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Is there a sound democratic case for raising the membership of young people in political parties and trade unions through descriptive representation?

by Thomas Tozer

Abstract: Young people are seriously under-represented in both political parties and trade unions. I argue that a dependent conception of democracy interested in substantive equality, not merely formal equality, would support addressing this problem through descriptive representation. The essay begins by considering the requirements of democracy, and whether these can support a case for descriptive representation. Although descriptive representation entails democratic costs, there is a contingent case for group representation that is consistent with the aims of democracy. Young people, moreover, satisfy this case in terms of membership of political parties – but less so in the case of trade unions. Finally, the essay considers practical methods for improving young people's representation in these.

Keywords: Democracy, Descriptive representation, Substantive equality, Political parties, Trade unions

Introduction

Membership of a political party or a trade union bestows a form of power upon the member, giving her an opportunity to influence politics. Indeed, members often exert significant influence on the party. Depending on its rules, members might select or help to select the party's candidates or leaders. They may present new suggestions for policy, as well as sharing views which reflect those of the electorate – an oft-cited benefit of membership for the party is that it will gain from policy ideas which mirror the needs and wishes of the electorate, with the members acting like scouts for these (Kölln/Polk 2017: 20). Finally, party membership is often a requirement for standing for a party position, and thus for gaining political office: future politicians will arise from the respective membership bases of parties. Similarly, by joining a trade union – an organisation of workers who have come together to protect and improve their employment conditions – it becomes possible to affect its agenda and priorities, suggest new ideas, bring the views of the electorate to bear on its policies, and so forth. In particular, membership of a trade union allows the member to influence her own and others' working conditions, such as their wages, pensions and holiday allowance, by influencing what the trade union itself is seeking, and how it intends to obtain it. Moreover, political parties function as a link between the electorate and the government, safeguarding the legitimacy of the latter by ensuring that it is responsive to the concerns of the former (Keman 2014; see also Dalton et al. 2011; Müller/Katz 1997). Trade unions, on the other hand, function to look after the interests of workers, and to protect them from exploitation or maltreatment at the hands of their employer.

It is therefore obvious that the extent to which different groups are represented in political parties and trade unions will have im-

portant political implications. There are certain groups the under-representation of which would raise concerns about whether the group's voice is being heard in the representative assembly, and its views and interests adequately represented; i.e. which would have implications for representative democracy.

There are certain groups the under-representation of which would raise concerns about whether the group's voice is being heard in the representative assembly, and its views and interests adequately represented.

Young people are such a group. Data from two European surveys, from the late 1980s to 2000s, reveal a gap between the age of party members and of the general population that has been present for a long time, but which has grown larger in recent decades (Scarrow/Gezgor 2010: 829f.). A general tendency for membership of political parties to decline has been present across most European countries, but it has hit the young – who are often the first to express frustration with the political system – especially hard (Bruter/Harrison 2009: 1260f.). Consider the UK, for example. Among the UK's main political parties, only a very small percentage of members are less than 25 years old: in 1990, the percentage ranged from 1% of the Conservatives to 12% of the Green Party (Davis 1990: 101). More recent figures on the membership of British political parties, according to a recent study, are no less alarming: though 18-24 year-olds make up about one-tenth of the population, they make up just one-twentieth of the membership base of the four biggest political parties – Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and the SNP – varying between 4% of Labour's membership base and 6% of the Liberal Democrats'. This age-group, in comparison to others, makes up by far the smallest proportion these parties' members. In contrast, over-65s make up about 18% of the UK population but comprise 44% of Conservative members and around 30% of the other parties' membership bases. As the authors of the study write: "None of the parties...has got that much to write home about when it comes to young people." (Bale et al. 2018: 8f.)

Similarly, while union membership has been in significant decline over the past three decades (The Economist 2015), it has declined disproportionately among the young and now stands at a particularly low level for this group.¹ For example, in the UK in autumn 2000, union membership stood at 10% of 16-24 year-old workers, compared with 30% of workers aged 25-65. Figures from 1983 show that this gap has widened: back then, the rate in Britain was 34% within the first group and 54% within the second. In 1975 the respective figures were 43% and 58% (Blanden/Machin 2003: 393). In 2015 just 9% of workers aged 16-24 were

members of a union, compared with 20% of those aged 25-34 and 33% of those aged 50 or over (Full Fact 2017).

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This essay asks whether the under-representation of young people in political parties and trade unions poses a democratic problem and, if so, how it should be addressed. It begins by examining the requirements of democracy and considering whether descriptive representation, which requires that representatives are from the descriptive or “group” that they represent, would support these requirements. I argue that although descriptive representation entails democratic costs, there is a *contingent* (or “contextual”) case for descriptive or “group” representation that is consistent with the aims of democracy. Young people, moreover, satisfy this case; and the case also holds for membership of political parties and trade unions. The essay concludes by considering what actions are thereby required by democracy in order to boost the membership of young people in political parties and trade unions.

What is required by democracy?

Democracy was defined by Rousseau (2008 [1762]: 67) as the political form that arises when the whole, or the majority, of government power is bestowed upon the people. In a similar vein, Phillips (1995: 27-30) distinguishes two principles of democracy: popular control and popular equality. The first requires that it is “the people” who control politics; government must not only be “for the people” but also “by the people”. The second requires that every citizen must have an equal level of power to determine political outcomes, as expressed by the old dictum “one person, one vote”; the days of John Stuart Mill’s proposals of multiple votes for the more educated are long gone. Equality, therefore, is the basis of a democratic division of power (Brown 1950: 47). “No system”, Phillips (1995: 27) writes, “can claim to be democratic if it does not recognize the legitimacy of these two goals”. The two principles can in fact be collapsed into one: political power – i.e. the ability to make political decisions – must be held by all citizens in equal measure. This is the most fundamental principle of democracy.

Yet in that raw form, this principle leaves open an important question: should democracy be concerned only that the formal institutions and systems of democracy bestow equal political power upon all citizens, or should it be concerned with the distribution of political power more generally? The two prongs of this question correspond to two conceptions of democracy, as distinguished by Dworkin (1987: 3-8): a *dependent* conception, and a *detached* conception.² According to the first, the *consequences* of political institutions and processes for the *substantive* equality of citizens must be considered at the same time as questions of whether the institutions and processes themselves distribute power equally. The best form of democracy is one that is as well-placed as possible to produce decisions which treat all citizens as equally important. According to the second, all that matters is that there is *formal* equality, i.e. that power over political decisions is distributed equally – the institutions and processes of democracy give

every citizen an equal stake in decision-making. The results of these decisions are irrelevant.

