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Introduction: The Problem Is Representation! Towards an Analytical Framework

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The point of departure in this book is that the current stagnation of democracy in the postcolonial world is due to the depoliticisation of important public issues and interests. Major public concerns have become matters of technocratic governance or privatised to the market as well as communal, patronage, and privileged citizens' networks. The introductory chapter argues that the root-cause is flawed representation: flawed representation emanating from both elitist institution building *and* fragmented citizen participation. Hence, a case is made for the need to rethink popular representation and develop methods that are more democratic. An analytical framework is outlined to that end. This framework draws on the insights from the subsequent chapters, in the context of the wider discourse. These chapters in turn focus on critical theoretical issues and empirical experiences in comparative perspective.[1]

Depoliticisation and the Primacy of Representation

The state of democracy in the Global South is marked by a striking paradox: although liberal democracy has attained an ideologically hegemonic position through several so-called waves of democracy,[2] the qualities of such democracies are increasingly called into question. The few 'old' democracies in the Global South, like India and Sri Lanka, are weakened.[3] They emerged in the struggle for state sovereignty and citizenship against colonialism and feudal-like subordination of people. The basic

argument was about the need for social, economic, and political modernisation toward democracy. This called for structural change, however: some said the expansion of market-based capitalism; others said socialist road maps. One debate was about what classes and groups would be interested in and able to propel strategies and reforms such as redistribution of land. Another debate was whether and how democracy was a realistic political project given the deficit of structural preconditions. In any case, democracy deficits are now apparent within constitutional and institutional arrangements as well as in political practices.

In addition, the second wave of democracy in the South (or, globally speaking, the third wave) seems to be over. This path was associated with the countries and peoples that did not make it in the first round or that backslide into authoritarian or even dictatorial rule. The subsequent crisis of these regimes, the generally felt need among dissidents to foster basic human rights, the rare ability of popularly rooted forces to present a strong alternative (with the major exception of South Africa), and the strong interest among international actors in promoting global liberalisation, generated transitions that were more about elitist designing of minimum democratic institutions than more substantive institutions, popular capacities, and policies to promote the structural conditions and relations of power that had hitherto been deemed crucial for genuine democratic development. Typically, the incumbents among the powerful elites gave up authoritarianism as long as they could privatise and legalise decades of accumulation of capital through political monopolies and coercive instruments of power, so-called primitive accumulation of capital. In return, the dissidents agreed to constrain popular participation and radical change, as long as there was agreement (at least on paper) on basic liberties, human rights, and certain elements of democracy. The common scholarly and political argument was that once the right institutions were in place with regard to justice, basic rights, elections, 'good governance', freedom of media, and civil society participation, democracy would flourish. It would also prevent and help resolve social, ethnic, and regional conflicts.

The 'new' democracies have fostered freedoms, elections, and decentralisation but continue to suffer from poor governance,[4] representation, and participation despite positive experiments such as participatory budgeting in parts of Latin America. Vulnerable people are frustrated by the lack of actual influence and sustained elitism. Politicians winning elections often need to foster ethnic and religious loyalties, populism, clientelism, and the abuse of public resources. Powerful groups and middle classes with limited ability to win elections tend to opt for privatisation and return partially to authoritarian governance.[5] Hence, critical questions are asked about the general feasibility of democracy in developing country contexts.

Three main explanations have been offered for the democratic deficits. First, the suggestion is that it is not a failure of the model of democratisation as such but of its implementation.[6] For example, inadequate resources have been applied to get liberal politics up and running both before and after elections. Currently, there is a special interest in better crafting of party systems so that they become functional in accordance with classic elite-led parliamentary principles – while popular political representation based on ideology and interests is deemed idealistic.[7] Critics argue, however, that this is not enough to foster the development of movements and parties that are needed to bring crucial popular issues and interests on the agenda. In this respect, moreover, there are few indications that even the new local politics based on crafting civil society and interpersonal trust (social capital) have developed more comprehensive democracy. Rather, the occasional democratic advances with civil society participation seem to have rested with successful political initiation and mediation.[8]

The second and radically different explanation is that the problem is less about design than insufficient conditions for liberal democracies, narrowly defined in terms of freedoms and fair elections. Currently, one core argument is that the freedoms and elections tend to be abused. This may even generate more corruption and violent conflicts.[9] Hence, it is argued that democracy needs to be sequenced. That is, popular control should be held back until unspecified elites have created the necessary conditions.[10] Such conditions include a liberal state based on the rule of law, good governance, and civil societies. Although leftist theses about the need for revolutions have largely faded away, suitable elements of the classic argument among modernisation theorists about the need for economic growth to gain more public resources and middle classes is also added and generalised far beyond Western Europe. The only alternative in this respect seems to be the experiences from the authoritarian developmental states and China to somehow foster progressive growth coalitions.[11] In many ways, the law and governance aspects of these arguments resembles, moreover, Samuel Huntington's old thesis from the cold war about the need for 'politics of order' to enforce and institutionalise middle class rule – a thesis that paved the way for decades of authoritarianism.[12]

There are convincing arguments however, that the sequencing thesis is both empirically and theoretically mistaken. *Empirically*, there are no attractive blueprints. In Europe, it took hundreds of years of violent conflicts to create the right preconditions.[13] In the new industrialising states such as South Korea and China, the pre-democracy sequence is marked by harsh repression. Furthermore, most parts of the postcolonial world are short of the social, economic, and political dynamics and actors that resemble those that finally generated the various brands of the liberal central

and west European *rechtsstaat* and thus economic development ahead of democracy. The relative absence of these dynamics in most of the Global South seems to call instead for even more repression and authoritarian solutions than in Europe and East Asia,[14] at times with nondemocratic religious and ethnic communalism involved too.[15] *Theoretically*, moreover, all proper institutions should ideally of course be in place when people gain control of public matters. However, if necessary elements of democracy (such as strong legal and administrative institutions) are not included in the definition of democratic process but deemed external preconditions, there are by definition nothing but nondemocratic enlightened ways to generate them (such as in Singapore and China).

