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Participatory Democracy

> *We seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims; that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence of man and provide the media for their common participation.* (Port Huron Statement, 1964)

> *Although the meetings were frequently long and tedious, many occupiers point to these open, participatory assemblies as embodying an alternative to the current representative democratic order disproportionately influenced by the 1%.* (Juris 2012, 263, on #Occupying Boston)

The often-quoted Port Huron Statement by the US student movement in 1964 is considered to be a manifesto for democracy as participatory, claiming free speech and the right to participate in collective decisions. About fifty years later, as Juris observed on the Occupying movement, participatory democracy is still central for the movements that have mobilized against financial crises and austerity measures. Some of the transformations-as-opportunities identified at the end of the last chapter tend to favor the development of some specific democratic qualities, which are central for conceptions of democracy other than the liberal one discussed in the last chapter. In particular, the growth of diverse and multiple forms of unconventional political participation reflects the development of participatory conceptions of democracy. To this conception and related practices, and the long path of their development, this chapter is devoted. After defining participatory democracy and reviewing

normative theories devoted to it, I'll turn to history to show how social movements (in particular, the labour movement) have put forward different conceptions of democracy from the liberal one, emphasizing collective and social rights over individual (negative) freedom as well as participation by citizens over delegation to politicians. In their complex evolution, the labour movement, and other left-wing movements, have not only succeeded, often in alliances with other actors, in changing political institutions, but also experimented with different democratic qualities within their structures and struggles.

Participatory democracy: an introduction

The theme of participation is central to politics and to democracy. The very concept of politics, with reference to its etymological root in the Greek *polis*, recalls an image of participation: in the agora one intervenes in the making of decisions. If so-called 'ancient democracy' included this element of direct intervention, however, it is often said that 'modern democracy' has little in common with the Greek *polis*, being prevalently representative.

Yet another conception of democracy has survived in contemporary democracies, alongside the liberal one – one which underlines the necessity for citizens, naturally interested in politics, directly to assume the task of intervening in decisions that regard public issues. Where liberal democracy foresees the constitution of bodies of specialized representatives, participatory democracy instead posits strong constraints on the principle of delegation, seen as an instrument of oligarchic power. If liberal democracy is based on formal equality – one head, one vote – participatory democracy underlines the need to create the conditions for real equality. While liberal democracy is often bureaucratized, with decision making concentrated at the apex, direct democracy insists on the necessity of bringing decisions as close to the people as possible.

If the tension between representation and participation is always present in debates on democracy, with the first clearly prevalent in the actual evolution of democratic institutions, a certain level of participation is nevertheless necessary to legitimate representatives. The very idea of popular sovereignty presupposes the participation that developed in Europe halfway through the eighteenth century together with the public sphere, and which allowed interaction between citizens and institutional representatives (Mayer and Perrineau 1992, 10). This was then extended through the different stages of the widening of electoral suffrage, removing – albeit very slowly – census and gender barriers. As Pietro Costa (2010, 9) has observed:

> The driving force of democratization (its principal rhetorical device) is equality, employed as an instrument capable of shedding light on differences and denouncing the illegitimacy of the barriers that fragment the national society creating mutually estranged classes of citizens. And it is the participation–equality–rights nexus that continues to hold up democratic claims throughout the nineteenth century... It is in this perspective that attacks on the census constraints of suffrage are conducted, in which the political and social elite who form a considerable share of public opinion oppose tenacious resistance.

Theories of participatory democracy have also criticized liberal conceptions of democracy, which spoke of free and equal citizens, as unrealistic, underlining instead the power asymmetries that a purely political equality failed to neutralize. Influenced by the most powerful interests, the state is in fact seen as not fully able to guarantee real freedom and equality. To fight inequalities (and their delegitimizing effects), greater transparency in the functioning of public – both representative and otherwise – institutions is thus called for, along with the democratization of societal institutions. The involvement of citizens must be continuous and direct, widening towards a capacity to intervene in all the different areas of a person's everyday existence. The democratization of parties and associations is considered particularly important, as these mediate between society and state. According to Held:

> if we want democracy today to bloom it is necessary to rethink it as a double-faced phenomenon, with one side regarding the reform of state power and the other the restructuring of civil society. The principle of autonomy can only be realized if we recognize that a process of 'double democratization' is indispensible, that is the independent transformation of both the state and civil society. (1997, 435)

In this conception, participation at all levels, institutional or not, is oriented to rebalancing power inequalities that the liberal conception does not question. In fact, in this vision, while democracy is challenged by powerful organizations, in order for democracy to survive the challenge, 'economic groups and associations must undergo rearticulation by political institutions, in order to become part of the democratic process itself. This is possible with the adoption, within the modus operandi of such actors, of principles, rules and democratic practices' (1997, 451).

We can add that a delegated conception of democracy does not take into account the problem – acknowledged by Dahl (2000), among others – of the different intensity of preferences. At elections, each vote counts equally, but in reality the strength of citizens' opinions and emotional attachments, as well as competences, on different issues varies

enormously. While this unequal distribution of preference makes representative democracy inefficient in its very claim to reflect preference distribution (Pizzorno 2012), participatory democracy takes this into account, by granting more decisional capacity to those who are more committed, and therefore participate more.

To a certain extent, participation has indeed survived even in representative regimes. Even if they are representative, participation (not only electoral) is considered essential for contemporary democracies, which gain legitimacy not only through votes but also through their capacity to submit decisions to the 'test of the discussion' (Manin 1995). As Pierre Rosanvallon noted, in the historical evolution of democracy, along with the growth of institutions of electoral accountability, a circuit of oversight anchored outside of state institutions took shape. In fact, the understanding of democratic experiences requires the consideration, at the same time, of the 'functions and dysfunctions' of electoral representative institutions, but also of the organization of distrust. The different elements of what Rosanvallon defined as counter-democracy do not represent, in fact, 'the opposite of democracy, but rather a form of democracy that reinforces the usual electoral democracy, a democracy of indirect powers disseminated through society – in other words, a durable democracy of distrust which complements the episodic democracy of the usual electoral representative system' (2006, 8). If mistrust is the disease, it might be part of the cure as 'a complex assortment of practical measures, checks and balances, and informal as well as institutional social counter-powers has evolved in order to *compensate for the erosion of confidence, and to do so by organizing distrust*' (2006, 4).

In the same vein as Rosanvallon, other scholars have stressed at the same time the crisis of the traditional, liberal (representative) conceptions of democracy and the revival of democratic qualities often considered under the label of a 'democracy of the ancients' that stresses the importance of a (free and committed) public. In particular, Bernard Manin described the evolution from a 'democracy of the parties', in which the public sphere was mainly occupied by the political parties, to a 'democracy of the public', in which the channels of formation of public opinion are freed from their ideological control (1995, 295). This also means that the cleavages within public opinion no longer reflect electoral preferences, developing instead from individual preferences formed outside of the political parties:

> Individuals may have different opinions on a certain theme (for example, some are in favour, others against). A fracture then forms in public opinion on the theme in question…but this fracture does not necessarily reproduce partisan divisions between those that habitually

> vote for one party and those that vote for another. The fracture forms on the basis of the preferences of individuals on a specific subject, not on the basis of the partisan political preferences. The fracture of public opinion on different themes may not coincide with the line of division established at the vote. (1995, 295)

Normative theorists of participatory democracy have, as mentioned, stressed the importance of involving citizens beyond elections (Arnstein 1969; Pateman 1970; Barber 2003). In sum, participatory theory – which David Held defines as the conception of the 'New Left' – promotes a 'direct participation of citizens in the regulation of the key institutions of society, including the spheres of work and the local community' (Held 1997, 379), or 'the participation of citizens in the determination of the conditions of their associational lives, which presumes the authentic and rational nature of the judgements of each individual' (1997, 416).

In Carole Pateman's theorization, citizens should be provided with as many opportunities to truly participate as there are spheres of decision. While in *partial* participation, 'the final power of decision rests with the management, the workers if they are able to participate, being able only to influence that decision' (Pateman 1970, 70), *full* participation is a 'process where each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions' (1970, 70–1). In a similar vein, 'strong democracy' has been defined as a government under which citizens participate, at least some of the time, in the decisions that affect their lives (Barber 2003).

Participatory theorists have in fact criticized ritualistic forms of participation, calling instead for real empowerment. As Arnstein (1969, 216) noted, 'citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power'. This means that 'there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process' (1969). Any process which does not transfer power is a manipulation of public opinion; no meaningful participation is achieved until direct democracy comes into play. This is why, for instance, Arnstein's ladder counts eight rungs corresponding to eight degrees of power. From the bottom to the top, these eight rungs are: manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control. The first two bottom rungs are equivalent to non-participation; the three successive ones are degrees of tokenism; but the three upper rungs are degrees of citizen power.[1]

Participation is called for as not only just, but also useful. Among the instrumentally positive contributions of participation, we find defence from arbitrary power, the production of more informed decisions and the growth of the legitimacy of those decisions (Smith 2009, 5). Yet the

advantages of participation are praised in terms not only of immediate legitimation, but also of a growing socialization to interest and action for the collective good. Participation is seen to have a positive effect on citizens. Spaces of participation become 'schools of democracy': the more citizens participate in the decision-making process, the more they are informed and enlightened, and the more they will vote in national elections (Pateman 1970). Active, knowledgeable and informed citizenship will increase the systemic efficiency and individual and collective wellbeing.

Participation creates, then, a virtuous circle: opportunities to participate stimulate trust and activism, thus reproducing the stimulus to participate and improving the effects of participation itself. Indeed, participation in civic activity educates individuals with respect to how to think in public, given that citizenship permeates civic activity with the necessary sense of public-spiritedness and justice; in this sense, to paraphrase Barber, politics becomes its own university, citizenship its gym, participation its teacher (2003, 152).

Free spaces (horizontal and participatory) offer a school of citizenship, socializing in those competences and values that are essential to support effective participation (Evans and Boyte 1986, 17). Participation in social movements and other associations often broaden the personal identities of participants and offers satisfaction and self-realization (Gamson 1992, 56; Blee 2011). Indeed, identities and motivations are transformed, during collective action: while participation often starts for limited, immediate, even selfish reasons, many activists develop in time a political and social conscience and a more public and trusting sense of the self (Szas 1995, 154).

Similar effects were detected in the case of decentralized institutions. As Tocqueville (1986, vol. I, 112–13) wrote long ago, 'Town-meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it.' It is from encounters that solidarity is born: 'Feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed by no other means than the reciprocal influence of men upon each other' (Tocqueville 1986, vol. II, 158). Similarly, according to J.S. Mill, it is local institutions that carry out

> the practical part of the political education of a free people, taking them out of the narrow circle of personal and family selfishness, and accustoming them to the comprehension of joint interests, the management of joint concerns – habituating them to act from public or semipublic motives, and guide their conduct by aims which unite instead of isolating them from one another (Mill 1947, 112)

In this sense, it is by participating that people learn to participate. As Carole Pateman writes (1970, 42–3), 'the principal function of participation is . . . the educational, educational in the widest sense of the term, that includes both psychological aspects and the acquisition of the practice of capabilities and democratic procedures . . . Participation develops and forges those same qualities that are necessary to it: the more an individual participates, the more he is able to participate.' Personal involvement in the participatory process may significantly change one's attitude, perspective and value priorities (Bachrach 1975, 50).

The need to create multiple and varied channels of participation is justified by the recognition of the presence of conflicts between actors possessing different resources and powers. Bachrach and Baratz (1986), in particular, have theorized a dichotomy between those who have power and those who do not. The former can realize the mobilization of prejudice, excluding some ideas and requests from the public debate through the activation of a bundle of norms, values and rules that prevent some matters from becoming subject to public decision. Part of the activity of exercising power is thus oriented towards imposing and reinforcing this selectivity, preventing controversies from emerging on questions of fundamental importance to the group in power. Decisions are thus often taken on issues of little relevance, while non-decisions are taken with regard to the most important conflicts.

