



WHEN NEW POLITICAL PARTICIPATION MEETS TRADITIONAL POLITICS

QUANDO A NOVA PARTICIPAÇÃO POLÍTICA SE ENCONTRA COM A POLÍTICA TRADICIONAL

CUANDO LA NUEVA PARTICIPACIÓN POLÍTICA SE ENCUENTRA CON LA POLÍTICA TRADICIONAL

Ricardo de João Braga¹

Abstract: This article presents and analyzes new forms of political participation and their relationship with the traditional institutions and actors of representative democracy. In spite of the creation of new forms of political participation during the last fifty years, the representative system was until now not able to interact with the new political phenomena in a profitable way. The detachment between these two realities – two distinct groups of actions, actors, organizations and institutions - constitutes important part of the permanent “crisis of democracy”. While this detachment lasts, possible political outputs are the advance of populism and the delegitimization of some classical political institutions, like Parliaments.

Keywords: crisis of democracy; new political participation; legislatures; political representation.

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta e analisa novas formas de participação política e sua relação com as instituições e atores tradicionais da democracia representativa. Apesar da criação de novas formas de participação política durante os últimos cinquenta anos, o sistema representativo até agora não foi capaz de interagir com os novos fenômenos políticos de maneira eficaz. O distanciamento entre essas duas realidades - dois grupos distintos de ações, atores, organizações e instituições - constitui parte importante da permanente “crise da democracia”. Enquanto esse distanciamento perdura, possíveis desdobramentos são o avanço do populismo e a deslegitimação de algumas instituições políticas clássicas, como os Parlamentos.

Palavras-chave: crise da democracia; nova participação política; poder legislativo; representação política.

¹ Economista (UNESP), Mestre em Ciência Política (UnB), Doutor em Ciência Política (IESP-UERJ), atualmente aluno do Mestrado Interdisciplinar Roads to Democracy, na Universidade de Siegen, Alemanha. E-MAIL: ricaflav2010@gmail.com

Resumen: Este artículo presenta y analiza nuevas formas de participación política y su relación con las instituciones tradicionales y los actores de la democracia representativa. A pesar de la creación de nuevas formas de participación política durante los últimos cincuenta años, el sistema representativo hasta ahora no podía interactuar con los nuevos fenómenos políticos de manera rentable. El desapego entre estas dos realidades, dos grupos distintos de acciones, actores, organizaciones e instituciones, constituye una parte importante de la "crisis de la democracia" permanente. Si bien este destacamento perdura, los posibles resultados son el avance del populismo y la deslegitimación de algunas instituciones políticas clásicas, como los parlamentos.

1 Introduction

Democracy can mean a lot of different things: power to the people, participation in power, reasonable living standards for people, freedom in its various forms (HELD, 1996; CUNNINGHAM, 2002). The generally positive perspective associated to the concept of democracy (related to the fulfillment of basic human needs) and the open meaning of this polysemous word confer to it its power, appeal and capacity to survive. In this perspective, democracy must concede that transformations are an inherent feature of itself.

Power, on the other hand, can also take on a lot of different meanings (BOBBIO et. al., 2009; POPITZ, 2017). However, as Machiavelli (1995), Hobbes (1982) and others pointed out, people desire power and it seeks to create stable and predictable relationships. For this reason, there is permanent tension between democracy and power structures, because the former exists under an everlasting drive to transformation, and the latter pursues stability and maintenance of the *status quo*.

This paper addresses new forms of political participation (THEOCHARIS; VAN DETH, 2017) and their relationships with the traditional representative democracy. It is a patent truth that many new forms of action in the political field emerged in the last decades. However, how much of an impact do these new actions exert on the political system, more specifically on representative democracy? Because of less marked boundaries between public and private life today, any personal public action could be understood as political; nevertheless, the representative system has its own methods to produce government, decisions and legitimacy. Therefore, the political intention of a given act might be clear to the agent who takes it, but for the political system it can or cannot be of relevant consequences.

This paper intends to discuss new political movements, attitudes, ideas and their connection with the traditional representative democracy. Representative democracy is a very complex system, which legitimates power and produces government, and recent forms of political action are still emergent phenomena in the political scene. Theocharis and Van Deth (2017) show clearly that the debate on the role of new forms of political participation is not

mature, because even the clear distinction of whether something is political or not is yet to be established. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what is the role of these new forms of political participation in relation to the traditional representative system, how they can influence public policies, politicians, and how they transform the process of legitimation undertaken by the traditional representative system. In fact, the permanent tension between democracy and the structures of formal power comes to life here: contemporary democratic societies foster a lot of transformation, but are the structures of power affected by these novelties? And if they are affected, how does this transformation happen?