As Dworkin explains, the dependent conception regards the best form of democracy as determined by an “output test”: it favours whatever form is “most conducive to advancing or protecting these substantive egalitarian goals...[and] is most likely to produce the *substantive* decisions and results that treat all members of the community with equal concern”; it regards the consequences of these decisions as crucial. The detached conception, on the other hand, regards the best form of democracy as determined by an “input test”: if forced to decide between different democratic processes, it favours whichever “is best calculated to improve equality of political power still further”, but ignores the consequences of these processes or of the decisions made by them (Dworkin 1987: 3-5).

The normal presumption is in favour of the detached conception: equal voting power among citizens, and hence majority rule, is commonly held as *the* fundamental principle of democracy; anything that counts against it (and against majority rule) is considered anti-democratic. The “*apparent* neutrality” (Dworkin 1987: 7) [my emphasis] of this conception of democracy also makes it particularly appealing. But, of course, this neutrality does not ensure neutrality of outcome. If, for example, voters hold some preferences that are based on sexist or racist sentiments, then the “neutral” apparatus of democracy will simply mirror these preferences in the composition of its representatives.

Narrowly following a normative principle is folly if doing so will lead to an outcome that undermines that principle’s aims, i.e. that undermines the deeper principle(s) *underlying* that principle.

Though there is not space here to treat the tension between these two conceptions of democracy with the thoroughness it deserves, and that it receives from Dworkin, let me offer a brief argument in favour of the dependent conception. Narrowly following a normative principle is folly if doing so will lead to an outcome that undermines that principle’s aims, i.e. that undermines the deeper principle(s) *underlying* that principle. Thus it would be folly, for example, to follow the principle “you should feed your children meat” in order to fulfil the principle “you should ensure that your children are healthy”, if we knew that for some reason the meat we were feeding our children would actually make them *unhealthy*.

Consider the democratic principle that political institutions must distribute political decision-making power equally. This principle is followed, I suggest, because it is believed to be the best way to ensure that everyone has an equal stake in the political process (for example, by having one vote each), rather than some people having more political decision-making power than others. In other words, it is followed on the basis that it is the best way to ensure political power is held equally by all citizens. What this implies is that the principle “political institutions must distribute political power equally” is *underpinned* by the (deeper) principle that political power must be held equally by all citizens: that is the more fundamental principle of democracy. It is that latter principle which *motivates* the former one. But if this is the case, then it would make no sense to follow the former while neglecting the latter. Rather, the latter must take precedence. If a tension arises between the two principles, we must prioritise the deeper princi-

ple that political power must be held equally by all citizens. Since this motivating principle is the guiding principle of the dependent conception, and the motivated principle – that political institutions must bestow equal political decision-making power on all citizens – is the guiding principle of the detached conception, it therefore follows that we should favour the dependent conception over the detached conception. Thus, we should adhere to a principle of *substantive* equality (i.e. actual equality of political power), rather than merely *formal* equality.

Thus, we should adhere to a principle of *substantive* equality, rather than merely *formal* equality.

Democracy is also endorsed as a good method for promoting people's *substantive* interests – such as in peace, prosperity and liberty (Kolodny 2014: 199-202).³ In short, the idea is that by giving people ownership of political decision-making, democratic political decisions (as opposed to non-democratic decisions) are more likely to be the ones that will best further people's substantive interests. Perhaps furthering people's substantive interests could not be considered a requirement of democracy as such, but rather an (absolutely fundamental) aim of democracy. A democracy that successfully promoted prosperity would *mutatis mutandis* be considered a "better democracy" than one that did not, but it would probably not thereby be considered any more democratic. But this distinction is not especially relevant here: for our purposes, we can add "furthering people's substantive interests" to the *requirements* of democracy. In conclusion, then, democracy is required for two things: to promote substantive equality, and to promote people's substantive interests.

Democracy vs descriptive representation

The specific form of representation relevant to our purposes is *descriptive* or *mirror* representation. This form of representation requires that the representative shares some of the essential characteristics of the group that she represents, such as shared experiences and/or physical identity. Thus, women should be represented by women, blacks by blacks, the working class by the working class, and so forth.⁴ The ideal of descriptive representation, coined "microcosmic representation" by Birch (1971: 17; 1975: 56), is that the representative assembly should reflect, in exact proportions, the socio-demographic divisions within society – it should be the entire citizenry in microcosm.

Arguments for descriptive representation have carried considerable weight over the past few centuries. In the American revolutionary period, John Adams argued that the representative assembly should be "an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large", and the seminal 19th-century utilitarians Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and John Stuart Mill all espoused an essentially microcosmic conception of representation (Adams 1856; Judge 1999: 23-30; Birch 1971: 53-55).

Descriptive representation and the methods to achieve it, such as quotas, are often taken to conflict with democratic ideals however, such as the principle that every citizen should have an equal opportunity to run for office. This conflict is crucial for us to resolve, because if descriptive representation necessarily contradicts the principles of democracy then there cannot be a *democratic* case for descriptive representation of young people in political parties and

trade unions. My answer: although descriptive representation may contradict some democratic principles, the conception of democracy sketched above means that a democratic case for descriptive representation will stand so long as the *overall* effect of descriptive representation is to further substantive equality and promote people's substantive interests. When would we expect it to do so?

There are numerous possible cases. Although the members of a particular group in society may be politically marginalised or have interests that can only be addressed through policy (both of which could potentially be addressed through descriptive representation), they might also not be represented because, for example, they lack the confidence to stand for office; or they may be ill-informed about *how* to stand for office; or they may not have the educational attainments necessary to persuade people to vote for them. In such cases, descriptive representation might, overall, function effectively to promote substantive equality and substantive interests.

The equal political power bestowed on them by the political institutions will not translate into equal political power more generally.

Perhaps the most commonly discussed case however, which arguably entails some (or even all) of these, is when there is an unequal structure of power within society that effectively prevents a particular group standing for office. Very often, this structure of power is invisible, potentially creating a "glass ceiling" for the group. As a result of this unequal power structure, the group does not receive the political support it needs and deserves, *even though* the political institutions may bestow on them the same level of political power (i.e. one person, one vote; the right of every individual to run for office; etc.) as on everyone else in society. For example, if the members of a minority group are regarded by most to be "second-class citizens" due to an underlying racism in society, and if they are poorer and less well educated than the rest of society, then formal equality will not be enough for them: invisible barriers to running for office, such as lacking the knowledge of how to stand for office, and invisible barriers to being voted in, such as the racist preferences of most of the electorate, will mean that the equal political power bestowed on them by the political institutions will not translate into equal political power more generally.

