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Die DFG-KollegforscherInnengruppe „Landnahme, Beschleunigung, Aktivierung. Dynamik und (De-) Stabilisierung moderner Wachstumsgesellschaften“ – kurz: „Kolleg Postwachstumsgesellschaften“ – setzt an der soziologischen Diagnose multipler gesellschaftlicher Umbruchs- und Krisenphänomene an, die in ihrer Gesamtheit das überkommene Wachstumsregime moderner Gesellschaften in Frage stellen. Die strukturellen Dynamisierungsimperative der kapitalistischen Moderne stehen heute selbst zur Disposition: Die Steigerungslogik fortwährender Landnahmen, Beschleunigungen und Aktivierungen bringt weltweit historisch neuartige Gefährdungen der ökonomischen, ökologischen und sozialen Reproduktion hervor. Einen Gegenstand in Veränderung – die moderne Wachstumsgesellschaft – vor Augen, zielt das Kolleg auf die Entwicklung von wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsweisen und auf eine Praxis des kritischen Dialogs, mittels derer der übliche Rahmen hochgradig individualisierter oder aber projektförmig beschränkter Forschung überschritten werden kann. Fellows aus dem In- und Ausland suchen gemeinsam mit der Jenaer Kollegsgruppe nach einem Verständnis gegenwärtiger Transformationsprozesse, um soziologische Expertise in jene gesellschaftliche Frage einzubringen, die nicht nur die europäische Öffentlichkeit in den nächsten Jahren bewegen wird: Lassen sich moderne Gesellschaften auch anders stabilisieren als über wirtschaftliches Wachstum?

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Participatory inequality in the austerity state: a supply side approach

Abstract

One uncontested defining element of the democratic regime form is equality of political rights of citizens. Yet rights (such as voting rights and other forms of political participation) are not equally being made use of in capitalist democracies at the behavioral level. As to voting, there is an overall decline in turnout as well as a well-documented stratification effect that depresses the participation of those with lesser income, education, and class status. Both trends are remarkably stable across time, space, and most forms of participation. The essay reviews proposed remedies to both of these democratic deficiencies and the ways they are viewed in contemporary democratic theory. It also proposes an explanation of the phenomena in question which does not start with the characteristics of non-participants (e. g., their limited capacity to absorb and process relevant information) but with the supply of policy choices available in capitalist democracies. This supply is argued to be of a nature that makes, from the point of view of less privileged strata of the electorate, the democratic "game" one that is rationally deemed by them largely not to be worth participating in.

Zusammenfassung

Die Gleichheit der politischen Rechte der Bürger gilt unbestritten als bestimmendes Element der demokratischen Regierungsform. Jedoch zeigt sich auf der Verhaltensebene, dass diese Rechte (wie das Wahlrecht und andere Formen politischer Partizipation) in kapitalistischen Demokratien nicht von allen gleichermaßen in Anspruch genommen werden. So gibt es im Hinblick auf Wahlen insgesamt einen Rückgang der Beteiligung, ebenso wie einen gut dokumentierten Stratifizierungseffekt, durch den die Teilnahme von Menschen mit geringerem Einkommen, Bildung und Klassenstatus abgeschwächt wird. Beide Trends sind sowohl zeitlich und räumlich als auch über die meisten Beteiligungsformen hinweg erstaunlich stabil. Der Essay prüft vorgeschlagene Gegenmittel zu diesen beiden demokratischen Defiziten sowie die Art und Weise, wie diese in der gegenwärtigen demokratietheoretischen Debatte wahrgenommen werden. Er schlägt zudem eine Erklärung der genannten Phänomene vor, die nicht bei den Eigenschaften der Nicht-Teilnehmenden ansetzt (z.B. deren begrenzter Fähigkeit, relevante Informationen aufzunehmen und zu verarbeiten) sondern bei dem in kapitalistischen Demokratien zur Auswahl stehenden Politikangebot. Es wird argumentiert, dass dieses Angebot das demokratische ‚Spiel' in den Augen von weniger privilegierten Teilen der wahlberechtigten Bürger und in durchaus rationaler Weise als eines erscheinen lässt, an dem teilzunehmen sich nicht recht lohnt.

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Introduction[1]

In this chapter, I explore some of the links that exist between three bundles of variables. Two of them are the two macro-variables that are tied together in the concept of contemporary *democratic capitalism* (Streeck 2010, 2011a). The third is the micro-variable of individual citizens' political participation. Participation is a multi-faceted phenomenon (voting, joining, discussing politics, etc.) that requires for its understanding the reference to various meso-phenomena (political parties, political rights, associations). The question that guides the discussion of these extremely complex relations is how empirical trends in political participation - citizens' overall disengagement with political life (Mair 2006) and the increasingly unequal pattern of that disengagement - can be accounted for in terms of developments taking place at the level of the democratic state and its policies, on the one hand, and the capitalist economy, on the other.

Two trends

The topic of why people don't vote - or participate in political life in other ways - has a long history in political science: It has attracted fresh scholarly interest since the mid-nineties of the past century. Two questions are being asked and need to be answered. First, why do we see an *overall decline* in voting - as well as other forms of political participation - in most liberal democracies, old ones as well as new? Second, why is non-participation a phenomenon that is far from randomly distributed across the population of eligible citizens, *disproportionally affecting the less privileged strata* of constituent populations? To the extent either or both of these phenomena, the average *level* of participation of the entire (eligible) population and the distributional *patterns* of participatory practices across the social structure, are considered problematic from points of view spelled out by normative democratic theory, there are conceivable solutions to the respective problem. In case such solutions are available and attempted, the following logic applies: Any workable solution to problem (1) - e. g., making voting mandatory or incentivize it through positive or negative sanctions - would also take care (or, depending on the effectiveness of its implementation, comes close to taking care; cf. Quintelier et al. 2011: 397)) of problem (2), while the inverse is not necessarily the case: Participatory practices can remain low on average even if they are evenly distributed across structural hierarchies.

Whenever we conceptualize a social phenomenon as a "problem", we need to specify "for whom" or, more generally, under which evaluative perspective it may be seen to constitute a "problem", meaning a condition that calls for, or inspires the search for, a "solution". Thus we need to understand for whom and according to what kind of evaluative standard our problem (1), a low overall turnout in elections (or, for that matter, low rates of other kinds of political participation), should constitute a problem.

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[1] Der Beitrag beruht auf einem Vortrag, den der Verfasser am 01.11.2011 in Jena gehalten hat. Eine gekürzte Version ist erschienen in A. Schäfer und W. Streeck (Hg.) 2013. *Politics in the Age of Austerity*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons

Is non-participation a "problem"?

To this question, there are two kinds of answers. One starts with the intuition that by participating citizens confer *political resources* on the supply of which political elites, as well as the proper functioning of the political system as a whole, depend for the sake of their legitimacy.[2] The more members political parties and functional associations have, i. e., the more people decide to join, the greater their pool of material resources (membership dues) and the more credible their legitimacy-conferring claim to representativeness. Conversely, the entire political system would suffer considerable embarrassment and loss of credibility if the turnout on election day were to drop below the level of, say, 30 per cent of those eligible. Such outcome would be perceived as signaling worries of large parts of the electorate about either the *relevance* of the alternatives (candidates, platforms) between which voters are called upon to decide or the perceived *fairness* of the procedures according to which the system operates, or both. It would also allow to denounce governing coalitions resulting from low-turnout elections as representing, in the limiting case, just a tiny minority of (in this case 15,01 per cent) of the overall polity, thus considerably weakening its claim to democratically constituted political authority. Moreover, political elites must be interested in absorbing the hopes, fears, loyalties and interests of citizens into the institutional channels of "normal politics", thereby *integrating* the political community at the level of "diffuse support" for the democratic form of government and strengthening a second-order consensus concerning the rules by which first-order conflict and dissent is to be processed. Absent such support and consent, it is likely that those motivations seek, and eventually find, their expression in non-institutional, potentially disruptive forms of participation. High degrees of electoral disengagement and abstention will also undercut political "input legitimacy". "Low levels of input legitimacy [can] have a negative impact on the government's ability to ensure compliance with government regulations" (ibid.: 399) and hence on the effectiveness of its governance.