Increasing participation by the excluded therefore becomes necessary in order to introduce new, important issues into the political debate. Participatory democracy thus has elements in common with *associational* democracy (Hirst 1994), which focuses upon the need for citizens to self-organize. Associational experiences in civil society are here considered not only to be capable of replacing the state in some of its functions, but also to produce social solidarity, contributing to the democratic socialization of the citizens as well as to the production of social goods.

Participation should thus be an instrument for redistributing resources to the advantage of the weakest. While interest groups favour the most resourceful through less visible lobbying, these arenas of participation should give more power to the powerless. For Peter Bachrach, democratic participation is 'a process in which persons formulate, discuss, and decide public issues that are important to them and directly affect their lives. It is a process that is more or less continuous, conducted on a face-to-face basis in which participants have roughly an equal say in all stages, from formulation of issues to the determination of policies' (1975, 41). The participation of those who are excluded is an instrument for reducing inequalities as a democratic public sphere should provide the mechanisms for recognition and representation of the voices and perspectives

of those who are oppressed (Young 1990, 184). From this point of view, the participatory approach tends to stress also the substantive, social dimension of democracy (Schmidt 2010, 225–35).

Conflicts are central in the conceptions of radical democracy (Laclau and Mouffe 2001), which presents agonist democratic *politics* as a peaceful way to manage conflictual interests that emerge in the (antagonist) *political*. So, for Chantal Mouffe, the political is 'the dimension of antagonisms that I take to be constitutive of human society', while politics is the 'set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political' (Mouffe 2005, 360). In this sense, agonism recognizes the conflicting relations with, but also the legitimacy of, the Others:

> while antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents . . . This means that, while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place. (Mouffe 2005, 20)

What is shared in this vision is 'adhesion to the ethical–political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality. But we disagree concerning the meaning and implementation of those principles, and such a disagreement is not one that could be solved through deliberation and rational discussion' (Mouffe 2000, 245).

Visions of participatory democracy thus tend to consider the formation of collective identities as exogenous to the democratic process: that is, they emerge in the society, and then participate in politics. This is the case also for the radical democratic approach which leaves the formation of interests and identities outside of the (conflictual) political sphere. The interest in 'articulation' – as practices that establish a relation among elements, so that identities are modified (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 105) – does not bring about a definition of the (democratic) conditions under which this 'articulation' might happen. Additionally, there is a separation between political institutions and society. Identities are not constructed through democratic processes; rather, the function of democracy is 'to provide institutions that will allow them to take an agonistic form, in which opponents will treat each other not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as adversaries who will fight for the victory of their position while recognizing the right of their opponents to fight for theirs' (Mouffe 2009, 53).

The historical development of participatory democracy

In European history, a participatory vision of democracy developed with the mobilization of the labour movement, also bringing about relevant institutional changes. The initial phases of the democratic state have been defined as characterized by widespread activism in the public sphere (cf. Eder 2010), which remained autonomous from political parties. During the first phase of representative democracy, which Bernard Manin (1995, 260) defined as *parliamentarism*, candidates were elected on the basis of personal trust, linked to their networks of local relations and reputation. In society, opinion movements were organized around varied themes, and applied pressure, often through public demonstrations in parliaments, conceived as the place where representatives formed their opinions through open discussions. It is in this phase – which in the history of England and France stretches from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth – that the public sphere asserted itself, and not only for the bourgeoisie. Studies on the formation of the labour movement describe this period as characterized by identities still oriented to trades, fragmented organizational structures and local, sporadic protests, but also by a certain participatory ferment.

In this phase, electoral accountability was limited, as electoral suffrage was still very restricted. Notwithstanding the low levels of electoral participation, participation in the public sphere was intense, with the multiplication of autonomous and influential opinion movements. Summarizing numerous historical studies, Alessandro Pizzorno observes that, halfway through the eighteenth century, in England public opinion 'manifested itself in ever more numerous petitions, in discussions in public places, or in semi-private places (taverns, cafés, clubs), where the new middle class of tradesmen and professionals, readers of periodicals gathered… Numerous societies and associations were formed… the political press spread in a manner previously unimaginable' (Pizzorno 1996, 972).[2] In the period, which, according to E.P. Thompson (1991), saw 'the making of the English working class', street marches for reform mobilized hundreds of thousands of citizens, while some of the radical magazines achieved circulations of tens of thousands of copies. In France, as in England, extra-parliamentary political associations gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures for petitions on themes such as the freedom of the press, the emancipation of slaves, freedom of religion, electoral reform, and public education (Pizzorno 1996, 488–9). Here too, processions and barricades mobilized hundreds of thousands of people (Sewell 1980).

In Habermas' analysis of the formation of public opinion, social conflicts that emerged outside of parties were expressed in the bourgeois *public sphere*, a sphere that 'develops in the field of tension between State and society, in such a way as to itself remain a part of the private arena' (Habermas 1988, 171).[3] The birth of the public sphere coincides with the rise of demands by social movement organizations for an active role in decisions that regarded their constituencies. In this sense, the notion of public opinion, connected to that of publicity, was affirmed during the eighteenth century. Peculiar to the public sphere is, according to Habermas, the instrument used for political confrontation: public and rational argumentation. Cafés, drawing rooms, linguistic societies and Masonic lodges were the social spaces where this public sphere took form and the taste for debate was satisfied. It is in these spaces, then, that the institutions that led to the physical enlargement of the public space developed – first the press, but also public meetings, reading societies and various associations. After the French and American revolutions, journalism, freed from the censorship of absolutist regimes, became an instrument of wide discussion, albeit limited to an elite.

In Habermas' historical reconstruction, the commercial bourgeoisie progressively assumed a hegemonic position in civil society. Financial and commercial capitalism required the international circulation of both goods and news, thereby creating a social class interested in influencing government action (1988, 37). According to research on social movements, however, the public sphere was not (only) bourgeois, in the sense of being limited to the elites of literary cafés. Even though it is debated whether emerging conflicts should be read as motivated by the beginnings of class consciousness, or the survival of community or trade identities (Calhoun 1982), social movement organizations, with their scarce links with political parties, occupied an important space in the public sphere

At the origins of democracy lies, in fact, what Bendix called 'the entrance of the masses into history': indeed, 'the 18th century represents a rupture on a grand scale in the history of western Europe. Before that moment, the masses were barred from exercising their public rights. From that moment, they became citizens and in this sense members of the political community' (Bendix 1964, 72). In contrast to the Marxist school, Bendix underlines the primarily political character of those social movements:

> the growing awareness of the working class expresses above all an experience of political alienation, that is, the sense of not having a recognized position in the political community or of not having a civic community in which to participate. . . . the recently politicized masses protest against their second class citizenship, demanding the right to

> participate on equal terms in the political community of the nation state. (1964, 73)

The struggle for universal suffrage was thus also and principally a struggle for recognition: 'it is to oppose a conception of foreignness and social invisibility that impacted the majority of society. Overcoming existing discrimination in the name of equality meant being recognized as full members of society' (Costa 2010, 13).

Popular participation through unconventional forms went along with its politicization. Between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, the importance of demonstrations and strikes grew, with workers forming associations focusing on the defence of wages and working conditions, but also allied to political movements calling for democratic reforms. In France, newspapers written by workers for workers appeared, denouncing the partiality of the bourgeois press (and journalists) (Sewell 1980, 197). In England too, political reading societies (including working-class ones) met in public cafés where up to ninety-six newspapers were bought and read, including those printed illegally (Thompson 1991, 789). Not only, recalls E. P. Thompson, were there around a million literate people among English workers, but in addition 'Illiteracy . . . by no means excluded men from political discourse' (1991, 782). We can speak, then, of numerous and diverse *reading publics* (ibid., 790), not only bourgeois ones, that addressed political (public) issues.

A central element in the conception of democracy that developed in this way is the *collective* dimension of rights as opposed to a liberal conception of freedom (of contracts, property, etc.) as merely individual. If the public sphere emerged in these years, the actors who participated in it were only partly new. In both France and England the continuity between the trade corporations and the labour movement is underlined. In France, the societies of *compagnonnages* and mutual aid societies remained active, reproducing post-revolutionary versions of the old confraternities that later transformed into free associations. The leaders of the *compagnonnerie* maintained their influence in negotiations with masters, and in deciding eventual strikes (Sewell 1980, 180). The English workers' movement combined the traditions of the secret societies with that of trade unionism (Thompson 1991, 570). Here as well, the representatives of the old trades had a say in the emerging public sphere (Calhoun 1982).

The social and political demands of the budding workers' movement intertwined with claims that may be defined as meta-democratic, addressing the very conceptions and practices of democracy. The battle for the freedom of the press was a founding experience of the English working class (Thompson 1991, 805). There, the Luddites formed a transitional

movement with their mix of defending the past yet anticipating the future through, among other things, the elaboration of specific proposals against the exploitation of women and children, for a minimum wage, and indeed for the right to form unions (1991, 603). The Chartists' claims for political reforms (such as universal suffrage and the secret ballot, the abolition of limits on eligibility to stand for election, and paid parliamentarians) were in fact supported by workers' organizations (Tilly 2004, 46). In France, in 1848, trade corporations and political clubs marched together to demand civil and political rights.

The emerging social movements in the public sphere not only discussed specific political reforms, but also constituted arenas for the meeting of different conceptions of democracy, with an explicit challenge to the minimalist, individualistic and liberal vision of the developing democratic state. From this point of view, liberal democracy unintentionally offered the relational and cognitive resources for its own transformation. Even if the discourse of individual rights that dominated the collective order hindered the organization of the workers at first, it nevertheless triggered the development of alternative conceptions of democracy.

In England, it was precisely the resistance to repression and limits to the freedom of association that led to an alliance between radical clubs and trade unionism (Thompson 1991, 675), with the accompanying emergence of popular radicalism and militant trade unions. If the Combination Acts reflected the alliance of aristocrats and manufacturers, they also produced, as a reaction, the alliance between radicals and workers' organizations (1991, 217). Similarly, the repression of 1817–19 contributed to the bridging of calls for political reform and calls for social reform, in a reaction that E.P. Thompson sees as principally determined, in terms of initiative and character, by worker associationism. The Peterloo Massacre (eleven demonstrators killed) in 1819, by bringing hundreds of thousands onto the streets to protest, caused a polarization of public opinion ('nobody could remain neutral': 1991, 757) and the consequent alliances between moderates and radicals in the struggle for civil and political rights. Indeed, if the liberal language of rights defined these as the natural rights of the free man, 'it was primarily through the prism of their rights as citizens that workers came to discover and articulate their interests in the first place' (Somers 2008, 13, and 152).

In France, too, although a series of laws benefiting property-owners on a basis of competitive individualism emerged from the revolution (see also chapter 2), some of its ideological elements were nevertheless taken up by workers and their associations to justify demands for not only the widening, but also the transformation of the meaning, of those rights (Tilly 1995, 142). In the 1830s, the tension between the Enlightenment

conception of freedom (according to authorities, if workers had requests they had to present them individually to the competent authorities) and the workers' demands for the recognition of trade unions was obvious. Presenting the middle class as a new aristocracy, some of the labour organizations claimed their right to free themselves from oppression.

A central claim for the worker movement was in fact the right 'to combine', which began with the right to associate, but differentiated itself from this (Bendix 1964). While the freedom to associate with others formed a part of the freedom of conscience, of speech, of industry, of religious belief and of the press, it had not, like these others, been promoted by the revolution, which had rather, as mentioned, aimed to abolish the bodies between the state and the society. It emerged instead as an invention of the workers' organizations that, exploiting the ambiguities of the revolutionary discourse, defined the demands for collective negotiations in terms of brotherhood. In the burgeoning workers' movement, associations were thought of as workers' corporations, cooperatives, but also as confraternities of proletarians, initially with a mutual aid function, but then elaborated as instruments for opposing a vision of freedom as isolation, promoting instead reciprocal links and common intelligence (Sewell 1980, 216). Work was presented as the foundation of sovereignty, and the organization of workers in associations as a principle of social order, of a unique and indivisible republic. The language of association in fact allowed a redefinition of the workers' corporations as free and voluntary societies, combining cooperative language with a revolutionary one.