This is especially true in cases of intersectionality: when someone belongs to more than one marginalised group. For example, if homosexuals and white people were marginalised, then white homosexuals would suffer from the dual effects of these two unequal power structures. They may experience a unique form of marginalisation that is different from the sum of the marginalisation experienced by whites and homosexuals. If particularly bad, this group (white homosexuals) might therefore merit descriptive representation.

The extent to which different groups will have a case for descriptive representation is contingent, however: it will depend upon the particular groups and the political context in question. Broadly speaking, the case for the descriptive representation of a group will hinge on whether such representation will further substantive equality and substantive interests. But that leaves us with a tricky question: when would it do so? Answering that is the task of the next section.

Which groups?

There are innumerable groups in society that could be candidates for descriptive representation: gingers, Protestants, blacks, homosexuals, women, gypsies, left-handers, cyclists, disabled people, fat people, young people, etc. The difficulty in determining precisely which groups require descriptive presentation and why is often taken to be a very serious issue for descriptive representation – or even to be dispositive (Mansbridge 1999: 634). But it is not insurmountable. There are clearly principles to be uncovered regarding which groups should be represented, because it is immediately obvious that while there would be a good case for the descriptive representation of some of these groups, such as women, for others, such as gingers, there would not.

Young (1990: 186f.) argues that we should represent oppressed social groups, not interest groups or ideological groups. “Once we are clear that the principle of group representation refers only to oppressed social groups,” she writes, “then the fear of an unworkable proliferation of group representation should dissipate.”

There are innumerable groups in society that could be candidates for descriptive representation: gingers, Protestants, blacks, homosexuals, women, gypsies, left-handers, cyclists, disabled people, fat people, young people, etc.

Beyond this, however, Young does not offer any philosophical criteria by which it could be determined precisely which groups should be represented, claiming rather that no philosophical argument could resolve this problem and so the application of her normative principle should be rough and ready. Ultimately, she claims, it should depend upon the context: any principle that is devised should be subject to revision if conditions change (Young 1990: 190). For example, the Catholic/Protestant cleavage was so salient that it required political representation in the 19th and early 20th century. Now that cleavage has faded, but new groups have emerged with their own particular cases for descriptive representation (Young 1998).

Not only is Iris M. Young’s account fuzzy on the details, however, her list of “oppressed groups” (1989: 261) in the US includes about 80% of the population! As Kymlicka (1995: 145) points out, that puts into serious doubt Young’s claim that her conception avoids an “unworkable proliferation” of different groups requiring descriptive representation.

Mansbridge takes a more direct approach. “The primary function of representative democracy,” she suggests, “is to represent the substantive interests of the represented through both deliberation and aggregation [voting]” (Mansbridge 1999: 630). Thus, the case for descriptive representation should be judged against this criterion; and it is democracy’s deliberative function that requires descriptive representation far more than its aggregative function (Mansbridge 1999: 629).

Mansbridge’s conclusion is that there are two contexts in which descriptive representation will so improve deliberation: when a disadvantaged group mistrusts society, and when the expression of a group’s interests and views is uncrystallised, descriptive representation will improve communication and add experiential knowledge. There are also two contexts in which descriptive representation will further goals unrelated to representation (i.e. un-

related to either deliberation or aggregation): when a group has historically been politically subordinate, descriptive representation creates a social meaning of “ability to rule”; and when a group has historically been discriminated against, descriptive representation will increase the group’s attachment to the policy, and thus improve their perception of its legitimacy (Mansbridge 1999). Since we are assuming a *dependent* conception of democracy, these two contexts must also be considered legitimate cases for descriptive representation.

A deeper question remains unanswered: *why* should we be concerned with improving deliberation only with respect to the needs of *these particular groups*?

Yet Mansbridge’s view strikes me as being overly complex while at the same time giving an insufficient account of which groups should be represented and why. There are surely cases outside of Mansbridge’s four that would justify descriptive representation. For example, what about a group whose concerns have historically been misinterpreted? Mansbridge’s criteria also fail to get to the heart of *why* certain groups merit descriptive representation. Her four cases, though related, are distinct in a way that leaves the reader wondering exactly what they have in common. Certainly she goes some way towards explaining this – the first two will both improve deliberation, for example – but at the same time, a deeper question remains unanswered: *why* should we be concerned with improving deliberation only with respect to the needs of *these particular groups*?

Two criteria

There are, I suggest, two criteria for representation which underpin both Young’s and Mansbridge’s stabs at which groups should be represented. This is my own attempt at answering the question: the democratic case for descriptive representation holds for those groups which have (1) unique concerns that are significant (2) where those concerns stand to be affected by the actions of the elected representative body. These two conditions are, I contend, jointly necessary and sufficient for a case for descriptive representation.

Numbers alone do not matter. Phillips (1995: 21), for example, decries the “injustice” and “democratic deficit” implied by women making up just 5% of the legislature, and claims that in such a context the case for descriptive representation, which Phillips calls the “politics of presence”, appears beyond question. But in fact, the under-representation of a social group to this extent is not, by itself, sufficient for concern. For example, imagine that just 5% of the legislature can roll their tongue, even though tongue-rollers comprise 50% of the population – this would be the same ratio of percentage presence in the population to percentage presence in parliament (50:5) as in the case of women, but it would not be of concern. Why? The reason, I suggest, is that tongue-rollers do not meet either of the two criteria. They have no significant unique concerns, and, even if they did, there is nothing much that politics could do about them – there is no drug that can alter whether or not someone is able to roll their tongue that the state could sponsor. Women, on the other hand, clearly meet both: they have significant unique concerns – for example on particular issues such as maternity leave and abortion – and these concerns stand to be affected by political action – for example, legislation could

determine how much maternity leave businesses are required to give women, or it could change the legal status of abortion.

The wording “stand to be affected by” of the second criterion is important. To justify descriptive representation, it does not have to be the case that the concerns of the group will necessarily *benefit* from political action, as such. Indeed, for an issue such as abortion it is not clear what it would mean for women to *benefit* from political action, because the correct policy on abortion is something that is hotly disputed among women. The point is rather that because such an issue will be significantly affected by politics, and because women stand to be uniquely affected by it, women should be able to stand in the political assembly and represent their unique concerns on the issue. This is necessary in order that the substantive equality of men and women, and the substantive interests of society, are supported – i.e. that the aims of democracy are fulfilled.

