Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 7
List of Contributors 9

Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Parliamentary Democracy
Kari Palonen and José María Rosales 11

The Changing Uses of Parliamentarism

1 How Women’s Suffrage Was Devalued: The Burden of Analytical Categories and the Conceptual History of Democracy
Jussi Kurunmäki 31

2 Cambridge and Oxford Union Societies as Parliamentary Bodies: Legitimating Politics through the Adoption of the House of Commons Procedure
Taru Haapala 53

3 ‘Advanced Liberalism’ and the Politics of Reform in Victorian Parliamentary Debates of the 1860s
Rosario López 73

4 What Matters in Social Sciences and Political Debates: Max Weber’s Contributions to Parliamentary Studies During World War I
Félix Blanc 97

5 Contrasting Complaints about Parliamentarism in Western Europe (1918–39)
Joris Gijsenbergh 117
6  Parliamentary Oversight in Foreign Policy: The Momentum of US Congress in the 1970s
   Anna Kronlund 141

Debating Democratic Theory and Performance

7  Can Deliberative Mini-Publics Improve the Quality of Democratic Decision-Making?
   Maija Setälä 165

8  Democracy and Compromise: Beyond a Deliberative Approach
   Enrico Biale 187

9  Democratic Authority and Informed Consent
   Javier Gil 207

10 The Paradox of Democratic Selection: Is Sortition Better than Voting?
    Anthoula Malkopoulou 229

11 Elective and Aleatory Parliamentarism
    Hubertus Buchstein 255

12 Participation: A Complement or a Substitute to Parliamentary Democracy?
    Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark 279

Epilogue: Recasting the Parliamentary Culture of Politics
    Kari Palonen and José Maria Rosales 299

Index 319
Acknowledgments

The story of Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory began in the World Congress of Political Science held in Madrid, in July 2012. We had convened several panels and were approached by Jakob Horstmann on behalf of Barbara Budrich Publishers. For the following months the three of us opened a lively correspondence on the arguments linking the practice of democratic theory with the study of parliamentarism, and on the relevance of parliamentary politics to modern democracy. Never were we sure about the outcome of our communication, for Horstmann kept an intriguing balance between interest and scepticism. It was only after several months of critical exchanges covering most imaginable aspects involved in that relation that the idea of the book began to take shape.

From the original papers to the final versions the distance became huge, as they had to fit in with a consistent rationale. Enrico Biale, Félix Blanc, Jussi Kurunmäki, Rosario López, Anthoula Malkopoulou, and Maija Setälä thoroughly revised their contributions to the panels. Later on Hubertus Buchstein, Joris Gijsenbergh, Javier Gil, Taru Haapala, Anna Kronlund, and Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark joined the book project. We thankfully acknowledge their encouraging involvement over the two years that the preparation has lasted.

At Budrich we have found the trust and support distinctive of audacious publishers to compete in the global market of academic publications. At different stages Miriam v. Maydell and Sarah Rögl have finely conducted the production process. We also appreciate the thoughtful reviews Budrich made of the different versions of each chapter. For the final stage we have counted on the invaluable expertise of Ilana Brown as copy-editor, helping us to turn the manuscript, written by authors from eight countries, into a readable book.

The volume has been the initiative of the project The Civic Constellation (FFI2011-23388, http://www.uma.es/civicconstellation), al-
so assisted by the research group *Filosofía Moral y Política* (HUM 350), in partnership with *The Politics of Dissensus. Parliamentarism, Rhetoric and Conceptual History* research project (https://www.jyu.fi-yltk/laitokset/yfi/en/research/clusters/dissensus). We gratefully acknowledge the support of both the Academy of Finland and Spain’s National Research Fund.

Jyväskylä/Helsinki, and Málaga

February 2015
List of Contributors

ENSIC BIALE is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Political Philosophy at the University of Piemonte Orientale

FÉLIX BLANC is Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Science at the University of Nice

HUBERTUS BUCHSTEIN is Professor for Political Theory at Greifswald University

JORIS GIJSENBERGH is Postdoctoral Researcher in History at Leiden University

JAVIER GIL is Associate Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Oviedo

TARU HAAPALA is Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Science at the University of Jyväskylä

ANNA KRONLUND is Senior Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs

JUSSI KURUNMÄKI is Associate Professor of Political Science at Södertörn University

ROSARIO LÓPEZ is Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Philosophy at the Universities of Málaga and St Andrews

ANTHOULA MALKOPOULOU is Research Fellow in Political Science at the University of Uppsala
Kari Palonen is Professor of Political Science at the University of Jyväskylä

José María Rosales is Associate Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Málaga

Maija Setälä is Professor of Political Science at the University of Turku

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark is Associate Professor of International Law and Director of the Åland Islands Peace Institute
Over the last decades, parliamentarism as an argumentative kind of politics—not merely a regime type—has become an understated institutional reference in democratic politics, and a missing research object for democratic theory. Yet, along with republicanism and liberalism, parliamentary politics is one of the three traditions in institution-building, as well as in legal and political thought, whose confluence gave rise to representative government at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the very idea of fair play informing parliamentary procedures, and the concurrent rhetorical practices aimed at political deliberation, have prompted a distinct parliamentary manner of debating and of acting politically since the late sixteenth century, originally at Westminster. Spread through the experience of debating *pro et contra*, parliamentarism has contributed to crucially shaping the political culture of modern democracies into cultures of political debate.