In the protest campaigns for the expansion of citizens' rights, other models of democracy were also conceptualized and practised: direct, horizontal and self-managed conceptions developed. In the public sphere, old and new intertwined: traditional forms of associationism (corporations, etc.) combined with emerging ones. In France, the conception of democracy emerging in working-class mobilizations included the federation of self-governing trade unions. With a mix of continuity and discontinuity, horizontal terminology began to spread in the trade associations – such as 'associate' rather than 'member', 'president' or 'secretary' rather than 'head' or 'captain'. The *sans-culottes* had already imagined the direct exercise of popular sovereignty in the name of a single popular will, calling for the public spiritedness of action, unanimity and equality (Sewell 1980, 103). Notwithstanding the defeat of the workers' motions in June 1848, the Luxembourg Commission (which functioned as an arena for interest mediation) remained an example of an attempt at self-management against the disorder of the market.

In a similar manner, the associations of the radical movement in England tended to organize in 'divisions', which were to divide as soon

as they reached forty-five members (Thompson 1991, 167). A delegate from each division participated (along with a vice-delegate with no voting rights) in weekly meetings of the general committee. The principle of payment for services was affirmed with the aim of preventing 'the taking over of its affairs by men of means or leisure' (1991, 169). In many Corresponding Societies, which met at private houses or taverns, the presidency of the session rotated, changing each time. Influenced by the events in France, the English Jacobins took up the 'zealous egalitarian underpinning' of the *sans-culottes* (1991, 171). Predominantly artisans (but also journeymen), the participants at the meetings brought the spirit of mutuality of that culture along with them (1991).

Returning to the model of liberal democracy presented in the previous chapter, we may observe that this was contested and, at least in part, disregarded in the construction of the democratic state – not only in the continuation of the visions and institutions of the 'old order', but also in the emergence of different visions and practices of democracy.

If requests that had formed in the public (not only bourgeois) sphere were granted and identities recognized, this does not seem to have occurred (only or principally) through mechanisms of electoral accountability. In his research on France and England, Tilly describes a transformation in the form of collective action between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, in which a local and parochial repertoire became a national and autonomous one, based on public assemblies and ad hoc free associations among its interest groups. According to Tilly, in the eighteenth century the assumption was that citizens, grouped into known bodies (guilds, communities, religious sects), exercised collective rights, protected by the law, through the actions of their representatives who had the ear of the authorities (1995, 142). The modern repertoire that developed in the following century was made up of forms of action independent of the authorities, carried out in public places with the participation of associations that deployed their symbols of belonging (1995, 362). In England, the concentration of capital and proletarianization transformed the structure of interests, while urbanization changed the fabric of relations and the growth of the state (linked to military efforts) politicized the conflict, in what Tilly defines a 'para-parliamentarization' (1995, 49). Alongside parliamentarization, in fact, a public sphere grew, including even those citizens who, despite not having the right to vote, followed elections and participated in electoral campaigns (1995, 143). The parliamentarization of politics thus made elections important not only for the candidates, but also for their clientele (1995, 147). The French evolutionary path is similar, with growing demands by the state corresponding with a process of centralization of decisions and nationalization of political power (Tilly 1986).

Tilly linked the influence of social movements to the electoral moment, insofar as elections marked the presence of mass support for a few proposals (and thus a potential electoral pool of support). Nevertheless, the parties of the time were initially rather indifferent to these movements. Despite the odd exception (for example, candidates who supported the ideas of the English radicals), the parties were parties of notables, based on *individual representation* (Neumann 1956). *Patron* parties in the Weberian definition, they sought to:

> install their leader in a position of control in order that he would assign state offices to his followers, that is to the apparatus of functionaries and party propagandists. Lacking any principled content, the latter would from time to time include in their programs, in competition among themselves, those requests to which they attributed the greatest propagandist strength among the electors. (Weber 1974, vol. II, 709)

According to Neumann, this party 'is typical of a society with a limited political field and a low level of participation. This is manifested, in party terms, only by voting, and the party organization (if it even exists) remains inactive in the period between one election and another. Its principal function is to choose representatives who, once chosen, are invested with a complete mandate' (1956, 153).

Nevertheless, under pressure from social movements of various types, the system of representation that had been constituted with continuity and discontinuity with respect to the old order soon began to build institutions and practices for recognizing collective identities. Notwithstanding the individualizing rhetoric, the democratic state-in-formation developed traits of organized or associative democracy, constructing channels of access for interests organized in parties or associations. Both pluralist and, even more, neo-corporative models (Schmitter 1981) then recognized those bodies intermediate between the individual and the state that had previously been stigmatized. In addition, diverse conceptions and practices of democracy were present within these intermediate bodies, in some cases involving claims for direct participation, in some versions invoking self-management.

The labour movement has been a most important actor in the transformation of the individualistic liberal conception of right through a recognition of organized forms of participation. If, according to common wisdom, the Left privileged equality and the Right freedom, in reality the history of the workers' movement is one of claims for civil and political rights as inextricable from social rights. The relation between workers' struggles and demands for freedoms emerges continually in the historiographical reconstructions of the evolution of the workers' movement over the course of the nineteenth century.

In Great Britain, the tangling of claims for justice and for freedom appears evident in historical reconstructions. Chartism is presented as a development of radicalism in the eighteenth century, but also as the last spark of working-class revolutionary politics (Biagini and Reid 1991, 3). Halfway through the nineteenth century, the Reform League (65,000 members and 600 sections, 100 of which were in London) had an 'overwhelmingly working class' membership (Hinton 1974, 11). In tacit alliance with the more moderate Reform Union, the League organized huge demonstrations against the limits on the right to political assembly (in 1866, 150,000 protestors converged on Hyde Park, challenging a government ban), pushing the Disraeli government to concede an enlargement of suffrage. The 1850s also witnessed hard-fought battles for the recognition of trade union rights, among which the right to register was recognized only in 1855 with the Friendly Societies Act. In addition, it was only in the 1870s that the question of trade unions' legal status was finally settled, despite the earlier explosion in the numbers of those signing up. And even then, disputes over work on the law on conspiracy, the abolition of incarceration for breaking a contract (used until then against strikers) and the introduction of the right to peaceful picketing were excluded (Hinton 1974, 22). In the 1880s, the Democratic Federation continued its mobilization against repression in Ireland, for the nationalization of land, for democratic reform (along Chartist lines) and for a further extension of suffrage. Demands for social, civil and political rights thus became more and more intertwined, in complex ways:

> Unfortunately, it is all too often assumed that the world of the working-class politics can be understood simply by deploying categories such as 'socialist', 'Lib.-Lab.' or 'Labourist' to divide the labour movement into its ideological parts. In reality, working-class politics was far more complex. Individuals frequently shifted between these supposedly discrete ideological positions, or, more revealingly, behaved as though they were completely ignorant of their existence. (Lawrence 1991, 83)

Historians have in fact noted reciprocal influence between the organizations active on political rights and those active on social rights. Distinct from socialism, Chartism nevertheless had an impact on the workers' movement: while the Liberal party is normally seen as the heir to the traditions of radicalism, its effects are also strong in the Labour party (and in the organized working classes) (1991, 18). In fact, the Liberal party was viewed sympathetically by many trade unionists in the late Victorian period (for example, on the labour-law reform of 1875, Spain 1991, 110). The Tichborn movement of the 1870s has been described as the link in the chain between the end of Chartism and the development

of socialism (and thus of the Labour party in the 1890s) (McWilliam 1991, 44). Over the course of the century, popular constitutionalism was indeed invoked in support of working-class mobilizations:

> It was the repertoire of constitutionalist action – the mass petition, the remonstrance to the Crown, the mass demonstration and platform agitation, the convening of conventions – that could be relied on to rally the force of popular radicalism. It was not merely what could be said but what could be done that gave the constitutional force, allowing certain things to happen, certain political dramas to unfold. (Epstein 1994, 11)

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, this mostly came about in a defensive manner, in particular against the restrictions placed on trade union rights by the government Whigs, repression in Ireland and the new Poor Law, as well the Rural Police Act. Protests developed against restrictions of the right to meet in public and the suspension of *habeas corpus* in 1817.

In France, too, social movements intervened in the public sphere, raising demands for justice and liberty, but also presenting diverse conceptions of democracy. Sewell (1986, 63) writes that 'the fall of 1833 saw not only the creation of a new and powerful sense of class-consciousness among artisans working in different trades, but also the first steps towards a political alliance between radical republicanism and socialism'. In particular, the role played in the 1833 strikes by the Société des Droits de l'Homme has been underlined: initially a republican and bourgeois society, it soon became dominated by the working class. Together with the diffusion of socialist ideology, the demand for freedom was considered to be the central characteristic of the French working-class conscience. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the working-class identity, linked to a widespread popular culture, was characterized by:

> the sense of being manual workers; of being exploited by employers who, in the popular imagination, had replaced feudalism; a lively attachment to freedom, which formed the basis of the *sans-culotte* spirit as well as direct-action trade unionism; extreme suspicion towards all forms of authority, towards those referred to as 'them', ranging from the state to the workshop and even including other unions, whenever the 'little leaders' took advantage of their functions to act as big shots. (Perrot 1986, 105)

Although they were a minority, critics of the vote (and of 'votards') as an individual instrument in contrast with the collective will expressed in

assemblies, testified to the survival of conceptions of direct democracy (1986, 109).

Similarly in Germany, where end-of-century repression had favoured the centralization of struggles and working-class representation in the party (Nolan 1986), the workers' movement was born and grew from the bottom up: 'even apart from the strikes, to many workers self-organization and collective self-help appeared to be a quasi-natural way to protect against the insecurities of the market economy and the superiority of employers' (Kocka 1986, 338). The Verband Deutscher Arbeitervereine grew as the umbrella organization of workers' associations that had developed close links with left-wing and democratic liberals (Kocka 1986, 345). It was the defeat of the mobilizations of 1848–9 that rendered these alliances more difficult, contributing towards the creation of a strong yet isolated social democratic party.

From an organizational point of view, the interweaving and tensions between working-class struggles and conceptions of democracy were reflected in frequent waves of criticism of parties and trade unions 'from below'. As early as the end of the nineteenth century, in Germany, the political police had registered in the workers' *Kneipen* (bars) complaints about the coldness of the party and the loss of working-class spirit (Evans 1989, 246). In France, in 1936, the occupation of factories demonstrated how these had substituted trades as the focus of identity. As Perrot recalled:

> The occupations of factories in 1936 implied an entirely different relationship not merely to the instrument of work, but also to space. Dispersed with respect to residence, the workers were reunited daily in the factory, which became the locus of their collective existence; dislocated with respect to their crafts, they were reunited in the firm, which became the locus of their convergence, and thereby all at once the epicentre of the labour movement. (1986, 91)

In Great Britain, if the explosion in the numbers of those joining trade unions in the 1890s, and the mobilizations linked to this, led to the Labour party's running in the general elections of 1892, dissatisfaction over the lack of direct representation for the poor nevertheless accompanied the development of ideas of direct revolutionary action.[4]

Conceptions and practices of different models of democracy (and different democratic qualities) with respect to those foreseen in the definition of the liberal state were indeed developed and prefigured during waves of protest. In Great Britain, from 1910 to 1914, a new surge in membership of trade unions accompanied 'bottom-up' actions organized during the depression of 1908–9. Spontaneous transport strikes led to

alliances negotiated from below among up to eighteen trade unions at a time, all pledging not to leave the negotiating table until the requests of each had been satisfied. Community mobilizations included the strikers' wives, who marched under the banner 'Our poverty is your danger. Stand by us'. Currents of trade unionism in defence of working-class autonomy developed, criticizing existing trade unions as too sectarian in structure, oriented to compromise in their politics and internally oligarchic in their conception of representation (Hinton 1974, 91). These examples of working-class autonomy are described as 'loosely-coordinated, fragmented and lacking a coherent body of theory'; in this sense, 'trade unionism failed to organize the grassroots leaders of industrial militancy into a disciplined force capable of leading a fight for revolutionary politics within labour politics' (1974, 94). Nevertheless, 'in a period when the Labour Party achieved little and was wracked by internal dissension, the trade union explosion provided a base for a renewal of socialist politics' (1974, 89). Even during the Great War of 1914–18, spontaneous protests saw alliances between skilled and unskilled workers, who pushed the Labour party to adopt some socialist goals. After the war, resistance to the moderate turn of the Labour government was expressed in the 1920–1 protests by the unemployed people's movement (organized in the National Unemployed Workers Movement), taking the form of hunger marches, which saw the participation of, among others, the party's local councillors, often at odds with the national government (1974, 134–5). The trade unions also expressed their disappointment about the second (minority) Labour government in 1929. In the 1930s, Labour re-emerged under the control of the trade unionists, with calls for promises to enact socialist legislation when in government, and a bottom-up opposition to the alliance with Churchill emerged in 1944.