The democratic case for descriptive representation holds for those groups which have (1) unique concerns that are significant (2) where those concerns stand to be affected by the actions of the elected representative body.

Indeed, as Phillips argues, women may have diverse opinions on childcare and abortion, but this does not render these issues gender-neutral (1995: 67-71). On the contrary, they are issues that are profoundly more relevant to women than to men, and the argument for the “presence” of women in parliament does not depend on all women sharing the same viewpoint, but only on the fact that the interests of women and men are distinct. I should also add that it is not necessary for the group itself to express the concern(s) of criterion (1). Consider Mansbridge’s case of a group that mistrusts the polity, for example: such a group thereby has a unique, and significant, concern (its level of trust in the polity), but it may not itself recognise this mistrust as a “concern”. Finally, let me add that the term “unique concerns” should have some degree of stretch: if there are significant concerns that affect a particular group more than any other group, then that group meets the first criterion *pro tanto*.

Thus, when Mansbridge and Young propose theoretical categories for determining which particular groups should be represented, these categories are in fact merely examples of groups that tick both these boxes. Take “groups who have uncrystallised interests”: if such a group did not have any *unique* concerns, then its lack of clarity on these issues would not be democratically problematic because the policies that others would prefer are just as likely to fit the preferences of this group as any other group; and if they had unique concerns but these did not stand to be affected by the actions of the political assembly, then there would be no point in worrying about their political representation.

These two criteria follow logically from an appreciation of the very purpose of descriptive representation... to promote substantive equality, and to further democracy’s ability to promote people’s substantive interests.

My argument for why we should reduce the case for groups requiring descriptive representation to these two criteria is two-fold. First, the attempts to answer “which groups should be descriptively represented?” by Mansbridge and Young seem to be accounted

for by these two criteria; and the two criteria themselves are both simpler and more concise than the proposals of either Mansbridge or Young.

Second, more fundamentally, these two criteria follow logically from an appreciation of the very purpose of descriptive representation, as I have presented it in this essay: to promote substantive equality, and to further democracy’s ability to promote people’s substantive interests. Descriptive representation of the groups that meet my two criteria will ensure that decision-making power is held by all relevant groups which are: the groups which actually have important “group concerns” to be represented (determined by criterion one – i.e. by the fact that the group actually has concerns which are unique to it and which are important enough to merit representation), given that political representation of these concerns would be worthwhile (determined by criterion two – i.e. by the fact that would be no point in giving a group political representation if doing so could not have any impact on that group’s concerns). Thus, by preventing political neglect of all the relevant groups, the two criteria will further substantive equality (the first requirement of democracy, as I have laid it out); and by ensuring that the relevant groups are given a voice in the representative assembly, the two criteria will increase the likelihood that policy decisions will be made which further their substantive interests (the second requirement of democracy). The two criteria themselves simply determine what the “relevant” groups are.

It is worth noting, moreover, that the case for descriptive representation sketched above, about how descriptive representation may be necessary in order to tackle an unequal power structure in society, is accounted for by the two criteria, because a group that is uniquely suffering from an unequal power structure is precisely the sort of group that would meet the criteria.

Hence, to return to our original question, whether the underrepresentation of young people in political parties and trade unions is a democratic problem depends on whether, and to what extent, they meet these two criteria.

To the extent that a certain group fulfils the criteria, the case for descriptive representation of that group is, I contend, *pro tanto* strong. For example, if the group’s concerns are completely unique to that group, very important, and stand to be affected significantly by political action, then that group has a very strong case for descriptive representation. Thus, like Mansbridge and Young, I propose a *contingent* (or “*contextual*”) case for descriptive representation that will vary according to the conditions of the time and to the group under consideration. Hence, to return to our original question, whether the underrepresentation of young people in political parties and trade unions is a democratic problem depends on whether, and to what extent, they meet these two criteria.⁵

Let me close this section by giving an example of descriptive representation that clearly met these two criteria and which, hence, has succeeded in furthering both substantive equality and people’s substantive interests: the representation of women in South Africa. As detailed above, women clearly meet both criteria very strongly. And the increased representation of women in South Africa has led to significant legislative amendments and additions on issues such as abortion and employment equality, and can even

be credited with the 1998 Domestic Violence Bill (Devlin/Elgie 2008: 240). It is self-evident that such legislative effects will further substantive equality and substantive interests.

More generally, although the impact in African countries of greater female presence in parliament has been to some extent mixed, in large part the less successful cases have been due to factors that prevent successful descriptive representation, such as women representatives feeling that they must toe the party line, rather than the ineffectiveness of descriptive representation itself (Devlin/Elgie 2008: 240) (I respond to a related worry below: “Discouraging ‘we-thinking’ and harming deliberation”).

Objections

Before we consider whether young people meet the two criteria, there are a number of strong and popular objections to descriptive representation that I should consider, some of which are directly concerned with its impact on democracy.

Accountability

Accountability is an essential piece of apparatus in any system of representative democracy, because it is accountability – the possibility of being held to account at the ballot box – which keeps representatives responsive to the people they represent. Therefore, if descriptive representation damages accountability, this would be a serious democratic issue. Why would it do so? Mansbridge (1999: 640) puts the problem very clearly: “The descriptive characteristics of a representative can lull voters into thinking their substantive interests are being represented even when this is not the case”. She quotes a black representative speaking to Carol Swain: “One of the advantages, and disadvantages, of representing blacks is their shameless loyalty to their incumbents. You can almost get away with raping babies and be forgiven. You don’t have *any* vigilance about your performance” (Swain 1993: 73, cited in Mansbridge 1999: 640).

If descriptive representation damages accountability, this would be a serious democratic issue.

However, this problem can be reduced if more descriptive representatives compete for the post, and are seen within the assembly, enabling voters to weigh the virtues of different potential descriptive representatives against each other (Mansbridge 1999: 640f.). For example, the fact that some African American groups, such as the Congressional Black Caucus, did *not* endorse Clarence Thomas’s nomination to the Supreme Court in 1991, despite his descriptive identity, was an indication that black representatives had become sufficiently commonplace that the black community no longer felt that they needed to support black candidates no matter what (Mansbridge 1999: 640f.; Swain 1992). Indeed, so long as there are even just two candidates standing for the same position we would expect voters to compare them, and for these two candidates to therefore compete over who will best represent the concerns of the group being represented. The conclusion, then, is that in order to avoid a loss of accountability there must be *at least* two descriptive candidates standing for a particular position in the representative assembly. From this perspective, the more the better.

