Contemporary political theory tends to view democratic representation, generally, and descriptive representation, in particular, predominantly from only one perspective—namely, from the perspective of inclusion. To view democratic representation from the perspective of inclusion is to focus on the question “whose interests, opinions, and perspectives need to be brought into the political arena in order for democratic institutions to function fairly and justly?” The perspective of inclusion assumes that democratic representation is a process by which democratic citizens (or at least their voices, interests, opinions, and perspectives) are made present via their representatives in governmental processes. According to this way of thinking, democratic representation requires incorporating more and more different interests, opinions and perspectives. In particular, contemporary democratic theorists have emphasized the importance of including representatives from historically marginalized groups into the political arena to speak and act on the behalf of those groups. What is most distinctive of the perspective of inclusion is the assumption that democratic representation requires an expansive political arena. From the perspective of inclusion, the more inclusion, the better.

In contrast, I will argue that an adequate understanding of democratic representation requires adopting another perspective, what I call the perspective of exclusion. To adopt the perspective of exclusion is to focus on a somewhat different question—namely, “How should democratic citizens limit the influence of certain citizens and their representatives?” The perspective of exclusion acknowledges and embraces the fact that exclusion is inextricably tied to democratic representation. In other words, the perspective of exclusion attends to the ways that democratic institutions can only function properly if they exclude. Not only do some citizens’ voices need to be brought in, some voices need to be constrained and kept out.

The paper makes two points. First, I argue that political inclusion is not antithetical to political exclusion; rather, *democratic representation requires inclusion and exclusion to occur simultaneously*. In particular, I identify two ways that political exclusion is inextricably tied to democratic representative institutions. This argument is certainly not new. In fact, I draw on the classic work of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl to show that the almost exclusive focus on inclusion does so by ignoring and downplaying important exclusionary aspects of democratic norms and practices. Second, I contend that contemporary political theory’s almost exclusive focus on inclusion in democratic representation is misplaced. Democratic theory needs to adopt a perspective of exclusion on democratic representation. For the dominant focus on inclusion prevents acknowledging the types of sacrifices needed for more just and equitable relations. More generally, I make these arguments in order to start a conversation about how democratic institutions can and should properly exclude. Of course, democratic citizens also need to address how and whom their institutions should include. However, political deliberations about inclusion are *not* the same as public deliberations about exclusion. Just as one can propose including more items on the budget without making any recommendations for items that need to be cut, one can discuss inclusion without explicitly acknowledging the need for limiting the
presence of certain groups. By arguing for adopting a perspective of exclusion, I seek to make the costs of democratic representation more explicit. Because democratic citizens via their representatives are ultimately responsible for deciding who is included and excluded from their polity, and because, I will argue, it is impossible to avoid exclusion, initiating a conversation about the proper way of excluding is the first step towards democratic institutions functioning more justly and fairly.

**Democracy and Inclusion**

Recently, there has been a renewed fascination with inclusion in political science. For instance, Christina Wolbrecht and Rodney Hero (2005) wrote that “The politics of democratic inclusion are central to an understanding of the quality of American Democracy” (2). Evaluating the “incorporation, influence, and representation of various disadvantaged social groups within democratic institutions in the United States” is crucial for determining how well democratic institutions are doing. Political inclusion is understood as a commitment to diversity, one that prioritizes bringing in the marginalized and political vulnerable. Three benchmarks are typically used to measure the inclusion of the marginalized (Ronald Schmidt et al 2002). The first benchmark is whether the political system allows full formal access. The second benchmark is the presence of members in decision-making institutions. The third benchmark is whether public policies are adopted that address group interests. Each of these different benchmarks identifies how political inclusion benefits disadvantaged groups and thereby indicates a level of progress for democratic institutions. Using such benchmarks, political scientists tend to judge democratic institutions by the extent to which they “include” that is, assimilate marginalized groups and allow those groups to become full members.

