



Why Democracy?

Paul Fairfield

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Reexamines the normative justification for democratic politics.

While much of the world now embraces the democratic idea—that the people must rule—the philosophical case for democracy has yet to be made convincingly. *Why Democracy?* not only reexamines the current debates in normative democratic theory, but also challenges popular conceptions that tend toward an uncritical idealization of popular rule. It is not enough to call for more extensive public deliberation, or for greater participation and inclusion in the democratic process, or for a radical extension of the scope of the process. Making the case for democracy requires examining its imaginative and rhetorical dimensions as well. The democratic idea of “rule by the people” must be understood less as a definition than as an aspiration, a trope, and the beginning of a narrative that includes, while extending beyond, the domain of government.

“This book is well written, polemically forthright, and lucid. I like how the author places participatory and deliberative theories in the context of conflict. He is part of a trend that is interested less in the analytic rigor of political theories than in their function either as political ideologies or as moves within an irresolvable conflict over power.” — Peter Breiner, author of *Max Weber and Democratic Politics*

Paul Fairfield teaches philosophy at Queen’s University in Ontario and is the author of several books, including *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition: The Politics of Individuality*; *Public/Private*; and *The Ways of Power: Hermeneutics, Ethics, and Social Criticism*.

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