The third explanation and the point of departure for this book is based on the argument in our previous volume about the new local politics of democratisation: that is, the development of democracy has been depoliticised.[16] This is not to suggest that democracy used to be constructively politicised in the Global South or to celebrate uncritically even the idealised attempts at popular politicisation in places such as Kerala.[17] But it is a major problem that the proponents of the dominant two arguments agree on a narrow definition of (liberal) democracy in terms of freedoms and fair elections and then either neglect a number of basic dimensions or say that they have to be created beforehand by other means. The result is that both paradigms exclude by definition approaches that focus less on democratic rules of the game in themselves and more on how these institutions may be used and expanded in favour of improved social, economic, and other basic conditions. Given that such social democratic paths have been quite important, especially in the transition of the previously poor Scandinavian countries, and that adapted versions are gaining ground in cases such as Brazil, there is an obvious need to widen the perspective.[18]

In addition, it is a fundamental problem that the growth of new democracies has been rooted primarily in pact making and institution building among elites. The views and interests of the majority of the population are thereby excluded from the formal political arena. In the absence of effective popular control over public affairs, economic and political power in many countries of the Global South rests primarily with actors related to the combination of state and private businesses. The leverage of these dominant actors has increased with the hollowing out of the public resources and relatively autonomous capacity that were vested with the state. In this context, relations between state and people are increasingly mediated on the one hand by communal-, patronage-, and network-based groups and on the other by market institutions, neither of which are subject to democratic control. The reduction of the public space in favour of, for example, religious and ethnic communities is not incompatible with neoliberal
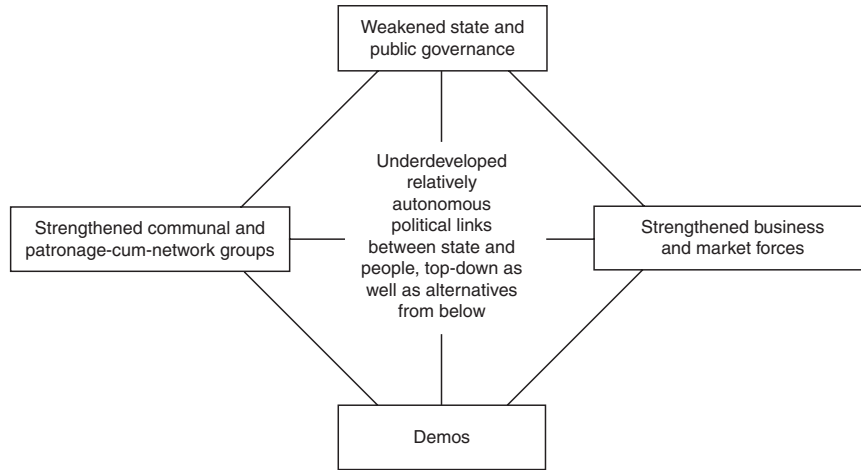
Figure 1.1   The challenges of democratic popular control of public affairs.

perspectives. Rather, the communal perspectives are quite in line with the privatisation of public resources. (The reduction of public social security and education, for instance, generates both more communitarian charity and schools for the poor and profitable private hospitals and schools for the rich.) Meanwhile, those excluded by basic social and economic cleavages are poorly represented by movements, organisations, political parties, and civil organisations.[19] Civil society in terms of associational life among rights-bearing citizens is often confined to middle-class activism and self-management.[20]

Thus, the core of this argument of depoliticisation of democracy is that relatively autonomous *political* relations between state and people are underdeveloped (Figure 1.1). Hence, there is a need to counter the problems of democracy by way of more, not less, popular influence to alter the structure of power and open up for alternative processes and agents of change. The roots of the democratic deficit are not the new and positive civil and political freedoms, but rather that the defunct instruments and popular capacities to exercise control over public matters have made it difficult to use the freedoms and new institutions to alter the relations of power and thus improve law, policies, and governance. This calls for analyses of the politics of representation.

Rethinking Democratic Popular Representation

If flawed representation is the root cause of democratic deficits in the Global South, what would be the best framework for understanding and

analysing the problems and options? The contribution below situates the insights from the subsequent chapters (and the projects that they draw on) in the context of the wider discourse on democratic representation.

Representation is a complex and contentious concept. As outlined by Pitkin, representation presupposes a representative, the represented, something that is being represented, and a political context.[21] Although there are several types of representation (including within law, business, and oligarchic systems), our focus is on the problems of democracy. The essence of democratic representation is authorisation and accountability based on political equality, which presuppose transparency and responsiveness. That which is represented may be substantive, descriptive, and/or symbolic. *Substantive* representation is when the representative acts for the represented, for instance, a leader advancing the interests of workers. *Descriptive* representation is when an actor stands for the represented by being objectively similar. For instance, a woman represents women and a resident in a village represents the other villagers. *Symbolic* representation is when an actor is perceived by the represented to once again stand for them but now, for instance, in terms of shared culture and identities. In addition, symbolic representation may also be understood in the wider sense of constructing the demos, the groups, and the interests that are being represented and claiming to be a legitimate authority as a representative.[22] This, of course, is particularly important in the aftermath of the nation building against colonialism, with the increasingly widespread identity politics and the continuous attempts by various movements and actors (from above as well as from below) to constitute 'the people' and establish their own authority as legitimate representatives.

There are two universally valid, major approaches to democratic representation with related recommendations. The first focuses on *the chain of popular sovereignty* from the people, via various intermediaries such as democratic organisations expressing collective interests and ideas, to elected political parties and politicians, supposedly aggregating these views, taking decisions, making laws, and delegating the executive powers and overseeing impartial administrative and legal implementation. This is inspired by the principal-agent perspective and typically adhered to by students of formally regulated politics, government, and public administration. The second stresses the importance of *direct participation of the immediately concerned people* through not only formal but also informal arrangements, popular movements, and lobby groups as well as civil action in, for instance, neighbourhoods and associations for self-management.