Normative political theorists seemingly concur. Inclusion of those affected in collective decisions is considered a basic norm of democracy, (see, e.g., Habermas 1996; chap. 3; Young 2000, 5–6; Warren, 2002). For example, Robert Dahl contends that “the fifth and final criterion for the democratic process is, as follows: The demos must include all adult members of the association except transients and persons proved to be mentally defective” (1989, 129). Dahl notes that the terms “transients” and “mentally defective” could introduce ambiguities. So he specifically qualifies the fifth criterion for democratic institutions by saying that attempts to manipulate the qualification as a way to deprive certain persons of rights should be seen as evidence that democratic processes have failed to meet this fifth criterion. Similarly, Iris Marion Young, the preeminent theorist on inclusion, contends that inclusion increases the legitimacy of democratic institutions. For Young, “The normative legitimacy of a democratic decision depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision-making processes and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes” (2000, 5).

Inclusion is treated as democratic antidote to past wrongs. For example, Young writes, “Democratic political movements and designers of democratic processes can promote greater inclusion in decision-making processes as a means of promoting more just outcomes” (17). Political inclusion is how democratic societies right the past and present political injustices of those societies.

Implicit in both political scientists’ and political theorists’ accounts of political inclusion is the assumption that political inclusion is morally distinct and in opposition to political exclusion. Understanding exclusion and inclusion in oppositional terms has important political implications: Good democracies include while bad and oppressive states exclude. In fact, most political theorists take political exclusion to be simply a “form of domination.” For example,
James Tully (2005) has argued that relations of exclusion – e.g. those that deprive subjects with formal democratic rights the money, time, or knowledge to exercise those rights – “render citizens unfree and violate the co-equality of the principle of democracy” (212). Tully’s discussion points to very troubling instances of exclusion, ones that are intolerable from the perspective of democratic theory. Given the prevalent tenor of existing accounts of exclusion, it is not surprising that contemporary theorists treat inclusion and exclusion as opposites. It is not surprising that most theoretical accounts of democratic representation simply focus on and celebrate how representative institutions include. Who wants to stand up for exclusion?

Now I want to begin by admitting that democratic governments do not and have not done exclusion well. For most often democratic governments have excluded citizens from being full participants in representative institutions based on their group memberships, e.g. based on their gender, race, or sexuality. Cathy Cohen (1997) calls such extreme forms of marginalization “categorical exclusion.” Such exclusions have proven to be very effective ways of dominating and oppressing certain groups of citizens, violating the equal civic standing of certain groups of citizens. I strongly agree that categorical exclusion is unacceptable.

However, categorical exclusion is not the only way that democratic institutions exclude. Cathy Cohen (1997) identifies three additional ways that democratic institutions can exclude without formal prohibitions targeting certain groups: integrative marginalization, advanced marginalization, and secondary marginalization. Integrative marginalization occurs when the informal norms and practices of democratic procedures prevent certain members from integrating and assimilating into dominant political institutions and social relationships. According to integrative marginalization, conceptions of who “deserves” representation can exclude—allowing certain members of a marginal group in while keeping other marginal members out. Interestingly, this form of exclusion occurs even as some members have been integrated and assimilated into dominant political institutions and social relationships. Like integrative marginalization, advanced marginalization excludes through the informal norms and values adopted by democratic citizens. More specifically, Cohen is concerned about how “dominant norms and values are incorporated into the culture, ideology, and consciousness of marginal group members, resulting in a form of internal regulation” (1997, 582). This second form of exclusion identifies how the assimilation of certain dominant norms intensifies the ways that certain marginal members of a group are controlled by members of their own group. This second form of exclusion suggests that exclusion within democracies is not always done by dominant groups. Certain groups can exclude themselves, or rather, their vulnerable members. This leads to the third form of exclusion, secondary marginalization. Cohen points to how understandings of a group’s identity can lead to political exclusion. More specifically, she describes secondary marginalization as occurring when “members of marginal communities most in need and most extreme in their ‘nonconformist behavior’ are defined as standing outside the norms and behavior agreed upon by the community.” Such vulnerable members are denied access to dominant resources as well as indigenous resources. All four of these forms of exclusion demonstrate how informal norms and values, the ethical outlook that underlies democratic institutions, can facilitate political exclusion. Cohen’s work therefore reveals the need to evaluate democratic institutions by the informal norms and values shape preference formation in ways that constrain certain groups while aiding others. Understanding and measuring the “inclusiveness” of democratic institutions by the lack of formal prohibitions misses the point that alternative forms of political exclusion (categorical, integrative, advanced, and secondary marginalization) can be prohibitive, establishing unfair and unjust barriers to full
citizenship. The extent to which these alternative forms of political exclusion establish such barriers is the extent that political exclusion seems by definition to be an activity that democratic theorists should denounce.