Discouraging “we-thinking” and harming deliberation

An essential part of a functioning democracy is deliberation. Suc-

cessful deliberation involves the deliberators being prepared to alter their preferences as they reflect on the different points of view under discussion, and this in turn depends on “we-thinking” rather than “I-thinking”. If deliberators think in this way then solutions which were impossible before become possible; and without it, individualism can dominate, as a result of which no shared vision of the political community is possible (Mansbridge 1992: 36f.; Elshstain 1981: 246).

The worry is that descriptive representation encourages representatives to argue for the policies that are best for *their group*, rather than to reflect honestly on the policies that are best, and fairest, for society as a whole. This worry is exacerbated by claims that people from outside a group cannot, or even *should not try*, to empathise with the needs of, and represent, that group. For example, Baines (1992: 56, cited in Kymlicka 1993: 67), making the case for the descriptive representation of women, claims that representation can occur fully only when the representative shares the identity of the represented group: she rejects the notion that a man can, or should try to, represent the interests of a woman. Similarly, Phillips (1995: 76) contends that “no amount of thought or sympathy, no matter how careful or honest, can jump the barriers of experience”. Arguments such as Baines’s and Phillips’s, which often underpin arguments for descriptive representation, can discourage people from even attempting to empathise with members of other groups by suggesting that such empathy is impossible.

The worry is that descriptive representation encourages representatives to argue for the policies that are best for *their group*, rather than to reflect honestly on the policies that are best, and fairest, for society as a whole.

In contrast, by pursuing a shared conception of the common good *without* being directly held to the views and concerns of any particular group, in a context that respects the basic norms of equity and the democratic process, effective deliberation becomes absolutely possible (Phillips 1995: 155-160; Parkinson 2004: 380f.; Cohen/Rogers 1992: 420). Descriptive representation can therefore be seen as an impediment to democratic deliberation.

The first thing to note here is that the above argument for why descriptive representation threatens accountability, and this argument for why it causes representatives to be fixed to the views of their group, point in opposite directions. The concern must either be that descriptive representation will lead the representative to do what he wants and ignore the needs and views of his group, or that it will lead the representative’s opinions to be fixed to these in a way that will harm deliberation. It cannot cut both ways.

This itself shows that these two objections to descriptive representation are based on shaky ground. For each, the likelihood of being true counts against the likelihood of the other being true. The sensible conclusion, therefore, seems to be that neither is inevitable, nor even especially likely. With respect to the worry that deliberation will be harmed, my answer is simply that descriptive representatives should be encouraged to bring the concerns and views of their group to the debate, but to nonetheless prioritise the common good – reaching a set of policies that treat everyone as equals – above the welfare of that group alone. This would allow representatives the autonomy to deliberate successfully, while ensuring that the concerns of their group are taken into account.⁶ The objection that representatives would be *unable* to empathise

with the concerns of those not from their group strikes me as both false and harmful: as Kymlicka (1995: 140) argues, to the extent that there are limits to our ability to empathise with other groups, we should try to fight against those limitations – not blithely accept them.

Thus, although there is a danger that descriptive representation might cause a loss of accountability or harm deliberation, it seems just as likely that it may do no such thing; and by encouraging representatives to act in the way just suggested, both pitfalls can be avoided.

Selection by lot and loss of talent

Another problem is the practical question of how the goals of descriptive representation could be achieved. Actual microcosmic representation, for which the proportions in which different socio-demographic groups make up the populace is exactly replicated in the representative assembly, would be almost impossible to achieve unless the representative assembly was chosen by a controlled random sample, using selection by lot (as was, in fact, practised in ancient Greece), or comprised of volunteers (Birch 1971: 57f.; Burnheim 1985: 110–113). But as Birch (2001: 97) argues, this hardly seems sensible or fair when the job in question necessitates particular talents and brings with it a high degree of insecurity.

Another problem is the practical question of how the goals of descriptive representation could be achieved.

However, as Mansbridge points out, this criticism holds weight only against microcosmic representation – something that few contemporary theorists actually defend.⁷ Microcosmic representation would indeed entail a huge sacrifice in talent, and it would incur the problems mentioned above of abandoning accountability since representatives would no longer be authorised by, and thereby would not be accountable to, the people they represent (Kymlicka 1995: 139). Those are both very strong reasons to reject the case for microcosmic representation.

Having done so, without having given up the general case for descriptive representation, we are left with what Mansbridge (1999: 632) calls “selective” descriptive representation, according to which “institutional design gives selected groups greater descriptive representation than they would achieve in existing electoral systems in order to bring the proportions of those groups in the legislature closer to their percentages in the population”. This is the type of descriptive representation that I am arguing for in this essay. The assumption here is that the group is as capable of representing itself as any other, and is not suffering from a lack of selection due to any factor that relates to how well members of that group could engage in political representation, but rather due to some structural factor. So the trenchant counter-example to descriptive representation of “lunatics representing lunatics” is not relevant here (Mansbridge 1999: 633).⁸ Hence there is only a very minimal chance that descriptive representation will lead to a loss in talent.

Quotas

The question remains of how selective descriptive representation is to be achieved. Quotas are perhaps the most common way of achieving selective descriptive representation. In actual fact, quotas could not be applied to membership in political parties and

trade unions, for purely practical reasons; but as one of the key methods of descriptive representation, they are worth considering in order that we can ask what the costs of achieving descriptive representation would normally be. At the end of this essay we will consider a number of less conventional methods for achieving selective descriptive representation that *would* be applicable to membership of political parties and trade unions.

Quotas are perhaps the most common way of achieving selective descriptive representation...The worry is that quotas entail serious democratic costs.

The worry is that quotas entail serious democratic costs. In particular, Rehfeld argues that methods such as quotas, which make particular characteristics or beliefs a required qualification for people to be able to vote for that person, undermine two presumptive democratic rights: “the right of citizens to run for any office that stands to make and enforce law over them; and the right of citizens to choose whomever they want to fill those offices”. And these, Rehfeld contends, are the very principles that make representative government a legitimate form of democratic self-rule (2009: 239).

