

Constituting the People

What features must a constitution have if it is to be democratic? It must provide and protect institutions of democratic governance. But what about the people governed by those institutions? Many say the ideal of democracy presupposes the existence of a people but contributes nothing to its definition. In this Lecture I explain why this is wrong. Every democracy must try to constitute a democratic people, that is, a people who have a reasonable prospect of governing themselves democratically. Paradoxical as it sounds, constitutions can have a role in creating the people they are to govern.

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