The chain of popular sovereignty has two related tendencies toward deteriorated representation. One is that public matters and resources have

been reduced and fragmented under neoliberalism and globalisation by way of privatisation, subcontracting, and delegation beyond democratic control. The other tendency is that the demos is fragmented and almost all the links in the chain itself are tarnished. The latter is especially true with regard to the intermediary representative institutions from citizen associations to political parties. Mass-based interest organisations (rooted in the industrialisation in the North and anticolonialism in the South) have been radically weakened, most severely those based on class. Although public resources and capacities are shrinking, politicians and political parties lose firm and independent roots among people. The privatisation, informalisation, depoliticisation, and weakening of the intermediary political institutions generate further distrust in the authorisation of representatives and their mandates, and people act more like individuals on a market than as citizens in a public sphere. Particularly in the Global South but also in the North,[23] representative politics is often looked on as a particularly dirty business characterised by money and personality-oriented politics, non-programmatic organisational machines, and crooked politicians.[24] This in turn has generated alternative routes. But the various supplementary forms of democracy – by taking matters to court and to institutions in civil society for self-financed self-management and direct participation, pressure, and informal contacts – tend to focus on single issues and immediate benefits and are largely detached from the political chain of popular sovereignty. Also, they are made best use of by the educated middle classes, which in mainstream theory are looked on as the pillars of democracy, and the civil organisations and activists themselves are rarely subject to basic principles of democratic representation, authorisation, and accountability. Moreover, communal ethnic and religious organisations as well as families and clans cater to an increasing number of popular worries and needs, typically among the weaker sections of the population with insufficient capacities to make use of civil rights.[25] When not claiming equal civil, political, and socioeconomic rights for all but specific communal privileges, these organisations and solidarities tend to fragment the demos and undermine democracy – at times, by way of identity politics.[26]

The advantage of the chain-of-popular-sovereignty approach is precision and conceptual consistency in relation to democratic theory. However, a cross-examination of Norwegian and Indonesian results shows clearly that contextual differences of capacity and class are often neglected. One example is the gap between the exit from organised politics to private solutions by the majority of resourceful citizens in the Global North, but only a critical minority in the Global South, and the marginalisation from active organised politics of vulnerable majorities in the Global South, but only poor immigrants in the Global North.[27] Even more important: practices

outside the formally recognised chain tend to be set aside. These practices include attempts at participatory governance and democratic struggles over the extensive public affairs that have been privatised and informalised.

Unfortunately, however, the approach focusing on *direct participation by the immediately concerned people* does not provide a good alternative but rather stresses the other side of the coin by setting aside the formalised chain of popular sovereignty. Interestingly, this is done from two directions. The first is market oriented, supported by organisations such as the World Bank[28] and in favour of user and consumer participation rather than citizenship and popular sovereignty. The other is advocated by poststructuralists, including Escobar and Alvarez.[29] who turn against the modern agents of change like state, parties, and class-based movements in favour of culturally rooted and pluralistic grassroots movements, partly along similar lines as the later postcolonial generation of the originally Indian subaltern school, and Chalmers *et al.,* who add associative networks.[30] In addition, the critics of globalisation like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that state and power has been so dispersed and localised that there is no decisive unit left to fight and that increasingly many producers are regulating social relations themselves, so that strong parties and representative democracy are unnecessary and even irrelevant.[31]

Yet the basics of both the market and poststructural positions are remarkably similar to that of Robert Putnam and others in emphasising that the 'real' demos develops organically from below among self-managing, cooperating, and associating citizens (thus developing social capital), not in relation to ideologies, institutions, and political engagement.[32] Consequently, representation becomes redundant because according to Putnam and others people act directly through the same personal contacts and associations that have constituted the collectively acting people in the first place. Given that almost any civil organisation thus becomes part of and almost embodies the demos itself, activists who are critical of Marxist-Leninist analyses of 'people's objective interests' as a legitimate basis for 'enlightened leadership' actually apply similar but more emphatic expressions such as 'we represent the victims' or we provide alternative support to bypass 'rotten politicians'. This way, moreover, there is no need to analyse with, for example, Mamdani,[33] Chatterjee,[34] and Harriss[35] differences between organisations of 'rights-bearing citizens' and 'subjects' (or 'populations' or 'denizens') who are short of such rights, lack sufficient capacity to use them, and at best use organisations and numbers to improve their position. Similarly, one does not have to consider the possible importance of intermediary variables such as politics and ideology. Hence, it is difficult to explain the rise and importance of different forms of associational life.[36] It is conveniently forgotten that Scandinavian democracy, welfare

states, and the current social trust – as well as contemporary participatory budgeting and planning in Porto Alegre and Kerala, for instance – have all been politically facilitated and sustained, but also undermined due to insufficient political defence.[37]

On the other hand, many civil society activists are now more anxious than before to legitimate their work in terms of whom they try to speak and act for.[38] In addition, the new institutions for direct participation such as participatory planning are attempts to initiate a new layer of representation between electoral chains of popular sovereignty and associational life and populism, just like previous Scandinavian experiences of combining liberal political democracy and interest-based representation and cooperation between government and associations.[39] Yet, a number of questions remain to be answered. One is the lack of appreciation for the difference between associations that reflect private life, special interests, and specific issues and those that relate such interests and issues to matters and perspectives of public concern and thus legitimate them by arguing convincingly for why they are vital for many, not just for a group. Another problem is how to guarantee authorisation and accountability. A third and even more difficult task is how to identify and agree on what parts of the demos should control what sections of the more or less extensive public affairs on the basis of political equality. For instance, should the poor decide in their neighbourhoods and the rich take care of themselves in good democratic order behind guarded fences, or should the boundaries of the society and the common affairs be defined more widely at the level where the differences have appeared, so that they can be tackled democratically?

An Integrated Framework

In brief, although the strength of the chain-of-popular-sovereignty approach is the conceptual clarity in relation to democratic theory, the major weakness is contextual insensitivity and neglect of attempts at democratisation in relation to practices outside the formally recognised democratic polity. However, the approach focusing on direct participation by the immediately concerned people is no alternative because it tends to set aside the links to formalised politics and ignore the core issues of power and democratic representation. The obvious option is instead to find a way of combining the benefits of each approach. Given the primacy of *democratic* and not just any form of popular representation, the point of departure must be the chain of popular sovereignty. However, it should be applied not only to the established polity but also to efforts at representation beyond the formal public institutions.