The other answer to the above question derives from a well-founded empirical generalization. It claims that the further the level of participatory practices *deviates* from the 100 per cent maximum, the more *unequal* the pattern of participation is bound to be. The lower the overall rate of participation, the more socially *distorted* it is according to stratification dimensions such as income, education, class, and status security. Distorted patterns of participation, once they are known to exist and anticipated by competing political parties, have a direct impact both on the content of parties' programmatic platforms and the policy output of governing parties. In particular, parties and governing coalitions will tend to form rational strategies which are biased in favor of those social categories who are known to participate and ignore or downgrade those who are less likely to do so; they will tend to "optimize the allocation of pains to

[2] Note that the interest of political parties in the *overall* turnout in elections is at best qualified. Party A, while interested in mobilizing its own constituency as much as possible, will also be interested in Party B's failure to mobilize *its* constituency, as the abstention of (potential) B-voters is bound to benefit A. And neither can parties be unequivocally interested in *maximizing* the number of those who join them as members, as, to the extent these members are active, they may exacerbate the party's problems of internal conflict management. To the extent citizens turn from voting and party membership to less formal modes of political expression (civil society associations, movements, protests), such moves will be considered positively unwelcome by political party elites.

[known] non-voters." (Streeck 2007: 28) "Who votes and who doesn't has important consequences … for the content of policies." (Lijphart 1997: 4) In a second step of an unfolding circular dynamic, those who perceive themselves to be "left out" due to such strategies of parties and rulers will probably have ever fewer motives to participate, which in turn will further diminish parties' willingness to take their interests on board - and so on.[3] The net result would be a nominally democratic political system which is systematically biased to favor the middle class and everyone above it, while depriving all those below it of the effective use of their political resources, i. e. the political rights of citizenship. It amounts to a gross *de facto* violation of the normative standard of *civic equality* that we associate with the idea of democracy. (Schäfer 2010; 2011a) Note that this line of reasoning leads us right to the fusion of the two problems that we have distinguished at the outset. We might now paraphrase the problem by saying that the first phenomenon - overall *decline* of participation - is both a problem in itself (because of the issues of legitimacy and political integration, as perceived by political elites) *and* a cause of the problem of *distorted* participation (our second phenomenon) that it invariably involves.

Participatory inequality: patterns and trends

Data on participatory inequality in Europe are readily available. Widely used data bases on voting and other forms are the 2008 European Social Survey (ESS) and Allbus data for Germany. The dependent variables are types of participatory behavior in which citizens do - or do not - participate. In the case of ESS, these types of behavior include voting, the signing of petitions, critical consumption (including the boycott of products), doing organizational work for political parties, making contact with politicians, participating in demonstrations and protests (including online), wearing opinion buttons, being an active member in a political party. Frequencies of reported behaviors are then correlated to socioeconomic independent variables, such as income and education; this allows for the calculation of degrees of distortion (i. e., the degree of group-specific under-representation in the pool of participants; Schäfer forthcoming) that are statistically associated with particular independent variables. Other measures used as independent variables are demographic ones (gender, age) and attitudinal ones (interest in politics (Köcher 2011), as well as the interaction of the two; also poverty (Bundesministerium AS 2008: 129), social class (blue collar vs. white collar) and labor market status (employed vs. unemployed; Gallego 2007: 7) and various aspects of respondents' life satisfaction (Kohler 2006). Age, income, and education are everywhere found to be the dominant determinants of all forms of participatory inequalities. These indicators are then available for international comparisons (as in the International Social Survey Programme 2006 (ISSP) comprising 23 OECD countries). They are also made comparable in the longitudinal direction, i. e. as time series representing the development of both distortion of participation and

[3] Nor is the problem of participatory distortion of a self-healing nature, as several authors seem to imply. There is nothing "paradoxical" (Schäfer, forthcoming: 4) or a "puzzle" (as Solt 2008: 57 explains) about the fact that (a) high rates of non-participation are statistically correlated with low level of individual income, education, and security and the fact that (b) the average *increase* of educational standards and prosperity coincides with growing levels of participatory distortion and patterned political disaffection. To argue otherwise is simply due to a fallacy of composition and of disregarding the possibility that growing *average* income and education can be trumped in its effect upon participation by growing overall inequality, which discourages participation.

average participation (with the decline of the latter creating the possibility space for the former) by individual countries. One consistently reported finding is that voting is everywhere still the *most frequently* used and the *least* unequally distributed form of participation, while overall turnout rates are slowly declining in most countries. Compared to voting, the use of all the other forms of participation is highly education-sensitive and, in particular, income sensitive.

Membership in political organizations in general (Dathe et al. 2010) and in political parties in particular (van Biezen et al. 2012; Schlote 2011) is arguably the most demanding form of participation as it involves the spending of money (membership dues), often time (meetings, holding offices), as well as the balance of risks and opportunities that are associated with the making of explicit political commitments which are known to others (as opposed to the commitment people make when voting under the cover of secrecy). In most EU member states, membership rates (measured as the ratio of members of all parties and all voting age citizens) are declining over recent decades. In the 13 "old" (pre-1974) democracies, "membership levels in terms of absolute numbers have been nearly halved since 1980", while gains have been interestingly achieved in the three Mediterranean post-1974 and post-authoritarian democracies (Spain, Portugal, Greece) alone, but not so in the post-1989 member states. (van Biezen et al. 2012: 29, 33-5) While declining numbers and rates of members could, logically, leave the social composition of members and its representativeness unaffected, empirically it does not. Members - regardless whether they are active members or not - "tend to be older and better-off than the average citizen, more highly educated, more likely to be associated with collateral organizations such as churches or unions… and more likely to be male than female." (*ibid.* 38) To a variable extent across countries (with the Austrian case most conspicuous among them), party membership is instrumental for public sector and other careers, a mechanism described already by Max Weber as parties recruiting members by Ämterpatronage. As parties do need members (partly to recruit candidates and officials, partly as a source of income from membership dues, partly, as in Germany, because state subsidies are transferred to them in proportion to the number of their members), they need to provide "selective" incentives to join beyond people's commitment to the collective goods parties generate. Yet as the attractiveness of membership in political parties is clearly in decline (see below), other forms of political association, notably those focusing on "green" issues (Dathe et al. 2010: 3-4), seem to provide some form of substitute, resulting in a limited trade-off of membership options across associational forms. Civil society associations in Germany show a similarly distorted structure of membership, with women, the poor, and blue collar workers being under- and the highly skilled and public sector workers overrepresented. Other findings suggest that while non-institutional forms of participation tend to strengthen inequalities based on education, they have a favorable and inclusive effect in that "women and young people tend to use these forms to get their voices heard in the political arena". (Marien et al. 2010: 205)

Trends concerning both the levels and the composition of party membership apply to both leftist parties and those on the political right. The political parties' overall legitimacy dilemma is one of having just single-digit membership rates (in all but 6 of the 27 EU cases: below five percent) and strongly distorted membership profiles while at the same time being highly privileged by democratic constitutions as they

are entitled to define the political agenda as well as to select the political leadership of their polities. This dilemma has stimulated the search for diagnoses and cures, in particular on the part of left-of-center political parties. It has been hypothesized (and positively suggested, see White and Ypi 2010) that "strong left-wing organizations [can] mobilize resource-poor citizens to vote… [the latter] can participate at roughly the same rate as their fellow socially privileged citizens if certain organizations mobilize them to vote", as they "need a group-based process of political mobilization" (Gallego 2010: 240). The underlying idea here is that if "I" am resource-poor and hence lack a sense of individual political efficacy, I need to trust "horizontally" in order to be mobilized at all that other like-minded people "out there" will effectively be mobilized by the same collectivist organization, union, or party.

Yet the attractiveness of membership in political parties is in decline because parties seem to have lost distinctive functions they may have performed in an earlier period of their history, that of "mass politics". The "voice" of members is often substituted for and eclipsed, when it comes to the party's selection of candidates and programs, by polling organizations and professional specialists who are commissioned to design campaigns and apply marketing techniques. (van Biesen et al. 2012: 40) Parties are no longer operating as bridges linking civil society and the political system but have transformed themselves, as indispensable institutional components of any representative democracy, into integral parts of the state apparatus to which citizens relate as remote spectators. Behavioral indicators of this remoteness, or "partisan dealignment", are, on the part of voters, the phenomena of abstention, split-ticket voting, and voters' volatility, all of which are increasing since the 1980ies. At the same time, parties have also lost some of their function in defining policy issues and policy formation to other institutional entities, ranging from social movements to interest associations, ad-hoc commissions, fiduciary institutions (such as central banks, political think tanks, survey research organizations), supranational organizations, and the media.[4] All of which Peter Mair (2006) describes as a process of mutual communicative distantiation or reciprocal withdrawal of parties, on the one side, and members as well as voters, on the other. The process of "hollowing out" of party democracy and competitive elections has evidently accelerated since the end of the Cold War in all of the EU-15 member states; Mair reports (2006: 37) that more than three quarters of all "record low turnouts" since 1950 have been recorded in the period 1990 to 2003.