Parliamentarism’s fading away in democratic theory debates and its loss of visibility in democratic politics bring up intellectual and institutional questions on the understanding of democracy. At stake is a matter not only of theoretical interpretations evincing the changing views of democracy over time, but also, and most consequentially, of the procedures and practices explaining the workings of real democracies. To this latter end democratic theory, namely the theoretical study of democracy as differentiated from empirical research, has become almost helpless, turned into a narrow academic discourse largely detached from history, institutions, and political actors.

In response to this twofold challenge, the collection of essays in *Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory* thematises such problematics from two complementary perspectives, both aiming to create a
critical distance for political analysis. One situates in history the conceptual background to current intellectual controversies, thus bringing to light previous contextualisations of debates on democracy. The other ‘de-provincialises’ contemporary democratic theory debates by remapping them in time, linking intellectual controversies to the comprehension and the reform conditions of democratic institutions.

**Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory**

The first part of the book, *The Changing Uses of Parliamentarism*, presents a series of studies on the history of parliamentarism as a culture of political debate and control of both government and administration. It also outlines the history of democratisation of suffrage and the extension of political rights in general. Jussi Kurunmäki’s chapter illustrates how the huge historical discrepancies in the enfranchisement of women are dismissed or marginalised in social history or political sociology studies, which mostly operate with class concepts. The next two chapters focus on the parliamentarisation of politics in nineteenth-century Britain, whereas another two deal with the political and scholarly debates during and after World War I. The criticisms of parliamentary politics through the interwar years in Western Europe already contain to a remarkable degree the substance and form of criticisms that are again commonplace. Despite the many different circumstances, current parliamentary democracies have proved a much stronger capacity to come to grips with the predicament of politics, even if, or perhaps because of, their electorally reduced parliamentary pluralism. The sixth chapter further extends the enquiry into a presidentialist polity, the United States, whose Congress has developed parliamentary instruments of political checks and balances comparable to those of parliamentary democracies.

The second part, *Debating Democratic Theory and Performance*, directs attention to the advanced democratisation of parliamentary regimes. Improving the democratic performance of parliamentary institutions with the assistance of deliberative mini-publics is the concern of the first chapter. It is followed by two philosophical accounts on the role of deliberation in democracy, each one addressing democratic theory debates from irreconcilable points of view. The book adopts a non-normativist position, a recognisable trait of current democratic theory, but roots intellectual argumentation in historical and institutional research. The next two chapters challenge the theoretical
status quo by imaginatively discussing the suitability of participatory devices and procedures from ancient democracies to complex parliamentary democracies. The sixth chapter considers the role of political participation from a legal perspective in parliamentary democracies claimed in recent democratic theory.

In the following paragraphs, we introduce a selection of representative features of Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory. In different moments they call into question part of the mainstream knowledge on the relations of parliamentarism with democracy. That scholarship was inspired by wartime realism endorsing the needs of a minimalist democracy, and a minimalist parliamentarism, as the only viable alternative for democratic regimes to endure. The classic example is the much-discussed chapters XXI and XXII in Joseph Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942), but James Burnham’s *The Machiavellians* (1943) also figures prominently among the forebears of political realism with its reduction of democracy to competition between elites. In both accounts the democratic ideal of self-government is confronted with the conditions of mass democracy, which force a complete redescription of democracy’s normative programme.

‘The crisis of parliamentarism’ was a partisan slogan coined in France around 1900 against the Third Republic, but only became commonplace in European continental discourse from the mid-1920s after the disappointments experienced with Europe’s parliamentary democracies both old and new. Compared with Britain, continental parliamentarism was less dissensual, with the exception of the Spanish Second Republic’s parliamentary periods from 1931 to 1936 (Rosales 2015). Parliamentary rhetoric was understood in Latin Europe in continuity with the classical tradition of public oratory instead of in terms of pro et contra debating, whereas in the Netherlands and in the Nordic countries, suspicious of leaning either to oratory or debate, parliamentarism was reduced to a governmental technique.

