disabled but finds them to be lacking. One such argument against the enfranchisement of children is that, since the treatment is universal (i.e. everyone is disenfranchised until adulthood), it is acceptable. López-Guerra disputes this claim: "That a certain (mis)treatment applies to everyone and eventually ends does not make it just" (70).

He argues that, although there is no argument to support such a claim, even if it is assumed for the sake of argument that the enfranchisement of minors would have a negative effect in the short term, it could aid democracy in the long term by "creating a more engaged and public-spirited citizenry" (67).

The fourth chapter is concerned with the issue of disenfranchisement of non-residents and non-citizens. The author reverses the

widely accepted idea that non-residents should be allowed to vote in their home country but that non-citizens may not vote in their country of residence. The distinction between resident and citizen is not clear-cut and, except that in the cases of taxation and military service, residents of a country are subject to its governance and laws whereas non-resident citizens are not. Non-citizen residents are thus more deserving of a vote. López-Guerra considers and contends several other arguments in support of the enfranchisement of non-resident citizens, concluding that we are not morally obliged to give them the right to vote.

He also considers the principle of affected interests, which prescribes the enfranchisement of everyone whose interests could be affected by the election of a political group. The author accepts the moral principle but rejects the institutional principle of enfranchising all affected interests. He contends the proposed cross-voting method, by which individuals could vote in any election which affects their interest, and instead promotes a model for federalisation. A higher authority could be democratically appointed to deal with common affairs.

In the next section, the author argues against the disenfranchisement of imprisoned convicts. They are, he argues, still a part of society and their basic interests are dependent on decisions made by elected bodies. Epistemic arguments, and arguments concerning respect, punishment and democratic identity are found to be lacking. A difference between being denied the right to vote and being denied the opportunity to vote is distinguished and, since conditions in many of the world's prisons are unsuitable for holding free and fair elections, the author admits that it may be appropriate to deny prisoners the opportunity to vote in many cases.

Finally, democratic theory related to the topic is explored. Democracy's prescriptions are very general and give no guidance as to who should make decisions. The author concludes that democratic theory is not helpful in settling the controversial issues dealt with in the book.

The book is well written and accessible. The relevant topic and the approach to the topic mean that the book is of interest and comprehensible not just to philosophers and political scientists, but also to individuals with less background knowledge of the theme of suffrage. The author's register, and particularly his choice of vocabulary, also promotes ease of reading. Topic-specific concepts and

vocabulary are explicitly explained. However, López-Guerra does sometimes fail to clarify terms. Throughout the book, he refers to “good” and “bad” electoral choices and outcomes. For example, on page 32 it is stated that “a well-informed electorate would make the incidence of bad electoral results less likely.” What is meant by a “bad electoral result” is not explained. The reader is left to wonder whether he is referring to an outcome that is morally or democratically “bad”, such as a dictatorial party gaining power, or simply an outcome ill-suited to the interests of the majority of the population. Two more examples are from page 64: “make bad choices” and “the best option on the ballot”. The best option on the ballot could be the option that would most represent the electors’ individual interests, the interests of their age cohort, or the interests of the population, depending on from which concern we consider the term “best”. Alternatively, it could also be the least corrupt option.

Occasionally, some clarification of these ambiguities is offered. When considering the

potential voting tendencies of children, López-Guerra suggests that a poor choice from a minor might be “inappropriate from the perspective of an uncontroversial normative standard”. Yet he also argues that even a choice which is inappropriate on these grounds is not “dismissible ex ante as clearly unacceptable”, without explaining why.

A further criticism is that the book’s proposals sometimes lack detail. This is deliberate: the author states on page 25 that if he were to “present a detailed version of the lottery, chances are few people would accept it.” His goal is only to convince his readers that the enfranchisement lottery is morally acceptable, not to implement it, so it is understandable that he does not want to dissuade people on the basis of the finer points. This deliberate vagueness, however, can be frustrating. Some of the important issues not tackled are the size of the group of electors, the method of gathering a random sample of the population, and what the competence-building process would involve. López-Guerra asks us to consider the en-

franchisement lottery under the most favourable conditions, but it might be helpful to know how and if it is possible that these conditions could come to exist.