However, the problem with this way of understanding political exclusion is that it fails to see how democratic institutions exclude as they include. In other words, it ignores how political exclusion is inextricably tied to political inclusion within democratic representative institutions. The problem with denouncing or even trying to eliminate all forms of political exclusion is that it would literally throw the baby out with the bathwater.

**Democratic Representation and Exclusion**

In what follows, I identify only two of the main ways that democratic representation is inextricably tied to exclusion. I do not deny that democratic representative institutions can exclude in other ways. Rather, I simply wish to show the important insights that are ignored when we treat inclusion as the antidote for exclusion or when we treat exclusion as essentially anti-democratic. Contemporary theorists do not explicitly deny these two connections; rather, champions of inclusion prefer to be silent about the mechanisms of exclusion necessary for achieving the full inclusion of certain groups. Moreover, their silence about exclusion rests on an implicit assumption—namely, that “good democratic practices” should simply try to maximize inclusion and minimize exclusion as much as possible. In this way, exclusion is like the dirty laundry of democratic theory, the subject that democratic theorists do not like to spend too much time or normative analysis on. It is easier just to denounce exclusion than to recognize how political exclusion is built into democratic processes.

Consider the first, and perhaps most fundamental, way that democratic institutions exclude, namely by who gets defined as “the people.” If democratic institutions are ones that allow the “people” to rule, democratic institutions must also establish criteria for delineating who counts as a full member and citizens of its society. All democratic states determine, and determine arbitrarily, the criteria and qualifications for full citizenship and thereby full membership in a democratic society. Every democratic state has citizenship qualifications that identify who obtains the full status and thereby full rights and privileges that accompany that status. Such qualifications function to separate citizens from outsiders (Benhabib, 2004; Cole, 2000). Furthermore, democratic states can define the qualifications and boundaries for citizenship in ways that include some (e.g. property owners) and exclude others (e.g. slaves or green card holders).

Definitions of the qualifications for full citizenship also determine who are protected and punished by the law. Recently, Leonard Feldman argues that laws regulating sidewalk sitting, public sleeping, camping, and panhandling function to “turn the homeless into outlaws, non-citizens whose everyday coping strategies place them outside the law” (2004, 108). Feldman goes on to write that “to be an out-law is to be both outside the law’s protection (exclusion) and subject to the law’s punishment (inclusion)” (108). Feldman’s analysis of the homeless reveals how the political abandonment of the homeless, and thereby their exclusion, works simultaneously as they are included, and punished by the law.

A similar dynamics occurs with the disenfranchisement of felons. Although the extent to which felons can participate varies on the state, e.g. Massachusetts explicitly forbids prisoners from forming PACs while Arizona denies that convicted felons can run for public office, it is important to note that an estimated 5.3 million Americans are disenfranchised because of their criminal record (Manza and Uggen, 267). Katerine Irene Pettus notes that our democratic polity...
is shaped by the holes in its electoral body. She writes, “A polity containing citizens proper and mere citizens without political rights is one that continues to institutionalize ethical-cultural criteria of virtue and status honor in a framework of universal legal membership” (81). What is interesting about the case of felons is that the ideal of universal legal membership is advanced even as a significant portion of the population is excluded.