Among party elites, there is the theory that if parties are losing members, it must be because the terms and conditions which govern the practice of membership are insufficiently attractive. Hence the options of what members are allowed and invited to do must be made more appealing. For instance, it is suggested that the rights of members (plus, in some cases, of sympathizing outsiders as "no-yet-members") must be expanded, and the intrinsic "process benefits" of participation in intra-party decision-making enhanced. Hierarchies must be flattened, primaries and referenda introduced, transparency standards observed, and regional as well as other group representation rights strengthened; more people are to be given opportunities to make their voice heard more often and on a greater number of topics. These and similar proposals have actually been experimented with in recent years by a large number of (most-

[4] If that is right, a promising remedy might be the reinvention of a type of mass party that combines a clear-cut representation of social, economic, and cultural cleavages with a strong hegemonic appeal (cf. White and Ypi 2010) which, however, are nowhere in sight.

ly) social democratic parties in Europe. (Schlote 2011) Yet I have not seen any evidence to the effect that these reform initiatives have in fact succeeded in reversing the trends anywhere - be it in quantitative terms or in terms of the social background of members.

Also, as parties become more remote from voters and members, they come closer to each other, giving rise to a sense of political indifference on the part of the constituency of voters who fail to perceive and appreciate the differences that remain beyond the faces and media-communicated faces of their leading personnel. What leaders and campaign specialists increasingly rely on is a centripetal fusion of policies, declared values, and promises by the promulgation of which they try to appeal to some imaginary "median" voter through mixes of liberal, conservative, "green" and "social" elements. Yet beyond mere campaign tactics, this convergence seems to correspond to a situation where international economic and, in particular, fiscal and monetary constraints and imperatives governing national policy-making preclude major policy choices anyway and replace credible *policy alternatives* with choices among *persons* in leadership positions. Moreover, the rhetorical focus on the "middle ground" of society is bound to alienate those who have no reason to think of themselves as being located in anything like the "middle" of society.

At the same time, it is not clear what the appeal "to sharpen the programmatic profile" of parties can possibly accomplish under these constraints. (Merkel and Petring 2011) One way out of this quandary is, of course, that parties give in to the temptation of turning strategically to emotionally charged issues even though (or rather because) they are quite remote from the core issues of the political economy and the key interests of constituencies. Polarizing populist campaigns and programs based on religious issues, ethnic nationalism, moralized "culture wars", ideological confrontation and insinuation, the personalizing exploitation of scandals, and the skillful substitution of "stagecraft" for "statecraft" (Streeck 2007) can at times make up for the lack of distinctiveness as to what parties have to propose on bread-and-butter issues of the political economy, such as growth, employment, fiscal balance, and issues of security and distribution.

Four diagnoses and associated therapies

To the extent the second problem - increasingly *distorted* rather than *declining* participation - is recognized as a "problem", there are four broad categories of conceivable answers. The *first* is solving problem (2) in indirect ways by solving problem (1). As noted before, solving the overall turnout problem would offer an (approximate) solution to the distorted participation problem, but not *vice versa*. If this is so, there seems to be a strong *prima facie* suggestion for making voting mandatory for all citizens (as influentially advocated by Lijphart 1997), thus imitating arrangements as they are in use, for instance, in Belgium and Australia where, as a consequence, turnout rates range in the upper nineties and electoral disproportionalities are effectively neutralized. Lijphart suggest an *institutional* theory as to why people don't vote, and some less than others: It is because institutional rules in which acts of voting are embedded are insufficiently and unevenly inviting and encouraging that we get the outcome we observe. Yet Lijphart's proposal (which he combines with other participation-facilitating institutional rules such as

"voter-friendly registration rules, proportional representation, infrequent elections, weekend voting, and holding less salient elections concurrently with the most important national elections" (1997: 1) meets with a number of objections, partly normative and partly empirical.

One normative objection is that it must be considered *illiberal* to make voting compulsory, as it would deprive citizens of their *negative* voting freedom, the right to abstain. Compulsory voting would also, it might be argued, illegitimately and undeservedly protect political elites from the embarrassing evidence of their candidates and programs being considered unappealing by large and slowly increasing parts of the population.[5] Empirically, compulsory voting seems to be on the decline (as is one of the other duties of citizenship, compulsory military service), both as a statutory (or even constitutionally enshrined, as in Greece) duty and in terms of the sanctions applied in case of the duty is violated.[6] Yet even if enforced by strong sanctions, voting cannot *really* be made compulsory, only the presence of people at the voting booth; they still remain free to cast invalid or empty ballots. (Quintelier et al. 2011) In the present context, however, the main objection is this: Even if the participatory distortion in *voting* could be eliminated through making it compulsory, this would only take care of the evidently smallest (and hence arguably least urgent) part of the overall problem of participatory distortion or inequality. For among all forms of political participation, voting is by far the *least* unequally distributed. So, Lijphart's proposed solution would help to tackle the overall problem, but just marginally.

If we build an index of participatory distortion that ranges from 0 (= no distortion) to 1 (= a *de facto* exclusionary pattern according to income and education), we get, on the basis of 2008 data for Germany, the following distribution (Schäfer forthcoming: 22): Distortion is lowest for the participatory practice of voting (.11), as it is clearly the most "user-friendly" and least demanding, least "costly" (in terms of time, money, commitments, risks) form of participation, while distortion is much higher for activities such as being an active member of a political party (.36), participating in a citizens' initiative (.38), participate in political discussions (.48), signing resolutions (.51), participating in demonstrations (.65), and engaging in practices known as "critical consumption" (presumably of health food etc., (.69)). A value for another important participatory practice, donating for political causes, is not included in this particular data set, but can confidently be assumed to be even higher as, trivially, the poor have less to donate. As all of these practices belong to the portfolio of the means and rights by which citizens can raise their voice and express their demands and preferences, and as the use being made of them is likely to be cumulative (or "Gutman scaleable" as opposed to mutually compensating; see Marien et al. 2010: 204-6), the overall significance of our second phenomenon appears to be much greater than what can possibly be coped with by introducing compulsory voting; and surely nobody in his or her right mind will advocate

[5] To be sure, this deficiency could be healed by providing voters with the option to tick an additional box on the ballot which allows them to vote NOTA (meaning "none of the above").

[6] This apparent trend (with only five EU member states maintaining the duty, partly without any sanctions: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Belgium) has, however, a counter-trend in the Andean states of Chile, Peru, Ecuador and (with positively draconian sanctions attached) Bolivia. - Sanctions can take the form of monetary fines which in most cases are quite moderate; they could also, conceivably, take the form of excluding voters from the next election in case they have failed to show up at the present one.

making participation in protest demonstrations or joining a political party also mandatory for the entire citizenship! If we balance the normative and empirical "costs" of compulsory voting (including the unpromising prospects of introducing it in places where it does not have a tradition) against its likely "returns" as a remedy to *overall* participatory inequality across all of its forms, it does not appear to be an unequivocally profitable move. To repeat, most forms of participatory inequality (e. g., membership in political parties or civil society organizations) defy any conceivable statutory remedy anyway. So, while recognizing the twin problem of low turnout/unequal participation as a challenge, the response of making it a *duty* of citizens to *make use* of their rights is plainly unconvincing as it papers over a problem the causes and consequences lay much deeper.

A *second* way to remedy the problem of participatory inequality is resolving the problem through providing for the *random composition* of decision-making bodies, including electorates themselves. This amounts to solving our second problem *without* solving the first. While such random procedures are recommended in much of the recent literature on deliberative democracy and deliberative polls (Fishkin 1995; Offe 2011: 467-69), i. e., as democratic innovations that are being proposed as *supplements* to the procedures of majoritarian and representative democracy, it is hard to imagine that randomization could serve any meaningful and legitimate purpose beyond such supplementary function. This is so because randomization would involve a massive *dis*franchisement of all those who have *not* "won" in the lottery; and because an element of non-random (self-)selection cannot possibly be fully excluded (while the other desirable function of randomization, that of neutralizing the influence of organized stakeholders and interested corporate actors can well be fulfilled). In the absence of a strictly enforced equivalent of the institutions of jury duty (which itself allows for a number of opportunities for "opting out"), the social selectivity would just be pushed one step back: From the question who actually *casts a ballot* to the question of who *enters the pool* of those among whom random selection then takes place and who, if selected, *agrees to perform* as decision-maker or deliberator. Greater diversity of decision-making bodies (such as legislatures and party lists) could also be achieved through mandatory quota, as in many countries it is the case with gender quota. Yet this would provoke, among other problems, the issue of "second-order-quota": what is the portion of seats that should be allocated according to gender quota (incidentally, a less significant determinant of participatory distortion), and what the portion determined according to the (overlapping) dimensions of minority or migration status, income, education, class, age, etc.? While all referenda and similar forms of direct democracy operate on the basis of a quorum (a minimum limit which if not surpassed makes the poll invalid), one could think here of a combination of quota and quorum: For instance, a referendum is valid only if at least 50 percent not of the *overall* constituency, but of those belonging to an age, gender, ethnic (and possibly other) categories reach the requisite level of turnout.