López-Guerra argues his case passionately; his arguments are balanced. He considers objections to all of his proposals and arguments and admits to their failings. In chapter two, for example, he admits that potential undesirable corruptive effects may be strong enough to reject the lottery, and that the enfranchisement lottery is less transparent than the current system of universal suffrage. The book incorporates literature from around the world and from many different disciplines, including history, philosophy and political science. However, the referencing is clumsy, and there are some mistakes in the bibliography (Beckmann, Calvino, Daniels, Hariss, Holyoake, Kahneman).

Claudio López-Guerra (2014): Democracy and Disenfranchisement: The Morality of Electoral Exclusions. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 189 pages. ISBN: 978-0198705789. Price: £50.

Hélène Landemore: Democratic Reason

Reviewed by Madeleine Pitkin

Landemore’s new book argues that democracy, the form of rule in Western nations, is valuable based on the idea of collective intelligence. It presents arguments supporting the collective intelligence of the people, which Landemore calls “Democratic Reason”. The book aims to convince readers, including those who may not share Western faith in democracy, that democracy epistemically outperforms any form of non-democratic rule. The book has eight chapters, a conclusion, an index and a bibliography.

In the introductory chapter, Landemore introduces the very concept of democracy, which she defines as “an inclusive decision making procedure” (10). The author discusses the originality of her book, which stems from her original argument that explicitly connects the epistemic properties of a liberal society and those of democratic de-

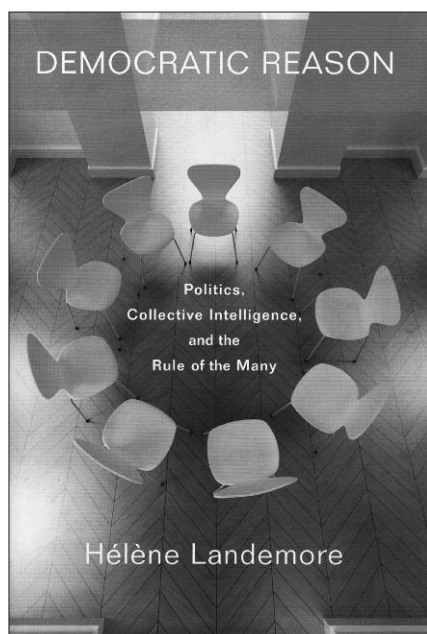
cision-making procedures. Landemore states her intention to defend “collective intelligence” in favour of democracy, on the basis that with collective intelligence comes “cognitive diversity” (the existence of different ways of seeing the world (5)), a property which she attributes to good political decisions. She illustrates her epistemic argument for democracy with an applied maze model. Chapter two illustrates the notion of the only-recent acceptance of democracy in the Western world. It considers the deep-seated anti-democratic prejudice shared by many contemporary political philosophers against the rule of the “dumb many”, and provides four positive and four epistemic reproaches to such prejudice. The positive reproaches are that citizens are irrational, citizens are apathetic, citizens are ignorant, and democratic decisions are impossible and meaningless. Turning now to the normative approaches,

Landemore considers the elitist theories of democracy, the participatory theories of democracy, the deliberative theories of democracy, and finally epistemic theories. Also in chapter two, the author carries out a critical literature survey focusing on work by José Luis Martí (2006) and David Estlund (2008), among other democratic theorists. The author continues to think critically about other work in the third chapter, which is dedicated to a history of ideas about collective intelligence. Landemore distinguishes two mechanisms for the production of collective intelligence: deliberation and aggregation. She separates the historical thinkers into two groups according to these mechanisms: “talkers”, who have deduced that democratic reason is a function of individual reason, and “counters”, who focus on the epistemic properties of judgement aggregation involving large numbers of people.

However, rather than grouping together historical ideas accordingly, she provides a traditional chronological history of ideas beginning with Protagoras' (arguably) first epistemic argument, and considering thought from several time, spatial and cultural perspectives.

