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Can Democracy Be Saved?: Participation, Deliberation and Social Movements, by **Donatella della Porta**. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013. 224pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780745664606.

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Even as the ideal of democracy is nearly universally endorsed, democracy's appropriate institutional forms and social practices seem ever more contested. Whereas representative government with multi-party elections has been largely taken for granted as democracy's canonical institutional form, this is now no longer true. Chinese leaders and scholars speak of democracy "with Chinese characteristics," which means only one party for the foreseeable future.¹ In Latin American countries, especially Brazil, there has been a rebirth and reinvention of democracy in participatory configurations.² In the mature North Atlantic industrialized democracies of the United States and Europe, the canonical form of democracy faces challenges of losses of trust, confidence, and affiliation from below and transnational governance institutions from above.

In her new book, *Can Democracy Be Saved?* Donatella della Porta brings her expansive command of contemporary social movements and democratic institutions to bear on the question of the future of democracy. Hers is a potent combination—more of us

should be attentive to the intersection between these two arenas, and work at that cross roads. The world resists division into these facile intellectual categories, and these categories inhibit our ability to understand the crucial moment that lies before us. This moment presents opportunities, motives, and means for fundamentally reconstructing democracy in less liberal-representative and more directly participatory ways.

Della Porta begins by explaining that liberal democracy has never been the only institutional game in town. Instead, she conceives of democratic institutions along two dimensions: whether public decision-making is delegated to representatives or participatory; and whether decisions are made through (aggregative) majority rule or deliberation (Table 1.1, p. 8).³ These conceptual alternatives to liberal democracy have always existed and even been practiced and advocated from time to time, especially by worker's movements.

There is a second, macro-empirical dimension of the opportunity for institutional transformation. Della Porta argues that the three conditions which made liberal democracy possible and desirable in the twentieth century no longer hold in the twenty-first century. Specifically, liberal democracy depended upon (1) functioning and empowered political parties; (2) the territorial nation-state as the area in which majoritarian decisions govern; and (3) the efficacy of political means, and political equality, to constrain economic and social inequality. Each of these conditions has given way to different realities: the power of national executives, regional and global dynamics, and market forces against state regulation.

Della Porta's relatively brief treatment of these large macro-empirical claims will not settle questions of whether her three conditions have eroded to the point of threatening the stability of liberal democracy itself. But there are many other empirical trends that indicate deep challenges to liberal

¹ See He, Boagang and Ethan Leib, eds. *The Search for Deliberative Democracy in China*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

² See, for example, Wampler, Brian. *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability*. University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2007; and Baiocchi, Gianpaolo. *Militants and Citizens: The Politics of Participatory Democracy in Porto Alegre*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.

³ Elster, Jon. "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory." Ed. Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland. *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Pp. 103–33.

	Majority Vote	Deliberation
Delegation	Liberal Democracy	Liberal Deliberative Democracy
Participation	Radical, Participatory Democracy	Participatory Deliberative Democracy

democracy, while offering a window of opportunity for reconstruction. Chief among these are changes in the hearts and minds of citizens in the industrialized West. In particular, there is little doubt about the broad popular disaffection with political parties and decline of trust in the public institutions of liberal democracy across many societies in the mature North Atlantic democracies, especially among young people.⁴

In the most distinctive and richest part of the book, della Porta uses interview and survey data of almost 250 social movement organizations in Europe (p. 77) to show that those who participate in contemporary social movements organize themselves using an array of participatory and deliberative methods, and they favor less liberal, more participatory and deliberative ideals of democratic governance more generally. Movements from Occupy Wall Street, to the Indignados, to anti-globalization groups have responded to the problems of political inequality and exclusion in their own ranks by developing a range of practices for decision-making that revolve around consensus, more equal communication and participation.⁵

Two open questions remain. Will these social movement organizations muster the capacity for a transformation of not just their internal governance, but for a wider transformation of public institutions? Toward that end, will they be able to spread the enthusiasm for participatory and deliberative democratic forms beyond their own ranks?

⁴ See Dalton, Russell J. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008; and *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*. Revised 1st ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2009.