In sum, the quality and sustainability of democracy is on discussion, included in ongoing debate about the crisis of democracy. The crisis of democracy can be explained within two lines of concern. The first one is analytical. Since the end of the 18th century, democracies were based on representative systems. United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, and other countries have developed and spread the common standard of democratic regimes all over the world. In general, this system consists of free, fair, and regular elections to choose the rulers of the country. Legislatures and parties proved to be essential parts of the whole democratic system also. Therefore, the weakening of these basic elements would substantiate a crack in the system's core. A recent speech of the former United Nations' General Secretary Kofi Anann is a good example of this classical analysis.

... even in democracy's historic heartlands, we are witnessing a shift in the perceptions and practice of democracy evidenced by ever lower levels of voter participation, falling membership of political parties and declining trust in politicians and institutions. (KOFI ANNAN FOUNDATION, 2017).

Another analytical perspective of the democratic crisis is the actual capacity of the representative system of attending to the needs and desires of the citizens. "The Crisis of Democracy: On the Governability of Democracies" (CROZIER, et. al., 1975) is a standard example of this kind of concern, asserting that an excess of citizen demands undermines the representative system because the state is not capable of fulfilling people's requirements. In a certain way, this second perspective positions itself against the ever-changing essence of democracy, since it tries to limit the actions taken by citizen.

The normative aspect of the democratic crisis treats democracy as a (valuable) end. For people who highly value their freedom, political regimes other than democracy are not ideal, and the advance of autocratic rulers in the last times weakens the future of democracy (for an example of democracy as a valuable end, see Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom (2000), and for information on the current high tide of dictatorships, Freedom House (2018) and Economist Intelligence Unit Limited (2017)).

This paper presents and discusses three groups of evidence. First, the findings of the World Values Survey and their link with new forms of political participation. It is important to stress that new forms of political action emerge from a solid cultural foundation, thus, they are

not a fad, that is, a temporary phenomenon. In fact, the emergence of representative democracy and its institutions occurred in a very different world, from the end of the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century. The conditions of political action, participation, and political values changed immensely since then. The second part of the paper presents and discuss the so-called new forms of political participation. Its main objective is to present and discuss these new procedures, stressing their most important characteristics, because new forms of political participation can be as diverse as revolutionary riots in the Arab Spring and videos uploaded on YouTube protesting against Nestlé and its Kit Kat candy bar. The third part discusses what is representative democracy, its components and how it works. In this moment, we should emphasize that democracy is responsible, on one hand, for building government and decisions on public issues, and, on the other hand, for legitimizing power (or domination) in politics. We dedicate special focus to legislatures, due to their central role in political representation, and, in some countries, their critical role in defining public policies. One final section, as a conclusion, discusses the relationship between traditional elements of representative democracy and new forms of political action.

2 Changing Political Values, Attitudes and Actions

The World Values Survey (here WVS) (WVS, 2018) is a longitudinal and cross-national research based on surveys carried out since the 1980s intending to identify and analyze human beliefs and values. In spite of the fact that the research covers countries in just one or two phases of their historic trajectory, the WVS is able to identify important structural changes in societies, since it is able to compare different countries in different moments of their evolution.

Inglehart and Welzel (2010), the leading researchers in the WVS, state that human values have been changing in many societies. Obviously, one could claim that complexities and transformation processes like those discussed by Inglehart and Welzel occur in democratic, authoritarian, as well as other types of political regimes. However, the main point is the fact that societies do change and produce new forms of political expression and organization.

WVS findings divide human values in two different dimensions: traditional versus secular-rational values; and survival versus self-expression values.

Traditional values esteem “religion, parent-child ties, deference to authority”, while secular-rational values “have the opposite preferences to the traditional values”. Survival values emphasize “economic and physical security”, and they are “linked with a relatively ethnocentric outlook and low levels of trust and tolerance”. On the other hand, self-expression values support “environmental protection, growing tolerance of foreigners, gays and lesbians and gender equality”, besides, they feature “rising demands for participation in decision-making in economic and political life” (WVS, 2018).

According to Inglehart and Welzel, concrete changes in the structure of society, like better living standards and higher level of education, modify values and beliefs, and “they provide the missing link between economic change and democratization.” (2010, 552).

The same authors maintain that the most important changes occur when society shifts from agrarian onto industrialized society. At this moment, survival values decrease because the economy can produce more wealth and survival is from then on taken for granted. However, this wealthier society doesn't necessarily lead to democracy, and fascism, communism and theocracy are possible in this economic situation as well (INGLEHART and WELZEL, 2010, 552).