Over the following four chapters, which comprise the empirical part of the book, the author draws upon and exploits Hong and Page's investigations, which establish the claim that cognitive diversity is, in many cases, more important than individual ability. In the fourth chapter, which continues the history of ideas, Landemore presents her original argument for why inclusive deliberation is epistemically greater than less-inclusive deliberation. She clarifies the meanings of, and discusses, the various types of deliberation including individual, collective, classical and inclusive deliberation, and discusses whether voting is a necessary complement of deliberation or a sign of its shortcomings. The theoretical epistemic qualities of deliberation are presented and illustrated with concrete examples. The author also demonstrates her support for the "Diversity Trumps Ability Theorem" developed by Hong and Page; the idea that "a randomly selected collection of problem solvers outperforms a collection of the best individual problem solvers" (102). Finally, she suggests and discusses the respective advantages of three different ways to ensure cognitive diversity: random lotteries, citizen assemblies, and deliberative polls.

Chapter five focuses on the objections to the idea that democratic deliberation has epistemic properties. The chapter is split into two sections. In the first part of the chapter, the author acknowledges problems raised in objections to her argument and proposes solutions to such problems. The second part is dedicated to a theoretical response to the empirical challenge to the epistemic properties of deliberation, which the author developed in collaboration with Hugo Mercier: the new psychological "Argumentative Theory of Reasoning", which theorises that the aim of reasoning is to find and evaluate reasons "so that individuals can convince other people and evaluate their arguments" (124). Chapter six addresses three accounts of the epistemic properties of judgement aggregation through majority rule, each of which suggests a general epistemic inferiority of pure judgement aggregation compared with pure deliberation. Landemore argues that majority rule is task specific and should be



seen both as a way of settling on a collective decision when time is of the essence for deliberation and, thanks to the notion of collective intelligence, as a way of turning imperfect individual predictions into accurate collective ones (146). This, the author argues, makes majority rule a supplement to, and not a rival of, deliberation. There are three appendixes to chapter six. The first involves graphs to illustrate how the probability that a majority is right rises as the number of voters increases. The second illustrates how group predictive competence emerges from negatively correlated judgements with an example adapted from Hong and Page, and the final appendix gives information on information markets, a market-based procedure for aggregating the wisdom of crowds. Landemore defends her decision to include this final appendix on the basis that they are interesting, although they are not an alternative to majority rule. The seventh chapter focuses on the objections to the claimed epistemic properties of majority rule and claimed epistemic judgements. Section one is dedicated to a general objection to the epistemic approach to voting because it fails to take seriously the idea that politics is about the aggregation of ideas. Section two deals with the problem of informational free riding and the voting paradox, and finally section three refutes that citizens suffer from systematic biases which are multiplied at the collective level. Chapter eight is concerned with political cognitivism. Landemore attempts to convince the reader that the idea that there are right or wrong answers to some political questions and that the right answers can be

deduced, or at least approximated, by a political decision mechanism is at least plausible. The chapter distinguishes between weak (a decision is good as long as it avoids major harms) and strong (more substantive) political cognitivism, as well as culturalist and universal political cognitivism, and considers the implications of each of these different types. It presents Philip Tetler's attempt to quantify good political judgement, explaining his experiment and results. However, it also considers the anti-authoritarian objection to political cognitivism.

The author concludes her book by returning to the maze model of the introductory chapter and considering its limits in greater detail. There are, according to Landemore, good theoretical reasons that the rule of many is better than the rule of the few, and there is a lack of evidence to suggest that democracies do systematically worse than other regimes which would be needed to refute the claim that democracy is the smartest form of rule, although it would be good to support the epistemic argument with empirical proof connecting existing democracy and valued outcomes. She iterates the preconditions of democratic reason: cognitive diversity, liberalism, and a liberal and democratic education. Democratic reason must be distributed across time as well as space in order for it to include the ability of people to learn from the past, and democracies must thus have institutions to store knowledge and memory.

The number of concrete examples which Landemore uses to demonstrate almost every abstract term, such as the maze model she uses to illustrate the epistemic argument for democracy, makes for interesting reading and assists understanding. However, the author assumes a certain level of background knowledge from her readers, and her lack of definition or explanation of some complicated concepts could make the book quite inaccessible for a reader without an in-depth knowledge of the subject.

