



Can Democracy Be Saved?: Participation, Deliberation and Social Movements

By *Donatella della Porta*



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Financial crisis, economic globalization and the strengthening of neoliberal policies present stark challenges to traditional conceptions of representative democracy. Yet, at the same time, new opportunities are emerging that propose alternative visions for the future of democracy.

In this highly articulate book, *Donatella della Porta* analyses diverse conceptions and practices of participatory and deliberative democracy, building upon recent reflections in normative theory as well as original empirical research. As well as drawing on key historical examples, the book pays close attention to the current revitalization of social movements: the Arab Spring uprisings in processes of democratic transition; the potential of new technologies to develop so-called e-democracy in the Indignados and Occupy Wall Street protests; and proposals for cosmopolitan democracy found in recent campaigns for democratization of the European Union and United Nations. Alongside such social movements, the book also assesses institutional reactions, from the policing of protest to efforts at reform.

This contribution to a critical contemporary debate, by a leading political sociologist and scholar of social movements, will be of great value to students and scholars of political sociology, political science and social movement studies, as well as anyone interested in the shape and development of democracy.

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Editorial Review

Review

"She has certainly conducted the greatest number of inquiries and case studies on the issue, but manages not to lose sight of the theoretical and normative dimensions involved."

Survival

"Very few authors can rival Donatella della Porta's ability to present - in so few pages - such a broad but accurate sweep of developments in contemporary political ideas about democracy. She moves remarkably easily between exposition of classical debates in political thought and empirical research on current new forms of protest."

Colin Crouch, University of Warwick

"The search for a viable conception of democracy has for decades centered on procedural criteria. Rejecting this monism, and drawing on theorists like Habermas, Held, and Pateman, as well as on her own empirical work on social movements, della Porta masterfully proposes and illustrates a fourfold typology of democratic theory - and of democracies - that challenges the canon and opens a debate to compare representational, participatory, and deliberative models of democracy."

Sidney Tarrow, Cornell University, author of *Power in Movement*

"Given the current ailments of capitalist democracies, we all might be inclined to exclaim: "That is a good question!" As an answer, the author provides readers with both a nearly comprehensive inventory of causes for concern as well as her spirited and informative analysis of protest politics, the role of new media, and the potential of new democratic ambitions that are both participatory and deliberative. An overall optimistic message from one of the leading social science experts on movement politics."

Claus Offe, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin

"A timely in-depth investigation into the challenges and opportunities that shape the way we think about democracy. Answering the question of if and how democracy can be saved requires a diligent analysis of the ever-changing meaning of democracy and the distinct democratic qualities of different democratic models. Della Porta's book does just that, providing a solid foundation for beginning to tackle some of the more far-reaching questions regarding democracy."

The International Spectator

About the Author

Donatella della Porta is professor of sociology at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. In 2011, she was the recipient of the Mattei Dogan Prize for distinguished achievements in the field of political sociology.

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