The other critical moment of change occurs when industrial societies become knowledge societies. In this moment, democracy is the most probable outcome:

Knowledge societies cannot function effectively without highly-educated workers, who become articulate and accustomed to thinking for themselves. Furthermore, rising levels of economic security bring growing emphasis on self-expression values that give high priority to free choice. (INGLEHART and WELZEL, 2010, 552)

What is important to take into account is that this knowledge society produces what the authors call “emancipative values”. Those values are strongly related to lifestyle and are part of a broader process of human empowerment. In relation to politics, they “encourage *nonviolent protest*, even against the risk of repression”, “provide social capital that activates societies, makes publics more self-expressive, and vitalizes civil society.” In fact, the emancipative values change the whole society's political profile, because they “advance ‘entire societies’ civic agency” (WVS, 2018). These emancipative values “change the nature of the desire for democracy”, which turns to focus a more liberal perspective, and produces a more critical assessment of the real democracy by citizens (WVS, 2018).

At this point, the broad perspective of the WVS encounters the established discussion about political culture and participation, a field of inquiry initiated in the 1960s with the classical works of Almond and Verba (1963) and Pye and Verba (1965). These studies undertook their analyses based on an industrial world (Western developed societies), or a world that has begun its transition into a post-industrial/knowledge society.

The classical perspective of civic culture, produced by the works of Almond, Verba and Pye, was created when the emancipatory values were surging, in a moment when the previous set of values was dominant. Dalton and Welzel (2014) considered the ensuing literature produced after the 1960s and the research on values carried out by the WVS. Then, they summarized both extremes of this trajectory as the “allegiant model of citizenship” and the “assertive mode of citizenship” (p. 10-11), a transformation that encompasses a substantial modification in the way people understand democracy and their role within it.

In relation to gradation of values, allegiant citizens esteem the outputs of the political

system, especially order and security. Assertive citizens, on the other hand, value input, emphasizing voice and participation – emancipative, self-expressive, individualistic values are central to this group. In regard to authority, allegiant citizens show deference to it in various contexts. On the contrary, assertive citizens don't defer to authority. The former group trusts institutions; the latter distrusts them. Allegiant citizens support democratic principles and democratic practice, while assertive citizens support only its principles; therefore, the first group is satisfied with democracy as it is and the second is not. In regard to their conception of democracy, the first group mixes input and output, while the second group values voice and participation, an input's perspective. In reference to types of political activism, allegiant citizens conform to traditional activities, like voting, while assertive citizens support non-violent, elite-challenging activities.

The Kofi Annan speech we mentioned earlier refers to part of this phenomenon, as he points to “lower levels of voter participation, falling membership of political parties and declining trust in politicians and institutions” (KOFI ANNAN FOUNDATION, 2017). However, what Annan sees as structural democratic problem, is, according to Dalton and Welzel (2014), a transformation of the way people interact with their duties, rights, and possibilities on the inside of democratic systems. In the new assertive perspective, people can maintain their support of democratic principles while being more critical and absent from traditional political activities.

In the allegiant model of citizenship, there is a greater concern with the stability of democracy. In fact, the traditional concept advocates a less active citizenry, because democratic stability depends on citizens who fulfill their duties and do not exert much pressure on the system. On the other hand, critical citizens or assertive citizens, present more challenges to the political system, demanding changes in the traditional political perspective.

3 New Forms of Political Participation

Theocharis and van Deth wrote a comprehensive and updated work about new forms of political participation. They affirm that there is a “continuous expansion – and fragmentation – of the repertoire of political participation” (2017, 4), and that “by now almost every conceivable non-private activity by some citizen can be sometimes understood as a form of political participation...” (2017, 4). Self-expressive and individualistic values gave rise to the contemporary creative forms of political participation, some of them carried out on on-line environments.

They identify a temporal evolution of the available modes of participation (THEOCHARIS and VAN DETH, 2017, 18-19). New modes arise and old procedures do not disappear, broadening and complexifying the repertoire of political participation. After WWII, voting, campaigning, and contacting officials were the only available forms of political

participation. These “established conventional or institutionalized modes of participation” (2017, 18) were strongly associated with representative political institutions. In the 1960s, protests (“demonstrations, sit-ins, signature actions”) became “normalized”, and were no longer seen as unconventional forms of political action. In the 70s and 80s, pacifist and women groups created what was called “new movements” and, along with those groups, their own forms of action. In the 90s, “volunteering, social engagement, working with others to solve local problems” started being recognized as political action, related to “civic activities” (THEOCHARIS and VAN DETH, 2017, 19). Recently, lifestyle preferences – based on more individualistic values – started expressing moral and ethical standpoints, which lead to boycotting, “buycotting”, and creative forms such as “guerrilla gardening”, “flash mobs”, “crowd-initiated public assemblies”. Besides that, new internet-based forms of action have emerged, such as content-sharing, and the use of social media to mobilize people.