The book is well-organised in many ways, for example in that it has helpful headings and sub-headings, and that each chapter is summarised in its introduction and has a conclusion; however, sometimes the way the author chooses to lay out her ideas detracts from ease of chronological reading. In chapter six, readers are invited to read chapter eight for a defence of "moral facts", which are discussed and applied to quite a significant effect prior to the defence of such application (146). Similarly, on page 152, the

author refers to “incompetent-pace contrived rational choice theory predictions (which I also address in the next chapter),” a fairly abstract principle which could have perhaps been better explained fully at first encounter.

The book strives to be balanced throughout. Landemore considers various counterarguments to each of her assertions or beliefs, which, when rebutted, add to the strength of her own argument. However, she does not always elaborate or counter such counterarguments. For example, on page 39, Landemore argues “in spite of”, not counter to,

Sunstein’s assertion that all groups will have some kind of exchange of opinion and are thus deliberative. She does, however, admit to the limits of her supporting arguments: for example, on page 66, that Aristotle and Machiavelli do not explain what makes them confident about alleged immunity of groups to passions, compared with single rulers or princes.

In chapter four, the author states that “representative democracy so far remains the only option for our mass societies” (90). However, this assumption is not referenced or supported, and is something that may be

disputed, particularly outside of the Western world and even within it. For example, Claudio López-Guerra’s book *Democracy and Disenfranchisement* (2014) is dedicated to convincing readers of the plausibility of an election process not involving universal suffrage and is a response to many works on the topic of universal suffrage taking for granted that voting is a universal and fundamental right.

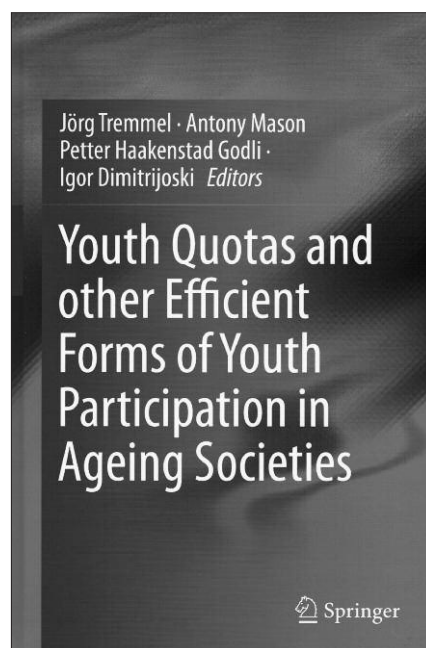
Hélène Landemore (2013): Democratic Reason. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 279 pages. ISBN 978-0691155654. Price: £27.95

Jörg Tremmel/Antony Mason/Petter Haakenstad Godli/Igor Dimitrijoski (eds.): Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies

Reviewed by Lena Sommerfeld

The anthology *Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies* deals, as the title suggests, with the challenge of demographic change in Western countries and its implications for the youth. One of the main questions is how the participation of young people may be supported and secured. Eleven articles, including introduction and afterword, discuss possible ways to increase young people’s presence in elections, as well as in public offices, and the problems that come with this. The main topic, youth quotas, has not been discussed much before – neither in politics nor in scholarly debates. In this work, the authors approach forms of participation from the point of view of different disciplines including political science, philosophy and sociology.

The introduction to the book lays out the general problems that are created by an ageing society. In addition, some definitions – for example for different types of quotas – are given. These clarifications ease the reader into the topic of youth quotas and provide a useful background when reading the other contributions. The anthology then presents some of the issues concerning youth participation. While quotas are the main topic of the first few articles, some other forms of



youth participation receive a discussion as well. In this brief summary, three articles, by Juliana Bidadanure, Ivo Wallimann-Helmer, and Marcel Wissenburg, will be omitted, since they are reprinted in this journal (albeit in shortened versions).