Joseph Schumpeter ties the sovereignty of democratic states is inextricably tied to the exclusion of non-citizens. For Schumpeter, the exclusion of non-citizens is a necessary form of discrimination. After all, “in no country, however democratic, is the right to vote extended below a specified age. If, however, we ask for the rationale of this restriction we find that it also applies to an indefinite number of inhabitants above the age limit” (244). Obligations of democratic states are limited to those citizens whom the state recognizes as qualified. Schumpeter goes on to claim the power to extend or curtail the scope of citizenship is constitutive power of democratic states: to be self-governing requires the capacity to control who counts as one’s citizens. Closing the borders and establishing other disqualifications are integral to democracies’ autonomy.

Second, the institutional processes that democracies use to select their representatives exclude. After all, representative institutions exclude citizens from public office (at least temporarily). As Andrew Rehfeld pointed out, “Political representation excludes almost all of a nation from the institutions that ‘democratically’ govern it. In any two-year period, the average US citizen has a 25 percent greater chance of being struck by lightening, than serving in either the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives” (5). The size of democratic states seems to deny ipso facto most citizens from assuming an active role in their democratic institutions. Ironically, this form of exclusion is recognized as providing the distinctive benefits of representative democracies over direct or participatory democracies. Exclusionary procedures allow democratic governments to be a manageable size.

Besides, as Joseph Schumpeter reminds us, democracy is a “political method” that provides a way of selecting political representatives and that safeguards the free competition among the possible alternatives. In selecting and thereby including some representatives, citizens invariably exclude other potential representatives. Democratic citizens cannot advance their preferences for one representative without indirectly marginalizing and excluding other’s preferences. That’s the beauty of competition—there are winners and losers. Rejecting some representatives is as integral a part of democratic representation as choosing them. For this reason, exclusion and inclusion are best conceptualized as two sides of the same coin: inextricably linked to democratic processes.

Both ways that democratic representation is connected to exclusion reveal that democratic institutions exclude and include simultaneously. For this reason, exclusion should not properly be understood as a marginal activity of democratic representation. Rather, exclusion is integral to democratic processes of representation. Consequently, it is necessary to understand not only how democratic institutions should expand the presence of certain groups, it is also necessary to understand how democratic institutions need to limit, constrain, and even marginalize the interests, opinions, and perspectives of citizens in the decision-making processes. It is necessary to understand democratic representation from a perspective of exclusion.

*The Need for a Perspective of Exclusion*

Let me begin by clarifying what is a perspective of exclusion? Here I adopt Iris Marion
Young’s definition. Young describes a perspective as consisting “in a set of questions, kinds of experience, and assumptions with which reasoning begins, rather than the conclusions drawn... Perspective is a way of looking at social processes without determining what one sees” (2000, 137). Young understands a perspective as “a starting place” for a conversation, highlighting what is important or interesting about a topic. To adopt a perspective of exclusion, therefore, is to emphasize the ways in which democratic processes constrain, limit, and exclude certain citizens’ experiences, interests, and opinions. Instead of denouncing such constraints, a perspective of exclusion raises how such constraints can be necessary and even desirable to democratic processes.

A perspective of exclusion is essential, on my view, when democratic politics is a zero-sum game—that is, when gains for some citizens can only be achieved at the expense of other citizens. Under such circumstances, it is undesirable and deceptive to approach democratic politics with a “more the merrier” attitude. A perspective of exclusion is most necessary when democratic institutions must face choice in which bringing in some citizens’ preferences means leaving other citizens’ preferences out.