A *third* possible solution to the problem of participatory distortion is to try to "activate" the non-participants. This is an approach that is based on an implicit *behavioral* theory that associates outcomes with individuals' characteristics: Some people lack the skills, motivations, and other personal features that are conducive to participation, and these deficiencies must be overcome through countervailing

incentives - material, cognitive, and normative ones. As far as voting is concerned (remember: the *least* dramatic of our distortion problems), this could be done, for instance, by increasing turnout through material incentives: After casting his or her ballot, each voter would automatically participate in a lottery in which a significant amount of cash can be won, or a luxury car. Others would prefer an educational approach: Civics curricula in secondary schools should familiarize students with the full range of the portfolio of rights and organizational means with which citizens in a democracy are endowed, and encourage its use also as a matter of civic virtue. Or targeted information and mobilization campaigns could be launched (e. g., by public electronic media) to make it understood even to the politically least enlightened and least interested what is at stake for them, specifically, in upcoming elections and other political decisions, and who is likely to eventually benefit in case they *fail* to participate. All of this is meant to strengthen the "voice" of those who tend to keep silent and to encourage the making of demands.[7]

The truth, however, seems to be that all of this (except for the lottery for voters) is *already* being undertaken by schools, media, civil society organizations, trade unions, religious communities, social movements, and political parties themselves. In the absence of these efforts, the situation might be still much worse than it actually is; but that does not mean that additional efforts of this sort will achieve significant improvements of a situation that for a long time has been deteriorating in terms of participatory inequalities. Beyond that, there must be something wrong with the behavioral theory in the first place.[8] The democratic motive of mobilizing non-partcipants into participation is, of course, the concern that those who do not vote (or use other forms of civic participation) will be neglected by policy making elites because the latter have nothing to *fear* from the former. Yet "it is by no means obvious that politicians *would* pay much heed to the views of the poor if they *did* vote. It may be … unfair to push the blame for unresponsiveness, at least implicitly, onto poor nonvoters." (Bartels 2008: 275; emph. in orig.) Perhaps non-participants do well understand this "unresponsiveness" of elites, implying that there is little anyway that the former have to expect and to hope for to be delivered by the latter.

Which leaves us with the *fourth* and last of my stylized options of how we should understand - and, if possible, act upon - the condition of unevenly distributed political participation in all of its forms. The argument that I shall explore and defend for the rest of this chapter is a "supply side" argument. Its implicit theory is one that could be called *interpretive political economy*, meaning an understanding of social action and its cognitive foundations that starts with peoples' "lived experience" of the interplay of economic and political forces in contemporary capitalist democracies. Those who do not, or do not fully, participate in political life fail to do so because they perceive the state, governments, and political parties as lacking both the necessary *means* and the credible *intent* to "make a difference" on matters (such as employment, equality, education, the labor market, social security, financial market regulation) which form the core concerns of those who do not participate; they fail to participate *because* they have

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[7] An example are registration campaigns for African Americans in the 1980ies. Cf. Piven and Cloward 1988.

[8] Only if one were to adopt the perspective of making individual "deficiencies" causally responsible for distortions one can find it "especially disturbing" that the decline in turnout persists even though "levels of education and prosperity (factors that can be expected to increase turnout) have been going up dramatically in Europe, as they have in the United States." (Lijphart 1998: 5)

come to perfectly well understand that lack. Roughly speaking, their "lived experience" is that of living in a disempowered state, or in one that is overpowered by the *poderes facticos* of corporate market actors. Their negative response is proportional to their perception of the state's disempowerment (cf. Makszin and Schneider 2010). They do not join the game of democratic politics because they are unconvinced that doing so would yield results that are worth their effort and worthy of their recognition; nor do they trust that making such efforts could succeed in changing the agenda and priorities ruling the overall political economy. To be sure, the only practical implication that this perspective has to offer is the appeal, addressed to political parties and elites as the suppliers of public policies, to restore, reassert and consistently demonstrate some of their trust-engendering governing capacity.[9]

Dissenting voices and their dilemmas

The theoretical and practical approaches I have discussed so far all agree that participatory distortion is a significant problem that needs to be solved for democratic reasons. Yet that view is not universally taken as axiomatic and increasingly challenged. On the other side of the debate, there emerges a school of thought of those who *deny* that there is a problem in the first place. The (arguably increasing) number of adherents of this school believe that the proponents of a version of democratic theory that originated after the end of the Cold War and held "civic engagement" of all sorts to be necessary and desirable in order to "make democracy work" (Putnam et al. 1993) were fundamentally misguided (Berger 2011; Brennan 2011). In a recent paper by Ben Saunders (2011), the author denies the presence of the very problem that Lijphart tries to solve. He postulates that "democracy is compatible with low levels of turnout" (5) and that, consequently, our first phenomenon, low overall turnout, should not be perceived as a problem at all: "Low turnout is not, in itself, a cause for concern." (2) Yet there is a clear and repeatedly stated misconstrual of the problem when the author claims that abstention may even be democratically desirable. As if in order to make the alleged problem go away he speculates: If some do not vote, it may be that refraining from doing so is due to the fact that "they are not affected by a decision". (2) Here, the author confuses an election in an ordinary representative democracy (which is what we are talking about) with a referendum on a particular substantive issue, say, on the building or closing of an airport. In contrast to the latter case, general elections are not about "decisions", but about the composition of a legislative body and, derivatively, executive branch of government which, in its turn, is mandated to decide upon, an (*ex ante* largely unknown) multitude of matters it *decides* to decide upon. What voters do when voting is not deciding upon a policy issue, but deciding on the composition of a body endowed with agenda-setting power involving a huge and, at the point of voting, largely unknown

[9] This is also the conclusion that Petring and Merkel (2011: 33) draw in a postscript to a summary of their paper (Merkel and Petring 2011). In that postscript they write: "Instead of engaging into a hopeless struggle against symptoms, the causes should be addressed. Such causal approach should consist, first of all, in new education, social, tax, and economic policies. The demonstration that public policies are still able to reduce inequalities, tame markets and subject them to democratic control … could motivate the participation of those parts of the citizenry who now have turned away from it in frustration." [my translation, CO] Interestingly and perhaps symptomatically, this key thought is deleted from the "official" version of their paper (Merkel and Petring 2011) as it was published by the Social Democratic Friedrich Ebert Foundation that had commissioned it.

variety of policy issues. If this is so, *nobody* can reasonably claim that s/he is "not affected by a decision", as the voting decision of each of us will ultimately have consequences that do affect "all of us". The votes that each of my fellow citizens casts (or fails to cast) are thus bound to generate externalities, favorable or otherwise, that affect "me" as well as everyone else.

Saunders comes closer to the heart of the matter when he tries to draw the distinction between "the *opportunity* to participate in collective self-rule" and citizens' "*actual* participation", emphasizing that "the opportunity involved must be a genuine one". (6; emph. in original) Yet as it comes to finding out how to tell "genuine" from merely formal or nominal opportunities, the author capitulates by saying that "it is quite difficult to specify exactly what is required for the opportunity to be real and not merely formal." (*ibid*.), evidently shying away from the solution that his own approach strongly suggests: The opportunity is a real (as opposed to a merely nominal) one if the behavioral evidence suggests that whether or not participants make use of that opportunity is *randomly* distributed, rather than distributed in its statistical probability by opportunity-constraining social and economic conditions, such as education and economic status. At any rate, to insist "that the universal opportunity to vote suffices to realize the value of democracy" (8) makes sense only if we have an operational measure of what "universal opportunity" is to be taken to mean. While the author mentions in passing the "perhaps most difficult case" when participatory distortion "exacerbates existing social inequalities because the groups least likely to vote are already disadvantaged in society" (12), he subsequently drops the subject when claiming that "seeking higher turnout among the disadvantaged is *not* [emphasis in orig.] distinctively democratic, but is rather to promote social justice" (*ibid*.) - which leaves the reader wondering how the normative desirability of democracy can be argued for if "social justice" is categorically excluded from the argument.