In the first article, *What Do Quotas Do? Reflections on the Ubiquity and Justice of Quotas*, Radostin Kaloianov explains the purpose of quotas in general and only touches on the

topic of youth quotas lightly. Kaloianov lists arguments for and against quotas, while saying that they have become a vital part of our society. Whenever a choice between people has to be made, quotas are applied. This is described as meritocratic allocation (8), Kaloianov’s first dimension of quotas. The second is a formal quota which can be implemented for normative reasons. He argues that such quotas for the disadvantaged can improve justice in their treatment. By means of such a quota, equal opportunities for different groups of people can be created (10). Many opponents of a normative quota, according to Kaloianov, argue that candidates for certain positions are not as qualified as others because of their age or race. This way, the merit principle prevalent in our society, i.e., the already existing quota, impedes minorities from being successful because of their discriminated-against attributes. This so-called “meritocracy” implies the marginalisation of certain groups of people in our society and preserves the asymmetrical power relations and oppression. A formal quota would neutralise these tendencies and prejudices and make positions available to people irrespective of their background. Kaloianov then briefly examines the implementation of a youth quota. He concludes

that not having to be involved in politics is a privilege that young people have. In times of the acceleration of the life-cycle, the protection from being an adult is threatened enough. A youth quota would only worsen this development and cause the young to grow up even faster. Youth quotas, if implemented at all, could only be imaginable if they addressed talented young people who explicitly wish to participate in politics instead of all young people (18).

Like many other authors of the anthology, Tobias Hainz calls to mind many of the problems that come with the democratic change, such as the marginalisation of young people. In his contribution, he seeks to explore whether youth quotas can be seen as discrimination against other ages and thus as a form of ageism, and whether a quota can be justified.

In the author's opinion, demographic change could diminish the interest that decision makers take in the concerns of young people. This way, young people would become marginalised morally and numerically. Although one might think this is the reason why the representation of young people should be secured by a quota, the author lays this out differently. Under these circumstances, he thinks that other minorities, such as atheists and homosexuals, would deserve a quota, too. He also questions the importance of young people's opinions over others and argues that young people are not, in themselves, an interest group like other minorities. Because of this, there is no need for special representation of young people. Furthermore, young people are no formerly discriminated-against group and therefore are in need of compensation. The author recalls, however, that young people do have the right to participate in politics, even before they graduate. This militates against a quota. Also, he argues that demographic change is unintentional (31) and therefore does not need to be compensated.

His conclusion is that youth quotas come up to ageism and are therefore morally not acceptable. Through a quota, the elderly would be disadvantaged and thus unduly discriminated against (34).

In another chapter, Anja Karnein and Dominic Roser discuss youth participation from an environmental perspective by asking *Saving the Planet by Empowering the Young?* This article puts an emphasis on the possible negative aspects of the demographic change and how to counteract them. It is presumed that the high number of elderly

people participating in politics might result in short-term policies. The idea, presented by the authors at the beginning, is that empowering the young would lead to more idealistic policies.

Karnein and Roser stress that a quota should not be an end in itself. Lowering the voting age should be justified by the right reasons, such as enhancing democratic legitimacy, but not in order to meet the goals of a particular agenda (80). An argument against youth quotas is that, unlike gender quotas, they do not empower a formerly discriminated-against group. What is more, a youth quota would not automatically guarantee a better representation of young interests. It is not only young people who can address topics relevant to the youth, such as the environment. Seeing that all currently living people are similarly affected by environmental changes, it is not a topic that can be limited to one age group (86).

Consequently, the authors state that age does not allow a conclusion to be drawn about the kind of policies that would be addressed by certain people. Only if there were a proven connection between the ages of the members of parliament and voter turnout might a youth quota be considered. Also, to favour one group of people because of special interests, or in this case their age, does not square with democratic ideals (89/90). Rafael Ziegler's article *Toward All Voices, from all Levels and in Their Own Ways? Discussion of the Youth Quota Proposal as an Incremental Policy Innovation for Sustainability* also makes youth quotas the subject of discussion and focuses on the quota as a means of making politics more sustainable. As was asked in the preceding chapter, he discusses whether young people are an important key to a sustainable politics. The second question is whether a youth quota might be a useful instrument in order to achieve this goal.