Yet given a dependent conception of democracy, quotas can be seen as tools that can be justified from a democratic perspective even though they incur these democratic costs, so long as their *net* effect is to further the fundamental aims of democracy. The question of whether quotas can be justified on democratic grounds is therefore contingent: it depends on whether the quota will, in the given context, benefit democracy to an extent that outweighs these democratic harms.

Essentialism

The final objection to descriptive representation that is considered here is essentialism: the worry that descriptive representation relies on a false assumption that groups have an inward “essential” nature, and unified views, which could therefore be represented by any member of that group.⁹ This can lead to the sorts of difficulty which we saw above, in which it is claimed that only the members of a group can understand its concerns; or it might lead to an essentialising of that group’s concerns, and a consequent neglect of the diversity of opinions within that group.

However, there is simply no reason why descriptive representation has to fall victim to this false assumption. As argued above, the case for descriptive representation does not depend upon the members of a group all sharing the same view, but only on the fact that that group has unique concerns.

Conclusion

If my responses to the above objections have been sound, then these objections are not quite as devastating as they first appear. Indeed, the only objection that has truly been left standing is Rehfeld’s complaint that (in my words) using certain instruments of descriptive representation, such as quotas, goes against democratic principles. It is primarily against this objection, then, that I shall later defend my case.

Do young people qualify?

Based on the argument made above, a case for descriptive

representation of young people will stand if, and only if, they meet the two criteria. I will now argue that young people fulfil both.

Criterion (1)

Young people, in general, face a number of concerns that are specific to them (Howker/Malik: 2013; Martin: 2012; Davis: 1990). But the current generation of young people, in particular, called the “jilted generation” by Howker and Malik, face a number of especially pressing concerns (Howker/Malik 2013: 202, 240, 263).¹⁰ Indeed, the 20th century saw young people increasingly being singled out as a group that required its own special treatment, and it became increasingly commonplace to hear the “youth problem” being discussed (Davis 1990).

Let us consider some two specific examples from the UK: student debt and housing. With respect to both of these important issues, young people have significant, unique concerns. To consider student debt first: in 2010, tuition fees were tripled, from £3,000 to £9,000, by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. In England, at the time of writing, they are fixed at £9,250. In 2002 Margaret Hodge, the higher education minister, justified raising tuition fees on the logic that a degree enables a graduate to earn, on average, an extra £400,000 over his or her lifetime. Since then, this figure has been deployed repeatedly by those who support the higher fees. Yet according to more recent research, that figure is more like £100,000. According to a study by the Intergenerational Foundation, even this figure is too high; but the study also points out that that even if the figure is correct, it cannot cover the interest being applied to student loans (Kemp-King 2016). As a result of these huge fees, students are now leaving university with an average of £50,000 in debt (Belfield et al. 2017). And this figure will rise quickly, due to high interest rates. In contrast, previous generations enjoyed free university education, without having to accrue any debt whatsoever. Thus, young people are uniquely faced with the burden of high tuition fees and mountainous student debt.

Let us consider some two specific examples from the UK: student debt and housing. With respect to both of these important issues, young people have significant, unique concerns.

Young people also face unique, significant concerns in terms of housing. Compared to previous generations, they are likely to spend longer renting privately and living with their parents (Rugg/Quilgars 2015: 5). Indeed, England has seen home-ownership decline among the young for a number of years. In 15 years, the proportion of under-35s within the home-owner population has dropped by almost half; and the ownership rate of young people on low/middle incomes fell from 56% in 1998 to 25% in 2013-2014 (Corlett et al. 2016: 36f.). The Institute for Fiscal Studies (Cribb et al. 2018) recently released a report that clearly shows the difference in home-owning prospects between the young today and previous generations of young people: of 25-34 year-olds whose incomes were within the middle 20% for their age, 65% owned their own home in 1995-96. Yet by 2015-16, it was just 27%. This significant drop in house-ownership, which can be explained by the rise in house prices over the past few years, represents a serious obstacle for young people.

Young people also face pressing democratic concerns. In the UK, the likelihood of feeling a civic duty to vote is much lower for young people than for the rest of the population. According to statistics from 2012, 45% of young people feel a duty to vote; this is in contrast to an average of 62% across the population, and a level of 73% for those aged 65 and above (Lee/Young 2014). And in the UK in 2011-12, 42% of young people aged 16-24 stated that they had no interest at all in politics, compared with half this figure – 21% – for those aged 65 and above (Randall 2014). Relatedly, recent UK elections have seen a significantly lower turnout among the young than among older voters. In 2010, 44% of 18-24 year-olds turned out to vote, compared to 76% of those aged 65 and over (Ipsos MORI 2010). In 2015, the corresponding turnout rates were 43% and 78%, and in 2017 they were 54% and 71% (Ipsos MORI 2015, 2017). Moreover, this tendency seems to have become part of a vicious circle in which the young do not vote, vote-seeking politicians therefore ignore their concerns, and young people therefore feel ignored and so do not vote etc. (Sloam 2007: 565; Birch et al. 2013: 16, 20; Lijphart 1997: 4; Tozer 2016: 18f.).

The fact that the young also face certain *democratic* concerns, such as low voter turnout, lends particular weight to the democratic case for descriptive representation.

It is therefore plain that young people strongly fulfil the first criterion: they have a number of significant, unique concerns. The fact that the young also face certain *democratic* concerns, such as low voter turnout, lends particular weight to the democratic case for descriptive representation.¹¹

Criterion (2)

These concerns clearly stand to be affected by the actions of the elected representative body. With respect to the democratic concerns faced by young people, the vicious circle of young people's under-representation in politics will start to reverse if their representation in politics increases: increased political representation could trigger a virtuous circle that encourages the representative assembly to decide on policies which are fair to young people, in turn encouraging more young people to vote. In this way, it would help to further substantive equality between the young and other age-groups.

More specifically, in terms of the two issues young people face that I have just expanded on – student debt and housing – there is no doubt that these stand to be affected by political action. It was the actions of successive governments that led to tuition fees being introduced in the first place and then increasing a number of times; and governments have been choosing to continue not to change or reverse such policies. That such a reversal is possible is demonstrated by the Labour party's proposed policy of abolishing tuition fees entirely. And on housing, there are clearly government policies that could improve young people's prospects. David Willetts, formerly a Conservative minister and now chair of the Resolution Foundation, a think tank, says: “We do need to accept that there's a very important role for the public sector in getting houses built. It can't all be done by private housebuilders... On this, I am completely non-ideological” (quoted in Eaton 2018: 24). That would remedy a housing shortage, but it also implies a

prospective solution to the high house prices faced by the young: reducing prices by introducing publicly-owned houses at a much more affordable price.