Theocharis and van Deth (2017) face a methodological and theoretical challenge, namely, creating a way to identify the changing political forms of action in current society. Their starting point is the classical work by Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America*. For Verba and Nie, political participation are “those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take” (1972, 2, apud THEOCHARIS and VAN DETH, 2017). On one hand, the work of Verba and Nie is dated, since nowadays there are lots of actions people undertake with the intention of changing collective results, which can be seen as politics. However, this new definition of political is highly debatable. Extreme cases are considered political by Theocharis and van Deth (2017), because people who undertake them conceived them as political actions. For instance, sending an e-mail informing that Nike refuses to write “sweatshop” in its products or buying a specific brand of coffee are political actions according to Theocharis and van Deth’s definition (2017, 79).

On the other hand, Verba and Nie have a very strong point when they link political actions to the “selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take”. In fact, this kind of evaluation is more concrete, and presents a clear link between actions and collective life (“governmental personnel and actions they take” are major pieces of the representative democracy). An e-mail I conceive as political can be understood as non-political by the people who read it. If one person, or just a few people, thinks a given action is collectively important, is it political? The definition of political rests on collective entities, hence, the sole intention of the agent cannot be sufficient to define something as a political action. In these extreme cases, the political nature of one action depends on the impacts it produces in the broader political field.

Theocharis and van Deth present a map with “five variants of forms of political participation” (2017, 87), depending on how far they are from the minimal definition of political participation. Here we present and discuss some examples of new forms of political

participation for each variant, emphasizing their “new” elements, like their “creative” or “non-orthodox” forms, their use of Internet and social media, and results they (intend to) produce.

The first variant refers to “activities that are located in the area of politics, government, or the state” (2017, 87). This category includes conventional political actions, such as voting and contacting a politician. The *Podemos* experience fits in this category and brings to discussion some new valuable elements.

Podemos, a Spanish movement-party/party-movement, was created after important social movements occurred in Spain after 2011 (SEGURADO, 2016). Its two main achievements until now were breaking the traditional two-party system in Spain and being considered part of the “new, modern Spain”. Parties are created all the time all over the world, then what is different in the *Podemos* experience?

Social movements in Spain, initiated in May 2011, questioned the consequences of the 2008 economic crisis, especially the government support of the banks, in spite of its problematic consequences for the people. Between 2011 and 2014, many actions took place and the movements questioned the representative system itself. In 2014, after debates, the majority of the supporters decided to create the *Podemos* party, making a transition from the movement to a party. After that, it reached a few important victories, like electing mayors in Madrid and Barcelona.

Podemos’s experience presents some valuable new developments. First, the transition from movement to party relied in a very participative on-line action, including the polling (SEGURADO, 2016). Since the beginning, *Podemos* uses social networks and practices what is called “política em rede” (network politics), strengthening the participatory feeling and legitimacy of the political process. Another aspect is that in the core of *Podemos*’ conceptions are both the idea of democratic rupture and the radicalization of democracy. What seems inconsistent is a real manifestation of the new kind of citizenry defined by Dalton and Welzel (2014) when they discuss support for democratic principles but not for democratic practice. A third important aspect is the use of crowdfunding to finance elections and the party.

As a summary, what is most striking in the *Podemos* experience is the union and action of people with very strong self-emancipatory values, and their intention to break the traditional structures of parties, with their internal bureaucracies, hierarchy, and opacity. On the contrary, *Podemos* relies on very open processes of discussion, both in face-to-face meetings (called “Círculos”, local and very autonomous party structures) and on-line discussions and polls. The classical literature on parties (MICHELS, 1982) shows that bureaucracy, hierarchy and opacity are the major challenges of *Podemos*, and their supporters are trying to deal with this challenge using new, innovative techniques, some of them internet-based.

The second variant encompasses activities “targeted at government, politics, or the state”, like signing a petition, demonstrating, etc. (THEOCHARIS and VAN DETH, 2017, 87).

Here we can discuss some Internet sites aimed to produce communication between citizens and state representatives, like Change.org. On the contrary, is interesting to present the case of the Brazilian House of Representatives, as a contrast but parallel initiative, since it uses new communication technologies in the other direction, that is, from parliament to citizens.

Change.org is an internet-based platform for the creation of on-line petitions. Like Margetts et al. point out, on-line petition sites lower the participation and transaction costs below the costs of the traditional processes of petitioning, which can rise the number of supporters (MARGETTS et. al., 2015). Also regarding Change.org, there are other interesting facts, such as other features of its strategy. First, they insist that petitions are created by users, which strengthens the legitimacy of the process. Second, they claim the press can use the platform as rich source of information about societal problems, and media coverage can boost the spread of petitions. The Change.org team asserts that the press produces hundreds of news reports everyday based on Change's petitions (CHANGE.ORG, 2018). A third feature is the possibility of people answering the petitioner (answers provided by the person responsible for the problems that the petition targets). Since it is so easy to create an on-line petition, the Change.org team built a strategy that enriches the context of the petition act, pointing to different gains that an on-line petition can obtain; otherwise, the user can think that his/her petition is just one more anonymous action in the immense digital world. Change.org facilitates the creation of a social/political network linked to an on-line petition.