Moments of tension and innovation also developed in the course of waves of strikes, accompanied by processions, assemblies and occupations. According to E.P. Thompson's formula, 'class formation occurs at the intersection of determination and self-activity: the working class made itself as much as it was made' (1978, 299). It was especially during strikes that a working-class consciousness was formed. In Michelle Perrot's reconstruction (1974), the strikes that spread through France at the end of the nineteenth century [5] were in fact organized not just by trade unions, but also by various local committees, with strong involvement from grassroots activists, who were often very young. In this sense, action produced and reproduced the workers' community – as Perrot noted:

> Revolt is not instinctive. It is born of action, and community in action. The strike, in this view, offers a remarkable occasion for basic training, an antidote to isolation, to the mortal cold that the division of labour

> reduces workers to. With its leaders, its assemblies, its demonstrations, its language, sometimes even its financial organization, it forms a community with Rousseauian aspirations, anxious for direct democracy, avid for transparency and communion. (1974, 725)

In its everyday dimension, the long strike of this period (ten times longer than the average contemporary strike), 'even if rational in its reasoning and objectives, is not purely functional, but experience, history, event. Experienced as a liberating force, able to break the monotony of the days and force the retreat of the bosses' power, it crystallized an ephemeral and often-regretted counter-society. Strike nostalgia carries the seed of its recommencing' (1974, 725).

Pushed by the workers' movement, the debate on democracy also spread to include not only an emphasis on participation, but also themes of social equality. In the first period of the development of capitalism, equality in civil and political rights sanctioned by the concept of citizenship was not normally considered to be in conflict with the social inequalities produced by the market, notwithstanding the fact that these weakened the enjoyment of civil and political rights (Marshall 1992, 27). In the twentieth century, the growth of economic wellbeing, the diffusion of education, and the use of those same civil and political rights affected this balance:

> Social integration spread from the sphere of sentiments and patriotism to that of material satisfaction. The components of a civilized and cultivated life, at first the monopoly of the few, were progressively placed within reach of the many, who were encouraged to reach out their hand to those who still eluded their claims. The diminution of inequality reinforced the pressures for its abolition, at least with regard to the essential elements of social wellbeing. These aspirations were in part heeded for incorporating social rights in the *status* of citizenship and thus creating a universal right to a real income that is not proportional to the market value of the claimer. (1992, 28)

Social rights began then to be discussed as essential conditions for a true enjoyment of political rights.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was therefore Bendix's 'masses' that conquered the rights of citizenship, organizing in political parties which then contributed to their integration. In particular, the socialist parties included the working class in the system, allowing the nationalization of society: 'above all integrating the working class into the procedures of the representative regime, "giving it a voice" and thus leading it to enter into dialogue with the other components of the political system, then contributing with success to enlarge the attributes of the

State' (Pizzorno 1996, 1023). With respect to the democratic state, the 'masses' exercised constant pressure for the enlargement of rights to dissent, as well as 'civility control'.[6] Further, they kept alive a focus on participatory democracy – open, direct and horizontal.

A participatory revolution?

Going back to the definition of liberal democracy, we can observe that it does not reflect some of the main elements which are present in the conceptions and practices of democracy which have developed in the last two centuries. While the electoral moment certainly played an important role, it was, however, neither the only nor the most important one in a democratic participation which instead flourished in associational forms, often independent of the representative circuit. Like the labour movement in the past, more recent movements also became arenas for debating and experimenting with different conceptions of democracy.

The protest movements of the late 1960s were already interpreted as an indication of the widening gap between parties and citizens – and indeed of the parties' inability to represent new lines of conflict (Offe 1985). This could be seen in the growing separation between movements and parties, that had together contributed to the development of some main conflict lines. Despite the obvious tensions between movements and parties, especially on the European continent, relations with parties long continued to play a central role for movements (Tarrow 1998; della Porta 1995). In fact, social movements have tended to form alliances more or less tightly with parties – and parties have sought to co-opt social movements, to absorb their identities, and to represent them in institutions. Social movements have indeed been extremely sensitive to the characteristics of their political parties of reference: they have privileged action in society, leaving parties the job of bringing their claims to institutions. They have placed themselves on the political Left–Right axis, and have constructed discourses compatible with the ideologies of their allies. For their part, parties have not been impermeable to the pressures of movements: from the Labour party in Great Britain to the Social Democrats in Germany, from the French socialists to the Italian communists, the programmes and members of the institutional left have changed following interactions with social movements and increasing awareness on themes such as gender discrimination or environmental protection. Comparative research has indicated that, in general, the old Left has been more disposed to supporting movements in locations where exclusive regimes had for a long time hindered the moderation of conflicts on the Left–Right axis (Kriesi et al. 1995, 68; della Porta and Rucht 1995).[7]

Between parties and movements, tensions continued to develop, however, over the appropriate organizational format. Faced with more and more bureaucratized parties (see chapter 2), the democratic quality of participation has remained central in the visions and practices of left-wing social movements. The 1968 movements (or the 'sixty-eight years', as they have recently been defined) called for an extension of civil rights and forms of political participation. The Berkeley Free Speech Movement influenced European student movements, which also organized debates on freedom of opinion as well as the 'state of emergence of democracy' (in Germany, for example) (for recent analyses, see Tolomelli 2008; Klimke and Scharlot 2008). The anti-authoritarian frame, central to these movements, was in fact articulated in claims for 'democracy from below'. Democracies in the form of councils and self-management were also discussed in the workers' movements of those years. Beyond the expansion of forms of political participation, the student movement and those that followed it (the first being the women's movement) experimented internally with new democratic practices, considered to be early signs of the realization of non-authoritarian relations (a libertarian dimension).

The so-called new social movements of the 1970s and the 1980s also insisted on the legitimacy – if not the prevalence – of alternative forms of democracy, criticizing liberal visions. In fact, 'the struggle of the left libertarian movements thus recalls an ancient element of democratic theory, which promotes the organization of the collective decision-making process variously defined as classical, populist, communitarian, strong, grassroots or direct democracy, against a democratic practice defined in contemporary democracies as realist, liberal, elitist, republican or representative democracy' (Kitschelt 1993, 15). According to this interpretation, against a liberal democracy based on delegation to representatives who may be controlled only at elections, movements affirm that citizens, naturally interested in politics, must directly assume the task of intervening in political decisions. As carriers of a participatory conception of democracy, the new social movements of the 1970s also criticized the monopoly of mediation through mass parties and by a 'strong' structuration of interests, aiming to shift policy making towards more visible and controllable places. Democracy as self-management was much discussed among social movements in this period.

In part, these conceptions did penetrate the democratic state through reforms that widened participation in schools, in factories and in local areas but also through the political recognition of movement organizations and the 'right to dissent'. Beginning from the 1960s, there has also been an increase in institutional and other forms of participation. In an important piece of comparative research carried out in the 1970s in

different western democracies, Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase noted that, with respect to laws and decisions considered unjust or illegitimate, ever larger groups of citizens were ready to resort to forms of action characterized by their unconventionality, as in advanced industrial societies techniques of direct political action were no longer carrying the stigma of deviance, nor were seen as anti-systemic in their orientation (Barnes and Kaase 1979, 157). For example, between 1960 and 1974, the percentage of those who responded 'Non-conventional political actions, such as demonstrations' to the question 'What can a citizen do with respect to a local regulation judged unjust or damaging?' increased in Great Britain, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany from less than 1 per cent to over 7 per cent.

The conclusion here is that increasing participation, including unconventional forms, is not an indicator of political alienation but, on the contrary, of the growth in political competences, in particular among the young. It was an expression of an enduring increase in potential citizen interventions, a broadening of the repertoire of political action that they rightly predicted was going to be reproduced over and over again (1979, 534).

In line with those predictions, a large-scale comparative research project – which used data from different surveys carried out at various points in numerous western democracies – underlined that, at least until 1990, political participation in western Europe grew considerably, with a reduction in the percentage of entirely inactive people (from 85 per cent in 1959 to 44 per cent in 1990) and a parallel growth in people partaking in some political activity (from 15 per cent in 1959 to 66 per cent in 1990) (Topf 1995, 68). While traditional political participation has remained stable, non-institutional participation has increased enormously in the years that followed. This growth has affected not only all the countries analysed, but, within the individual countries, it has reduced the differences in participation levels linked to gender, age and educational attainment – so as to lead scholars to speak of a 'participatory revolution' (1995, 78).

The most recent research also confirms that unconventional forms of participation are complementary, not alternatives, to conventional forms. In the 2000s, survey-based research has repeatedly underlined the decline of conventional forms of political participation (Putnam 2000; see also chapter 2), but the corresponding rise in unconventional forms (Torcal and Montero 2006). In Italy, for instance, unconventional forms of participation, such as signing petitions or participating in boycotts and marches, have spread – in 2005 the percentage of citizens that participated in unconventional forms stood at 37 per cent, equal to that of citizens participating in conventional ways (Lello 2007, 433; also Diamanti,

2007). In addition, while parties are losing members and trust, voluntary associations have gained. The number of people declaring that they never discuss politics has also tended to decrease: in Italy from 47 per cent in 1981 to 32 per cent in 2000 (Lello 2007, 416).

Conclusion

In conclusion, at the normative level, the concept of participatory democracy has suggested, with growing success, the need to increase the number and power of arenas open to citizens' participation. Concretely, real existing democracies developed by multiplying channels of participation, and extending the civil, political and social rights that made that participation possible. In fact, at least partially, participatory conceptions have penetrated the democratic state, through reforms that increased participation in public institutions, but also through the political recognition of the 'right to dissent'. This evolution has been neither linear nor peaceful: rights to participation were affirmed through various waves of protest, with strong resistance and frequent U-turns. Different democratic qualities – based on participatory principles – were nurtured in social movement organizations, re-emerging with more strength in times of struggle. The broadening of participation rights was reflected in a growth in unconventional forms of participation. Most importantly, the criticism of liberal democracy was expressed in the theorization of and experimentation with other models of democracy in a growing number of social movements.