Why would a perspective of exclusion be valuable? First, adopting a perspective of exclusion is necessary because political inclusion can have significant costs. As a result, it is necessary to be strategic about political inclusion. After all, sometimes, political inclusion can work against the preferences of those being represented. For example, consider a congressional redistricting dispute in California that revealed an important conflict between the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and Latina/o legislators. In *Cano v. Davis*, MALDEF challenged the redistricting scheme proposed by legislators, arguing that it diluted the voting strength of Latina/o voters. A three judge panel acknowledged that MALDEF’s claims “raise challenging questions regarding the applicability of voting rights doctrines developed in a fundamentally different context than the rapidly-changing multi-racial and multi-ethnic community that is present day Southern California.” But they concluded that “Latino legislators and interest groups played a significant role in the 2001 redistricting process.” In particular, the court cited the dramatic increase in the number of Latinas/os to office in California as justifications for why the redistricting plan did not violate Latinas/os voting rights. (For a full discussion of this case, see Johnson, 2002). What this court case shows is that the inclusion of some Latinas/os in the political process can justify dismissing the concerns and interests of other Latinas/os.

The need to be strategic about political inclusion was most forcibly argued by John Dryzek (1994). Dryzek warns that political inclusion without external pressure from civil society can promote instrumental political bargaining at the expense of transformative politics (For a similar argument, see Reed 1999). Dryzek goes so far as to state that the costs of political inclusion can be so great that “Democrats should generally favor a state that is exclusive in important aspects, for exclusion properly arranged can benefit democracy and democraticization even from the point of view of those excluded”(476).

In contrast to Dryzek, I am less confident that exclusion “properly arranged” will benefit or please those who have been excluded. In fact, I would contend, that in order for democracy to exclude properly, those being excluded are not going to like it. Of course, democracy should try to reach a consensus, but the fact of pluralism suggests that a consensus among all citizens is unlikely to be realized.

Second, a perspective of exclusion is necessary because the political inclusion of some groups might be undesirable. To motivate this second argument, consider the effects of
including two different groups: those who opposed or seek to co-opt democratic institutions and those who reject certain democratic norms. First, consider those groups that reject democratic institutions and democratic norms outright. The extent to which groups—from the military or from political elites, seek to destroy democratic institutions through coercion or corruption is the extent to which democratic institutions will need to constrain citizens in order to survive. In her research on the collapse of democratic institutions in Central America, Nancy Bermeo (2003) found that “it seems that democracies do not break down unless political elites deliberately destroy them” (254). In particular, Bermeo attributes the collapse of democratic institutions to representatives who fail to distance themselves from anti-democratic and extremist political positions. Thus, it would appear that democratic institutions need to be supported by an ethical outlook that recognizes and values the role of democratic institutions.

Of course, democratic norms and practices can be co-opted. Consider the case of theocratic groups that wish to replace the constitution with the Bible. These groups describe themselves as “democratic” in the sense that they want to convince a majority of citizens to replace the constitution with the Bible; however, such groups do not support the procedural and substantive characteristics of democracy that allow democratic institutions to rule fairly. They do not seem to worry about those groups that do not worship the Bible. Democratic institutions need to guard against those groups that co-opt democracy as a way of dominating their opponents.

Now, let’s consider the representation of groups that explicitly seek to dominate other groups of citizens, the groups that Simone Chambers and Jeff Kopstein (2001) call “Bad Civil Society.” Such groups seek to advance xenophobic, racist, and sexist views. Improving the representation of Bad Civil Society depends on decreasing the representation of people of color and women. For instance, improving the representation of blacks might depend on marginalizing the representatives of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). After all, the Second Ku Klux Klan that began in the 1915 not only burned crosses and murdered those whom they opposed but also elected public officials throughout the country. For instance, the strength of Klan influence in Indiana allowed it to elect Republican Klansman Edward Jackson in 1924. In fact, Klan membership peaked at 4 million in the 1920s. It is estimated that the Klan consisted somewhere between 20% to 40% of the adult white male population in many broad geographic regions. Under such conditions, achieving adequate representation for blacks may well have depended on marginalizing Klan representatives. To analyze the democratic political process through the perspective of exclusion is to be sensitive to the need to take sides between blacks and the KKK.

