

Mill and Political Representation in a Multicultural Society

In this paper, Mill's opinion on political representation appears to us as an alibi or starting point when thinking about quota in political representation. Women, immigrants, national movements or other cultural groups are searching for a political representation that demonstrates their special identity within the framework of democratic state. Mill advocated a Parliament reflecting the make-up of the nation's people. Thus, his concept of representation means reflection of society, not action, if we accept Hannah Pitkin's classification. For example, women would represent-reflect women and Scottish people represent-reflect Scots. This concept of representation is demanded in the current multicultural world, where the strong modern subject is criticised and where homogeneity is breaking up into a myriad of identities. In this context, representation as reflection permits the presence of a large variety of not-strong individuals clustered in many distinct identities. But different kinds of problems arise from this framework, such as what constitutes a group identity and how to ensure the best of its members are elected to represent the others. And even though Mill was not concerned about these questions, if not resolved, they affect the legitimacy of quotas for political representation.

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