This calls for analyses of democracy that are inclusive of such practices. A generally accepted definition of the aim of democracy is popular control of public affairs on the basis of political equality.[40] Hence, there are three basic pillars: (1) the people (demos), (2) the public matters, and (3) the intermediary ways to exercise popular control of policy making and implementation.[41] The mediation in turn calls for representation on the basis of political equality. What are the intrinsic instruments to this end, especially among marginalised people? As already emphasised, political equality and popular control may not require advanced conditions such as economic prosperity and social equality. But there must be reasonably well-performing, well-spread, and substantive institutions to promote and sustain civil, judicial, political, and basic socioeconomic rights, free and fair elections, representation, responsive and accountable governance, and civil participation. Moreover, all people, and not just the elite, need to have sufficient capacity to promote and use these institutions.[42] Within this framework, democratic representation in turn calls for authorisation with mandate and accountability with transparency and responsiveness.

In other words, the main focus of analysis should be the development of these dimensions of the chain of popular sovereignty in relation to all vital forms of governance, not just official forms, of important matters that all people, not just dominant groups, deem to be of public concern given their engagement.

An integrated framework for the study of popular democratic representation is presented in Figure 1.2. Actors and their policies may be more or less democratic. Informal leaders are not democratically institutionalised but relate to democratic institutions such as elections. Popular representation that bypasses the political legislatures and the additional more or less democratically oriented institutions for participation (such as arrangements for corporate systems or participatory planning) is included as non-democratic but crucial to consider.

First, let us consider the people. The definition of the demos cannot be taken for granted. The constitution of national projects and communities against indirect rule and imperialism was replaced by postcolonial conflicts over limited resources, identity politics, and authorisation of representation.[43] Globalisation and the hollowing out of the state (on central but also local level) have contributed to disintegration and the production of overlapping demos in relation to various issues, spheres, and territories. Higher mobility, migration, continued subordination of women, less unified workplaces, and increasing separation of workplaces and residences add to the picture, as do identity politics. Who are citizens with actual rights and who are instead virtually subjects?[44] Who has the right to vote and a say in other ways, and who has not? Who has the right to control

Bypassing democratic representation

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Matters of common concern which may be governed in more or less public ways

Institutions for private governance	Institutions for civil self-governance	Auxiliary state institutions and institutions for sub-contracted public governance	Institutions for public government		
			The civil and military administration	The judiciary and police	The political executive
					The political legislative at all levels

Institutions for participation/representation at all levels and in all sectors

Self-representation / Direct participation

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

In politically equal policy-making (input) and impartial implementation (output):

*authorisation with mandate

*accountability with transparency and responsiveness

Representation via mediators

Civil society	Political society	Informal leaders
Self-management, associational life and public discourse based on citizens' rights and/or struggle for them	Parties, organisations and movements based on interests in governance of public affairs	Leaders and groups based on patronage, 'good contacts', kinship, religion, ethnicity

Legitimated authority to represent various sections of the demos symbolically, descriptively and substantively

Symbolic representation 'Standing for': belief, identity	Descriptive representation 'Standing for': territory, community groups	Substantive representation 'Acting for': views, ideas, interests

PEOPLE / DEMOS

The articulated people: Social units, conflicts, cleavages and actors with capacities, interestsm ideas and positions on public matters
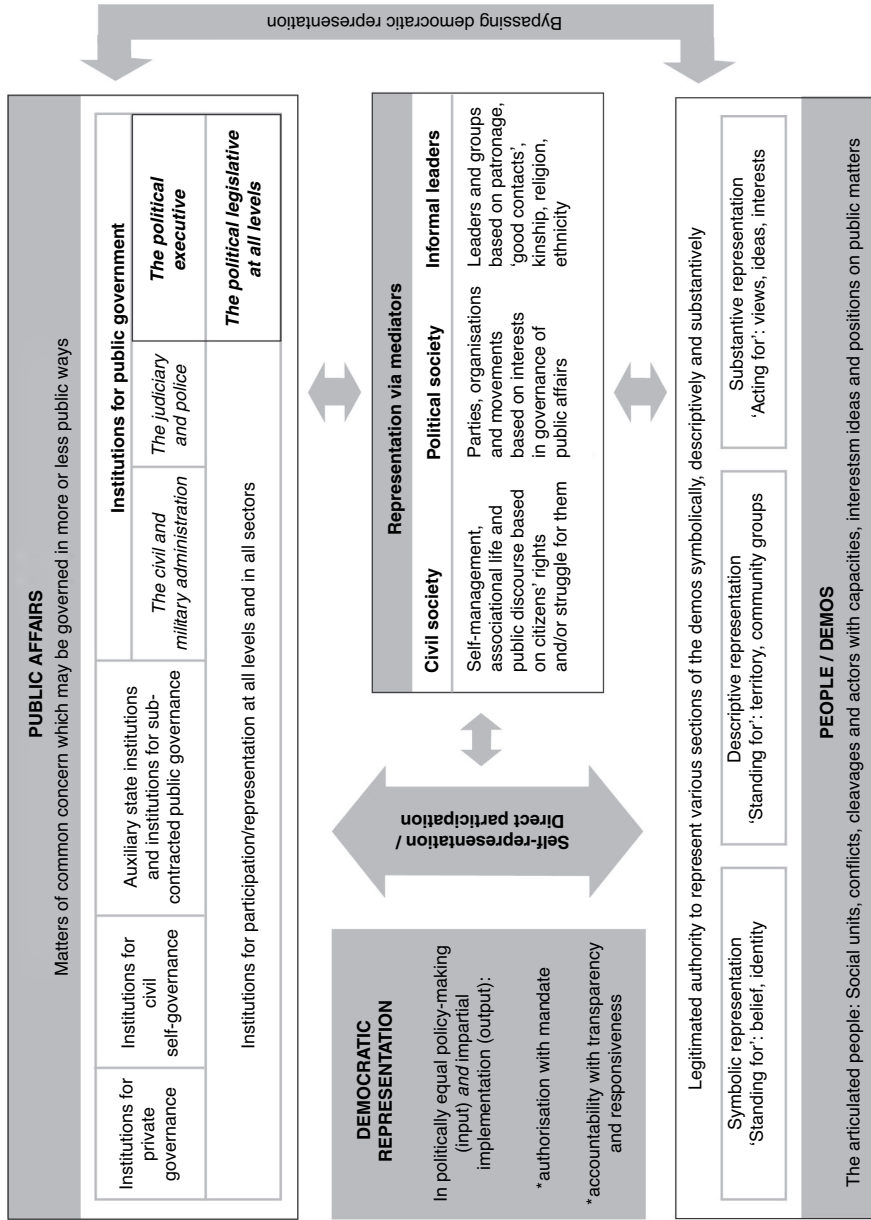
Figure 1.2 Integrated framework for the study of popular democratic representation.

certain aspects of the public matters but not others? What is the capacity of various sections of people to voice their views and interests and act accordingly – individually or collectively?