4

Deliberative Democracy: Between Representation and Participation

*After a march on 15 May 2011, about forty protestors decided to camp in Madrid's main square, Puerta del Sol, calling for supporters on the Internet. By 20 May, 30,000 people were in that square, and many more followed the protest online, while the movement spread to many other localities, both large and small. As sociologist John Postill (2012), present during the events, recalled, 'The encampments rapidly evolved into "cities within cities" governed through popular assemblies and committees. The committees were created around practical needs such as cooking, cleaning, communicating and carrying out actions. Decisions were made through both majority rules vote and consensus. The structure was horizontal, with rotating spokespersons in lieu of leaders. Tens of thousands of citizens were thus experimenting with participatory, direct and inclusive forms of democracy at odds with the dominant logic of political representation. Displaying a thorough mixture of utopianism and pragmatism, the new movement drew up a list of concrete demands, including the removal of corrupt politicians from electoral lists, while pursuing revolutionary goals such as giving "All power to the People".' By mid-June 2011, consensus-oriented assemblies decided it was time to move from the central squares to the neighborhoods (*barrios*).*

From Spain, the emphasis on the creation of open spaces moved to Greece and the US, following mobile activists. Describing Occupy Boston, and citing an activist who talked about the 'small slice of utopia we are creating', Juris (2012, 268) singled out some of the tactical, incubating and infrastructural roles of the occupied free spaces: among the first are attracting media attention and inspiring

> *participation; among the second, 'providing a space for grassroots participatory democracy; ritual and community building, strategizing and action planning, public education and prefiguring alternative worlds that embody the movement's visions'; among the third, networking and coordination. Beyond the prefiguration of a different society, the activists already imagine that these spaces, as Ratza and Kurnik (2012) noted, are also important in the invention of alternative, but not yet imagined, futures, through what has been called a politics of becoming. In the Occupy movement they studied in Slovenia, the encounters between diverse minorities transform them and their visions.*

Protestors in the Puerta del Sol, or those in Zuccotti Park in New York, certainly went back to conceptions of participation from below, cherished by the progressive social movements I mentioned in the previous chapter. As this short account indicates, however, they combined this with special attention to the creation of egalitarian and inclusive public spheres. In this sense, their actions resonate with the conceptions and practices of deliberative democracy, which we are going to discuss in this chapter. Here as well, I shall first introduce the debate on normative theory and then refer to empirical research on democratic conceptions and practices in social movements, looking in particular at two waves of protest at the turn of the millennium.

Deliberative democracy: an introduction

A different type of criticism of the liberal democratic model from the one discussed under the 'participatory' label came from the theorists of a deliberative democracy, initially defined as 'liberal-deliberative democracy'.

What emerges as most innovative in the definition of deliberative democracy is the importance given to preference (trans)formation during the discursive process oriented to the definition of the public good. In fact, deliberative democracy requires a transformation of preferences during the interaction (Dryzek 2000a, 79). It is 'a process through which initial preferences are transformed in order to take into account the points of view of the others' (Miller 1993, 75). In this sense, it differs from conceptions of democracy as aggregation of (exogenously generated) preferences (or opinions) as it aims instead at their (democratic) formation.

With varying emphases, theorists of deliberative democracy stressed the importance of communication, as in deliberative democracy people

are convinced by the force of the better argument. In particular, (good) deliberation is conceived as being based on horizontal flows of communication, multiple producers of content, ample opportunities for interaction, confrontation on the basis of rational argumentation, and a positive attitude to reciprocal listening (Habermas 1981, 1996). To use Barber's (2003, 173) words, 'at the heart of strong democracy is talk', and democratic talk requires listening as well as uttering.

Some deliberative conceptions stress consensus, as decisions are reached by convincing the others of one's own good argument. Decisions must therefore be approvable by all participants, in contrast with majoritarian democracy, in which decisions are legitimated by votes. According to Joshua Cohen (1989), an ideal deliberation aims to reach a rationally motivated consensus thanks to reasons that are persuasive to all.

Changes of preferences regarding the public good should occur through the process of argumentation wherein reasons are exchanged in support of respective and different positions. The central tenet of deliberative democratic theory is, in fact, that it is through argumentation that participants in deliberation convince one another and come to decisions. In deliberative democracy, the debate is oriented to finding endorsable reasons (Ferejohn 2000).

Finally, deliberation enables individuals to abstract themselves from the mere appeal of self-interest, in such a way that the solution should reveal the general interest (Cohen 1989, 23–4; Elster 1998). In this model, 'the political debate is organized around alternative conceptions of the public good', and, above all, it 'draws identities and citizens' interests in ways that contribute to public building of public good' (Cohen 1989, 18–19). A deliberative setting thus facilitates the search for a common good (Elster 1998). Indeed, while I can consider my preferences as sufficient reason to make a proposal, deliberation in conditions of pluralism requires that I find reasons that make my proposal acceptable to others whom I can expect not to consider the fact that this is my preference to be a sufficient reason for supporting it (Cohen 1989, 33). A public explanation of oneself and one's own reasons 'forces you to report only those reasons that others might plausibly be expected to share' (Goodin 2003, 63).

Deliberative democracy is therefore a way to address controversies through dialogue: when citizens or their representatives disagree morally, they should continue to reason together until they reach mutually acceptable decisions (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Decisions are legitimate 'to the extent they receive reflective assent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those subject to the decision in question' (Dryzek 2010, 23). Deliberation (or even communication) is based upon the belief that, while not giving up my perspective, I might learn if I listen

to the other (Young 1996). While reaching consensus is not always possible, different forms of meta-consensus (on values, beliefs, preferences or discourses) can ensure the functioning of a deliberative arena (Dryzek 2010, 94, 114).

Deliberative forms of democracy have also been advocated as a way to channel the support of critical citizens into democratic institutions by building upon the assumption that contemporary democracies (at the local, national and supranational levels) need to combine representative institutions with other arenas. As Dryzek (2010, 40) noted, 'Democracy does not have to be a matter of counting heads – even deliberative heads. Nor does it have to be confined to the formal institutions of the state or the constitutional surface of the political life. Accepting such confinement means accepting a needlessly thin conception of democracy.' In the past, participation developed especially within political parties, where the reference to common values permitted the formation of collective identities. As mentioned earlier (see chapter 2), the very processes of economic globalization and political transnationalization challenge representative forms of democracy as they have developed within the nation state.

Recently developed partial solutions to the weaknesses of representative democracy appear far from satisfactory. Technocratic models of democracy, based on the assumption of consensual goals (such as economic development) to be reached with the input of experts or public bureaucrats, are accused of disempowering (and alienating) citizens (Sanderson 1999). Media democracy, with legitimation mediated by mass media, has facilitated populist appeals – as commercialization and centralization in the media system have encouraged the trend away from information and critical debate. In this context, interest has risen, among scholars as well as practitioners, in forms of democracy variously defined as deliberative.

Faced with these perceived challenges to representative democracy, the virtues of deliberative democracy are said to include legitimation on the input side and efficacy on the output side: 'Beyond its essential contribution to democracy per se, citizen participation in the policy process can contribute to the legitimization of policy development and implementation' (Fischer 2003, 205). For Bernard Manin, the legitimacy of the decision is the outstanding product of the deliberative theory of democracy: 'A legitimate decision is one that results from the deliberation of all. It is the process by which everyone's will is formed that confers its legitimacy on the outcome' (1987, 351–2). Also for Seyla Benhabib (1996, 69), deliberation 'is a necessary condition for attaining legitimacy ... with regard to collective decision-making processes in a polity ... what is considered in the common interest of all results from processes of collective deliberation'. And for Amy Gutmann (1996, 344), 'the legitimate exercise

of political authority requires . . . decision-making by deliberation among free and equal citizens'. In this sense, deliberative democracy is 'a normative account of the bases of democratic legitimacy' (Young 2003, 103). Deliberation, as a 'dispassionate, reasoned, logical' type of communication, promises to increase citizens' trust in political institutions (Dryzek 2000b, 64). Indeed, scholars highlighted a 'moralising effect of the public discussion' (Miller 1993, 83) that 'encourages people not to merely express political opinions (through surveys or referendum) but to form those opinions through a public debate' (1983, 89).

In its turn, legitimacy should facilitate the implementation of decisions, and efficiency should increase thanks to the increased information that citizens bring into the process. Among others, Fung and Wright (2001) stated the need to transform democracy in order to improve its capacity to achieve public goods. Deliberation should make people capable of overcoming their own individual interests and participating in the pursuit of a general interest (Cohen 1989, 23–4). In a virtuous circle, deliberative spaces improve citizens' information and decision-making capacity. Research on attempts at extending policy making through deliberative experiments – in the forms of auditing, people's juries and so on – usually focuses attention on the capacity of these instruments to solve problems created, for example, by local opposition to unpopular local land use (Bobbio and Zeppetella 1999, Sintomer 2001).

Deliberative and participatory democracy

A fourth model of democracy developed from some criticism of the original deliberative conception, bridging it with emphasis on deliberation from below. Critics have first of all stigmatized the *exclusionary* nature of the public sphere, especially as conceived in the Habermasian proposal. As Nancy Fraser noted:

> not only was there always a plurality of competing publics, but the relations between bourgeois publics and other publics were always conflictual. Virtually from the beginning, counterpublics contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behavior and alternative norms of public speech. Bourgeois publics, in turn, excoriated these alternatives and deliberately sought to block broader participation. (1997, 75)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, subaltern counterpublics (including workers, women, ethnic minorities, etc.) actually formed parallel

discursive arenas, where counter-discourses developed, allowing for the formation and re-definition of identities, interests and needs (1997, 81). Also, in contemporary societies, a multitude of public spheres offers to those subaltern groups the possibility of forming a collective identity. We can agree with Sheila Benhabib that 'heterogeneity, otherness, and difference can find expression in multiple associations, networks, and citizens' forums, all of which constitute public life under late capitalism' (1996, 84).

Second, and linked to this, liberal deliberative theories are said to tend towards an institutional bias denying that democracy develops (also or mainly) outside of public institutions. Scholars of deliberative democracy disagree in fact about the spheres in which it may take place, some focusing on the institutional public spheres, others on alternative spheres, free from state intervention (della Porta 2005b). Habermas (1996) postulates a double-track process, with 'informal' deliberation taking place outside institutions and then, as public opinion, influencing institutional deliberation. In empirical research, particular attention has been devoted to institutional arenas, from parliaments (Steiner et al. 2005) to administrative committees (Joerges and Neyer 1997), or in the mass media. According to other authors, however, deliberation happens (also or mainly) outside of public institutions. Joshua Cohen (1989) holds that deliberative democracy develops in voluntary groups, in particular in political parties, while John Dryzek (2000) singles out social movements as better positioned to build deliberative spaces, since they keep a critical eye upon institutions. In a similar vein, Jane Mansbridge (1996) stated that deliberation should take place in a number of enclaves, free from institutional power – social movements being among them. As Claus Offe (1997, 102–3) has emphasized, deliberative democracy needs citizens embedded in associative networks, able to build democratic skills among their adherents.

Third, not only does the historical account of the 'bourgeois' public sphere leave aside the 'proletarian' ones, but the very *communicative styles* which are normatively stressed varies. The Habermasian emphasis on the role of reason has been contested by those who pointed instead at the positive role of emotions and narration in public deliberation (Polletta 2006). Research on institutions as well as social movements revealed that different public spheres have different grammars (Talpin 2011; Haug 2010). Habermas has thus been criticized for reflecting elitarian norms: communicative rationality at the expense of story-telling, or politeness instead of passions. The importance of protest action as a complement to discourse was also noted: 'processes of engaged and responsible democratic participation include street demonstrations and sit-ins, musical works and cartoons, as much as parliamentary speeches and letters to the editor' (Young 2003: 119).

Emotions are here considered as important in creating solidarity through closeness and knowledge. As Hannah Arendt observed, a broad way of thinking cannot develop in isolation or solitude, but needs the presence of those others who have to be taken into account in that thinking (Arendt 1972, 282). Rhetoric can perform important functions in bonding and bridging individuals (Dryzek 2010, 69–81). To move beyond individual selfishness, in Iris Young's view too, people must meet, as a 'moral point of view' grows not from solitary reasoning, but from concrete meetings with others, who ask for their own needs, desires and perspectives to be recognized (Young 1990, 106). The need for a deliberation inside counterpublics, or enclaves of resistance, is recognized by the theoreticians of participatory forms of deliberation. Among them Jane Mansbridge stresses that 'democracies also need to foster and value informal deliberative enclaves of resistance in which those who lose in each coercive move can rework their ideas and their strategies, gathering their forces and deciding in a more protected space in what way or whether to continue the struggle' (1996, 46–7).