Ironically, Carl Schmitt’s distorted view of parliamentarism in the 1920s as incompatible with democracy has endured the passage of time and remains discernible in recent discourses on democracy’s discontents, even if argued from antagonist ideological stances. By contending that ‘in a correct sense, democracy is defined by the identity of ruler and ruled’ (Schmitt 1926: 20), the inference follows, ‘democratic homogeneity’ cannot be achieved by the heterogeneity of ruler and ruled that is proper to a representative democracy. Schmitt
claims that ‘the belief in parliamentarism, in a government by discussion [Walter Bagehot’s formula], belongs to liberalism’s world of thought’ (Schmitt 1926: 13), yet what he calls ‘liberalism’ refers rather to the rhetorical political culture of debating issues pro et contra that characterises parliamentarism.

Proposals for deliberative democracy have been argued to revitalise the democratic performance of representative regimes. In most of them, participation and deliberation are equated, confusing in fact two distinct kinds of political action under the unsubstantiated assumption that the more participatory a regime grows, the more deliberative it becomes and, finally, the more democratic. Yet, the most surprising side effect of this view can be observed in the way reforms are argued. Since the 1990s improvements have been devised in parliamentary-like settings out of real parliamentary institutions through experiments conducted by non-elected representatives. The discussion also shows how, generally passing unnoticed in practice, participation and deliberation might be turned against each other insofar as participation promotes the inclusion of politically uninterested citizens to the democratic process. In contrast, theories of deliberative democracy require participants to have certain competencies to improve the quality of deliberations.

By and large this response has produced the paradoxical outcome that deliberation is being vindicated as a de-parliamentarised activity. A deeper democratisation of parliamentary democracies, which inspires the aim of deliberative democracy theories, is thus being thought, and undertaken, in unpolitical terms. Such a shift in attention has been underpinned by a rewriting of the political vocabulary, most remarkably through governance jargon. Even if political, the conceptual constellation of governance is clearly indebted to administrative and management languages (Bevir 2009). Its ambivalent character reveals how unpolitically the reform of parliamentary democracies is argued in the name of deliberative democracy and in the name of democratic governance, and how unpolitically it is reconceptualising the vocabulary of politics.

Applying governance thus entails restricting the powers of parliaments, parties, elections and assembly votes, allegedly in order on the one hand to get rid of time-consuming debates between opposite views, and, on the other hand, eliminate the increasingly costly and unequitable electoral campaigns. Carried out by handing over those powers to courts, expert bodies and specialist committees,
such measures, which in fact reduce the scope of democratic and parliamentary action, are seen as justified by citizens themselves in opinion polls and consultative forums.

However, the scene of scholarly debates on democracy is more complex. A historical interest in democratic parliamentarism has emerged in the past decades, describing a nearly parallel path to the deliberative turn in democratic theory. Its contributions have meant, first, a rediscovery of the parliamentary antecedents to representative democracy mainly since the eighteenth century, and then a reappraisal of their role in the shaping of representative regimes throughout the next century; second, a historiographical revision of parliamentarism in European political cultures, spanning from France’s Third Republic to Weimar Germany; and third, an up-to-date defence of parliamentary politics in democracy highlighting its advantages over non-parliamentary forms of democracy.

**Approaching Parliamentary Politics**

Scepticism towards the parliamentary kind of politics comes up in the aftermath of the mistrust of democracy. With unmatched disparagement, democratic regimes are at present discredited, both in academia and by their own citizens, for producing inefficient bureaucracies and for the oligarchic effects of party systems, which curiously resemble those of more than a century ago. Critical diagnoses span from Marxist and Anarchist anti-parliamentary programmes to illiberal views. The first only counterbalanced by social democratic revisionism in the last decades of the century, and the second exemplified by Juan Donoso Cortés’s acerbic parliamentary speeches in the Spanish Parliament in the 1840s (see e.g. Donoso Cortés 1849) and Carl Schmitt’s pessimistic diagnosis of parliamentarism extending well beyond the case of the Weimar Republic (1926: 5–23; 1928: 316–9), portraying the contested legitimacy of parliamentary politics over the interwar years. Later examples range from post-Marxist critiques of liberal, representative democracies (Macpherson 1977; Barber 1984), to the egalitarian viewpoint of democracy, aiming to overcome democracy’s own oligarchic contradictions (Green 1985; Rancière 2005). For reasons as diverse as the decreasing weight of public deliberation in the process of democratic decision-making or the growing autonomy of political representatives from electors, we find elements of this trend of critical thought reformulated in early proposals for more
deliberative democracy (Dryzek 1990; Fishkin 1991; or Bohman 1996), and lately in the claims of ‘people power’ and of ‘real democracy’, by civic movements the world over (Carter 2012: 116–41).

Against the image of democracy as the best of bad of political systems, parliamentary democracies are criticised for not being pluralist enough, participatory enough, deliberative enough. Among governance theorists parliamentary democracies are simultaneously accused of being too pluralist, too participatory and too deliberative, an interpretation based on their instrumental judgment of parliamentary institutions evaluated merely from the viewpoint of their ‘outcomes’.

