

## *Abstracts*

### **Participation in institutions: conceptualizing experiments with participatory and deliberative democracy**

*by Donatella della Porta*

Deliberative and participatory forms in public decision making have been experimented with in various contexts and, especially, much discussed as possible bridging arenas between institutions and the citizens. In this article the author, referring to existing studies, develops a conceptualization of the different dimensions along which to assess the quality of experiments with deliberative and participatory democracy. The degree of inclusiveness, the quality of the discourse, and the decisional power devolved to these emerging institutions (empowerment) varies in fact significantly in the different forms (juries, assemblies, participatory budgeting) they take. Looking at potential explanations for the qualities (and the limits) of these democratic experiments, attention has been focused especially on two dimensions: the various institutional designs and the different promoters of these experiments. In fact, two different typologies seem to emerge according to the origin of the process, either from above, promoted by institutions or from below, promoted by social movement organizations.

Keywords: Social Movements; Participation; Deliberative Democracy; Empowerment; Decision Making.

### **Models of collective action: any distinctiveness for social movements?**

*by Mario Diani*

This article approaches the participation-social movements link from a peculiar perspective. First, it overlooks the conventional focus on individuals, on individual traits' being taken as the main explanatory factor for individual political behavior, and on a view of collective action as the aggregation of individual actions; in contrast, it

privileges an approach assessing how individual actions combine in peculiar collective patterns. Second, the article parts company with the traditional identification between actors and individuals, which has inspired so many analyses of participation, and focuses instead on organizational – especially, inter-organizational – dynamics. The article suggests this shift to be a necessary step in order to capture the distinctiveness of social movements as social processes.

Keywords: Social Movements; Social Networks; Participation; Social Movement Organizations; Coalitions.

### **Political participation and associations**

*by Roberto Biorcio*

Politics arouses few positive feelings, substituted by disillusion, disenchantment, indifference, and often by rage against parties and political men. The willingness to commit and to participate does not fall down, but it takes mainly other roads, taking distance from political parties (looking at voluntary sector, associations, social movements). In Italy, these tendencies become already to arise in the '80s, with the growth of social participation at the expense of other forms of participation. The importance of social associations oriented at public goods production has increased in the last twenty years while the influence of political parties has further decreased. In this article the main purpose is to develop a reflection on the relation between associations and participation. We ask if specific characters of participation to various association networks, if interpersonal boundaries, and if cultures developed within this field could influence political attitudes and various political participation forms, trying to understand synergies and tensions between them (and how these have been changed during the years). The importance of these questions is far-back well known, at least from the publication of the *Démocratie en Amérique* by Tocqueville, which has underlined the consequences of associations on American political life. However, the forms of the relation between participation and associations are different in modern democracies, and they have changed in the last decades.

Keywords: Associations; Collateralism; Conflict; Anti-Politics; Criticism.

### **Public policies and new forms of participation**

*by Luigi Pellizzoni*

In the field of public policies innovation seems today largely related to a number of “participatory” models and experiences. Yet on the one side the notion of participation is elusive. On the other side public policies always involve a plurality of actors, being thus participatory by definition. To understand the features of new participatory processes, therefore, a suitable interpretive equipment is mandatory. The article aims at contributing

to this purpose. It first reflects on the concept of participation and how it can be fruitfully applied to public policies. Second, it outlines the background of new participatory processes and elaborates on the notion of publicness. Third, it develops a typology that may help analyse participation in the field of public policies. Some significant examples are discussed accordingly. Fourth, it deals with an issue the implications of which for participatory innovation are of major relevance: how the different approaches connect the policy actors and their public. The conclusion presents some possible evolutionary paths.

Keywords: Public Policies; Corporate Social Responsibility; Deliberative Arenas; Political Consumerism; Urban Protest.

### **Inside the crisis of “party on the ground”**

*by Francesco Raniolo*

The aim of this article is to analyze the transformations of the Italian parties, using Katz and Mair’s approach of the three organizational faces of parties. According to the two authors the crisis of the parties exists, it is characterized as selective: it specifically concerns the “party on the ground”, but not in central office or in public office. Rather, today’s parties seem more and more centralized and centered on the State. The article wants to verify the existence of the crisis on the ground from the point of view of the middle-level élites (the delegates to the Congresses) of the main Italian parties: Rc, Pdc, Ds, Dl-Margherita, Udeur, Udc and Fi. The article thus examines delegates’ commitment, their “social capital” and their attitudes toward the party organization. From the used data set it emerges that the intra-party power is not only in the control of the institutions, but, rather, it also concentrates in the border between the “party in central” and “in public office”. Besides, for the sub-leaders the “party on the ground” is not a passive and declining aspect of political parties, but it rather constitutes a strategic element to activate, even with ad hoc policies *ad hoc* (as primary election).

Keywords: Political Participation; Political Parties; Italian Political System; Social Capital; Political Organization.

### **Gender identity and political representation**

*by Bianca Beccalli*

The occasion for the article is the public debate around the decline of women’s participation in the political process in Italy since the mid 1990’s and during the following decade; the debate has addressed the reasons of the phenomenon, as well as the issue of whether and how to contrast the trend. The thesis of women’s “natural” distance from formal democratic politics has emerged as an influential point of view in the debate, shared by scholars and social actors from different backgrounds, such as a number of feminists, neo-liberal theorists, and religious neo-conservatives. According to this point

of view, the marginal position of women in politics, and in the positions of power in general, is due to their own choices, to their “preferences”. Preference theory, with its essentialist overtones, is a main polemical target of the article. In order to denaturalize the relationship between gender identity and political participation, the Italian case is examined in a historical perspective, and it is compared to other national cases; also the different national strategies of promotion of women are considered. The historical and international variations are remarkable, and call for- historical and sociological explanations. In the background of the article lay these general questions: a) within the realm of politics, different modes of political participation have to be considered: participatory democracy and representative democracy are two poles which regard the whole range of democratic activities, but which are particularly relevant to the fluctuating participation of women. b) How much is “politics” special in promotion of marginal groups? Different social areas, such as the sphere of work, show patterns of marginalisation of vertical and horizontal segregation, and are possible targets of positive actions. c) The “justification” of the need of women’s presence in representative democracy as some specific characteristics, which the article deals with, namely the frame of the equal opportunities approach, the mirror democracy theory, and deficit of democracy approach. The three different perspectives are discussed at the end of the article.

Keywords: Women’s Participation; Feminism; Essentialism; Democracy Theory; Segregation.

### **The oscillating participation: the work in the factory**

*by Mimmo Carrieri*

Mimmo Carrieri re-evaluates the various phases of the workers participation within the enterprise system beginning with the tensions connected to the growth of the democratic mechanisms, to the economic world born within the workers movement. The author begins with the consideration that the incisive concepts of trenchant participation must be analytically reconsidered, distinguishing “involvement” and “participation”. Nevertheless the transit to the post-fordism production system characterized by flexibility and organized turbulence appears to be moving in the opposite direction. The growing share of “fluctuating” employment drives workers emotionally further distant from the establishment and less interested in dynamics of decisional involvement. As the author observes, an important step forward would consist in rethinking the rules concerning the bargaining structure, encouraging means of strong participation, therefore joint decision-making between parts. This clearly requires political commitment, bound together with the desire of investing in the participation of the workers, together with a cultural pitch of the interested parties to weave (a trustworthy relationship) relationships based on reliance inside the potentially disrupted dynamics of the molecular capitalism.

Keywords: Workers Participation; Trade Unions; Molecular Capitalism; Post-Fordism; Democracy.