Both of these cases reveal an important contribution that adopting a perspective of exclusion can have for democratic theory—namely, it reveals the need to examine the political process, not simply in formal or procedural terms, but also in light of the substantive ideas being advanced by particular representatives and the potentially negative impact of certain representatives on democratic institutions. Taking the perspective of exclusion permits us to ask: What is the proper way to treat those representatives (such as the leaders of the KKK) who seek to dominate and oppress others? Instead of denying that one party’s interests, opinions, and perspective should be given priority and another party’s be marginalized, the perspective of exclusion inquires about the merits of both parties’ case.

The third and final reason for adopting a perspective of exclusion is that it is necessary for improving the representation of historically disadvantaged groups within democracies. Currently, most discussions of descriptive representation have focused on the reasons why
historically disadvantaged groups need to be represented by members of their groups. In other words, the main focus of the literature on descriptive representation has been on explaining “why do we need female representatives to represent female citizens?” or “why we need black representatives to represent black citizens?” Although the arguments for why we need to expand the presence of historically disadvantaged groups are important, they overlook a key dimension of the problem. For in addition to asking “Why do we need female representatives to represent female constituents?” we need also to ask the question “When should male representatives stop representing female citizens?” This latter question is certainly more controversial than the former. It is more controversial because it implies not only that representatives who belong to disadvantaged groups should be added, but also that some representatives from relatively privileged groups need to resign, recuse themselves, or constrain their participation in order to make room for historically marginalized groups. It also suggests that when representatives from relatively privileged groups fail to constrain their behavior democratic citizens might be justified in putting pressure to make them do so. What is shockingly missing in the existing literature on descriptive representation is any discussion of the need to curtail and limit the presence and influence of the wealthy, the white, or males. As a result, this literature downplays the costs that descriptive representation has for privileged groups.

Recent empirical evidence has started to reveal some of those costs. Most notably, Claudine Gay (2001) has shown that the presence of black representatives decreases white citizens’ participation and their willingness to contact their representatives. If increasing the representation of blacks in legislatures has costs for white citizens, as Gay’s research suggests, then the descriptive representation of blacks is a zero-sum game. It would appear that increasing the number of black representatives can have drawbacks for white citizens.

Besides, the literature on descriptive representation needs a perspective of exclusion because historically disadvantaged groups must sometimes compete among themselves for representation. In districts with multi-racial constituencies, increasing the presence of Latinos in the legislatures can come at the cost of the numbers of blacks. The extent to which descriptive representation will improve the representation of any particular historically disadvantaged groups, therefore, depends on who is being included and who is being excluded. The existing literature on descriptive representation, however, stresses only the need to bring historically disadvantaged groups in, not to the need to choose among different differently disadvantaged groups. A perspective of exclusion is necessary to determine which groups are over-represented, and whether advanced marginalization is taking place.

A perspective of exclusion is also valuable, as Cathy Cohen’s work reveals, because not all members of historically disadvantaged groups are necessarily committed to advancing that group’s (or all members of that group’s) interests. It is important for democratic citizens to be aware of the costs of integration to vulnerable groups. Iris Marion Young made a similar point when she discussed how increasing the representation of straight Latinos can come at the expense of gay and lesbian Latinos. Consequently, a perspective of exclusion is necessary for deciding which representatives should be chosen in order to advance the representation of the group. The difficulties in determining which representatives from historically disadvantaged groups are “tokens,” “sell outs” or “insincere” representatives from those groups significantly complicates using the presence of members of historically disadvantaged groups as evidence of democratic progress.

So How Should Democratic Institutions Exclude?
Ultimately, how much one agrees with my argument for the perspective of exclusion will depend on the use of such a perspective. If a perspective of exclusion is used to foster categorical exclusions, it is certainly a morally dubious project. Consequently, I am not arguing that certain groups because of their ascriptive characteristics should be deprived of their right to vote, run for office or donate money.