Governance theorists’ distrust of representative institutions and parliamentary practices largely explains that improving the participatory performance, as shown in the first series of studies, and the deliberative performance of parliamentary democracies, as presented in the second series of examples, is divided in non-representative institutions and by non-parliamentary procedures. This apparent lack of interest in parliamentarism and in liberal democratic institutions contrasts with the vibrant debates of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe on parliamentary politics, liberalism and democracy, whilst anti-parliamentary views were thriving at that time (see Gusy, ed. 2008), and with the earnest interest in parliamentary institution-building since the 1970s. Moreover, it contrasts with the hopes raised by the spread of liberal democracies during the first half of the twentieth century in the most unfavourable of conditions or the strenuous advances of democratic institution-building in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia at the turn of the twenty-first century.

If examined from the point of view of scholarly debates, the reconstruction of democracies after World War II paradoxically sent parliamentary politics into oblivion, even though the emerging model was that of parliamentary regimes. The impact of the 1930s crisis remained powerful and for decades the failure of constitutional democracies has been attributed to faltering parliamentary institutions, Eric Hobsbawm’s The Age of Extremes (1994: 138–41) being a case in point. Moreover, from the pioneering research of Juan J. Linz, democratisation studies have taken the party system as the guiding reference to explain the ‘crisis, breakdown, and reequilibration’ process of democratic regimes (Linz 1978: 14–74). Oddly enough, the analysis is carried out from the angle of the party system, most of whose elements are given due attention around the government-
opposition divide, except for the underlying parliamentary politics. The parliamentary performance of democratic regimes in moments of crisis provides critical information to understand and to explain the breakdown process, and to inform the eventual reconstruction of democracy. However, as a counter-concept to totalitarianism, democracy was refocused on rationalising political pluralism and thus the attention moved towards electoral politics, to exorcise the endemic instability of interwar parliamentary regimes. To that extent, it explained the reduction of deliberative moments in the political process as well.

For all their contributions in boosting the democratic process, parliamentary practices have been either replaced or downsized by a series of trends of institutional restructuring since the interwar years. First, initially a reaction to parliamentary stalemate, yet presented under new specialised languages such as ‘governance’, the strengthening of executive and bureaucratic powers was aimed at introducing reforms from above without recourse to debating practices (e.g. ‘comitology’ in the European Union), or simply delocalising debates out of parliaments themselves, e.g. to ethics and truth commissions. Second, authoritative ruling capacity was transferred to the courts, thereby fostering not just a judicialisation of politics, but a significant decentraling of parliaments from the political process (for a critical assessment, see Tomkins 2005 and Bellamy 2007). Its depoliticising effects become accentuated by a third trend of changes, namely the spread of plebiscitarian practices, presumably aimed at reinvigorating democracy. They proceed either through the direct election of public offices – like the French president since 1965 and the Finnish from 1988–94, although in the latter case combined with constitutional changes empowering the parliament – or through referenda. In either case, with a few exceptions, debates were removed from parliamentary chambers and held in allegedly neutral venues by unaccountable non-representatives.

Both the uncritical admiration of direct or participatory democracy and of anti-democratic and anti-parliamentary ‘innovations’ have prompted studies since the 1990s based on the insight that representative democracy is no surrogate for direct democracy, but, rather, an invention of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see Rosanvallon 1992, 1998, 2000; Manin 1995; Ankersmit 1996, 2001, 2002; Buchstein 2000, 2009; and Urbinati 2006, 2014). From a complementary perspective, we find studies on the historiographical revi-
sion of parliamentary democracies (e.g. Roussellier 1997; Llanque 2000; or Mergel 2012). Since the 1980s, they can also be considered expressions of the ‘rhetorical turn’ – a term Richard Rorty coined – retrieving the analysis of the forms of political argumentation. Among linguists, rhetorical studies of parliamentary proceedings have been practised for a long time (e.g. Gumbrecht 1978; for an overview of contemporary studies, see Ilie, ed. 2010).

Simultaneously, through the past decades, practical innovations have created new and unexpected research opportunities. This has been the case with the digitalisation of parliamentary records and procedural documents. Nowadays, for example, the Hansard database of Westminster debates is available from 1803 onwards, and many other countries have also digitised their debates since the beginning of regular parliamentary sessions or periods. The use of search engines for exploring parliamentary sessions, concepts and contributors greatly facilitates the mastery of debates, allowing scholars to work from an overarching view. But it also opens the possibility of intense short-term analysis of single debates as well as cross-parliamentary comparisons, for example, regarding the parliamentary usage of concepts from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives (e.g. Ihalainen and Palonen 2009).