Another example is the website of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies ("Website of the Brazilian House of Representatives"). The website presents a whole range of mechanisms to enhance the relationship between representatives and citizens. Barros and colleagues (BARROS et. al, 2016) identify the following tools: "institutional email form (Contact Us), public [digital] hearings, social media accounts of the institution, and the e-Democracy platform" (2016, 4). Institutional e-mail sends messages to intended recipients, be they deputies or organs of the institution. Public hearings are on-site meetings between representatives and activists, scientists or authorities related to a specific issue. However, those meetings are broadcast on-line and citizens can watch and participate, sending in questions, comments, etc. Social-media accounts are, in general, Twitter and Facebook profiles maintained by representatives, committees, and other actors inside the parliament. In general, they are used to inform about new developments of the legislative process. Finally, e-Democracy:

The e-Democracy platform was established in 2009 with the objective of becoming a social networking platform of sorts – with virtual communities – to encourage engagement and popular participation in the formulation and discussion of legislative proposals and to divulge the progress of matters under discussion. The tool allows people to make suggestions to legislative proposals in progress, to prepare drafts of bills collaboratively and to share information that will contribute to discussions. This new tool was created in order to meet the principles of participatory democracy... (BARROS et. al, 2016, 7)

If Change.org tries to reach “government, politics or the state”, the technologies used by Brazilian Chamber of Deputies are the government, politics and the state seeking the citizen. However, what is interesting here is that the tools provided by the state lack legitimacy, because many citizens doubt their impartiality. Besides, what complicates matters is the fact that just a few politicians use those tools in a collaborative manner. These tools intend to produce a two-way flow of information, but this result depends on the attitude of politicians, and their inclination to participate is rare. These creative, self-expressive relationships do not occur, because politicians are not interested in maintaining this kind of relationship with his/her constituency and citizens in general.

The third category appointed by Theocharis and van Deth encompasses actions “targeted at problems or community issues” (2017, 88). Here the example of the ice-bucket challenge, given by the same authors, is representative. The ice-bucket challenge refers to an on-line campaign to support research about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis disease (ALS) (people can donate money to the cause and can participate too, making a performance throwing ice on their own heads). In simple terms, this campaign is not affiliated to state or government, but it reached politicians and celebrities, making the ALS ice-bucket challenge a public issue. A question that naturally arises here is which repercussions this campaign produced within the state, the government, and politics in general. The description by Theocharis and van Deth supports the hypothesis that the ice-bucket challenge attached itself to the public image of public actors – a separate development from the amount of money donated to the ALS research. However, more profound consequences depend on the engagement of politicians in traditional ways, like their pursuit of incentives and resources provided by the state, and we do not have information on that kind of consequences.

The fourth variant of THEOCHARIS and VAN DETH’s theory (2017, 88) refers to political context, such as “posting or sharing links to political stories, commenting on social or political issues on social media, and encouraging other people to take action on political or social issues using social media” (2017, 88). In this sense, it is relevant to discuss the case of Egypt in the Arab Spring. The use of social media to “mobilize, organize and inspire Egyptians to take the streets” (EATON, 2013, 5) was a creative, new use of social media that deserves commentary.

Briefly, Egypt was ruled by president Hosni Mubarak from 1981 up until 2011, under an autocratic regime. Within the broader context of the Arab Spring, Mubarak resigned his post after popular uprisings. The spreading of the Arab Spring movement and the prominence of social media in these political movements made some people very enthusiastic about social media in the development of profound political changes. Tim Eaton (2013), an analyst of Egypt’s politics and media, unlike other analysts, presents an article that clearly separates the importance of social media and the classical on-site political acts. For him, it is clear that the

strength of the movement depended on the numbers of real people on the streets. In a certain point in time, there were protests all over the country that were attended by millions of people. Social media, however, had an important role in the process.

The first point presented by Eaton (2013, 7) shows that some activists had previous experience using social media and Internet to inform and mobilize people against the regime. Experiences of this kind had been occurring since 2005. A second point refers to the “preparatory” movement related to Khaled Said. Khaled Said was a young man murdered by the police in June 2010. Extreme violence used by police, and its attempt to hide the circumstances of Said’s death caused indignation among the population and two Facebook pages were created to show support and protest his death. The activities related to Said remained in stasis until one week before the protests of 25th January, with few protests and only a few thousand people involved. However, one week before 25th January, the action in those pages grew rapidly and thousands of people engaged in the famous protests of Tharir Square. As pointed out by Margetts and her colleagues (2016), online political actions are unpredictable, because they work under a “s curve” of attention. Most phenomena do not draw much attention, but a few, in a short period, grow very rapidly, conforming the attention’s “s curve” – common periods of stasis followed by rare and short periods of extreme attention and action.