If we thus can neither solve the problem (following Lijphart) nor (following Saunders) consistently deny its presence, we may have to content ourselves with trying to explain its increasing occurrence. Such an explanation is called for in view of the fact that equality of political rights (and prominent among them: the right to vote in general elections) is the ultimate base of legitimacy claims of rulers in liberal democracies and their representative institutions. The claim is that the latter somehow reflect the will of (*all of*) the people. The strictly egalitarian distribution of political rights as citizens' core political resources is the outcome of a long historical process (often proudly celebrated by democrats) in which qualifications of these rights according to property ownership, tax paying status, gender, education, ethnic origin, race,literacy, linguistic and writing ability, length of residence, and clean criminal record[10] were all gradually abolished (Therborn 1977), with the only remaining threshold, under adult suffrage, being a minimum *age* requirements for the right to vote.[11] The recent wave of (mostly) liberalizing reforms of citizenship laws (Howard 2009) that have taken place in the majority of the EU-27 democracies concerning the

[10] This qualification of universal adult voting rights is still in full force and widely used in the US, with some states making it a lifetime ban. Due to the dramatic expansion in incarceration in the late 20th century, no less than 4.7 million voting age citizens were thus deprived of their voting rights in the elections of 2000. (Markoff 2011: 248) In Germany, the duration of the ban for convicted criminals (§ 45 StGb) is limited to a maximum of five years and rarely applied by courts.

[11] Yet even the age barrier can and arguably should be eliminated by a scheme introducing vicarious voting of parents: an extra vote for each mother for each of her sons, and each father for each daughter. (cf. van Parijs 2011)

naturalization/enfranchisement of migrants with full residence rights continues this long term historical trend. The fundamental normative tenet of liberal democracy is that all those who are subject to the law must have a voice in the making of the law. Whoever is under the rule of the law without being its (potential) co-author is a *subject*, not a *citizen*.

Non-participation: a challenge for democratic theory

How do we then account, in normative terms, for our two issues of (1) a percentage of *all* relevant social categories failing to make full use of the political resources accorded to them by law in the form of "*voluntary*" abstention and, even more difficult, (2) the pattern of an empirically *uneven* underutilization of citizens' political resources? As we have seen, the first of these two cases, at least if we think of voting alone, is much easier to cope with than the second, although a steady decline in turnout rates, even if that decline applies to *all* social categories. Whatever its social causation, and given that every freedom includes the freedom to abstain from its use (family rights include chosen childlessness, property rights include the right to voluntarily donate or destroy what you own), *random* non-utilization of political resources can arguably be accommodated within the liberal (if not so the (neo-)republican; cf. Schäfer 2011b) version of democratic theory. We would have to rely on a rule-of-thumb that some people will always, independently of their social status, freely develop a taste for forfeiting some of their freedoms. In contrast, (2) describes a situation where the "waste" of political resources is empirically correlated to indicators of individuals' life chances (such as education, income, labor market status, age). Here, non-participation is evidently not "freely chosen", or freely chosen in a different sense, as the conditions that are statistically correlated with this choice are themselves not freely chosen, but consist in circumstances that are "given" in a way that, at any moment, is beyond the control of those affected by them. Findings to this effect give rise to the suspicion that *social* and *economic* factors which operate beyond the system of *legal* rights can bring about discriminatory and exclusionary effects which are normatively problematic from the point of view of democratic citizenship and civic equality. Even worse, the normative problem for democratic theory is not just distortion itself, but the plausible possibility that distortion breeds on itself and leads to more distortion, or becomes permanent: As people are conditioned to "waste" their rights and political resources, and as competing political elites and political parties *come to understand* that parts of the electorate are less likely than others to make use of their political resources, those elites will concentrate in their platforms, campaigns, and mobilization strategies upon those segments of the citizenry who actually "count" and neglect others, launching a negative and exclusionary learning cycle of mutual alienation between elites and underprivileged citizens.

Moreover, these concerns relating to the quality of democracy can not put to rest by the argument that the preferences of those who vote and those who do not, after all, differ that greatly so that even under strong distortions the overall outcome of elections would be roughly the same as if participation across social categories had been more even. What is dubious about this argument is the fact that elections (and even more so: other forms of participation) are not just an opportunity to *express* given preferences; they are, at the same time and in anticipation of such expression, a challenge for citizens to *find*

out about and *form* those preferences by learning about, discussing with others, and deliberating about one's choices. People who are disposed by their circumstances not to vote miss this kind of opportunity and challenge of preference formation which perhaps would lead them to form preferences that *do* differ from those who do vote (Offe 2011). Here, another vicious circle suggests itself: The more people of certain status categories are (self-)excluded from voting and other forms of political participation, the more ill-considered and unreflective their political preferences and opinions are likely to remain or become, as they forego learning opportunities for forming judgments on public affairs. In this sense, undistorted political participation is desirable because it equalizes the challenge for individual citizens to practice and refine their capacity for judgment on public affairs.

In the post-WWII era of American-dominated social science, the claim was widely accepted that the vast underutilization of citizens' political resources that becomes manifest in widespread apathy and abstention must be read, being entirely *voluntary*, as a clear signal of tacit consent and acquiescence of the proverbial "silent majority". People who do not raise their voice have evidently little to nothing to complain about and thus are in basic and stable agreement with matters as they stand: If they were not, they would naturally have chosen to make their voices heard. In present-day Europe, the plain opposite is true. As Kohler (2006) has shown on the basis of EQLS data for each of the EU-27 member states, there is an almost uniform *positive* correlation between *subjective* measures of satisfaction (general life satisfaction, satisfaction with public services, absence of a perception of persistent tensions and conflicts in society) and participation in elections: the *happier* people are in social life and the *less* tension they perceive, the *more* likely they are to vote (even if we control for all the other known determinants of turnout; 163). This suggests that non-participation can be more plausibly interpreted as silent expression of *protest* and frustration than as silent consent.

Such widely confirmed and empirically uncontroversial findings are often construed as being paradoxical in still another sense. For those *least* well-endowed in terms of education, income, and security are clearly those who lack the *individual* means and resources the use of which can improve their condition (through spending income, making use of labor market opportunities, etc.). Given this lack of individual resources, they would likely turn to the *collective* resource of democratic state power as the only instrumental means available to them to improve their condition through state-provided services and transfers. In doing so and succeeding, they would benefit from the fruits of such collective efforts more strongly and more directly than the middle class. The opportunity costs of non-participation can be safely assumed to be greater for the resource-poor that for the resource-rich.[12] That would lead us to expect that the poorer, the less educated, and the more insecure people are in their socio-economic status, the more eagerly they should seek to put their political rights to use and the more readily should vote-seeking left-of-center elites focus on mobilizing and educating them to this effect. Yet this is not the

[12] A striking illustration is a referendum on a school reform proposal, backed by all political parties, in the city state of Hamburg when the turnout of the intended beneficiaries of this reform was much lower than that of its middle class opponents, with the latter defeating the reform. This result is to be explained by the combined effect of the losers being poorly informed by the media and the winners having much greater resources to invest in the campaign. Cf. Roemmele and Schober 2010.

case - arguably not just due to the lack of information, but also due to the lack of confidence that political involvement is worth the effort.

While it is true virtually everywhere in the OECD world that low education correlates with low individual propensity to vote, the *extent* to which this is the case varies in a cross-country comparison with the individual country's type of labor market regime and the resulting degree of status security of workers. Makszin and Schneider (2010: 16-18) were able to demonstrate the significance of this intervening variable to the effect that "this relationship [between education and voting] is notably stronger in countries that have labor markets characterized by low regulation" while "a more regulated labor market implies a less pronounced distorting effect of education upon political participation". As labor market regimes are nothing but sedimented results of several rounds of previous policies and the "lived experience" they left behind, I interpret this correlation as showing that in highly regulated/high protection regimes even poorly educated voters have strong *stakes* (be it hopes of further improvements or fears of losing past accomplishments) in the outcome of election, which they are unlikely to develop under regimes that do not regulate and protect in the first place.

A related theory to explain participatory distortion through policy outcomes is "relative power theory", as suggested by Solt (2008: 48-9). His analysis demonstrates "that economic inequality powerfully depresses political interest, discussion of politics, and participation in elections among all but the most affluent and that this negative effect increases with declining relative income." This finding is congruent with my claim that the degree of socioeconomic inequality that prevails in a society is itself to be taken as an *artefact of policy*, i. e. an outcome of the presence or absence of fiscal, labor market, incomes, educational and many other policies that favor egalitarian outcomes in terms of overall life chances. Also, it is assumed in this theory that voters assume highly inegalitarian distributional patterns to endow the rich with both the interest and, above all, the means to preserve or even further enhance their privileged relative status. They are seen as being able to convert economic resources into political ones (for instance, by shaping the policy agenda of parties and removing redistributional issues from the debate), while the poor do not have similar means at their disposal. Under this perceived configuration of forces, it simply makes no sense for the poor to participate. Fatalism prevails among them because they are "likely to rationally conclude that there is little point to being engaged in politics." (*ibid*.) Given their accumulated experience of living in a highly and increasingly unequal society in which the government is evidently not in control of the resources needed for redistributive measures, people lack what in the older literature used to be termed a "sense of subjective political efficacy".[13] Isn't it conceivable that large parts of the population, rather than lacking the intellectual skills and energies to engage into democratic politics, have come to understand quite well that they live, for all their practical purposes, in a kind of "post-democracy", while the rest of the population lives and partakes in a "two-thirds-democracy" (to quote the strangely oxymoronic term suggested by Merkel and Petering (2011: 19))?