From complementary angles, the studies mentioned document the contributions of parliamentary politics to the lengthy emergence of representative government and then representative democracy in the nineteenth century. ‘The fight against autocracy at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century’, wrote Kelsen, ‘was indeed a fight for parliamentarism’ (Kelsen [1929] 2006: 174). Its main contributions can be summarised under the ideas or principles of election of representatives, political responsibility, parliamentary control of government and administration, and political deliberation. They make modern parliaments substantially different from medieval parliaments, the historical differentiation being plainly observable through the changes in procedures (Redlich 1905: 41–70) and in the meaning of representation (Pitkin 1967: 241–52; Boldt [1978] 2004: 649–65; and Keane 2009: 177–93). Their absence would make incomprehensible the very principle of political representation and the deliberative or argumentative process of democratic decision-making; moreover, it is difficult to think of a lively democracy without the backdrop of a political culture of debate, which is probably parliamentarism’s most enduring feature.
The impact of scholarly debates on political changes is very limited. Even so, over the past half-century it becomes apparent how intellectual discussions have in some cases anticipated political moves, and how the course of political events has affected the scholarly agenda of intellectual debates in others, which expanded to become public debates at large. If on the side of political events, through the interwar years the irresoluble antagonism between political realism and theoretical innovation cum constitutional experiments (Carr 1939) remains the paramount reservoir of political experience, on the side of academic debates probably the most determining change was the differentiation process between theoretical and empirical accounts of democracy brought about through the 1950s.

By then theoretical research was gradually confined to the exploration, and the arguing of normative accounts, of ideals or models of democracy, abandoning a long tradition of historically-bound theorising. Empirical research specialised instead on the measurable data of the political process, thus covering the study of political behaviour and the workings of institutions. Yet, as argued by Quentin Skinner (1973), the claim of objectivity by empiricist accounts, exemplified by Dahl’s A Preface to Democratic Theory (1956), concealed an ideological view ‘commending’ one type of democracy over other competing models.

Moreover, political history, which had been formerly integrated with both political theory, or political philosophy, and political science, was excluded from both endeavours. Political philosophy became thus increasingly ahistorical, its evaluative task protected, indeed isolated, from historical contingencies, whereas the practice of empirical political science embraced historical research (political theory as an analytical discipline kept that essential link) along with the study of current affairs and even of future prospects, somehow adopting the style of journalism. So enduring has this mutual emancipation become, that both a non-empircist political science and a non-normativist, historical democratic theory, as practised by the authors and editors of this volume, would turn into a dissonant contribution to mainstream democracy research. All in all, they aim to widen the intellectual perspective of scholarly debates.
The Changing Uses of Parliamentarism

The first part of this volume is entitled *The Changing Uses of Parliamentarism*. According to Victor Hugo’s anecdote, it was Louis Bonaparte, president of the French Second Republic from 1848 to 1851, who unwittingly coined the word *parlementarisme* during that period in order to fiercely oppose it. Hugo, a poet and parliamentarian and exile after Louis Bonaparte’s December 1851 *coup d’état*, reappraises this very concept in his *Napoléon le Petit* against its presumable inventor: ‘I like parliamentarism. Parliamentarism is a pearl that enriches the dictionary. This academic of coups d’état even makes words’ (Hugo [1852] 2007: 274–5).

Like many other concepts, ‘parliamentarism’ was originally a pejorative term and has remained contested since. Its range of reference has varied in different contexts. In some cases, ‘parliamentarism’ refers to modern parliaments in general, irrespective of their political significance; even the Soviet-style façade parliaments have been called ‘socialist parliamentarism’. Ironically, early socialists, anarchists and communists disputed whether all kinds of ‘parliamentarism’, in the sense implied by participation in political deliberations, should be rejected. In a narrow sense, parliamentarism has been identified with the practice of non-confidence motions against governments in parliament. Post-World War II political science has extensively used this minimal benchmark. Earlier on, however, authors such as Max Weber had set more demanding criteria, including the selection of prime ministers among parliamentarians, the ministers’ duty to respond to members in parliament, and parliamentary control of the administration (Weber [1918] 1988: 227; see Palonen 2012).

In this volume, our focus on parliamentarism lies in the broader criteria that allow us to speak of parliamentary politics outside national parliaments, meaning parliamentary politics in any assembly adopting ‘parliamentary’ rules of procedure and debate. Besides the government’s responsibility to parliament, other criteria are typical

---

1 ‘Parlementarisme me plaît. Parlementarisme est une perle. Voilà le dictionnaire enrichi. Cet académicien de coups d’état fait des mots’. Hugo proposed Louis Bonaparte to be elected into the *Académie française* for having invented that term. The sentence has a clear ironic sense, meaning that Hugo’s candidate for the *Académie* not only made coups d’état, but also words.
features of the parliamentary-type of political culture, such as the specific procedural mode of parliamentary deliberations, and parliamentary representation based on free mandate as opposed to delegation under imperative mandate. With such a broader sense, when we can also speak of parliamentary political culture regarding local, regional and supra-national assemblies, the principle of parliamentary sovereignty in legislative matters is no longer a necessary requirement.