According to Eaton (2013), social media was used to mobilize, organize and inspire activists. Although social media alone is not the most important cause in the final political results of a revolution like the Egyptian one, activists used Facebook to post videos in order to inspire people, showing fights, violence, and acts of bravery of activists. Twitter, seen as a more agile tool, was used to mobilize and organize people during the protests, broadcasting the status of protests in real-time. Twitter was sometimes also used to move protesters from one site to another, where more people were necessary.

What is interesting about Eaton’s story is that inspiration gained a more dramatic and efficient tool for its dissemination, because real videos could be produced and shared with mobile phones and within the social media structure. Besides that, mobilization and organization could be more efficient, due to the immediacy of the communication. As stated by Eaton, the Egyptian revolution depended on social, economic, political, and cultural causes; people were obviously feeling oppressed by the dictatorship. However, the way that revolution occurred depended in a large extent on the use of new forms of communication provided by technology and on new kinds of action and activists, who were able to innovate and use social media on behalf of their cause.

Lastly, the fifth category refers to politically motivated actions, like boycotting “buycotting”, veganism, voluntary simplicity (GINSBORG, 2005; STOLLE et. al. 2013). This kind of political action is more linked to lifestyle, and it targets primarily the corporations, a strong but unofficial source of power. With the advance of neoliberal ideology and practices,

the market became a space of contestation in a political fashion. Results aimed by those practices (as such Fair Trade campaigns) are better conditions to workers, and a better environment. This kind of political action presents the more conspicuous blur between private and public life.

4 Old Tools for a New World

Representative democracy was born more than two centuries ago. United States, France, England, Belgium, and other developed countries (located in the so-called North-Atlantic) faced the challenge of creating a government that considered the majority of people in its constitution. Democracy, until then, was an archaic concept, a no longer used form of government, something related to classical Greece and consubstantiated by direct participation of people in government.

The North American “founding fathers” used the term Republic to name the political democratic system they were creating: the representative democratic system (MADISON et. al. 1987). In order to deal with millions of citizens, an impossible feat under a direct democratic system, they used elections to choose representatives and their national president (senators, in the beginning, were chosen by the state assemblies; only in the 19th century direct elections were used to select them). The division of powers, with Executive, Legislative and Judiciary Branches was established too, and these powers could exert a mutual control called “checks and balances system”.

At the core of the system was the complex idea of representation (PITKIN, 1967). At one position lies the citizen, who holds the sovereignty, and at the other position is the representative, who acts and speaks on behalf of the citizen. The citizen selects her/his representative and this representative must be accountable for his/her acts, an accountability that maintains the legitimacy of the system. This process of accountability demands a reasonable flow of information between representative and citizens and a feasible mechanism to reward or punish the representative. The most prominent mechanism in this category are elections.

Bernard Manin (1997), based on the historical experience of France, United Kingdom, and United States, presents an interesting analysis of the representative system, considering the types of parties, elections, and citizen-government relations, which, together, constitute different patterns of representative democracy.

Since the beginning of the representative system until the popular political movements of the 19th century, political parties were constituted by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (cadre parties), based on limited suffrage. During elections, the superior social and economic status of the candidate was the most important aspect, that is, constituted the influence that the politician possessed in his community. In this scenario, inside the parliament, representatives were free to act, maintaining loose relations with their constituency and their party. The

representative's tenure was also trust-based. In this period, demands from people emerged in society and were brought to the parliament by the press and social movements. In general, those demands crosscut all parties.

The next phase of representative democracy, based on the expansion of suffrage, occurred during the 19th century and beginnings of the 20th century, was defined by the emergence of mass parties. This kind of party has very strong ties with its social base, strictly ideological class-related mentalities, and intends to be present in all aspects of the citizen's life. Mass parties create newspapers, associations, and other forms of interaction with their social base (OPPO, 2009). Internally, they are organized in a pyramidal way, with strong hierarchies. Inside the parliament, representatives of mass parties must obey party directions, enjoying little liberty to act by themselves. In this period, there is a very clear alignment of opinions inside and outside parliament, at elections and in the period between them, since parties are encompassing organizations that possess some important media. A very relevant feature here is the intermediary role of parties, acting as a liaison between society and state. Given the centrality of parties in this period, Manin names this phase as "party democracy" (1997).