[13] - as conveniently operationalized as the percentage of those surveyed who *dis*agree with the statement: "People like me don't have any say about what the government does." (Madsen 1978)

Revisiting Schattschneider

The classical formulation of the puzzle of voluntary non-participation of less privileged strata is Schattschneider's (1960). He observes the "massive self-disfranchisement" (102) of American voters which occurs through extralegal means, as it is not coerced, but voluntary. He tries to understand the "invisible" (98) and "imperceptible" (108) forces that bring about the counter-intuitive self-disfranchisement of exactly the less privileged strata within the electorate that would often benefit most from actually making their voices heard. As I read it, Schattschneider's puzzle is something like this. Starting with a Schumpeterian model of the democratic political process, we must distinguish between elite *suppliers* in the political market (i. e., competing political parties) and *buyers* in that markets (mass constituencies of voters and "policy-takers"). The ballot is the equivalent of money through the spending of which buyers purchase what competing elites (promise to) supply.[14] The interest of suppliers is two-fold. First, and as a *common* interest of all suppliers, the author suggests, elites will do all they can to endow their (potential) constituency with political purchasing power (or "exchange value"), namely the right to vote. "The expansion of the electorate was largely a by-product of the system of party conflict. … One of the best ways to win a fight is to widen the scope of the conflict, and the effort to widen the involvement of … bystanders produced universal suffrage." (100-1) Seen this way, political parties have had a strong incentive to have voting rights granted to hitherto disenfranchized social categories.[15]

However, after any of those elites have attracted sufficient voter support to put themselves in the possession, if only for the time being, of political power, they must now start to design the product - bundles of programmatic policy proposals, candidates - that are likely to appeal to buyers (or rather creditors) in the political market - the "use value"[16] of public policies. At this point, the managerial (as opposed to entrepreneurial) logic of cautious economizing takes over, which means the priority of risk and blame avoidance and of keeping core segments of a party's constituency reasonably happy. The key organizational objective is that of defending one's market share (i. e., staying in power after the *next* election); it must not be jeopardized by ill-advised ambitions, risks, and confrontational moves beyond one's powers to cope. There are important but potentially dangerous issues that parties will wisely keep off their plat-

[14] However, in contrast to real money, there is no saving or hoarding with political money, which should provide a built-in incentive to actually spend it at the only time when it has value, namely on election day.

[15] This logic could still be seen at work when the Red-Green coalition government in Germany liberalized the German Citizenship Act (effective 2000) that facilitated the access to full citizenship (including voting rights) to long-term resident foreign workers and their spouses and descendents.

[16] Although the term "use value" is used here in an admittedly somewhat metaphorical manner, it should not be too difficult to agree on theoretical qualities of policies of "high" use value. For instance, the use value of a public policy increases with the extent it robustly departs, in ways that are widely considered desirable, from the status quo and thus "makes a difference"; with the extent it is inclusive in its *temporal* scope ("sustainable", not driven by short term pressures and opportunistic considerations); and with the extent it is *socially* inclusive, i. e. explicitly responsive to the interests and preferences of all sides affected by it (rather than being subservient to "special interests". - The distinction between between political exchange value and use value derives from the same intuition that has inspired, in 1992, German President's Richard von Weizsäcker's critique of political party elites of being, on the one hand and in exchange value terms, *machtversessen* (obsessed with gaining power) while being *machtvergessen* (disinterested in applying power) when it comes to making actual use of the power entrusted to them.

forms and agendas; otherwise, they would run the risk of being denounced by opponents for their lack of 'realism'.

Such reasoning seems to underlie Schattschneider's analysis when he emphasizes the contradiction that "the right to vote is now [in place] for a generation, but the *use* (emph. in orig.) of the ballot as an effective instrument of democratic politics is something else altogether." (101) After its party-driven universalization, political parties "attempt to make the vote meaningless". (103) It is this sense of meaninglessness that, in turn, leads to selective mass abstention that is caused by the "agenda of politics" chosen. (104) "Abstention reflects the suppression of the options and alternatives that reflect the needs of the non-participants", the latter consisting of "the poorest, the least well-established, least educated stratum of the community". (105) Due to the strategy of risk-avoidance of competing (and often also colluding) political parties, "large areas of need and interest are excluded from the political system". (106) Absent the perception of such use value, increasing segments of constituencies simply drop out of political life, following the simple logic of "if you fail to deliver, we refuse to pay".[17] The key theorem here is that the political agenda set up by supply side strategies in the political market selects "the submerged millions [who] have found it difficult to get interested in the game" (109) and who, as "a body of dissociated people" come to conclude "that politics is simply not a game worth playing" (Solt 2008: 58). "The root of the problem of nonvoting is to be found … above all by *what* [emph. in orig.] issues are developed." (Schattschneider 1960: 110) A political agenda is more than just a list of *what* to do and which problems to address; it is also, implicitly, a scheme of *whom* to appeal to, protect, rely upon, address - and whom *not*. "Whoever decides what the game is about decides also who can get into the game." (105) This interaction between the substantive and the social selectivity of strategically established agendas can serve to solve the puzzle of voluntary, non-coerced self-exclusion of major parts of the citizenry: "The exclusion of people by extralegal processes … may be far more effective than the law." (111) The root of this exclusionary process is, on the part of actors on the supply side of the policy transaction, the silent complicity of strategic non-decision making (Bachrach and Baratz 1970), i. e. of leaving "touchy" issues and agents untouched.

I have taken the liberty here to present the reader with a rather detailed account of Schattschneider's argument because it has triggered a still ongoing debate among theorists and sociologists of the liberal democratic regime form. The debate (as summarized, for instance, in Piven and Cloward (1988, ch. 4) started as one between social-psychological behavioralists and political science institutionalists. The former "fasten upon the question of what it is about non-voters themselves that accounts for their failure to participate". (113) Answers to this question focus upon attitudes, resources, and preferences of the non-participants who are said to lack a sense of political effectiveness, a sense of "civic obligation" (Al-

[17] The problem with this response is obviously that, in a dynamic analysis, the second order-effect is to be expected that political parties thus rejected will even more consistently decide to drop the interests of the less privileged from their agenda as the latter do not vote for them anyway so that no loss is to be expected for them if they ignore their interests. This dynamic can explain a change away from vote-maximizing catch-all-parties and their broad support to clientelistic parties catering only to special interests and specific segments of the constituency while ignoring in their agendas the interests of all those who are unlikely to support them in the first place.

mond and Verba 1963, chs. 11 an 12), possess few educational resources, feel little partisan attachment, and lack "civic skills" and "language skills" as essential "resources for politics" (Verba et al., 1995, ch. 11). In a rational choice perspective (Downs 1957), these deficiencies lead them to assess the situation to the effect that the "costs" of voting outweigh perceived benefits, while the better educated "are likely to get more gratification from political participation", as Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980: 35) point out in all seriousness. The less educated lack cognitive skills, the ability to learn about politics and "experience with a variety of bureaucratic relationships [such as] filling out forms, waiting in lines and meeting deadlines." (88). In this way, the "responsibility for widespread nonparticipation is attributed wholly to the ignorance, indifference and shiftlessness of the people." (Schattschneider 1960: 105) The behaviorist account thus pursues a line of methodological victim-blaming by "searching for an explanation of nonparticipation in the nonparticipants" (Piven and Cloward 1988: 121).

Political vs. social equality

We have now covered the full scope of the debate: From an author like Schattschneider who focuses on the "extralegal" exclusionary processes which are even "more effective than the law" (and by implication: more unjust than formal disfranchisement) to authors like Wolfinger and Rosenstone who (at the price of virtually ending up in tautology) explain whatever people do or don't do by their - perfectly legitimate and entirely harmless - taste or propensity for (not) doing it. At the same time, there does not seem to exist, in the normative literature, much disagreement on political equality being the core principle of a democratic political order. Most authors would also agree that political equality must not only be legally (*de jure*) provided for, but socially and politically implemented (*de facto*). Far from political equality being antagonistic to the other (and arguably *only* ultimate; cf. Honneth 2011) principle of a political order, namely freedom, equality is *instrumental* for the achievement of the latter. "Political equality is not … an end we can obtain only at the expense of freedom …; it is instead an essential means to a just distribution of freedom and to fair opportunities for self-development." (Dahl 1989: 322)

According to Dahl, there are three social conditions that can stand in the way of the achievement of *de facto* political equality, i. e. the fair distribution of what he calls "political resources" (*ibid*.: 130). These inequalities are (1) "differences in resources and opportunities for employing violent coercion", (2) those "in economic positions, resources, and opportunities" and (3) those "in knowledge, information, and cognitive skills". (*ibid*.: 323-4) Yet these differences are not just hindrances of a democratic political process, as they distort (according to any conceivable standard of a *fair* distribution of political resources) the *"inputs"* that citizens will make into that process; people who feel threatened by arbitrary police violence or economic dependency, or who are unable to understand what the political game is all about are unlikely to use their political rights freely and make their voices heard, individually or collectively.