What is more, social inequality is said to reduce the capacity of oppressed groups to learn the dominant rules of the game, as oppression 'consists in systematic institutional processes which prevent some people from learning and using satisfying or expansive skills in socially recognized settings, or which inhibit people's ability to play and communicate with others or to express their feelings and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen' (Young 2000, 156). Deliberative democracy, in its original version, is thus accused of favouring (at least reproducing) inequalities:

> Although deliberators will always choose to disregard some arguments, when this disregard is systematically associated with the arguments made by those we know already to be systematically disadvantaged, we should at least reevaluate our assumptions about deliberation's democratic potential. This is all the more problematic as deliberation requires not only equality in resources and the guarantee of equal opportunity to articulate persuasive arguments but also equality in 'epistemological authority', in the capacity to evoke acknowledgment of one's arguments. (Sanders 1997, 349)

Fourth, and most fundamentally, the classical version of deliberative democracy assumes the possibility of reaching consensus through dialogue, thus excluding fundamental conflicts, which are instead parts and parcel of democratic development. It does not therefore help to address a fundamental question: if, as is usually the case, deliberation does not achieve consensus, how should conflicts be addressed (Smith 2009, 11)?

The very plurality of opinions makes conflicts, even bitter ones, all the more likely. As Flybjerg (1998, 229) observed, 'With the plurality that a contemporary concept for civil society must contain, conflict becomes an inevitable part of this concept. Thus civil society does not mean "civilized" in the sense of well-mannered behavior. In strong civil societies, distrusts and criticism of authoritative action are omnipresent as is resulting political conflict.' But, also, exclusion from some spaces of deliberation might produce conflicts. From this point of view, public spheres are conflictual as they are selective: 'If some of the interests, opinions, and perspectives are suppressed…, or if some groups have difficulties getting heard for reasons of structural inequality, cultural misunderstanding, or social prejudice, then the agenda or the results of public policy are likely to be biased or unfair. For these reasons, the public sphere will properly be a site of struggle – often contentious struggles' (Young 2000, 178). The presence of conflicts (that cannot be solved discursively) is particularly important, as mentioned before (see chapter 3), in conceptualizations of radical democracy as based upon agonistic interactions. As Chantal Mouffe wrote, 'taking pluralism seriously requires that we give up the dream of rational consensus which entails the fantasy that we could escape from our human form of life' (2000, 98).

From these criticisms a conception of democracy which is at the same time deliberative and participatory developed. It calls for the formation of public spheres where, under conditions of equality, inclusiveness and transparency, a communicative process based on reason (the strength of the good argument) is able to transform individual preferences and reach decisions oriented to the public good (della Porta 2005a). A deliberative and participatory democracy is first of all inclusive. All citizens have to be included in the process and able to express their voice. Against hierarchy, it 'requires some forms of apparent equality among citizens' (Cohen 1989, 18); in fact, deliberation takes place among free and equal citizens (as 'free deliberation among equals': 1989, 20). This means the deliberative process takes place under conditions of plurality of values where people have different perspectives but face common problems. At least, 'all citizens must be able to develop those capacities that give them effective access to the public sphere', and 'once in public, they must be given sufficient respect and recognition so as to be able to influence decisions that affect them in a favourable direction' (Bohman 1997, 523–4). Deliberation must exclude power – deriving from coercion, but also from an uneven balance of the participants as repesentatives of organizations of different size or influence. In Joshua Cohen's definition, a deliberative democracy is 'an association whose affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members' (1989, 17). Consensus is, however, possible only if there are shared common values.

Global social movements, public spheres and deliberative democracy

A deliberative model based on participation has been promoted by the social movements that developed at the turn of the millennium claiming global justice. While a participatory emphasis has been pursued by the left-libertarian movements of the 1960s and the following decades, social movement activists have also been aware of the difficulties in implementing direct democracy. The risks of a 'tyranny of the structureless' (Freeman 1970; see also Breines 1989) have in fact brought about an increasing focus on discursive qualities and consensual decision making (Polletta 2002).

Some internal characteristics of this mobilization called for a participatory and deliberative conception. In the global justice movement (GJM), which became visible with the mobilizations against the WTO in Seattle in 1999, characteristics like network organizational structures, plural identities and the presence of a varied repertoire were intertwined with a transnational dimension (della Porta 2007). A plurality of networks active on a variety of issues participated in the protests, including in their ranks organizations and activists with experience in previous movements. New communication technologies – first and foremost the Internet – had not only reduced the costs of mobilization, allowing streamlined and flexible structures, but also facilitated reciprocal interaction between different areas and movements. The social forums represented attempts to create open spaces for meetings of different individuals and groups (della Porta 2009b).

Even though previous social movements also typically had a network structure, the global justice movement emphasized, even more than past movements, its reticular character, presenting itself as 'networks of networks'. Its activists were in fact rooted in an extremely dense network of associations, from Catholic to ecologist associations, from social volunteering to trade unions, from the defence of human rights to women's liberation, often with multiple belongings to associations of different types (Andretta et al. 2002, 184; della Porta et al. 2006; della Porta 2009b; see also della Porta and Caiani 2009). So, for instance, 97.6 per cent of participants interviewed at the anti-G8 countersummit in Genoa in 2001 were (or had been) members of at least one type of organization, 80.9 per cent were (or had been) members of at least two, 61 per cent of at least three, 38.1 per cent of at least four, 22.8 per cent of at least five, 12.6 per cent of six or more (Andretta et al. 2002, 184). Similar results emerged from survey-based research at the first European Social Forum (ESF), in Florence in 2002 (della Porta et al. 2006), and on

the fourth ESF in Athens in 2006 (della Porta 2009b; della Porta and Caiani 2009).

The formation of trans-thematic and transnational networks came about 'in action', along with a widening of protest repertoires (della Porta 2008b). From the end of the 1990s, demonstrations against the Millennium Round of the WTO in Seattle sparked a new wave of 'street politics' on global themes. Mass demonstrations had often been called for during countersummits defined as arenas of 'international level initiatives organized during official summits and on the same themes albeit from a critical point of view, raising awareness through protest and information with or without contacts with the official version' (Pianta 2001, 35). Millions of people joined the international day of protest against the war in Iraq on 15 February 2003 (della Porta and Diani 2004; Waalgrave and Rucht 2010).

The campaigns against land mines or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), the UN-sponsored world conferences and Jubilee 2000 were important occasions for organizational networking, aggregating the more institutionalized organizations – such as development and human rights NGOs, religious and non-religious charities, labour unions and large environmental associations – that had already collaborated in, among other movements, the previous waves of pacifist mobilization. Similarly, the European Marches against Unemployment and Exclusion, the actions in solidarity with the Zapatistas and the Intergalactic meetings (in 1996 in Chiapas and 1997 in Spain), as well the later demonstrations in Prague against the IMF and WB and in Nice and Gothenburg against the EU, constituted moments of interaction among the more radical groups and the critical unions.

Group interviews with activists show a pride in this 'plurality of the movement', whose strength was in fact located in its capacity to network associations and individuals, bringing together

> many situations…that in previous years, especially the last ten, did not come together enough, met around big issues for very short periods, always with a highly emotional impetus, while instead this is, I feel, the first experience I have had in such an alive way of contact and networking where the fact of being in contact and in a network is one of the most important factors…this is the positive thing…the value of the Social Forums. (cited in Del Giorgio 2002, 89)

The network was thus defined as more than the sum of its groups: for it is in the network that the activist 'gets to know people, forms relationships, becomes a community' (2002, 92). As another activist observed,

'A word I feel is key to a different way of doing politics is the concept of relations . . . the ability to create and amplify relationships counts more than the ability to send them down from above' (in 2002, 252).

The network logic facilitated the bridging of various issues as well. In different countries the different concerns of different movements were connected in a lengthy, although not always very visible, process of mobilization (della Porta 2007). The global justice movement developed from protest campaigns around 'broker issues' that tied together concerns of different movements and organizations. In Switzerland, the campaign against the WTO brought together squatters, human rights activists and labour unionists. In France, the struggle against Genetically Modified food linked peasants and ecologists, while the *mouvements de sans* saw the convergence of the critical unions with organizations of the unemployed, *sans-papiers* and homeless. Jubilee 2000 bridged development NGOs with rank-and-file religious groups. In the anti-Maastricht movement in Spain (and later in the '50 years are enough' campaign), ecologists and pacifists met with critical unionists. In Great Britain, opposition to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act was a catalyst for the interaction of travellers, squatters, ravers and environmentalists (and in the campaign against dismissals, dockers encountered – even if occasionally –the Reclaim the Street direct action network).

All this diversity needed spaces of confrontation where not only issues but also frames could be bridged. Countersummits and social forums have been important for the construction and exchange of knowledge. The relevance of communication is further confirmed by the importance assumed in the organization of protest, not only by the Internet but also by connected themes, from copyright to censorship (Milan 2009). Competences in counter-expertise are important characteristics of many more formalized associations, but also of think-tanks and alternative media close to protestors. The movement for global justice has in fact developed actions oriented to sensitizing the public on alternative values and cultures. Networking is facilitated by the so-called campaign approach, which foresees the utilization of various forms of protest and information, by wide networks of organizations and individuals, to attain relatively specific, but symbolically significant, demands.

The trans-thematic and transnational nature of the movement constitutes a novelty in an environment which appeared to be characterized by movements' specializations on single themes (from women to the environment, from peace to AIDS). In transnational protests, worries about the environment, women's rights, peace and social inequalities continue as characteristics of the sub-groups or networks involved in the globalization mobilization. The definition of a 'movement of movements' underlines the survival of specific claims, and the non-subordination of

one conflict in relation to others. The multiplicity of bases of reference in terms of class, gender, generation, race and religion appears to have led to identities that are, if not weak, certainly composite. In different campaigns, countersummits and social forums, fragments of diverse cultures – secular and religious, radical and reformist, of young and old generations – have tangled together in a wider discourse that has taken the theme of social (and global) injustice as its glue, yet at the same time leaving plenty of space for deepening discussions of different themes. At the transnational level, local and global concerns have been connected to values such as equality, justice, human rights and environmental protection.

Platforms, forums, coalitions and networks have allowed reciprocal knowledge and, often, understanding. Even while pluralism and diversity have been much emphasized, in the movement's discourse a *master frame* has developed around the claim for global justice and another democracy. In parallel, the enemy has been identified in neoliberal globalization, which characterized not only the policies of international financial institutions (the WB, the IMF and the WTO) but also the political choices of national right-wing parties and also left-wing governments. These actors are considered responsible for the growing social injustice, and its negative effects on women, the environment, the global South, etc. Next to social injustice, a common base is the meta-discourse on the search for new forms of democracy. The traditional legitimation of democracy through electoral accountability has been challenged by the development of global governance, but also by the perceived decline in state intervention as a consequence of a global economy. Perceived as hostile to the movement's claims, parties have also been criticized as the carriers of a conception of politics (and democracy) that is limited and exclusive. Distrust of parties reflects the perception shared by some activists that 'politics from below' is a viable alternative to the conception of politics as an activity for professionals defended by the parties (della Porta et al. 2006). The critique of parties – especially those potentially closest to movements – regards their conception of politics even more than their concrete political choices. Stigmatized as the carriers of an idea of professional politics, parties are seen as, at best, interested in electorally exploiting the movement, all the while denying its political credentials. In focus groups, most criticized is the reference made by party leaders to

> a *pre-political movement* asking to be listened to and then translated into a political project and programme by those doing politics in the institutional sense of the word, from local institutions to parliaments, and this is extremely dangerous...the very fact that many insist on saying that this is a youth movement...I remember an interview with

> the mayor of Florence after the Social Forum in which he said 'one cannot ask these young people to express political projects, it is up to us to interpret them'. (cited in della Porta 2007)

This movement's characteristics fuelled in fact a search for alternative conceptions of democracy. Focusing attention on the global justice movement, the research project Demos (Democracy in Europe and the Mobilization of the Society) – covering six European countries (Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain) as well as the transnational level – showed the increasing relevance of the debate on democracy, inside and outside the movement, confirming, however, that various conceptions of democracy coexist, stressing different democratic qualities (see chapter 1).

