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978-1-107-06296-2 - Freedom is Power: Liberty Through Political Representation

Lawrence Hamilton

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Freedom is Power

Using the history of political thought and real-world political contexts, including South Africa and the recent global financial crisis, this book argues that power is integral to freedom. It demonstrates how freedom depends upon power, and contends that liberty for all citizens is best maintained if conceived as power through political representation. Against those who de-politicise freedom through a romantic conception of 'the people' and faith in supposedly independent judicial and political institutions, Lawrence Hamilton argues that real modern freedom can only be achieved through representative and participative mechanisms that limit domination and empower classes and groups who become disempowered in the conflicts that inevitably pervade politics. This is a sophisticated contribution to contemporary political theory that will be of interest to scholars and students of history, politics, philosophy, economics, sociology, development studies and southern African studies.

LAWRENCE HAMILTON is Professor of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, and an Affiliated Lecturer in Political Theory in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *The Political Philosophy of Needs* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

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As the twenty-first century begins, major new political challenges have arisen at the same time as some of the most enduring dilemmas of political association remain unresolved. The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War reflect a victory for democratic and liberal values, yet in many of the Western countries that nurtured those values there are severe problems of urban decay, class and racial conflict, and failing political legitimacy. Enduring global injustice and inequality seem compounded by environmental problems, disease, the oppression of women, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and the relentless growth of the world's population. In such circumstances, the need for creative thinking about the fundamentals of human political association is manifest. This new series in contemporary political theory is needed to foster such systematic normative reflection.

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For Mairéad

Le grá agus buíochas

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Libertas suis stat viribus

Freedom is to be in one's own power

(Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, Book XXXV, Ch 32, 11.)

Er will unter sich keinen Sklaven sehn

He wants no servants under him

Und über sich keinen Herrn

And no boss over his head

(Bertolt Brecht, part of second verse of *Einheitsfrontlied* [1934/1935],
in Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. IV: *Gedichte* (Frankfurt:
Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967), p. 653.

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that
respects and enhances the freedom of others.

(Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson
Mandela* (London: Macdonald Purnell, 1995), p. 617.)

Without representation, no democratic politics.

(F. R. Ankersmit, *Political Representation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University
Press, 2002), p. 115.)

The only prerequisite [for demanding the right courses of action from
those in decision-making positions in the economy] is that you are
willing to remove those rose-tinted glasses that neo-liberal ideologies
like you to wear every day. The glasses make the world look simple and
pretty. But lift them off and stare at the clear harsh light of reality.

(Ha-Joon Chang, *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism* (London:
Allen Lane, 2010), p. xvi.)

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