Second, let us consider the public affairs that people are supposed to control, which also should not be taken for granted. The minimum consists of the factors that are intrinsic to develop and sustain democracy. During the third wave, limited democracy has proved possible even under harsh conditions and reduced public affairs. But as we know, the limitations *are* severe, and it is clear that increased public and popular capacity to promote and use the conventional instruments is also necessary: necessary to make political democracy substantial enough to serve as a framework for additional aspirations such as rights-based peace and sustainable development. Hence, although it may be obvious that the core institutions for public government include the legislative and its executive, the civil and military administration, the judiciary and the police, it remains a matter of dispute as to whether, for instance, domestic violence or work environment are part of public government. It is particularly important in the Global South to include both formal and informal institutions and to ask about their capacities in terms of performance as well as their geographical and substantive scope.[45]

Similarly, it is vital to consider institutions for self-governance such as cooperatives as well as different combinations of private, civil society and public governance, and government in the form of joint ventures, auxiliary bodies, and subcontracting or delegation, which have become increasingly common with the tendency toward less public and more polycentric governance. A particularly crucial issue here concerns the prospects for democratic regulation of the more or less privatised institutions rather than reclaiming them, which may not be feasible. Along the top row in Figure 1.2, privatised collective transportation, schools, or health services, for instance, could thus be subject to democratically decided rules and regulations.[46]

Another basic question is whether or not the combination of citizen rights and democratic governance would be conducive to fight corruption and promote environmentally and socially responsible economic growth. This might be a democratic alternative to the resurgence of the previously discussed thesis (based on theories of modernisation and 'politics of order') that there is a need to promote firm institutions, rule of law, and economic development ahead of popular sovereignty to prevent chaos and more corruption and conflicts. A current example of both the possibilities and problems is the successful social-democratic-oriented peace in Aceh and the risk that it can not be sustained through further reforms but is being derailed by clientelism and special favours.[47] In Figure 1.2, such

measures to improve responsiveness and accountability – such as those attempted in Brazil[48] and historically in Scandinavia[49] – would be by more democratic arrangements for interest-based representation and participation that are attached to the various institutions for governance (especially the executive ones) by democracy-oriented citizen and popular organisations and direct participation by relevant sections of the population. This is also where the renewed interest in learning from old Scandinavian social pacts[50] may be indicated in terms of triangular relations and agreements (about the exchange between state-guaranteed economic growth and collective wage agreements and universal-unemployment and social-welfare schemes) between productive sections of capital within the context of private governance, relevant sections of the institutions for public government, and well-organised trade unions and related movements.

Third, the various forms of mediation between the demos and public affairs should be considered. The mediation relates both to the input and output side of democracy, that is, to the politically equal generation of policies and to the impartial implementation (the latter of which seems to be positively related to the more universal as opposed to means-tested measures that are applied).[51] Arrangements for participation and representation that are related to the different institutions for governance of public matters are in the upper part of the model. This includes the elected legislative assemblies and their executives on the central and local levels. But as already indicated, there may also be institutions for consultation and participation in relation to a number of administrative boards and commissions, workers' participation in company management, the meetings of a neighbourhood organisation, or academic self-rule. Most of the introductions of these institutionalised forms of representation may well have been enforced from below through pilot cases and demands on politicians. However, the very implementation tends to be a product of top-down measures and decentralisation, in Scandinavia and Kerala, for instance, on the basis of strong state apparatuses or state-building projects and the legacies of free farmer communities and land reforms, respectively.[52]

For good and for bad, moreover, these roots and measures in turn have then formed much of the system of representation, including parties, movements, and even the constitution of the demos.[53] Far down in the model, this is indicated by the different formations and expressions of the demos and the struggle over legitimate and authoritative representation of various sections of the demos symbolically, descriptively, and substantively. The democratic means include the actors' authorisation, responsiveness, and accountability, as well as their capacity to voice interests and ideas and act accordingly, ideally on the basis of political equality.

On the left side of the model are the forms of self-representation and direct participation. Logically, there is no pure direct democracy beyond participation by each individual.[54] On the right side is the representation via mediators. A basic distinction may be made between three types of mediation. The first is via civil society with self-management (including professional nongovernmental organisations [NGOs]), associational life (from citizen's neighbourhood or sports organisations to action, lobby, and pressure groups), and public discourse (such as in media, academia, and cultural life) that are based on civil/human rights and their development. Similarly, the first type of mediation may also be via the many trade unions and other popular movements with people who do not have much actual civil and socioeconomic rights but fight for them. The second type is through political society with parties, movements, and organisations (including pressure and lobby groups) that are based on joint interests in the governance of public affairs beyond the rights of the citizens. Hence, there are often close relations between civil and political society: less in the liberal tradition where civil associations should be independent critics of politics and the state and more in the social democratic tradition where civil and popular organisations have opted for democratisation of the state and thus political implementation of many of their demands. The third kind of meditation is through informal leaders and groups that are based on and sustain patronage, good contacts, kinship, religion, and ethnicity but also relate to democratic institutions such as elections and parliaments. Again, of course, there are several cases of overlap between this and the previous channels of mediation.