In his chapter How Women’s Suffrage Was Devalued: The Burden of Analytical Categories and the Conceptual History of Democracy, Jussi Kurunmäki problematises a number of mainstream historiographical and political science accounts on the enfranchisement of women and democratisation. Kurunmäki argues that the dominant sociological and socio-historical approaches anachronistically discard both the language of contemporary political actors and the rhetorical struggles leading to the enfranchisement of women. And moreover, they also predate the moment of democratisation in ‘old’ West European polities, such as Britain, France, Belgium or Sweden and, conversely, also devalue in the history of democratisation the role of ‘new’ countries that had adopted women’s suffrage even earlier. In this context, the propensity to reduce parliamentarism to a governmental technique is the result of a similar unhistorical estimate of post-World War II academic terminology. The main interest of sociological approaches has been in explaining the stability of regimes, whereas the expansion of citizens’ political rights and their contribution to democratising the political system, such as the women’s vote and their parliamentary presence, has been largely ignored.

In the next two chapters we focus attention on the paradigmatic origins of parliamentarism, namely on Victorian Britain. Recently British scholars have emphasised the oligarchic and anachronistic features of the nineteenth-century Westminster Parliament. In contrast, this volume’s conceptual width and political vitality are appreciated by two historical accounts, Taru Haapala’s Cambridge and Oxford Union Societies as Parliamentary Bodies: Legitimating Politics through the Adoption of the House of Commons Procedure and Rosario López’s ‘Advanced Liberalism’ and the Politics of Reform in Victorian Parliamentary Debates of the 1860s. They both underscore the ‘parliamentary’ character of concepts, debates and procedures informing politics out of Parliament itself. In Taru Haapala’s chapter,
the deliberative aspect of parliamentary politics is examined, whereas Rosario López’s chapter deals with the ideological struggles over the principles of parliamentary representation.

The Union Societies at Cambridge and Oxford universities have a reputation as both debating clubs and training grounds for parliamentarians. In her chapter, Haapala takes notice of the additional feature that Union Societies, which were non-representative institutions, could be more deliberative in their modes of proceeding than Parliament proper, discussing both similarities and differences between Cambridge and Oxford. After the 1832 Reform Act both Union Societies consciously adopted Westminster rules of procedure for their own deliberations. These included, for example, the formulation of questions, the distinction between ‘House’ and ‘Committee’ styles of debate, or the rules of amendment and adjournment. Haapala divides the unions’ politics into politics of debate and politics of agenda. While the latter followed and sometimes anticipated the Westminster agenda (see Haapala 2014), the former concerned the ‘private’ meetings dealing with the drawing up, interpretation and revision of the unions’ own rules. Teaching the possibilities in the use of parliamentary procedure, the Union Societies not only trained future parliamentarians but were also crucial for the British debate-centred parliamentary culture of politics, as we learn from J. S. Mill and Walter Bagehot.

‘Liberalism’ became a party label in Britain only in the 1860s, later than in many other countries. Liberals in the partisan sense disclosed a heterogeneous background, and their divisions rose dramatically in the British debates on the Second Reform Act around 1866–67. Rosario López’s chapter focuses on those debates with special attention on the group of so-called advanced Liberals – another originally pejorative term. John Stuart Mill is the foremost intellectual-politician, including also the anti-Corn Law activists Richard Cobden and John Bright, but the entire group has been seldom discussed in broader terms. William Gladstone’s 1866 Reform Bill was supported by the advanced Liberals, but intensely and effectively opposed by another faction of the party around Robert Lowe. López examines in particular the features of the advanced Liberals to underline their commonalities with the British political culture as a tool for supporting their reforms, thus following the strategy that Quentin Skinner has deemed typical of ‘innovative ideologists’.
The relationship between parliamentary and academic debates in the early twentieth century has been presented in original but often misunderstood ways by Max Weber. In What Matters in Social Sciences and Political Debates: Max Weber’s Contributions to Parliamentary Studies During World War I, Félix Blanc takes up this link on the basis of recent scholarly literature about Weber. He argues that in a sense Weber strictly separated his academic writings from his political interventions, although there are similarities between them. Blanc links Weber’s work to the political and academic context of the early twentieth-century German empire, juxtaposing the scholarly demand for ‘objectivity’, based on the practice of debating items pro et contra, with the demand for Sachlichkeit on politicians, who should accordingly face political issues as they come out in reality. If scholarly disputes can rely on parliamentary models to proceed, politicians acting in the real world can only rely on previous examples and guidelines very provisionally, as they must also consider other aspects of every situation to judge them in a realistic and responsible way.