Debates tended to develop within the movements on the two main dimensions I used to construct the general typology of models of democracy (see chapter 1). First, participatory conceptions that stress inclusiveness of equals were contrasted with those based upon the delegation of power to representatives. A second dimension referred instead to majoritarian versus deliberative visions, diverging in the decision-making methods. Deliberative aspects have been particularly embedded and valorized by the *method of consensus* that poses an even stronger emphasis on the decision-making process per se than on the outcome of such a process. In the various parts of the Demos research (see della Porta and Reiter 2006; della Porta and Mosca 2006), we have in fact used a typology that crosses these two dimensions of participation (referring to the degree of delegation of power, inclusiveness and equality) and deliberation (referring to the decision-making model and to the quality of communication).

The analysis of the fundamental documents of 244 social movement organizations that have participated in the Social Forum process in Europe has shown that most of them made reference there to democratic values (della Porta 2009b). Participation is one of the most widespread references, mentioned by one-third of the organizations as an internal value and by more than half as a general value. This applies not only to the pure forms of social movement organizations; trade unions and left-wing political parties also referred to participation as a founding principle. However, additional values emerged that specify (and differentiate among) the conceptions of participatory democracy. References to limits to delegation, the rotation principle, mandated delegation, and criticism of delegation as internal organizational values were present although not dominant (each mentioned by between 6 and 11 per cent of our groups). Non-hierarchical decision making was often mentioned (16 per cent), and inclusiveness was even more (21 per cent and 29 per cent). If we

group the positive responses on critique of delegation, limitation of delegation, non-hierarchical decision making, and mandated delegation into an index of non-hierarchical decision making, 23.4 per cent had positive scores. Significantly, representative values were mentioned instead by only 6 per cent of our organizations.

With the aim of identifying the visions of democracy, inside and outside the movement, in this document analysis we narrowed them down to four basic conceptions (or models) of internal democracy (della Porta and Reiter 2006). In the *associational model*, the assembly is composed of delegates and – even in those cases in which the assembly consists of all members and is defined as the main decision-making organ – everyday politics is managed by an executive committee; decisions are taken by majority vote. When, according to the selected documents, delegates make decisions on a consensual basis, we speak of *deliberative representation*. When decisions are made by an assembly that includes all members, and no executive committee exists, we have an *assembleary model*, when decisions are taken by a majority; and *deliberative participation*, if consensus and communicative processes based on reason are mentioned together with participation as important values (see table 4.1).

As we can see in table 4.1, half of the 212 organizations we sampled support an associational conception of internal decision making.[1] This means that, at least formally, a model based upon delegation and the majority principle is quite widespread, and indeed expected, given the presence in the global justice movement of parties, unions and NGOs.

Table 4.1 Typology of democratic conception

		Participation	
		High	*Low*
Consensus	Low	Associational model (%) Visions: 59.0 Practices: 35.6 Norms: 19.1	Assembleary model (%) Visions: 14.6 Practices: 2.5 Norms: 35.9
	High	Deliberative representation (%) Visions: 15.6 Practices: 32.7 Norms: 8.2	Deliberative participation (%) Visions: 10.8 Practices: 29.2 Norms: 36.7

Visions (no. of cases 212), practices (no. of cases 184), norms (no. of cases 1055).
Source: della Porta 2009a, 72.

This is, however, only part of the picture: we classified 14.6 per cent of the organizations as assembleary since, in the documents we analysed, they stressed the role of the assembly in a decision-making process that remained tied to aggregative methods such as voting or bargaining. In an additional quarter (26.4 per cent) of the organizations, the deliberative element came to the fore, with 15.6 per cent of organizations applying consensus within an associational type (deliberative representation) and 10.8 per cent applying it within an assembleary model (deliberative participation).

Consensus is even more prominent if we move, as we did in another part of our research, from the written documents to the accounts of movement practices by representatives of the organizations (della Porta and Mosca 2006). Acknowledging that constitutions and written documents are not always followed in everyday activities, and that praxes are often different from norms, we complemented the information obtained on organizational ideology with interviews on organizational functioning, as perceived and reported by their speakers.[2] In this part we operationalized the dimension of *participation/delegation* by distinguishing groups characterized by a central role of the assembly in their decision-making processes from all other types of organizations (executive-centred, leader-centred, mixed models and so on). On the dimension *deliberation / majority voting*, we separated the groups employing consensus from those employing different decisional methods (simple majority, qualified majority, mixed methods and so on). Here as well, our research testifies to the presence of various types of organizational decision making, confirming that social movements are characterized by 'considerable variation in organizational strength within and between movements' (Klandermans 1989: 4).

Of the 202 out of the overall 212 cases that we could classify, almost one third fall into the deliberative representative category, where the principle of consensus is mixed with the principle of delegation. Another 36 per cent adopt an associational model that is based on majoritarian voting and delegation, while about 30 per cent of the groups bridge a consensual decision-making method with the principle of participation (refusal of delegation to an executive committee); only 2.5 per cent of the selected organizations mix the principle of participation with majoritarian decision making (assembleary model). The fact that interviewees tended to stress consensus more than the organizational documents can be explained in various ways: respondents might be more up-to-date and accurate in describing the actual decision making in their groups, or they may want to give a more positive image of decision making in their organizations. Whatever the explanation, norms of consensus appeared as very much supported by the movement organizations.

Different models of democracy followed from organizational traditions, age, size and self-conception. Reference to consensus was particularly frequent in organizations with smaller memberships and budgets, as well as no paid staff and more reliance on the assembly. There was also some coherence between the search for consensus and horizontal organizational forms, as indicated by the rejection of an executive, the high value given to the assembly, the explicit critique of delegation. Consensual methods were, finally, more widespread in the younger organizations, as well as in the transnational ones (della Porta 2009b).

Similar results also emerged from an analysis of the normative models of democracy proposed by the activists we interviewed at the ESF in Athens (see again table 4.1), although with a greater emphasis on participation. In that sample, the rate of support for associational models of democracy further declined to one-fifth of our population (N = 1,055), and the percentage for deliberative representation reached only 8.2 per cent. From a normative point of view, indeed, the ESF participants appeared equally attracted by either assembleary or deliberative-participative models (about one-third each). Participation and deliberation were considered, therefore, as main values for 'another democracy'.

At the individual level, together with experiences of participation in protest events, at home and abroad, subjective degrees of identification with the global justice movement influenced attitudes towards democracy. In particular, those who identify more with the movement expressed more support for those values that emerged as particularly relevant for the movement organizations – inclusiveness, participation and consensus. Crossing degrees of identification with normative conceptions of democracy, our analysis indicates a statistically significant correlation: with the growth of identification, support for consensual and participatory decision making increased (see table 4.2). Here too, however, the correlation is not particularly strong, indicating quite widespread support for the more participatory and consensual values.

In many of the groups linked to the global justice movement, the positive reference to consensual decision making (often embodied in organizational principles) was therefore quite innovative. Several organizations declared they wanted 'to take decisions that reach the maximum consensus' (RCADE 2001); were 'committed to the principle of consensus decision making' (Indymedia 2002) and experimented with 'an organizational path that favors participation, reaching consensus and achieving largely shared decisions' (Torino Social Forum 2008). In its self-presentation, Attac Germany (2001) stated that the organization is 'a place, where political processes of learning and experiences are made possible; in which the various streams of progressive politics discuss with each other, in order to find a common capacity of action together'.

Table 4.2 Identification with GJM by activists' normative models of democracy

Normative models of democracy	*Identification with GJM, %*			*Total number*	*% enough or much identified*	*Mean (value 0–3)*
	None or little	*Enough*	*Much*			
Associational	21.0	43.0	36.0	200	79.0	2.13
Deliberative representative	12.8	57.0	30.2	86	87.2	2.16
Assembleary	13.7	48.8	37.5	371	86.3	2.23
Deliberative-participative	9.1	49.1	41.8	383	90.9	2.32
Overall %	13.4	48.5	38.2	1,040	86.6	2.24
Measures of association	Cramer's V = .10**				Cr.'s V = .12 ***	ETA = .11**

Source: della Porta 2008a: 76.

Supporting this type of conception, in its 'Criteri di fondo condivisi' (2001), Rete Lilliput defined the 'method of consensus' as a process in which, if a proposal does not receive total consensus from all participants, further discussion ensues in order to find a compromise with those who disagree. If disagreements persist and involve a numerically large minority, the project is not approved (Tecchio, quoted in Veltri 2003, 14). According to the network Dissent!:

> Consensus normally works around a proposal, which, hopefully, is submitted beforehand so that people have time to consider it. The proposal is presented and any concerns are discussed. The proposal is then amended until a consensus is reached. At the heart of this process are principles that include trust, respect, recognition that everyone has the right to be heard and to contribute (i.e. equal access to power), a unity of purpose and commitment to that purpose and a commitment to the principle of co-operation. At these gatherings we seek to reach consensus on most issues, although this is not always possible and often there is no need to reach 'one decision' at the end of a useful discussion. (Dissent! – A Network of Resistance against the G8 2008)

Among the groups most committed to experimentation with consensual methods, specific rules were developed to facilitate horizontal communication and conflict management. Consensus tools included 'good facilitation, various hand signals, go-rounds and the breaking up into small and larger sized groups. These should be "explained by the facilitator at the start of each discussion"' (Dissent! – A Network of Resistance against the G8 2008). Facilitators or moderators were used (for instance, for the Italian Rete Lilliput or the British Rising Tide), with the aim of including all points of view in the discussion as well as implementing rules for good communication, going from the (limited) time allocated to each speaker to the maintenance of a constructive climate (della Porta et al. 2006, 53–4).

Attention to consensual methods as a way to improve communication resonated with the widespread idea of the movement as building public spaces for dialogue. This is illustrated, for instance, by the Spanish Derechos para Tod@s (n.d.), which stressed:

> our goal is to contribute to the spreading of debates, not by narrowing spaces, but by opening them to all those who are critical of this globalization that causes exploitation, repression and/or exclusion…No alternative to the current system can be regarded as the 'true' one. That is, we want to set up a space to reflect and to fight for a social and civil transformation. (Jiménez and Calle 2006, 278)

From the normative point of view, the assumption was that 'The practices of consensus-seeking strengthen bonds, trust, communication and understanding. On the other hand, decision-making based on voting creates power blocks, power games, and hegemonic strategies, excluded and included, hierarchies, thus reproducing the same kind of social relations we are opposing' (London Social Forum 2003).

Consensus was, however, framed differently by different organizations. In a *plural conception of consensus through high-quality dialogue*, which often characterized network organizations, consensus was considered as mainly 'functional for safeguarding the unitary–plural nature of the movement as well as members' demands for individual protagonism' (Fruci 2003, 169). In networks and campaigns, the consensual method was advocated as enabling work on what united the groups, notwithstanding their differences. In this sense, in organizational networks, consensual principles were presented as resonating with a respect for the autonomy of the individual organizations that were part of the federation.

The meaning of consensus was bridged here with a positive emphasis on internal diversity. This was the case, for instance, for Attac Italia, which in its Charter of Intent stipulated that it 'wants to be a democratic and open association, transversal and as much as possible pluralistic, composed of diverse individuals and social forces . . . it wants to contribute to the renovation of democratic political participation and favours the development of new organizational forms of civil society'. As its national assembly stated, 'We want to continue to build shared associational forms, based on participation and the consensual method, fit for letting diversities meet and work together and develop democratic decisional practices. Because we consider democracy as the most important element of the common good and we want, all together, to re-appropriate it' (ATTAC Italia 2007).

Participation and the method of consensus are, in this sense, considered as the main expressions of democracy 'as a common good'. In particular – but not only – for networks, consensus resonated with an emphasis on the respect for differences, bridged with calls for inclusiveness, within the conception of the organization as an open space – a metaphor often used by our groups. For instance, the Turin Social Forum (2008) presented itself as 'an open place in which even individuals, as well as the organized actors, can meet and work together; a space in which internal differences are accepted and given a positive value'.