One related question concerns the fate of democracies dominated by clientelism through informal leaders and privileged political connections and other resources.[55] Another dilemma involves the weak and generally problematic links between civil society associations (that are often rather small and confined to middle-class residents or activists) and the more mass-based and popular-oriented movements.[56] The same applies for the crucial problems of scaling up such links and cooperations on various levels and making an impact within the organised politics that tend to be dominated by powerful elites.[57]

The Strategic Connections

A major contemporary tendency at each level in the model of democratic representation seems to be what Peter Houtzager has dubbed *polycentrism* or more generally fragmentation: fragmentation of the demos, the governance of public matters, and their poor links by way of representation.[58]

The major challenge is therefore to apply the chain-of-popular-sovereignty approach within not only the remaining formal structures of command but also in the wider and fragmented landscape of actual governance and popular engagement and to focus on the strategic connections.

Viewed thus, the major problem of popular control of public matters summarised in Figure 1.1 translates into three strategic dilemmas in the model of representation shown in Figure 1.2: first, in relation to the model as a whole, the conceptualisation of representation and the authority and legitimacy of substantive, descriptive, and symbolic representation; second, with prime reference to the upper parts of the model, the links between political representation and governance; and third, with regard to the middle and lower sections in the model, the construction, organisation, and dynamics of direct and mediated representation. This forms the basis for the organisation of the present volume.

The Conceptualisation of Representation

The second part of the book is thus is about the development and dynamics of different forms of representation. What people and what views and interests are being articulated and represented? How is this done in relation to organised politics and administration? Our aim is to problematise representation in the context of how the demos is being constructed and how representation is legitimised and authorised given the relations of power and conflicts. The book includes three prominent efforts in these directions. Neera Chandhoke offers a close analysis of both the meaning and the pros and cons of *democratic* representation. Although she does not shy away from the fact that established forms of representation have been undermined and that much of the most crucial current issues have been brought to the fore by alternative and not always accountable civil society groups, she nonetheless concludes that equal political participation is a democratic root right that calls for elected representation. Hence, although the conflict between representation and direct participation is only natural given the deterioration of the former, civil society groups for direct participation cannot replace representation but should instead focus on improving and supplementing it.

Is this possible? Peter P. Houtzager and Adrian Gurza Lavalle address the paradox of civil society representation: although elected representation and its technocratic and corrupt administration suffer from distrust, the innovative civil-society-driven alternatives have weaker claims to democratic legitimacy. Based on interviews with leaders of community associations, advocacy NGOs, coordinating groups, and nonprofit service organisations

in São Paulo, Brazil, the authors explore the actual and symbolic construction of associational representation. Few NGOs claim representation, but many community groups do. The main focus is on representation in different locations and on special issues related to the executive branch of government. Interestingly, the leaders rarely legitimate their representation in terms of elections, wide membership, or descriptive identity (such as gender or ethnic origin), but primarily by serving as trustworthy mediators, being close and committed to the causes of their publics, and providing crucial services. According to Houtzager and Lavalle, the mediation argument is particularly promising because it adds new forms of representation of voiceless groups and interests to regular representative government.

What, then, is the most fruitful way of probing the different old and new forms of representation? Kristian Stokke and Elin Selboe support Houtzager and Lavalle by challenging Pitkin's identification of symbolic, descriptive, and substantive representation of given constituencies. Based on the importance of culture, Stokke and Selboe argue instead that both the constituencies (demos) and the different forms of representation need to be analysed in terms of how actors claim to be authoritative and legitimate representatives of specific groups and issues. Such studies, they add, may best be shaped by drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of social practice and symbolic power, despite his limited attention to the political field. Case studies of Sri Lanka and Senegal lend support to this argument, but also to the importance of combining analysis of the discourse and the political economy.

Political Representation, Government, and Governance

Turning from the conceptual issues to key problems related to the upper parts of the model of representation, the second strategic connection is between representation governance. We cover three generations of popular-oriented attempts, one from Asia based on the 'old' generation of widely based radical parties and social movements; another from Africa on efforts by modern-oriented liberation movements having come to power and then trying to introduce reforms from above; a third from Latin America where elected progressive executives have responded to popular aspirations by institutionalising participatory governance supported by civil society organisations and social movements. Common themes include the capacities of the poor to engage and the institutional constraints, but also the politics that drive and may alter the constrictions.

Neil Webster draws on his three decades of studies of the leftist efforts in West Bengal, India, to promote ordinary people's lives by combining

parliamentary and extraparliamentary struggle. By the midseventies, the struggle took a more reformist turn through the promotion of local governance. The question is, has this fostered democratic representation or cooption? Webster's critical case is the issue of education. Although there is a strong desire among parents to provide good education for their children, the Left Front Governments (LFGs) have not given prime importance to schooling. However, as in other sectors to which the LFGs have previously given priority, participatory and representative practices have supplemented each other in a system of checks and balances that, in spite of imperfections, have often increased the capacity of the poor to pursue their aspirations. There are cases of corrupt and party-partisan practices, but these cases do not amount to antidemocratic governance. Even within the weak sector of education, there are now signs of relatively consistent policy implementation in favour of more pro-poor, equitable, and accountable provision of schooling.

Lars Buur analyses the ambiguous character of popular participation and decentralised governance in Mozambique. The general argument is that what started as a clear attempt at party-state capture (due to worries about the 'uneducated' electorate) has over the years been partially altered within the framework of state-society relationships by constant reforms, local state functionaries' search for their roles, and unintended consequences of various measures. Hence, there is a need to focus more on state and party officials' attempts to design and appropriate participatory mechanisms for representation and consultation in the context of international aid and expanding markets than on new and celebrated forms of more or less independent civil society activism.

How shall one best understand then the world-renowned attempts at participatory reforms in Brazil within the analytical framework of democracy-oriented representation? Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Patrick Heller point to three factors. First, the reforms expand the access of the demos to public matters such as budgets, in the contexts of seemingly overwhelming corruption, clientelism, and elite dominance. Second, the introduction and institutionalisation of the measures call for effective politics including a programmatic and ideologically committed leftist party. Third, the new institutions are not limited to the ideas of new civil society politics but are instead designed to foster representation by excluded groups in between the chain-of-sovereignty approach and the direct-democracy approach. Moreover, based on a comparative study of the effect of different institutional arrangements under similar conditions, Baiocchi and Heller argue that although reforms 'from above' can make crucial impact, this rests with the political backing beyond parties alone. In fact, it is the interaction between political and a strong civil societies that is crucial and

prevents elite from dominating the new institutions and thus retain their control. Hence, it is crucial that the institutional design is not to provide ready-made rules and regulations (in accordance with the new 'sequencing of democracy thinking') but to enable wider popular participation to both alter the relations of power in a democratic way *and* gradually introduce new constitutions.

