The Future of Representative Democracy

*The Future of Representative Democracy* poses important questions about representation, representative democracy and its future. Inspired by the last major investigation of the subject by Hanna Pitkin over four decades ago, this ambitious volume fills a major gap in the literature by examining the future of representative forms of democracy in terms of present-day trends and past theories of representative democracy. Aware of the pressing need for clarifying key concepts and institutional trends, the volume aims to break down barriers among disciplines and to establish an interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars. The contributors emphasise that representative democracy and its future is a subject of pressing scholarly concern and public importance. Paying close attention to the unfinished, two-century-old relationship between democracy and representation, this book offers a fresh perspective on current problems and dilemmas of representative democracy and the possible future development of new forms of democratic representation.

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The Future of Representative Democracy

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These reflections on representative democracy and its future are a product of the first systematic research programme on the subject for several decades. Planned during 2006, the framework of *The Future of Representative Democracy* project was first discussed in detail at an international colloquium held in December 2007, at the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB). Following months of intensive correspondence and exchange of materials, the contributors met for a second time, during October 2008, at the Lisbon headquarters of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The Lisbon discussions proved vital in clarifying agreements and disagreements, and in re-shaping each contribution and the book as a whole. The end result we believe to be distinctive on four counts. First, this book is marked by a strong sense of the historicity of representative democracy, and of the general importance of the past for the present and future of democracy in representative form. Second, the book displays a strong awareness of the pressing need for clarifying key concepts such as representation, citizenship and democracy. Third, the contributors to the volume recognise the genuine advantages of breaking down barriers among research disciplines, as well as the utility of fostering a dialogue among scholars of political sociology and political theory, electoral studies and international relations, comparative political science and media and gender studies. Finally, the contributors to this volume are gripped by a strong sense that the subject of representative democracy and its future matters – that the neglected topic of democracy and representation is of worldwide scholarly and political importance.

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