Therefore, the second criterion is undoubtedly fulfilled: the young face a number of significant unique concerns (including many which have not been given here) that stand to be greatly affected by political action.

There are powerful concerns that are almost completely unique to young people, and which stand to be affected very significantly by political action.

Conclusion

Hence, the case for descriptive representation of young people stands. As argued above, the strength of this case depends upon the extent to which each of the two criteria is fulfilled. In the case of young people, they are both fulfilled strongly: there are powerful concerns that are almost completely unique to young people, and which stand to be affected very significantly by political action.

Political parties and trade unions

The next question is whether, and if so to what extent, this democratic case for descriptive representation of the young holds weight in the context of membership of political parties and trade unions. So far, we have been considering the descriptive representation of young people in terms of membership of the representative assembly, so now we must adjust our case. To do so, we have to slightly adjust the second criterion and then see whether young people still fit it. (The first criterion does not need to be adjusted because it only makes reference to the group itself, and so the degree to which it is fulfilled only depends on the characteristics of this group.) Hence, the question of whether young people meet the second criterion becomes: do the significant unique concerns of young people stand to be affected by the actions of political parties/trade unions?

Let us start with political parties. It has already been established that many of the significant, unique concerns of young people will be affected by the actions of the political assembly. What about the actions of political parties? To some extent, this dichotomy is a misnomer: the representative assembly will be comprised of members of *the ruling political party(s)* who has (have) been elected to the assembly, and it will implement an agenda that, to a greater or lesser extent, was decided by the party's members.¹² Thus, if the party is in power then its membership base will have determined who the country's political representatives are (since being a member of a political party is a prerequisite for standing, and hence being elected, as a representative), and, to some degree, what policies government is implementing. Therefore, if a political party has been voted into power then membership of that party implies a very high level of influence.

Even if the party is not in power, its members will influence it in its role as an *opposition* party. And since opposition parties also have a very significant political role – holding the government to account, offering alternative policy ideas, and so forth – membership will still enable significant influence. Therefore, political parties, both in and out of power, will be able to considerably affect the concerns of young people, and thus promote substantive equality

and substantive interests. Both criteria are clearly met, and so the case for descriptive representation within political parties is strong. What about trade unions? Trade unions are not concerned with people's conditions in general, but only with their employment conditions. Many young people are in full-time education, and so would find trade unions to be of little relevance. Furthermore, many of the specific issues facing young people (such as student debt and housing, as explained above) are issues that which fall outside the scope of trade unions.

At any rate, to the extent that young people are in the workforce and have certain concerns that are relevant to trade unions, most of these concerns (e.g. wage level and employee safety) will not be unique to them, but will apply equally to workers of all ages – and yet trade unions would not be able to affect the concerns that are unique to young people. There will be some exceptions – zero-hours contracts might be one – but overall, the extent to which young people will have significant, unique concerns about employment conditions seems limited. Therefore, the degree to which the significant, unique concerns of young people can be affected by trade unions (i.e. the second criterion), and hence the case for descriptive representation of young people within trade unions, is weak. Descriptive representation of young people within trade unions would do little to further substantive equality or substantive interests. This conclusion is made all the more forceful now that trade unions have reduced in power.

The degree to which the significant, unique concerns of young people can be affected by trade unions (i.e. the second criterion), and hence the case for descriptive representation of young people within trade unions, is weak.

The unequal distribution of power within both political parties and trade unions, tilted towards older generations, is only of democratic concern insofar as the second criterion is met, however. If it were not met at all, political parties/trade unions would not have any effect on the significant, unique concerns of young people, and so the inequality of power would be something of a red herring. It would be like there being few chess players on the local council, even though most people in the area play chess – this would be an inequality of power, but since the local council can't have much impact on the problems of the chess world it would not be of democratic concern. But it is only political parties that seem likely to have much effect on the concerns of young people. The conclusion, then, is that it is only within political parties that the inequality of power would suggest a strong case for descriptive representation. Thus, young people, who clearly meet criterion one, meet criterion two strongly in the case of political parties, and weakly in the case of trade unions. Hence, there is a strong democratic case for descriptive representation of young people within political parties, and only weak case for their descriptive representation within trade unions. What, then, should be done?

It should be noted before we continue that I am asking this question in the spirit of political philosophy: I am asking what *should* be done, without worrying at this point whether or not it *is* done. Some trade unions will already be practising some of the suggestions I make below, and to that extent, according to my argument,

they are doing “what should be done” – in the case of other trade unions, which are doing no such thing, my argument would imply that they should *start* following these suggestions. I do not attempt an empirical union by union analysis.

Policy I: quotas

Though quotas are a popular tool of descriptive representation, they are not practical here. Quotas are inapplicable to the case of party or trade union membership simply because people freely choose to become members – they are not selected by the party/trade union in a way that could allow for a requirement that a certain proportion of members be from a particular group. However, because quotas are a popular method for achieving descriptive representation, it is helpful to see whether, if quotas *could* work, they would be democratically appropriate in the case of membership of political parties and trade unions. The answer to this question can function as a benchmark against which other possible policy responses can be assessed.¹³

To answer whether quotas would be democratically appropriate, we must ask another question: would the *results* of a quota in the given context further democracy, by improving substantive equality and promoting people’s substantive interests, to an extent that would outweigh the quota’s apparent harm to democracy? In other words, would a quota have a positive *net* impact on democracy in this context?

Enabling young people to gain a more equal level of political power will do more for substantive equality, and furthering their substantive interests, than the size of the harm to (formal) equality of prioritising one group over another in the selection of representatives.

In the case of trade unions, the answer is “no”: the impact of trade unions on the significant, unique concerns of young people would be minimal, in comparison to the definite and notable cost to democracy entailed by quotas. In the case of political parties, however, the question is much more difficult. As detailed above, political parties stand to have a considerable impact on young people’s concerns – but would this impact be considerable enough to outweigh the significant democratic costs that quotas would impose? I would suggest it would, because the positive effects that membership of political parties could have on the power structure, which is currently tilted against young people, will outweigh the temporary imbalance of institutionally designated decision-making power; i.e. enabling young people to gain a more equal level of political power will do more for substantive equality, and furthering their substantive interests, than the size of the harm to (formal) equality of prioritising one group over another in the selection of representatives.