The responsibility of the youth for sustainability is split into three dimensions. The first is the responsibility of current generations for future generations. Ziegler argues that current generations could be useful for the sake of future generations. Youth quotas and their tendency towards sustainable policies, he expects, would 'automatically' lead to intergenerational justice. As an institutional addition, a 'future chamber' could secure sustainability. The second aspect is about distant generations, where he takes the focus off from quotas. For him, youth participation beyond a quota becomes im-

portant when the responsibility for distant generations is in dispute. Simply having a quota doesn't suffice for giving the young a voice. When talking about justice between overlapping generations, the quota becomes important again. Young people, through their participation in parliaments and elections, are expected to increase the chance for social change, thus leading to different policies. Nevertheless, the possibilities for the young would remain limited without institutional changes (100).

In the context of a project about participation, Ziegler then discusses possible ideas about the consequences of youth quotas. In his opinion, youth quotas would create young party backbenchers. The hierarchical structures of political parties would deter them from contributing experiences in a traditional way and lead to new ways of participation in parliaments and parties. Furthermore, he argues that the quotas would have to be extended to lower levels to be more effective, because only equal opportunities everywhere would deliver basic justice for all age groups (106).

Encouraging and Supporting Children's Voices by Sarah-Jane Conrad, Claire Cassidy, and Christian Mathis, deals with one of the arguments that is often used against youth participation. Maturity, and the degree of knowledge that goes with it, is often presented as a condition for participating in elections. Conrad, Cassidy, and Mathis describe philosophical projects that have taken place and enabled children to learn how to think critically, as well as how to discuss philosophical and political issues. The main question the authors ask is why children are not seen as full members of society and whether this does not contradict social justice and theories of the good life (111), thereby creating a power imbalance between children and adults. In order to recognise children as "beings in their becoming" (113), the power imbalance between them and others would have to change. Projects like Philosophy with Children, and especially the Community of Philosophical Inquiry prove that children can form ideas on what the ideal society would look like to them. They also showed that justice and equality are key components for a good life to the children. Philosophical and political thinking is, according to the authors, not reserved for adults, but can be used by children as well so as to create solutions for existing problems. Especially projects like the ones above would help the process along.

Therefore, children should be able to participate in politics and adults should enable children to speak up for themselves and, furthermore, try to profit from their opinions. The article *Democracy or Epistocracy? Age as a Criterion of Voter Eligibility* by Jörg Tremmel and James Wilhelm supports the argument that not letting young people vote is irreconcilable with the normative self-understanding of modern democracies.

During all periods of history, the right to vote has only been open to exclusive groups of the population. The concept of 'epistocracy' (rule by those in possession of political judgement) was established during classical antiquity and includes the rule of philosophers over the common people. The term 'epistocracy', however, can also be used for other systems in which voting is limited. The reasons for the exclusion of certain groups throughout history included income, education, gender, and age. The main questions asked by the authors are how people are kept from their right to vote and who, if anyone, has the qualification to make such a decision. The danger of excluding people from the right to vote is that they are not politically represented and are easily left out when it comes to important decisions.

The authors then go on to specify the reasons that are used as excuses not to change the voting age, and invalidate them. Maturity and political judgement seem to be the main arguments and become void when considering that there are no tests to verify other voter's qualifications. Their suggestion on how to implement the right to vote for people of all ages is by means of a registration (138). This way, they argue, there would be no general limit to the voting age and, if minors have an interest in voting, they can officially register and participate in the elections simply by opting in. Other solutions that are mentioned include the representation of children by their parents. This idea might be an alternative, too, but would have to be regulated in order to ensure the right to vote in secret and to avoid abuse. The conclusion to draw from this article is that any age limit would be a form of epistocracy and therefore needs to be removed from our democracy.

Petter Haakenstad Godli, in his article *Giving 16-Year-Olds the Vote: Experiences from Norway*, presents the results of a Norwegian trial which was conducted in order to examine whether the voting age should be lowered or not, and how this empirical evidence could influence further reforms. Ac-

cording to Godli, the discussion about lowering the voting age has been mostly normative in the past because there were few practical experiences that could be used (149). Because of this situation, Norway decided to conduct a trial in which 16- and 17-year olds were able to vote. The results from this election, it was thought, should allow for more informed discussions about the implementation of a lower voting age.