Militant critics on the left and right tended to reject parliamentarism altogether; the more moderate critics wanted rather to keep it under attenuated forms by strengthening executive powers and reducing the place of parliamentary debates in the political process. In his chapter Contrasting Complaints about Parliamentarism in Western Europe (1918–39), Joris Gijsenbergh focuses on the debates held in the Netherlands and Belgium, though some attention is also paid to those in France and Germany, and to the broader international treatment of the ‘crisis of parliamentarism’. The essay evokes the ambiguities of both moderate and extreme critics, whose judgements about the role of parliament stretch from considering it too powerful an institution to claiming its full recovery as a deliberative chamber. Criticisms turned characteristically against time-consuming debates and their protagonists, namely professional politicians, and not least the party system. Underlying that denunciatory view, it is possible to detect the old Hegelian idea of neutral bureaucracy taking care of the general interest of the state better than the elected representatives. Gijsenbergh argues that although universal suffrage had become an achievement of democratisation, and as such difficult to reject straightforwardly, its modes of accomplishment were disputed in the name of both reducing as well as increasing democracy. Moderate reform proposals pointed to referenda and other instruments of direct democracy. ‘Workers’ unions’ advanced by council communism
(Rühle 1924) and neo-corporatist models were among the most extreme alternatives to democracy and parliamentarism – with the proposals of ‘economic councils’ mixing both elements (see e.g. Schuller 1985).

The foreign and defence policy is conceivably the field that over time has most uncontestedly belonged to the *arcana imperii* of the state as monopolised by monarchs, courts, diplomats and governments. Even at Westminster only of late a more efficient parliamentary control of Britain’s engagement in wars has been achieved (see Häkkinen 2014). The United States’ Constitution of 1789 grants Congress the last word in ‘war-making’. Although those powers in the course of the twentieth century had declined, Anna Kronlund’s chapter discusses an interesting case from the 1970s to rescue the constitutional balance in war-making. As argued in *Parliamentary Oversight in Foreign Policy: The Momentum of the US Congress in the 1970s*, the War Powers Resolution of 1973 was supported by an overwhelming majority of members from both parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives, being eventually adopted by overriding President Nixon’s veto. The crucial point was that the constitutional principles of congressional war powers constrained and counterbalanced the presidential powers as commander-in-chief. The War Powers Resolution remains controversial in its range of legality. Nonetheless, Kronlund shows how it is still regularly referred to even in debates about the extraordinary presidential powers after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

**Debating Democratic Theory and Performance**

The volume’s second part examines the institutional performance of parliamentary democracies according to the benchmark of democratic deliberation. Ideally, deliberation should inform the decision-making process of a democratic regime. In practice, though, parliaments meet that fundamental purpose imperfectly; with exceptions, major political decisions are the result of negotiations involving non-parliamentary actors representing particular, organised interests. More specifically, the chapters in this part examine the concern with the deliberative and the participatory performance of democratic institutions traceable in recent democratic theory.

If over the 1970s and 1980s, in spite of the high voter turnout in representative democracies, parliaments’ participatory potential was
openly questioned, from the 1990s to the present the research focus has moved to the deliberative character of political institutions. Thus initially questioning the participatory record of the representative system, measurable in sociological terms, a great number of studies have also come to doubt its suitability to make democratic deliberation possible in the political process, this latter aspect being usually argued in normative terms.

The second part brings forward a group of essays exploring the meanings and institutional procedures of democratic deliberation. They introduce the reader to mainstream democratic theory debates, synthesised under the generic terms of deliberative democracy, not as a primer but from unaccustomed angles to illustrate how contested the meanings of deliberation are, and how they have changed over time. More revealingly, the chapters in *Debating Democratic Theory and Performance* spell out the easiness with which the claims for more and better deliberation are defended in criticisms of representative democracies, and how anachronistically the concept of deliberation is transferred from ancient to modern democracies.

In the opening chapter, *Can Deliberative Mini-Publics Improve the Quality of Democratic Decision-Making?*, Maija Setälä argues that the experiments with mini-publics, originally thought to be enlightened assemblies for policy-making settings, can be reasonably transferred to political decision-making. Adapting this recourse to the political process entails citizens to contribute directly to the formation of political judgement. It does not necessarily mean revoking authorisation from legitimate representatives, although the consultative role of mini-publics denotes the need to refine the deliberative accomplishment of representative procedures and practices. Randomly selected citizen fora can help to enhance the functioning of representative institutions by complementing them from the side of citizens deliberating on political issues. When experience teaches that more deliberation is needed in policy matters, writes Setälä, arguably better forms of civic deliberation are helpful to the political process.