Such distributional patterns of coercive, economic, and cognitive powers must also be seen as *"outputs"* of previous rounds of policy-making in which those patterns of unequal distribution of political resources have been brought into being - be it through political acts of commission or of omission. As political ine-

quality must thus be understood as being a *consequence* (and not just a *premise*) of the making of public policy, Dahl goes on to argue that the principle of political equality requires that rulers in an

> "advanced democratic country would actively seek to reduce great inequalities in the capacities and opportunities for citizens to participate effectively in political life that are caused … by the distribution of economic resources, positions … and by the distribution of knowledge, information, and cognitive skills." (*ibid.:* 324)

In other words: Participatory inequality must be understood not just as an unpleasant and (for democrats) somewhat embarrassing fact of life "out there", but as a condition that is inherently produced and reproduced by the conduct of public policy and its supply (or failure thereof) of policies providing for the approximate *de facto* equalization of political resources.

What Dahl proposes here is a dualist model of how democratic citizenship relates to public policy. The first and familiar side of that model is that *citizens* of a democracy, endowed with their political rights and through various procedures of aggregation, representation, coalition-building etc. *shape public policies*. The second and more striking side is this: Public policies, by "actively seeking to reduce great inequalities" or by *failing to do so* conversely *shape citizens* and the actual use they make of their political rights. More specifically, if governments allow *and thereby cause* income gaps to widen, educational opportunities to become massively unequal, precariousness of labor market status to spread, and the integration of migrants and their descendent often to fail they thereby *create* strata of citizens who are "objectively" ill-disposed to make use of the political rights and resources with which they are nominally endowed as citizens. They also create, among people affected by these conditions, a "subjective" life world of meanings, lived experience, expectations, fears, and denied recognition and accumulated diffuse aggressiveness which alienates them from the supposedly normal practices of political organization and participation and who come to consider their political rights largely useless - and act accordingly. Taken together, these two sides of shaping citizens through policies of omission or commission constitute groups that are marginalized and economically as hopeless as they are politically and culturally homeless (Walter 2010: 203-219).

It is thus not the case that a high level of inequality and social insecurity will in any way automatically lead to popular demands for policies that provide for redistribution. It can also be the case that the perceived inability or/and unwillingness of any governing coalition to respond to inequalities through the adoption of redistributive measures have become so evident (given the extent and persistence of problems of poverty, inequality of opportunity, and insecurity) that citizens affected by these conditions have given up raising their voice and demanding such measures. (After you learn that trains are not running here any more, it makes no sense to wait on the platform any longer.) "The evidence indicates, however, that higher levels of inequality are not associated with more redistributive spending", nor even with more loudly voiced demands for such spending. In this way, "economic inequality undermines political equality" (Solt 2008: 57).

The first of the two loops in the democratic model (from needs to demands to remedial policies) presupposes not just the presence of democratic political rights, but, in addition, the presence of *confidence*

that democratic government is a reasonably responsive agency and hence the appropriate address at which demands can be directed. Absent this confidence, demands will be neither voiced nor responded to, in spite of the largely unadulterated presence of those rights. While authoritarian rulers focus on demolishing those democratic rights, "post-democratic" rulers adopt the far less conspicuous strategy of frustrating the confidence that these rights are of much use, thus activating a negative version of the second loop: from failed policies to silenced demands to unaddressed needs.

Such reasoning does, of course, run counter to much of liberal theory of representative democracy. Both the 19th century timid opponents and the early 20th century social democratic proponents of liberal democracy as a vehicle of institutionalized class struggle were united in their basic assumption that providing citizens with equal political rights would spell an increasing intensity of class and other kinds of conflict. This doctrine finds it followers even in the early 21st century, as in a recent publication by Markoff (2011). After spelling out the different ways in which "material inequalities under democratic conditions might generate movements", he generalizes that "under democratic conditions, inequality is a frequent source of trouble". (251) He goes on to say that "democracy invites movements" and "claims that the people are sovereign are invitations for people to act; claims that the government serves the people are invitations for people to demand it to do so … and for those who feel unrepresented to point that out." (258-9) Democracy is even claimed to always "generate movements for more democracy" (261-2). What I have tried to do in the present paper is to cast doubt on such generalizations, and to point out some of the reasons for such doubt.

Standards of the requisite social equality which, following Dahl, are sufficient to redeem the promise of political equality are not easy to define and operationalize. My own modest proposal would be something like this: Conditions at the lower end of the distribution of life chances must be "tolerable" (as opposed to being those of deep and self-perpetuating poverty and precariousness); at the same time, conditions at the upper end of the distribution must be such that a warning of John M. Keynes is credibly heeded. Keynes wrote (in 1923!):

> "To convert the business man into the profiteer is to strike a blow to capitalism, because it destroys the psychological equilibrium which permits the perpetuance of unequal rewards. The business man is only tolerable so long as his gains can be held to bear some relation to what, roughly and in some sense, his activities have contributed to society." (Keynes 1931: 95)

Yet the concept of political equality itself is somewhat ambiguous. As in the debates on social justice, it is also in the field of political justice (and its social underpinnings) that the question must be asked: Equality of *what*? While we habitually tend to answer that question in terms of equality of *citizens* and the actual use they make of their political rights (of communication, association, participation, representation etc.), we might also think in terms of two additional answers. One pertains to the *substantive* dimension. If the democratic process of participation and representation is supposed to yield an adequate mirror image of the diversity of preferences, ideas, and opinions held by individual citizens as members of the electorate, we would also want to make sure that that diversity finds effective access to the political agenda, particularly as democracy is not just about equal rights, but also about competition, contestation, and institutionalized conflict. Thirdly, there is a *temporal* dimension: as there is a diversity of time

horizons, both short term and long term considerations must be included, ideally with some representation of the interests and foreseeable conditions of future generations and issues of sustainability. Yet in democratic practice, the substantive and temporal diversities must be brought to bear upon the political process through the *social* diversity of the people who at present participate in politics. To the extent they don't, not only the voices of non-participants go unheard, but also substantive ideas and future-regarding considerations that may have informed their preferences. At any rate, high rates of patterned non-participation are likely to impoverish the political process: it may become more easily manageable, but the range of issues, ideas, and anticipations entering into it - and thereby its overall learning capacity - may well be significantly reduced.

Two and a half theories about the operation of democratic capitalism

In this concluding section I'll describe in a stylized fashion and contrast three theoretical approaches to both *understanding* and *justifying* the realities of democratic capitalism and its (desired) mode of operation. Each of these theories specify in a consistent and empirically validated way how the state and policy makers, market actors in the economy, and citizens act and should act. The three theories are the social democratic *cum* social market economy theories, the market-liberal theory, and an (as yet incomplete) theory that, for want of a better name, will here be sketched out under the clumsy title "global financial market driven post-democracy". The latter is incomplete as it is well able to describe the "logic" which governs the realities of contemporary markets and politics but lacks the normative argument demonstrating why these realities are justified, universally beneficial, or even sustainable.

Social democratic and social market economy

At the legal and constitutional level, democratic political rights guarantee *civic* equality, not, of course, the equality of socio-economic *outcomes*. Civic equality is normatively premised upon a strict separation and disjunction of (unequally distributed) socio-economic resources and (equal) political rights according to the principle of *non-convertibility* of the former into the latter. Ownership of economic assets should not be allowed to translate into privilege, political power, or a shortcut to access it. Correspondingly, inferior socio-economic status should not be allowed to deprive citizens of their political voice and its effectiveness. At the same time, it can trivially be observed that the actual use of political resources (*rights* such as the right to vote, the right to form associations, freedom of opinion and assembly, all leading to law-making by representative legislatures) can (and is actually intended to) *have a major impact upon the relative socioeconomic status and status security of citizens*, as any democratically legislated tax law can serve to illustrate. This is the *asymmetrical* linkage between economic and political resources and spheres of action, with the former being to some extent (e. g., through the regulation of party and campaign finance etc.) *banned* from being converted into the latter yet the latter being allowed, in fact *intended* to impact upon the former.