All of the arguments against suffrage reform are also part of the discussion in the European Voting Age Debate, which offers the framework for Godli's piece, and which include legal and constitutional practice arguments, as well as democracy and political maturity arguments. Godli also presents the problems that would come with lowering the voting age, such as jeopardising the harmonisation of voting age, the age of eligibility and the age of majority. Furthermore, he argues that a majority of people in Norway was and remains opposed to lowering the voting age. Arguments in favour of suffrage reform are that the democratic legitimacy could be increased and the political marginalisation of youth avoided (158). Godli presents more issues and facts describing the turnout for the trial and the studies that have been conducted. Finally, he concludes that these trial elections had a positive effect on youth participation in Norway (171) and that the decision of the government on whether the voting age should be lowered or not should be based on evidence that can be deduced by this or an additional trial.

All in all, this anthology can be described as well-written and fairly balanced. Especially given the absence of research in this area, the reader gets a good idea on how youth quotas might be implemented and what sets them apart from other forms of quotas. However, not all of the articles fit the title. The phrase "efficient forms of youth participation" gives rise to the suspicion that further ideas and strategies to enhance the participation of young people might be presented. Instead, the discussions are limited to the arguments for and against quotas and justifications for the participation of youth. A concern for efficiency can only be ascribed to two contributions which evaluate whether a youth quota could make politics more sustainable – so efficiency is limited to the achievement of a certain goal here.

Those articles in particular seem very one-dimensional because youth quotas were looked at with certain preconceptions. It

seems rather harsh to designate young people to a specific field of politics and to not leave it open, at least in principle, where they themselves might decide to get involved. Whenever regulation for a quota is implemented, young people deserve to be given a voice, and not to be restricted in their participation because of a limited agenda.

Since the topic of youth quotas has not been researched very widely, there is probably not too much data out there on which to base one's arguments. Many arguments – for example why sustainable politics might be promoted by the young – are not backed up by facts, but mostly work on assumptions. Depending on the author, the same arguments are used for and against quotas and contradict each other. For example, Ziegler maintains that young people are interested in sustainable issues. Karnein and Roser, on the other hand, cannot detect a connection between interests and age. The problem here is not that there are different opinions, but that these opinions are based on assumptions and can be bent into the shape the authors need. By working with mostly empty assumptions, the results might turn out not to be transferable.

Following these general comments on the anthology, some articles will now be picked out and subjected to further critical scrutiny. The articles summarised above were of varying quality. While all were informative and generally well-written, there were parts that lacked clarity.

Ziegler starts out nicely by dividing the influence on the participation of young people in the three categories mentioned above. This illustrates well on how many levels different generations can be considered. While the beginning was comprehensible, the article then continues to become less so. Towards the end, as described before, Ziegler seems to build arguments on many assumptions and does not back them up empirically, which makes it hard to retrace his steps one-by-one. He says himself that the project he conducted, a "River Parliament", is not comparable to youth quotas. Notwithstanding, he draws an analogy to them and bases his arguments on the comparison, which seems not very convincing.

Later in the anthology, Godli gives a good example of how a trial on voting ages can be organised and that it might be necessary for some states to have empirical evidence in order to implement suffrage reform. This aspect could be very interesting for further discussions. Unfortunately though, his article

lacks structure. He opens up questions in one paragraph of the article that are not addressed directly. This way, one ends up having to go back and forth to search for the paragraph where he discusses those ideas, and one easily loses the thread of what he wants to convey.

Youth quotas are a very controversial issue. This is all the more reason to try to grasp the main ideas and form an informed position based on them. The anthology at hand lays the groundwork for further discussions and enables the reader to get to know the subject, as well as to engage with different ideas about youth participation in general.

Jörg Tremmel et al. (eds.) (2015): Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies. Cham: Springer. 188 pages. ISBN: 978-3-319-13430-7. Price: £90.00.

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