The subsequent period, a movement that emerged after WWII, sees the weakening of mass parties and the evolution and expansion of the media. Ideology becomes less important, as well as the connection between parties and the citizen's socioeconomic status. In fact, parties are not intermediary figures that link society and state, on the contrary, the state becomes an intermediary between society and parties (because parties no longer have an important base of supporters anymore and they receive public funds to maintain their activities, etc.). In this period, the "floating" elector is important (similarly to the weakening of the allegiant citizen, here there is a weakening of the loyal elector). The elections work like a theater: politicians choose the terms of the debate and citizens choose the candidate they prefer; before the electoral campaign, electors do not have well-defined preferences for issues distant from their immediate life. For this reason, elections are dominated by the "communicators", people who know how to use media. This new situation resembles the "face-to-face" political relations of the first period, and for this reason personal trust and image are more important than political programs. Because of the plurality of the media (when parties are no longer important players in this field), public opinion in the moment of elections and during the interim can be different. Inside the parliament, negotiations are held between the government and interested groups, because parties adapt themselves to these two more important actors. Based on the theatrical metaphor, Manin calls this period "audience democracy" (1997).

The three periods of representative democracy analyzed by Manin show the way government and citizens interact, the relevance and the changing role of media, as well as the fluctuation of electors' preferences. Besides, according to the analyses by Inglehart and Welzel, an advance of individualistic values and the empowerment of citizens are present. The changing

nature of the representative system creates a path to deal with the new kind of elector and his/her forms of action, but, unfortunately, in this work Manin could not stretch his analysis to digital activism and new forms of political participation.

Inside the representative system, another important feature related to the link between the formal political system and the citizen is the Parliament. Representatives in the Legislative Branch are theoretically the major supporters of the link between society and the formal political institutions. However, the structure of parliaments, in general, did not face substantial changes in the last centuries (POLSBY, 1968) (BRAGA et. al., 2016). Legislatures continue to maintain hierarchical structures with complex arrangements and operating modes. Committees, the enormous number of internal rules and procedures, overt and covert veto points, the slowness of the legislative process, among other factors, make the representative system a difficult one to understand and participate. Effective participation depends on so many issues that it demands, in general, professional assistance. As a result, participation is frustrated and its legitimacy weakened.

Faced with the advance of individualism, self-expression values, and new technologies of communication like the Internet and social media, the “communicator” presented by Manin tries to solve some problems in the relationship between state and society. However, their solutions seem to be personal and unstable, because they depend on the moods of people, empathy, the kind of public issue in discussion, and the changing speed of the public agenda. This kind of politics resembles show business, with its flashes of attention and exposition and periods of oblivion. At the end, a new communicator can substitute another less successful or exhausted one, and the cycle goes on.

However, institutions like the parliament cannot be changed by others in the same fashion, therefore, their challenge demands other kinds of solutions. The new kind of citizen – empowered and embracing self-expressive and individualistic values – demands a more responsive system and more accountable institutions².

5 Conclusion

As discussed in the previous sections, there are a lot of new forms of political participation in modern societies. Actions range from the creation of a new party, like Podemos in Spain, to new styles of consumption, and all of those actions demand changes in political results. Both the outputs and the inputs of the political system are being questioned. However, whether those new forms of participation are able to produce the results people desire is a questionable point. The Podemos party is an attempt to work with representative institutions. If

² In contemporary Brazil, the Supremo Tribunal Federal (“Brazilian Supreme Court”) has been performing some political actions that seems to answer this kind of society’s demands for action. However, it is not an ideal or proper response to the problem, and in some cases it produces further problems to the political system.

they will succeed, we do not know for now. Other forms of action like on-line petitions, “political life-styles”, and civil society campaigns energize the “public sphere”, but they have not caused the institutions to channel their inputs yet.

In general terms, the concept of representation, with its broad meaning, demands that representatives deal with collective concerns of citizens. However, as the example of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies shows, just a few politicians accept new kinds of participation in their routines. In spite of the broad infrastructure of new technologies, the traditional one-direction top-down communication is prevalent, a kind of simple political advertisement. If those political actors continue to rely on allegiance and deference to authority, this foundation of political action becomes weaker every day.

Margetts and her colleagues point that social media movements must be seriously considered by politicians (2016). Some cases show they are, but in a negative fashion; for instance, when the Egyptian government forced the shutdown of Facebook and Twitter communication during the uprisings.

For now, Margetts and colleagues show that on-line political actions (which encompass part of the repertoire of the new political participation) are much more unstable than the traditional ones (the “s curve” of attention we discussed previously). Besides, these authors point that collective action became more fragmented, due to the leaderless movements and the possibility of movements emerging anywhere. These phenomena rest on the more individualistic type of political action in society.

As a final result, during the interim when the political system still does not quite know how to deal with new forms of political participation, the rise of populism can be an answer, although a dangerous one. The political “communicator” of Manin’s theory can dominate the scene, and other forms of political activity that demand more institutionalized procedures (such as Parliaments) become weaker.

The crisis of democracy lies in the fact that traditional politics have not been able to communicate profitably (both in the constitution of government, as well as in the formation of public policies, and in the legitimization of the system) with new forms of political participation until now. Institutions without the participation of the society become sterile, and society without institutional articulation accumulates tensions and resentments. How long will traditional politics and new forms of political participation be able to survive without communicating in a productive way? The intensity and extent of our political problems hinge on the answer to this question.