A different viewpoint is a *communitarian conception of consensus as collective agreement*, expressed by groups with a deep-rooted 'assembleary' tradition. For instance, the British Wombles declared:

> We have no formal membership; all meetings are weekly & open to anyone who wishes to attend. These meetings are where any & all decisions concerning the group are made. The politics we espouse are those we wish to live by – self-organization, autonomy, direct democracy & direct action against the forces of coercion and control…As such, no individual can speak on behalf of the Wombles as all group decisions are made collectively based on consensus. (Wombles 2008)

In this area, consensus resonated with anti-authoritarian, horizontal relations. Accordingly, the French Réseau Intergalactique, which developed around the construction of a self-managed space at the anti-G8 summit in Evian, stated in its Charter: 'there is no dominant voice. It is what we call a horizontal way of functioning: there is no small group that decides. Thus, there is not on the one side thinking heads and on the other side small hands and feet. The aim is to facilitate the integration of each in the discussion and decision-making.'

Consensual methods are here adopted within a prefigurative vision of organizational life. They are linked to the aim of realizing social changes not only though political decisions, but through deep transformations in everyday life and individual attitudes. 'For it is impossible to realize a social transformation through merely political decisions. The activities have to relate to the needs and desires of the people, so that anti-militarism can bring about alternative lifestyles and struggle in a positive way. This would develop by consensus, understood as a process that aims at reaching the agreement which is most satisfactory for all' (Alternativa antimilitarist – MOC.). So, for the London Social Forum, the use of the method of consensus was also linked to the group's self-definition, reflecting in particular the preference for prefigurative politics over effectiveness.

Indignados, *Occupy and deliberative democracy*

A focus on deliberation became all the more central in the most recent movements against austerity. The Arab Spring could be read as yet another testimony that democracy is becoming 'the only game in town'. The effects of the wave of protest that brought about democratization processes in an area of the world traditionally defined as dominated by resilient authoritarian regimes certainly contributed to challenging the idea of a clash of civilization based on the incompatibility of Islam with democracy. Moreover, these protests have shown that, even in brutal dictatorships, citizens do mobilize, and not only on material issues. Interpreting the Arab Spring as merely a call for representative

institutions will, however, be misleading. The protestors in the Tahrir Square were calling for freedom, but also practising other conceptions of democracy that are, if not opposed to, certainly different from liberal representative democracy, resonating instead with ideas of participatory and deliberative democracy.

Not by chance, when the ideas of the Arab Spring spread from the MENA (Mediterranean and North-African) region to Europe, they were adopted and adapted by social movements that indeed challenged (neo) liberal democracy. Austerity measures in Iceland, Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain were in fact met with long-lasting, mass protests. Directly inspired by the Arab Spring, the Spanish and then Greek *indignados* occupied hundreds of squares in order not only to protest against austerity measures in their respective countries, but also to ask for more, and a different democracy. 'Democracia real ya!' was a main slogan of the Spanish *indignados* protestors who occupied the Puerta del Sol in Madrid, the Placa de Catalunya in Barcelona and hundreds of places in the rest of the country from 15 May 2011, calling for different social and economic policies and, indeed, greater citizen participation in their formulation and implementation. Before this example in Spain, between late 2008 and early 2009, self-convened citizens in Iceland had demanded the resignation of the government and its delegates in the Central Bank and financial authorities, accusing them of collusion with big business. In Portugal, a demonstration arranged via Facebook in March 2011 brought more than 200,000 young Portuguese people to the streets in opposition to their country's political class. The *indignados* protests in turn inspired similar mobilizations in Greece, where opposition to austerity measures had already been expressed in occasionally violent forms. In both countries, the corruption of the government was a central issue of protest, and it remained so when protest moved, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, to the US and beyond.

The very meaning of democracy was, in all these protests, contested. There is no doubt that the current crisis is a crisis of democracy as well as, or even more than, a financial crisis. As mentioned, neoliberalism was – and, in fact, is – a political doctrine that brings with it a minimalist vision of the public and democracy. It foresees not only the reduction of political interventions oriented to balancing the market (with consequent liberalization, privatization and deregulation) but also an elitist conception of citizen participation (electoral only, and therefore occasional and potentially distorted) and an increased level of influence for lobbies and strong interests. The evident challenges in a liberal conception and practice of democracy have, in this case as well, been accompanied by the (re)emergence of different ones, elaborated and practised by – among others – movements that in Europe today are

opposing a neoliberal solution to the financial crisis, accused of further depressing consumption and thereby jeopardizing any prospects for development (whether sustainable or not).

Accused by the centre-left parties of being apolitical and populist (not to mention without ideas) and by the right of being extreme leftists, these movements have in reality placed what Claus Offe (1985) long ago defined as the 'meta-question' of democracy at the centre of their action. The activists' discourse on democracy is articulate and complex, taking up some of the principal criticisms of the ever-decreasing quality of liberal democracies, but also some proposals inspired by democratic qualities other than representation. These proposals resonate with (more traditional) participatory visions, but also with new deliberative conceptions that underline the importance of creating multiple public spaces, egalitarian but plural.

Above all, protestors criticize the ever more evident shortcomings of representative democracies, mirroring a declining trust in the ability of parties to channel emerging demands in the political system. Beginning from Iceland, and forcefully in Spain and Portugal, indignation is addressed towards the corruption of the political class, seen both in bribes (the dismissal of corrupt people from public institutions is called for) in a concrete sense, and in the privileges granted to lobbies and common interests shared by public institutions and economic (often financial) powers. It is to this corruption – that is, the corruption of democracy – that much of the responsibility for the economic crisis, and the inability to manage it, are attributed.

Beyond the condemnation of corruption, the slogan 'they don't represent us' also expresses a deeper criticism of the degeneration of liberal democracy, linked in turn to elected politicians' failure to 'do politics'. The latter are in fact often united in spreading a narrative suggesting that no alternatives are available to cuts in budget and deregulation – a narrative that protestors do not accept. In Spain in particular, the movement asked for proportional reforms to the electoral law, denouncing the reduced weight given to citizen participation inherent to the majority system, where the main political parties tend to form cartels and electors see their choices limited (for this reason, equal weight for each vote was called for). Also in other countries, among other proposals for restoring the importance of citizens are those that call for direct democracy, and which give electors the possibility to express their opinions on the biggest economic and social choices. In this vein, greater possibilities for referendums are called for, with reduced quorums (for signatures and electors) and increased thematic areas subject to decisions through referendums.

Actually existing democracies are also criticized for having allowed the abduction of democracy, not only by financial powers, but also by

international organizations, above all the IMF and the EU. Pacts for the Euro and stability, imposed in exchange for loans, are considered as anti-constitutional forms of blackmail, depriving citizens of their sovereignty. Starting in 2011 with the petition Another Road for Europe (www.anotherroadforeurope.org) numerous reforms have been suggested at EU level in order to gain control of financial markets, for example through the introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax, political supervision of banks, the removal of the public role for (private) rating agencies and the creation of public ones, as well as higher taxes on capital, and strategies for economic growth (see also Pianta 2012, chapter 4). More transnational democracy is additionally called for (see chapter 6, this volume).

But in recent mobilizations there is also another vision of democracy, which normative theory has recently defined as 'deliberative democracy', and which the global justice movement has elaborated and diffused through the Social Forums as consensus democracy. This conception of democracy is prefigured by the very same *indignados* who occupy squares, transforming them into public spheres made up of 'normal citizens'. It is an attempt to create high-quality discursive democracy, recognizing the equal rights of all (not only delegates and experts) to speak (and to be respected) in a public and plural space, open to discussion and deliberation on themes that range from situations suffered to concrete solutions to specific problems, from the elaboration of proposals on common goods to the formation of solidarity and emerging identities.

Participatory and deliberative forms of democracy were in fact called for and experienced during these protests. In Spain, as elsewhere, open public spaces facilitated the creation of intense ties. Postill (2012) vividly recalls:

> the strong sense of connection to the strangers I spoke to during that fleeting moment…Under normal circumstances – say, on an underground train – we would have found no reason to talk to one another, but the present situation was anything but normal. The 15-M movement had brought us together, and the sense of 'contextual fellowship'…cutting across divides of age, class and race was very powerful.…Many participants later reported a range of psychosomatic reactions such as goose bumps (*carne de gallina*) or tears of joy. I felt as if a switch had been turned on, a gestalt switch, and I had now awakened to a new political reality. I was no longer merely a participant observer of the movement, I was the movement.

The assemblies in the encampments were described by activists as 'primarily a massive, transparent exercise in direct democracy'. So, they

declared, 'We feel part of the movement because we contribute to creating it, spreading it, growing it; Internet user and indignado are one and the same person' (@galapita and @hibai 2011, cited in Postill 2012).

Similarly, when the Occupy Wall Street movement started in the United States, quickly spreading to thousands of American cities, the concerns voiced by the protestors addressed the financial crisis, but even more the failure of democratic governments to live up to the expectations of their citizens. The occupations represented not only occasions to protest but also experimentations with participatory and deliberative forms of democracy. Called for by the magazine *Adbuster*, the protest started with a few hundred activists converging on Manhattan on 17 September 2011. A previous protest event had been staged on 2 August by the city group New York Against the Budget Cuts. As a journalist recalled:

> it began as an old-school rally with speeches by lifelong local activists. . . . the dedication was admirable, the rhetoric was antique. We must 'fight back by any means necessary,' said dreadlocked Larry Hales of NYABC. . . . Then hot-tempered Greek student Georgia Sagri shook things up. She took the mic, saying, 'This is not the way that a general assembly is happening! This is a rally!' She continued to blurt out criticisms and piss people off. But a chunk of them, mostly students but also middle-aged folk, joined her in a circle for a radical-consensus general assembly – a mainstay process in countries like Greece and Spain. Then it became something new (Captain 2011)

The style that started to dominate the Occupy Wall Street movement included an emphasis on respect and inclusivity. Moderators tried to assure a racial and gender balance. A consensual, horizontal decision-making process developed – sponsored by the young generations (two-thirds of whom had voted for Obama) and global justice movement activists – based on the continuous formation of small groups that then reconvened in the larger assembly.

The occupation became much entrenched with the very identity of the movement, not just, as for other social movements, an action form among others. Occupied spaces were in fact 'vibrant sites of human interaction that modeled alternative communities and generated intense feelings of solidarity' (Juris 2012, 268). Evictions took away these vital spaces, running the risk of transforming the camps into a sort of fetish, difficult to keep, but also difficult to replace. The clearing of the occupied places by the police in fact created important fractures among activists – for example, between the community of those who were physically occupying and the various circles of those participating virtually and/or intermittently.

Conclusion

Deliberative conceptions of democracy go beyond the traditional criticism of liberal democracy as excluding – or not including sufficiently – the citizens, stressing instead the importance for the very interests and/or identities that confront each other to be democratically constructed. Democracy is not only a way of counting votes, but especially a way to form preferences through inclusive and high-quality dialogues. If, in their initial versions, deliberative theorists maintained an institutional focus, other scholars have linked participatory and deliberative aspirations. Recent movements, to varying degrees, have done the same, stressing the need to form multiple and open public spheres, to allow the participation of various and plural actors.

Calls for and prefiguration of deliberative democracy follow a vision of democracy profoundly different to that which legitimates representative democracy based on the principle of majority decisions. Democratic quality here is in fact measured by the possibility of elaborating ideas within discursive, open and public arenas, where citizens play an active role in identifying problems, but also in elaborating possible solutions. It is the opposite of an unquestioning acceptance of democracy of the prince, where the professional elected to govern must not be disturbed – at least until fresh elections are held. But it is also the opposite of a democracy of experts, legitimized by the output, for which European institutions have long called. If, especially after the Maastricht Treaty and the introduction of the Euro, calls for this kind of legitimization – which appeals to the capacity to produce, apolitically and on the basis of specialist skills and economic successes – have gradually reduced, it now seems to crumble entirely before the disastrous results of European policies in the recent financial crisis. In protests against the crisis (and the ineffective and unjust responses to it), protestors have started to prefigure, in occupied public spaces, different conceptions of democracy, based on participation and deliberative values.