Challenges of Popular Political Representation

These conclusions take us to the third strategic connection in the middle and lower parts of the model on representation. The focus is on links between civil society and more popularised engagements on the one hand and organised politics on the other. This is essentially about democratisation by strengthening from below the weak autonomous connections between state and people at the expense of the dominant mediation (previously outlined in Figure 1.1) between the undermined state and the subordinated people through communal-, patronage-, and network-based informal leaders and the business and market. The third part of the book contains four studies of these challenges of popular representation.

Although most of the established democracies have grown out of modern development and thus rooted classes, movements, and parties, and although democratisation ahead of such transformations has generally given rise to clientelism and elite dominance, the recent experiences from Brazil, for instance, show that it is not impossible to improve popular representation. Yet, the problems *are* abundant. This calls for close understanding of the challenges of what Gerry van Klinken calls patronage democracy. Drawing on survey results on the state and dynamics of Indonesia's democracy[59] and a number of case studies of local politics under his own direction, van Klinken analyses the political economy of the relative advances and stability. It is true that politics is dominated by elites. Yet many of them are more broadly based, more localised, and less militarised than under Suharto. Moreover, just as in India, a majority do adjust to and, by contrast to the cosmopolitan middle classes, benefit extensively from the new rules of the game by drawing on their unique ability to mobilise voters through control of the local state apparatuses and longtime cooperation with communal and business actors. This cooperation is partly to make up for the insufficiently financed government and executive. Although patronage thus sustains elements of democracy, it is also responsible for much of the democratic deficit.

Further engagement calls for specific knowledge of the dynamics of civil and political inclusion and exclusion. John Harriss's chapter is based

on a collaborative comparative project on rights, representation, and the poor in India, Brazil, and Mexico. As opposed to researchers pointing to the supposedly remarkable access of slum dwellers in Delhi to politicians and government officials, Harriss stresses that most people are denizens (inhabitants without actual citizen rights) and that contacts with the state are brokered by patron-politicians and 'big-men'. In São Paulo, by contrast, ordinary people are capable of turning directly to more democratic state institutions; and in Mexico City, they can at least opt for more self-provisioning. This does not mean that Indian 'politics is a dirty river that has to be dammed up or diverted', as many civil society activists would have it. Most of the supposedly alternative civil society organisations are middle-class oriented, and few address the problems of ordinary people in a nonpaternalistic way. The experiences from Kerala and West Bengal point instead to the importance of combining leadership and popular participation. It is true that there must also be committed civil society organisations of people themselves to foster more independent popular agency through equal citizenship, but the unfortunate relative weakness of such groups calls for political engagement and alliances.

Are trade unions a spent force in bridging the disjuncture between parliamentary politics and civil society fostered by liberal and neoliberal theory? Björn Beckman recalls the historical experiences from Europe, arguing that it was not at first the numerical strength of the labour movement but its strategic position in terms of both popular aspirations toward modernity and industrial growth orientation that made it so crucial. This called for social and political regulations in which the organised labour was vital to productive entrepreneurs and middle classes too. Case studies of the role of trade unions in Nigeria and South Africa point to the sustained importance of similar logic. Although Nigerian unions have been oriented toward alliance building in civil society and have failed to foster a labour party, their South African counterparts have been more able to combine extraparliamentary and parliamentary struggles and do not engage in a civil society alliance against the state. Yet unions in both contexts have gained from engaging in alliances and social pacts. Moreover, they constitute the basis for civil and political rights, their workplace activities serve as a laboratory for democratic self-education, and they are crucial in promoting national development against global neoliberalism.

In Asia, the postcolonial aspirations to popular representation were particularly dynamic in Indonesia, the Indian state of Kerala, and the Philippines. By the eighties, a number of setbacks and new challenges spurred many groups and movements in favour of new democratic struggle against stateism, clientelism, and coercive means to accumulate capital. It proved difficult, however, to foster cooperation between citizen- and

popular-based organisations, to aggregate specific issues, and to make an impact at the level of parties, elections, and government. The year 1996 was the starting point of three innovative projects to tackle these problems: the building of a new citizen action party (*Akbayan*) in the Philippines, the launching of a huge people's decentralised planning campaign in Kerala, and the increasing politicisation of the civil-society-based democracy movement against Suharto in Indonesia. In the final substantive chapter, Nathan Quimper, Michael Thracian (with Joss Chathukulam), and Olle Törnquist, who have followed the movements for several decades, summarise experiences and lessons. Akbayan faces the challenge of expanding its local popular organisation and alternative governance beyond the temporary opening on the national level thanks to a party-list system and extraparliamentary actions. The Kerala activists try still to summarise and handle the political setbacks of the planning campaign as well as the associated problems of promoting production. The Indonesian campaigners were marginalised in civil society while the moderate opposition, especially in the provinces, and pragmatic sections of the incumbents captured the heights of the new democracy. This calls for a new framework to combine citizen and interest organisations with wider popular political work. Politicisation of the civil society work is thus inevitable, but the question is how will it come about and be organised. Although the space for advances is local, the need to scale up seems to call for broad alliances on the intermediary levels between polycentrism on the local level and top-down elitism.