However, I have suggested that democratic institutions can and should exclude in other ways. Moreover, I contend that democratic institutions are only likely to settle political disputes fairly when certain informal norms are in place about who should be excluded. Part of the lesson from my earlier discussion about the inextricable relationship between inclusion and exclusion is that democratic institutions are not always able to avoid excluding. How fairly democratic institutions exclude will be depend on citizens’ intuitions about political exclusion.

At this point, I can identify two important principles that should guide democratic citizens’ institutions about exclusion. The first argues that democratic institutions should exclude when democratic citizens are confronted with choices between those who seek to dominate and those who seek to avoid being dominated. In other words, democratic institutions exclude properly when they exclude the unjust excluders. For democratic citizens to make such a choice properly, they need to privilege those who do not aim to dominate and oppress others as well as those who in fact do not dominate and oppress over those who seek anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian ends. The need to privilege the former over the latter is particularly acute when it is no longer possible to expand the political arena. The perspective of exclusion is vital to good democratic representation because it creates a space for democratic theory to acknowledge that representatives and citizens who reject domination should be included first. Faced with choices in which democratic citizens have to select some representatives and not others, I contend that citizens should seek to minimize and exclude the influence of those who fail to recognize the civic equality of certain citizens, e.g. women, racial groups, or religious groups. Democratic representation, done right, places constraints on the bigots of the polity. The perspective of exclusion calls for marginalizing those who oppose or undermine crucial democratic values, such as civic equality.

However, the principle of excluding unjust excluders is not enough. After all, it is also necessary to exclude those who threaten the sovereignty of democratic institutions. To illustrate this example, consider the work of Avery Kolers (2002) on multinationals. Kolers argues that democracies need “the right to exclude those who ought not to have a say, and the right of communities to determine their own patterns of land use.” Both rights are necessary in order for democracies to be sovereign states. Kolers argues that small scale territorial jurisdiction is crucial for the autonomy of democratic states. “Poor countries and persons must be enabled to exclude foreign governments, financial institutions, and corporations from decision making and economic markets, at least when certain centrally important functions are at stake” (31). Avery Kolers’ work again points to the need to identify principles that guide proper democratic exclusions.

Of course, a lot more needs to be said about these principles. What I would like to emphasize is that these principles of exclusion are not simply ones that try to “maximize inclusion.” The moral of my discussion of a perspective of exclusion is not simply that one should be sensitive to the effect of policies with inclusionary intent or that seemingly inclusionary policies can be exclusionary. My point is that both political exclusion and political inclusion are integral parts of democratic representative institutions. The value of a perspective of exclusion is that it asks not only who should be given more access to public officials, but it
also asks who should be given less access.

Most importantly, the reason that the perspective of exclusion is valuable is because this perspective stays focused on the mechanisms of injustice that are part and parcel of democratic institutions. Instead of denying or downplaying how democratic institutions fail to live up to their ideals, the perspective of exclusion places the costs of political inclusion at the center of analysis. It improves the current trend to define and measure democracy by the way it includes, which masks the conflicts between privileged and marginalized citizens and the kinds of changes necessary for establishing more just and equitable political relations. By focusing on the forms of injustice that democratic institutions can commit, the perspective of exclusion compensates in important ways for any overly optimistic assumptions that accompany the perspective of inclusion.

References


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By descriptive representation, I mean the view that historically marginalized groups should be represented by members of those groups.

For an interesting discussion of how inclusion needs to be understood in terms of a distinction of left and right as well as in terms of the distinction between normative discourse and policies that discourse justifies, see Tebble (2006).

Young perceives exclusion as a problem of democratic representation that should be solved by inclusion. In contrast, by contending that our understanding of exclusion should not be limited to the deprivation of basic rights and opportunities of participation, I hold that exclusion is a part of democratic representation and that perhaps, if done right, it can serve the ends of good democratic representation.

Civic equality is the primary basis for the normative legitimacy of democratic authority. (I will not argue for the centrality of civic equality here. For such an argument, see Beitz, 1989).

For an argument about the arbitrariness of qualifications for citizenship, see Dahl (1989).