⁵ For an earlier treatment of these internal democratic innovations, see Polletta, Francesca. *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

If social movements are a principal motive and engine for democratic transformation, it is still the state—with its control of laws, policies, and public institutional designs—that controls the means to reinvent democracy. Della Porta (pp. 168–83) surveys a range of “deliberative experiments” inside public institutions, endorsed by governments. Participatory budgeting in Brazilian cities such as Porto Alegre is the most advanced and prominent of these such experiments.⁶ Beyond participatory budgeting, there has been a wide range of novel experiments and institutions that allows citizens to express themselves, and sometimes exercise influence, over issues as diverse as electoral rules,⁷ fiscal policy, national constitutions,⁸ European priorities, environmental issues, and public services.⁹

These institutional experiments show that sometimes, under some conditions, governments have the desire and wherewithal to implement institutions that embody forms

⁶ See Baiocchi and Wampler, Brian; Abers, Rebecca. “The Partido Dos Trabalhadores and Participatory Governance in Brazil.” *Latin American Perspectives* 23:91 (1996): 35–53; and Baiocchi, Gianpaolo, Patrick Heller, and Marcelo Silva. *Bootstrapping Democracy: Transforming Local Governance and Civil Society in Brazil*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

⁷ Warren, Mark E. and Hilary Pearse. *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly* (Theories of Institutional Design). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁸ See discussions of citizen participation in the recent revisions to the constitutions of Ireland and Iceland. “Ireland Constitutional Convention (2012)” at URL: <http://participedia.net/en/cases/ireland-constitutional-convention-2012> and “Icelandic Constitutional Council (2011)” at URL: <http://participedia.net/en/cases/icelandic-constitutional-council-2011>.

⁹ Fung, Archon and Erik Olin Wright, eds. *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*. London, UK: Verso, 2003.

of democratic governance that reach beyond liberal democracy. So, in this sense at least, the answer to the question that forms the title of della Porta's book, "can democracy be saved?", is yes. A different question, however, concerns what the future holds: will democracy be saved?

No one can claim the answer to that question. However, della Porta's exploration identifies three important barriers to such a wider transformation that merit further examination. The first is state resistance. In an important chapter on conflicts between these new social movements and governments, della Porta explores the emerging new strategies of police and state repression and control. They are, in some ways, as inventive as the democratic innovations she celebrates elsewhere in the book, though with different implications for democracy. More broadly, we can expect those who now enjoy the privileges of executive or representative power to resist the press for different kinds of democracy. Second, far from embracing state-originated democratic innovations, social movement organizations are often indifferent or skeptical (p. 173). Even though this skepticism is sometimes justified, it is difficult to see how democratic reform will achieve depth or scale absent working alliances between social movement organizations and political officials both committed to that goal. Finally, there is in most societies at present a dearth of political leaders who understand and are open to the project of deepening deliberation and participation in their governance institutions. Sometimes, as with the Workers' Party in Brazil at the end of the twentieth century, there is a systematic confluence of interest among officials in the political success and expansion of participatory democracy. Much more often, however, officials' commitments regarding democratic reform are idiosyncratic and episodic. How, then, can public officials be made to take a deeper interest in deepening their democratic institutions? Della Porta argues that social movements are the key, and she is likely correct.

The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools, by **Thomas A. DiPrete** and **Claudia Buchmann**. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013. 277pp. \$37.50 paper. ISBN: 9780871540515.

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The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools is a detailed account of how women have approached and even surpassed men in many different dimensions of educational outcomes over the past three decades. Thomas DiPrete and Claudia Buchmann begin with the premise that while we should celebrate the higher educational outcomes of women, we should also be concerned about signs that men are falling behind, especially during a time when income returns to education have increased. They stipulate that if men had a similar educational profile as women today, their unemployment rates and earnings would be higher than we see today. Their book is also motivated by the concern that young men are somehow suffering in school as academic achievement is linked to femininity and increasingly seen as incompatible with masculinity.

DiPrete and Buchmann have two general goals. First, they detail how the gender gap in educational attainment has changed over the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in the United States. Second, they are interested in analyzing gender differences in educational achievement and attainment from a lifecourse perspective. Their monograph is divided into three sections. Part I focuses on "Trends in the Macro Environment." Part II examines "Academic Performance, Engagement, and Family Influence." Part III analyzes "The Role of Schools." They provide detailed description and analysis of statistics from a wide range of data sources. There are too many results to summarize here, but they show a lot of very useful descriptive tabulations and graphs—especially useful to researchers who are looking for a summary of gender differences in a wide range of educational outcomes. Since