Conclusion

In the closing chapter, Neil Webster, Kristian Stokke, and Olle Törnquist discuss the policy implications of rethinking democratic representation for civil society and political activists as well as donors who wish to support rights-based democracy and sustainable development. It is true that the book points to severe problems in the promotion of democracy in the late-developing Global South. Yet advances have proved possible, and a major problem is that the policies and approaches of governments, donors, and many pro-democrats on the ground have not been so effective and need serious reconsideration. A democracy that provides a meaningful framework for ordinary people to improve their lives cannot be built only by 'getting the institutions right'. Typically, these minimal-rights institutions remain embedded in utterly unfavourable distribution of resources and relations of power. This does not mean that designing institutions and fighting for them is a lost cause, but there is a major need

to redirect attention to special promotion of such institutions that can counter the structural and other impediments. Three such areas stand out: first, capacity building to enable people to be active citizens; second, facilitation of popular organisation building; third, government provision of nodes for ordinary citizens' representation beyond elections only, from the provision of institutional channels through which democratic organisations can mediate with the state to fair arrangements for direct participation in planning and budgeting.

Notes

1. In addition to the crucial collective work with participants in our workshops and the joint efforts of the editors on the previous volume (*Politicising Democracy*, 2004) as well as the present anthology, several of the distinctions in this chapter have been inspired by the public discourse of the Norwegian research program on power and democracy (cf. Østerud 2003, 2005), the working papers by Houtzager *et al.* (2005) and Castiglione *et al.* (2005), the investigation in co-operation with the Indonesian Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (Demos) to discover if and how the analytical framework and concepts would make sense in our national survey on democracy, comments from Lars Svaasand and other participants in the 2009 Norwegian Political Science workshop on politics and development, and continuous discussions with Lars Rudebeck and Kristian Stokke.
2. For a broader review and references, see, e.g., Törnquist (2004).
3. Cf. CSDS 2007.
4. The term *governance* includes wider forms of government in society than those that refer to the organised systems of government. Hence, *good governance* does not presume democracy by way of a constitutional chain of popular command but is open to other systems of *public management* and focuses especially on problems of corruption, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.
5. See, e.g., Abrahamsen 2000, Grugel 2002, Ottaway 2003, Carothers 2004, Carothers *et al.* 2007, Priyono *et al.* 2007, Samadhi *et al.* 2008.
6. World Bank 1997, UNDP 2002.
7. See, e.g., IDEA 2007.
8. Harriss *et al.* 2004, Hickey *et al.* 2004, Houtzager 2005.
9. See, e.g., World Bank 1997, Mansfield *et al.* 2005.
10. Cf. Carothers 2007.
11. Cf. Khan, 2005.
12. 1965.
13. Berman 2007, Fukuyama 2007.
14. Törnquist 2004.
15. See, e.g., Corbridge *et al.* 2000, Blom-Hansen 1999.

16. Harriss *et al.* 2004.
17. Cf. Tharakan 2004, Törnquist 2004.
18. Cf. Houtzager 2005.
19. See, e.g., Harriss *et al.* 2004, Priyono *et al.* 2007, Samadhi *et al.* 2008, Harriss-White 2003, Nordholt *et al.* 2007.
20. Harriss 2006 and in this volume, Lavalle *et al.* 2005, Houtzager *et al.* 2007, Törnquist 2003, 2009.
21. 1967.
22. With authors like Bourdieu (Wacquant 2005a), Anderson (1983) and Stokke and Selboe (this volume).
23. Cf. Østerud 2004, 2007.
24. See, e.g., Carothers 2006.
25. See, e.g., Chandhoke 2005 and this volume, Harriss 2006 and this volume, Harriss *et al.* 2006, Houtzager 2005, Selle and Transvik 2004, Törnquist 2003, 2009.
26. Cf. van Klinken 2007 and this volume.
27. Törnquist 2006.
28. 1997.
29. 1992.
30. 1997a.
31. 2000.
32. 1993.
33. 1996.
34. 2004.
35. This volume.
36. See, e.g., Rudolph 2004.
37. Cf. Rothstein 2005, Kumlin *et al.* 2005, Tendler 1997, Abers 2000, Baiocchi 2003, Florisbelo *et al.* 2004, Isaac *et al.* 2000, Törnquist 1996, 2004.
38. Houtzager *et al.* 2007, Lavalle and Houtzager (this volume).
39. Cf. Avritzer 2002, Baioc 2005, Baiocci and Heller (this volume), Esping-Andersen 1985, Berman 2006.
40. Beetham 1999.
41. The actual content of what is thus being decided and implemented is due to the will of the demos but must be supportive of the principles of democracy and the necessary means to develop and apply them.
42. For specifications of what has been conceptualised as 49 intrinsic aspects of democracy in the development and application of a framework for analysing the state and dynamics of democracy 'from below,' see Priyono *et al.* (2007) and Samadhi *et al.* (2008).
43. Cf. Stokke and Selboe this volume.
44. Cf. Harriss this volume.
45. Cf. Helmke *et al.* 2004.
46. This is a long-established practice of social democratic governance, but it has also been tried in scattered local settings in, for instance, the Philippines (e.g., Rocamora 2004, Quimpo 2004) and in cases such as Brazil, South Africa, and the Indian state of Kerala and West Bengal (e.g., Avritzer 2002, Baiocchi

2003, 2005, Fung *et al.* 2003, Heller 2001, Isaac *et al.* 2000, Tharakan 2004, Jones and Stokke 2005, Buhlungu 2006, Ballard *et al.* 2006, Webster 1992, Rogaly *et al.* 1999).

47. Törnquist *et al.* 2009.
48. See, e.g., Baiocchi 2005, Baiocchi and Heller this volume, Webster this volume.
49. See, e.g., Esping-Andersen 1985, Berman 2006, Selle *et al.* 2006, Trägårdh 2007.
50. Cf. Moene *et al.* 2006, Beckman *et al.* 2000, 2004, and this volume.
51. Cf. Rothstein *et al.* 2005.
52. See, e.g., Esping-Andersen 1985, Berman 2006, Trägårdh 2007, Tharakan 2004, Törnquist 2004.
53. Cf. Chatterjee 2004.
54. Even the romanticised Greek democracy was not all that 'direct.' It operated largely by representatives selected through lotteries among those males (not women and slaves) who had enough time, money, and status (Manin 1997).
55. Cf. van Klinken and Buur this volume.
56. Cf. Harriss this volume.
57. Cf. Törnquist, Tharakan, and Quimpo, this volume.
58. 2005.
59. Priyono *et al.* 2007.