Policy II: incentives and free membership

For the costs of descriptive representation to be outweighed in the case of trade unions, the policy to be pursued must therefore be one that produces less democratic harm than quotas. One such method could be to improve the *incentives* for young people to become members of political parties and trade unions. This would not directly harm the democratic process in the way that quotas would, because it would not impose a legal requirement that a particular group be represented in a certain fixed proportion. It could still be complained that such incentives would *distort* the

democratic process. I accept this – the point is that it would not contravene it. The democratic costs of such a distortion would of course be proportional to the size of the distortion itself: they would be much greater if every young person was offered money for becoming a member than if her membership fee were merely less than the usual membership fee. Thus, an incentive system need cause only quite minor democracy-distorting effects; and these effects would entail costs that were sufficiently small to be outweighed by the democratic benefits of descriptive representation. An incentive system, moreover, would, unlike quotas, be perfectly applicable to the membership of political parties and trade unions.

One such method could be to improve the *incentives* for young people to become members of political parties and trade unions.

Let me conclude by offering some trade-union-policy suggestions that would meet this incentives criterion. One, as mentioned, would be for trade unions to charge a lower membership fee to young people (say, those aged between 18 and 30). A reduction of somewhere between 25 and 50% would seem reasonable: since membership fees are usually not very expensive anyway, even a 50% reduction would not amount to that much in real terms.

Another suggestion would be for trade unions to offer certain benefits to young members that are not offered (or that are offered at a fee, or at least a higher fee) to other members. These could be benefits such as a free gym membership, but the democratic case for descriptive representation would be stronger if such benefits directly helped the democratic representation of the young. For example, the young could be offered free (or fee-reduced) places on public speaking or debating workshops, thus incentivising them not only to join the party/trade union but also to learn the very skills that will aid their representative abilities.

Finally, a method to boost the membership of young people that would incur *even less* democratic cost would be for trade unions to spend more money (though not an absurd amount more) on publicity and advertising that targeted young people than on publicity that targeted other respective groups. The democratic cost here would be especially low because the trade unions would not even be offering an incentive to join that other groups were not being offered; rather, this policy would largely just have the result that a higher percentage of young people were made *aware* of the possibility and benefits of joining a political party or trade union. Since they may well be less aware of these than are older generations, in whose youth the joining of a political party and/or trade union was more common and therefore more talked about, such a campaign may in fact serve only to correct the present inequality in knowledge between the young and older generations.

Publicity and advertising that targeted young people... would largely just have the result that a higher percentage of young people were made *aware* of the possibility and benefits of joining a political party or trade union.

Of course, these are just suggestions – and rough sketches of suggestions at that – and there are undoubtedly many more ways in which young people could be encouraged to join trade unions that would have only minimal democratic costs. These ideas could also potentially be combined: for example, young people could be

offered particular membership benefits that are then advertised in a campaign to which a higher-than-average level of funding is allocated (higher, that is, than the average level of funding spent on advertising to other, equivalent-sized, age cohorts).

What about raising the membership of young people in political parties, for which (if they were possible) I have argued that quotas *would* be democratically appropriate? Because membership of political parties is freely chosen, there could be no equivalent of quotas that mandated that a certain number of young people joined political parties. Instead, then, I would suggest two things. First, the above (incentives), but done to a considerably greater degree – i.e. stronger incentives. Second, a more radical policy proposal could be to randomly select a number of young people (from various demographics) every few years, and offer them free membership and various benefits for remaining within the political party and engaging with its decisions. The number of young people to whom these benefits would be offered could, accounting for the percentage who will decline the offer, then accord with a target number that resembled a quota. To reduce its democratic costs, the size of such a “quota” (as happens with quotas generally) should be based on a lower percentage than the percentage in which those young people make up the population, but, obviously, a significantly higher percentage than the one in which they currently make up the membership of political parties.

A dependent conception of democracy clearly shows that the under-representation of the young in political parties, and to a very limited extent in trade unions, poses a democratic problem.

In conclusion, a *dependent* conception of democracy clearly shows that the under-representation of the young in political parties, and to a very limited extent in trade unions, poses a democratic problem. In the case of political parties, strong incentives and the bestowal of free membership, with benefits, upon a target number of young people in a way that resembles a quota, would be an effective way to remedy this democratic problem, by boosting descriptive representation. And in the case of trade unions, the under-representation of the young does not pose a democratic problem severe enough to justify the use of quotas (even if this were possible), but the use of incentives to boost trade union membership among young people would produce only minor democracy-distorting costs.

A sound case can therefore be made for raising the membership of young people in political parties, and (though to a weaker extent – meriting a correspondingly weaker medicine) trade unions, through descriptive representation, in order to further substantive equality and substantive interests – the requirements of democracy. In this final section, I hope I have brought this conclusion to life by giving practical examples of methods that would do just this.

Notes

1 E.g. for an analysis revealing this result in Germany, see Fitzenberger et al. (2009: 149). For Britain, see Blanden/Machin (2003: 392f.). For a study across many countries demonstrating particularly low union membership among the young (albeit alongside the additional claim that the oldest in society also have low membership) see Blanchfower (2007).

2 See also, for a similar distinction, Kolodny (2014: 197f.).

Kolodny refers to a “formal” and an “informal” conception of democracy.

3 This is the final “justification” of democracy that Kolodny (2014: 199-202) gives: its ability to further people’s substantive interests.

4 For the classic treatment of this subject, see Pitkin (1967: ch. 4).

5 I assume here for simplicity that there is no such “competition” for group representation, and that the case for representing young people can therefore be evaluated on its own merits.

6 For a similar proposal, see Urbinati (2006: 45). See also Urbinati (2000).

7 For one of the few, see Burnheim (1985).

8 For the comment on lunatics, see Griffiths/Wollheim (1960: 190).

9 For an excellent and insightful discussion of this issue, see Mansbridge (1999: 637-639). See also Phillips (1995: 52-56; 1999: 40f.).

10 For a concise and simple overview of the main issues facing young people today, see Intergenerational Foundation (2017).

11 For an argument as to why low electoral turnout among the young is of significant democratic concern, and how to remedy it, see Tozer (2017: 18f.).

12 For example, a “democratic audit” found the Conservative Party’s policy agenda to be less responsive to its members than the Labour Party’s, which in turn was less responsive than the Liberal Democrats’ (Democratic Audit UK 2013).

13 Generally speaking, a strong case can be made for quotas in the case of representation in the democratic assembly. For such a case applied to young people, see Bidadanure (2015).

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