By raising the example of the homeless and convicted felons, I do not mean to imply that I approve of their exclusion from the democratic polity. Although some crimes, e.g. white collar crimes that show a complete disrespect for constitutional issues or whose actions threaten a democracy may merit the suspension of voting rights. In general, I do not think citizens’ capacities for self-governance are annulled because of criminal convictions. You do your time, you paid your debt in my books. That said, my argument implies that democracies should evaluate whether certain crimes do merit exclusion and that there are possibly principled reasons for marginalizing certain groups of felons.

The “Guarantee Clause” of “Article IV, section 4 leaves the qualifications for voting up to individual states. For a discussion of how Massachusetts denied the right to form Political Action committees, see Boston Globe, August 2 1997.

For discussions of the qualifications of citizenship, see Failer (2002) as well as Smith (1997).

Of course, not all democratic theorists agree with Schumpeter. Some maintain that democratic institutions should include all individuals impacted by governmental decisions. For instance, David Held contends that democratic commitments lead to cosmopolitanism—obligations to all human beings and not simply to one’s citizens. According to this line of thinking, democratic commitments require all individuals impacted by governmental decisions to have some say in those decisions. Such a commitment explains why illegal immigrants can vote in local school board elections (although they are prohibited from voting in federal elections. For some political theorists, the extent to which democratic states expand citizenship universally is the extent to which the state is democratic.

Andrew Rehfeld (2005) argues that the organization of our electoral constituencies function to keep certain citizens’ interests and opinions out of the political arena. He claims that “the electoral constituency, then, is the quintessential institution of official exclusion, for it defines how it is the excluded get reconstituted for their only formal roles as members of a modern democracy” (xi). For Rehfeld, territorial constituencies—constituencies designed according to where citizens live—effectively exclude minority interests. Attempts to increase the representation of historically disadvantaged groups by designing majority-minority distributes are likely to fail because theorists of group representation do not recognize how the existing organization of constituencies is biased against historically disadvantaged groups.

Just as there are conditions in which democratic citizens should not seek political inclusion in the state, there are times when citizens will need to limit the influence of certain groups in democratic institutions. This is the flip-side of Dryzek’s argument about selective inclusion: Selective exclusion, though, requires making decisions about how the power of certain groups is distributed.

Mark Warren (2004) defines corruption as the violation of the basic norm of inclusion.

For a discussion of contemporary theocracy movements, see “Prophets of a Biblical America,” in the April 12, 1989 issue of the Wall Street Journal.
Representatives of the KKK arguably are not privileged in the contemporary US political system: after all, their ideas are considered extremist and out of the main stream of democratic politics. Note: I assume here that a representative for the KKK would be white. However, it is possible for white supremacists to hire black representatives, e.g. a black lobbyist or lawyer, to advance its cause.


For an important discussion of the dangers of xenophobic, racist, sexist, groups, see Chambers and Kopstein, Bad Civil Society.


The reliance mainly on the “overlooked interests” argument assumes that hearing the perspective of historically disadvantaged groups is enough to change public policy in the desired way (or at least to demand a public justification for not making those changes).

One exception is Dovi (2002).

Young (2000) recognizes how the problem of the inevitable exclusion is not just a problem for descriptive representation but is central to democratic representation. I take my discussion of the perspective of exclusion to be building on this insight of Young’s.

This first principle is not entirely new. It bears an important resemblance to Kant’s principle of Right, which maintains that the use of coercion is justified if it impeded coercive force, as well as to the Rawlsian standard of reasonableness, which excludes the unreasonable from deliberations. However, what is new about my argument is that it maintains democratic representation requires distinctive principled reasons for excluding certain interests, perspectives and opinions. In other words, we should not understand political exclusion simply in terms of how it facilitates inclusion; rather, it is necessary that we evaluate political exclusion by a distinct set of principles that relate to the well-functioning of democratic institutions.

For instance, I have not discussed the relationship between these two principles and how citizens should react when these principles conflict.