References

ALMOND, Gabriel, VERBA, Sidney. 1963. **The Civic Culture**: Political Attitudes in Five Western Democracies. Princetown, NJ: Princetown University Press.

- BARROS, Antonio T., BERNARDES, Cristiane B., REHBEIN, Malena. 2016. Brazilian Parliament and digital engagement. **The Journal of Legislative Studies**, v. 22, n. 4, oct./dec., p. 540-558. DOI: 10.1080/13572334.2016.1235331
- BOBBIO, Norberto, MATTEUCCI, Nicola, PASQUINO, Gianfranco. 2009. **Dicionário de Política**. 13 ed. Brasília.
- BRAGA, Ricardo de J., SATHLER, André Rehbein, MIRANDA, Roberto C. R. 2016. The institutionalisation of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. **The Journal of Legislative Studies**, 22:4, 460-483, DOI: 10.1080/13572334.2016.1235332
- CHANGE.ORG. 2018. <https://www.change.org/about> Accessed in 21 feb. 2018.
- CROZIER, Michel, HUNTINGTON, Samuel P., WATANUKI, Joji. 1975. **The Crisis of Democracy**. New York University Press.
- CUNNINGHAM, F. 2002. **Theories of Democracy**. London/New York: Routledge.
- DALTON, Russel, WELZEL, Christian. 2014. Political Culture and Value Change. in DALTON, Russel, WELZEL, Christian. **The Civic Culture Transformed: from allegiant to assertive citizens**. Cambridge University Press.
- EATON, Tim.. **Internet Activism and the Egyptian Uprisings: Transforming Online Dissent into the Offline World**. Westminster Papers, v. 9 issue 2, April, p. 3–24. 2013
- (THE) ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT LIMITED . Democracy Index 2017: Free speech under attack. 2018.
- FREEDOM HOUSE. (2018). Freedom in the World 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018> . Accessed in:
- GINSBORG, Paul. 2005. **The Politics of Everyday Life: making choices, changing lives**. Yale University Press.
- INGLEHART, Ronald, WELZEL, Christian. 2010. **Changing Mass Priorities: The Link between Modernization and Democracy**. Perspectives on Politics, 8(2), 551-567. DOI:10.1017/S1537592710001258.
- HELD, David. 1996. **Models of democracy**. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- HOBBS, Thomas. 1982. **Leviathan**. Penguin Classics.
- KOFI ANNAN FOUNDATION. 2017. The Crisis of Democracy. <http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/supporting-democracy-and-elections-with-integrity/athens-democracy-forum/> Accessed in 19 Feb. 2018.
- MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. 1995. **The Prince**. Hackett Publishing Company.
- MADISON, J., HAMILTON, A., JAY, J. (1987 [1788]) **The Federalist Papers**, London: Penguin Books.
- MANIN, B. 1997. **Principles of Representative Government**. Cambridge University Press.
- MARGETTS, Helen, JOHN, Peter, HALE, Scott, YASSERI, Taha. 2016. **Political Turbulence: how social media shape collective action**. Princeton University Press.
- MICHELS, Robert. 1982. **Sociologia dos Partidos Políticos**. Brasília: UNB.
- OPPO, Anna. 2009. Partidos Políticos. In: BOBBIO, Norberto, MATTEUCCI, Nicola, PASQUINO, Gianfranco. **Dicionário de Política**. 13 ed.. Brasília, p.981-997.
- PITKIN, Hanna F. 1967. **The concept of representation**. Berkeley: Univ. California.
- POLSBY, N. 1968. The insitucionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives. **American Political Science Review**, v. 62, n. 1, p. 144-168.

POPITZ, Heinrich. 2017. **Phenomena of Power: Authority, Domination, and Violence**. Columbia University Press.

PYE, Lucian, VERBA, Sidney. 1965. **Political Culture and Political Development**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

SEGURADO, Rosemary. 2016. Partido Podemos: Novas Práticas Políticas na Espanha. **E-Legis**, Brasília, n. 21, p. 7-22, set./dez. 2016

SEN, Amartya. 2000. **Development as Freedom**. New York: Anchor Books.

STOLLE, Dietlind and MICHELETTI, Michele. 2013. **Political Consumerism: Global Responsibility in Action**. Cambridge University Press.

THEOCHARIS, Yannis; VAN DETH, Jan W. 2017. **Political Participation in a Changing World**. NY: Routledge. 119p.

VERBA, Sidney, NIE, Norman. 1972. **Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality**. New York: Harper and Row.

WVS – WORLD VALUES SURVEY (). 2018. Findings and Insights. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>. Accessed in 19 fev. 2018.

Artigo recebido em: 10/05/2018

Artigo aceito para publicação em: 25/05/2018