Editorial

Mark Chou and Jean-Paul Gagnon

Recent years have seen democratic governments face a variety of challenges from both within and without. Endogenously, many established democracies have become pockmarked by factionalism, polarization, fearmongering, and populism. Exogenously, democratic institutions' effectiveness is now frequently called into question by the rise of autocratic powers and a range of never-before-experienced global crises that have exposed democracy's many shortcomings. Against this backdrop there have been widespread calls to ensure that democracies and their institutions become more epistocratic and adept at including the interests of affected individuals so that the factionalism and polarization leading to populist backlashes can be averted.

This issue of *Democratic Theory* draws together several key contributions to these important ongoing debates. The first article by Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti mounts a critique of the currently prominent push to ensure majoritarian institutions have the epistemtic capacity to discover and implement an objective standard of normative truth. For Invernizzi-Accetti, implementing epistemic safeguards is unnecessary and undesirable because, he contends, it conflicts with three key democratic values: autonomy, inclusion, and pluralism. At a time when both scholars and media commentators have highlighted citizens' ignorance and democratic institutions' inability to promote political knowledge, this is an important counter-argument that underscores the value of democratic proceduralism. The second article by Robert Farneti explores the shift from fractionalization to polarization in democratic theory and the epistemic leap scholars make from the realm of facts to the realm of normative problems. His article thus engages with polarization as the *normative* cause of a *normative* problem. Drawing on mimetic theory, he makes the case for polarity as the fundamental structure of politics. Next, Leif Lewin's article explores the relationship between corporatism in global politics and affected interests. As he notes, given the important roles NGOs play in the global arena, it is essential to develop a conceptual framework for understanding who is affected and how they can be represented. The final research article by Amit Ron also explores the politics of democratic institutions, but for him it is their potential to include and

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exclude that deserve attention. As he argues, the ideal of democratic institutions – the coming together of those who make decisions together with those affected by those decisions – is often undermined. Building on James Bohman's conception of democracy as a rule by multiple dêmoi, he thus develops a framework for studying and evaluating modes of democratic inclusion that are based on "being affected."

To draw this issue to a close we have two contributions: one from Simon Tormey and one from Jeff Jackson. In his interview of *Democratic Theory* editor Jean-Paul Gagnon, Tormey explores the contemporary dynamics of democratic representation and the crisis of representative politics. Building on his recent work, including in this journal, Tormey delves into what polities, politicians, and publics should do in this new age of democratic governance. Finally, Jackson ends this issue with a response to William Caspary's commentary on his earlier article in this journal. In his response Jackson engages Caspary's claim that Dewey is not a supporter of "nondeliberative" direct action and, in doing so, expands on my own critique of deliberative democratic thought.

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