Going from institutional to normative analysis, the next chapter advances the idea of ‘democratic bargaining’ to challenge ‘consensus-oriented accounts of deliberation’. *Democracy and Compromise: Beyond a Deliberative Approach*, by Enrico Biale, critically discusses a number of normative assumptions of deliberative democracy proposals derived from their search for consensus. Assuming the fact of disagreement over basic political values in representative democ-
races, compromise rises as a basic political need and resource. Surprisingly, Biale notes, the very idea of compromise seems to be excluded from mainstream proposals for deliberative democracy. Unlike examples of deliberative democracy built on normative models of democracy, political compromise leads to the real arena of democratic deliberation and negotiation.

In contrast to the egalitarian sense of political deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies, the modern notion of deliberation grew out of an aristocratic view of politics. John Stuart Mill’s idea of political authority based on the epistemic gap appreciable between educated representatives and a non-educated public serves Javier Gil to trace the legacy of ‘epistocracy’ in current models of deliberative democracy. *Democratic Authority and Informed Consent* draws on Mill’s image of a doctor-patient relationship to explain the relation between the represented and their representatives. Gil casts doubt on the democratic character of such an epistemic, aristocratic understanding of political authority by retrieving the underlying idea of informed consent, which was only unevenly developed by Mill. This ‘ambiguous legacy’, diffusively shared through deliberative democracy accounts, can be revised by introducing the principle of informed consent to redescribe the relation of electors with their representatives.

Political participation in ancient democracies, epitomised by the Athenian political system of the Classical era, from the fifth to the fourth century BCE, meant the access to the political institutions of the *polis*, from the assembly to the courts and the *bule* and local assemblies. It was indeed a kind of deliberative participation growing out of the acknowledgement of each citizen’s equal political rights. This basic recognition of identifying citizens as *polis*-beings entailed that all public offices were opened to the entire community of citizen-politicians. There was an exception, namely, the ‘strategist’, a position exempted from civic rotation that was assignable to non-citizens under competition criteria and turned into a leading position in the *polis* (see Hansen 1991: 55–85 and 268–71).

As Anthoula Malkopoulou argues, to think of a ‘democratic selection’ would have been a contradiction in terms in Greek democracies. Yet it becomes the conventional practice in representative regimes. Her chapter, *The Paradox of Democratic Selection: Is Sortition Better than Voting?*, dissects some of the drawbacks of the established procedures for the selection of democratic representatives that facilitate the entrenchment of party oligarchies at the expense of other
alternative civic options. Sortition provides a complementary channel to regular voting practices. Probably its most salient effect is that it sets, or re-sets, the basic democratic condition of the equality of political rights. Malkopoulou ponders the advantages of its selected adoption to complete conventional voting procedures. By producing a complementary ‘kind of political representation’, sortition advances the ideal of political equality or, in other words, the ideal of non-discrimination, in a more efficient way than, for example, the use of quotas. Along with political equality, sortition also widens the options for political participation, whose combined effect could become a gain in democratic legitimacy.

Further exploring the uses of a lottery in the selection of representatives, in his chapter ELECTIVE AND ALEATORY PARLIAMENTARISM Hubertus Buchstein advances the idea of opening elective parliamentarism to the renewal effects of an ‘aleatory parliamentarism’. Buchstein’s proposal of ‘aleatory democracy’ relies on acknowledging chance as a procedural factor in the process of democratic decision-making. Chance would then level the representative potential among electors, reducing the huge inequality of political power between representatives and citizens observable in parliamentary regimes. Its consistent application would lead to the forming of a ‘House of Lots’, a kind of deliberative ‘pouvoir neutre’ counterbalancing parliamentary majorities, hence arguably strengthening the currently diminished democratic legitimacy of parliamentary democracy.

The sixth chapter focuses on participation, discussing its contested role in parliamentary democracies. PARTICIPATION: A COMPLEMENT OR A SUBSTITUTE TO PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY?, by Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, deals with the right to participation as enshrined in international law documents, and with the participatory contributions to democratic regimes by NGOs and other civic groups. Specific attention is given to non-citizens, as they act collectively in politics and whose political significance remains understated in political science accounts. Spiliopoulou Åkermark’s analysis combines two narratives which share interesting elements. On the one hand, the growing attention to the rights of participation in international law; on the other hand, the challenge of movements and NGOs to political parties in influencing the political, namely the legislative, agenda. At their confluence lies the emergence of political actors other than citizens and parties.
In the following pages, readers will find a number of contributions to the scholarly debates that aim to retrieve the vantage point of parliamentary politics in exploring democracy. *Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory* vindicates the role of parliamentarism in democracy, appraising its argumentative, debating experience of politics to recast both the devalued reform potential of parliamentary democracies and a number of related, uncritical judgements usually assumed by democratic theory.

References