This formula is the normative bedrock of the "social democratic" or "social market economy" normative theory of capitalist democracy: political power, reflecting prevailing conceptions of social justice and claiming *primacy* over the dynamics of markets, can legitimately shape the distribution of economic resources, *but not the other way round*. More specifically, whenever a point on the trade-off curve of efficiency vs. equity is to be determined, the choice is to be made by democratically accountable political, not by economic agents. This normative theory suggests to secure the primacy of the social over the economic, or of the political over the market. (Streeck 2011: 8)

The social democratic theory shares with the "social market" precepts (which have their roots in the Roman Catholic social doctrine) two assumptions. First, the economic process is one that is entirely shaped by and embedded in institutional arrangements and political decisions which have been framed at the political and constitutional levels. They can be made to operate smoothly through ongoing bargaining among corporatist collective actors, statutory codetermination rights, taxation, and political regulation. It is public policies that set into motion, license, regulate, and thus provide an institutional framework for market forces. By doing so, the democratic state can steer the economic process in ways that reliably avoid the twin dangers of devastating economic crises and disruptive social conflict. The second assumption of the social democratic theory amounts to a theory of worker-citizens' participation and "voice". Its claim is that, given this confidence in the state's supervisory and steering capacities and given the uneven distribution of life chances that characterizes capitalist social structures, there will be a "natural" tendency of all parts of the population, and in particular the less privileged ones, to make an active use of the political resources that are granted to them by equal political rights. In such an institutional arrangement, there is a built-in incentive for citizens to make full use of their rights, as such use offers the prospect of a cumulative limitation of socioeconomic inequalities on the "output" side of state policies. More specifically, and in line with the slogan "millions against millionaires" that was popular on the political left in the Weimar Republic, the less privileged strata of the population would have good reasons and thus feel encouraged to *actually voice* their complaints and demands for redistributive policies and greater (job and social) security. The consequence would be a self-correcting dynamic, generating policies that reduce inequality and thus provide for political stability. The combined effect of what is suggested by these two social democratic assumptions would be a peaceful, non-violent and non-disruptive process in which political institutions of both territorial representation (parties and parliaments) and functional representation (trade unions and other major interest associations) allow for the ongoing accommodation of conflicting interests. They would, in particular, succeed in doing so if economic policies were adopted by the government which promote growth and hence set the stage for ongoing positive-sum-games, as fiscal growth dividends would continuously be generated and spent on social investment and transfers.

The market-liberal theory of democratic capitalism

An alternative theory of capitalist democracy, the "market-liberal" one, de- and prescribes a strictly symmetrical separation of markets and politics. As market power should not translate into political decision making power, neither should the state and politics be allowed to (more than marginally) intervene

into the market-generated distribution of resources. All liberal theories, particularly if combined with "pluralist" political theory, assume that under such symmetrical differentiation of political and economic spheres none of the two will either have legitimate reasons nor in fact the opportunity or prospect to claim primacy over the other. While neither the state nor the market are fully autonomous, the mutual relations and inputs required cannot possibly amount to any relationship of dependency or robust prevalence. This theory, which found its most sophisticated elaboration in the work of sociological theorists such as Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann, describes relationship between democratic state and capitalist economy as one of interdependence without primacy. The input that the political system provides to the economic systems is the legal guarantee of property rights, the enforcement of contracts, and the provision of infrastructural facilities and services. Conversely, the inputs coming from the economy are taxes, on the one hand, and pluralist group pressures on the other. Given a highly diversified socioeconomic structure, none of the organized groups that can mobilize political pressure is strong enough to impose binding demands on the political system; also, pressures generate ("counter-veiling") counter-pressures so as to cancel each other out, leaving the government free to give in and cater to this or that group.

Moreover, not all citizens in a "mass society" do actually belong to and identify with *any* particular group; yet many will, however loosely, belong to *more* than one group (e. g., a trade union and the Roman Catholic church) - a situation that gives rise to the healthy phenomenon of "cross-pressure" at the micro-level of voters which serves to mitigate the intensity of societal conflict. Nor does the pressure that one particular group can generate pertain to all policy areas equally, which further increases the freedom of discretion enjoyed by the governments of pluralist societies. What does this stylized liberal theory have to say about patterns of political participation and its motives? Here, the prevailing concern is with the systemic dangers of "excessive" mobilization and participation which, according the social science doctrines of the fifties and sixties, was suspected as a source of instability, if not "totalitarian" dangers. A political culture that leads people to stay passive or indifferent on most issues most of the time, combined with a sense of diffuse loyalty and support for the political system as a whole, is widely considered as desirable for the sake of stability. At any rate, widespread political apathy is normatively unproblematic and can even be considered an asset, as *voluntary* non-participation is to be read (wrongly, as we saw) as a sign of basic *satisfaction* with policies and political institutions on the part of all those who decide to refrain from raising their voice in spite of their right to do so. The multiplicity of opportunities to *join* groups that is present in a pluralistic society, as well as the multiplicity of opportunities to *vote* in local, state, and federal elections of a highly decentralized political system were both welcomed as buffer mechanisms which served to hinder excesses of mobilization that would jeopardize political stability.

As politicized conflict may breed instability and may threaten the institutional order by crossing or even demolishing the barriers between the democratic state and the capitalist market , high rates of (in particular: non-randomly distributed) abstention may also be *welcomed* as a buffer mechanism that safeguards the political order. The latter must be protected from the dangerous consequences of "excessive" electoral mobilization which may lead to fiscal crisis through "demand overload" (Huntington

1975). This type of argument draws upon an idea used by J. S. Mill in his defense of a system of plural voting rights: being more prosperous and better educated, the participation-prone members of the middle class are superior in experience and cognitive skills, which supposedly translates into a better quality of political judgment on public affairs, which again shows that both the quality and stability of democracy would *profit* from prevailing patterns of participatory inequality.

A further reassuring feature of liberal-pluralist political theorizing was the axiomatic assumption, derived from Schumpeter, of a deep divide between political elites and non-elites, modeled according to the market transaction. As there is the hiatus between producers and consumers in markets, there is a divide between elite suppliers and non-elite consumers in politics. As dissatisfied consumers, in their right mind, would never consider invading the place of production in order to make their dissatisfaction heard but rather rationally switch to a competing supplier who better caters to their needs and tastes, so the democratic citizen was categorically assumed to rely on "exit" by changing over to another supplier rather than engage in verbal (or other) types of conflict with an unsatisfactory supplier/political elite. Thus in both economy and politics, the market (or its political equivalent, driven by the ballot rather than cash payments) would make for the smooth and inconspicuous accommodation of divergent tastes and interests. Moreover, and given that the politically unrestrained market economy lets its output trickle down even to the least prosperous parts of the population, apolitical attitudes of "privatism" (Peterson 1984), "family-centeredness" and consumerism become so widespread as life styles that they effectively marginalize both the motives and time resources for political participation.[18]

Postdemocratic capitalism?

Both the social democratic and the liberal pluralist theories, as well as their implications concerning levels, kinds, and social distribution of participatory practices, are now a largely obsolete matter of the past - both in their analytical and normative aspects. They reached their expiration dates after the historical turning points democratic capitalism experienced in the second half of the 1970ies and again after 1989. What we are entirely lacking, however, is a theory, or a normative justification, of current realities where economic resources do determine the agenda and decision outputs of the political process, while the owners of those resources themselves and the distributional outcomes markets cause are not being significantly constrained by social rights and political interventions. To the contrary, the latter are to a large extent put at the disposition of economic "imperatives". Note that, compared to the social democratic model, the present condition of globalized financial market capitalism *cum* endemic fiscal crisis precisely amounts to an *inverted* asymmetry: *markets* set the agenda and (fiscal) constraints of public policies, but there is little that *public policies* in their turn can do in terms of constraining the realm and dynamics of ever-expanding markets -- unless, that is, political elites are suicidally prepared to expose themselves to the "markets" second strike capabilities. Yet it is this logic of a pervasive preponderance of accumulation, profit, efficiency, competitiveness, austerity and the market over the sphere of social

[18] "Most Americans are much more concerned with the business of buying and selling, earning and disposing of things, than they are with the 'idle' chatter of politics." (Lane 1962: 25)

rights, political redistribution, and sustainability, as well as the defenselessness of the latter against the former, that governs the contemporary version of capitalist democracy (or rather "post-democracy", Crouch 2004), and will do so probably for many years to come (Streeck 2011). This logic, as it unfolds before our eyes and on a global scale, is sufficiently powerful and uncontested, it seems, to prevail through its sheer facticity and in the absence of any supporting normative theory - as a "naked" reality bare of any shred of justification.

Briefly, this logic operates starting from the categorical denial of any tension between the rights of people and the rights of property owners, of social justice vs. property and market justice. To the extent the governments of nation states are in charge of the former and the addressee of respective demands and complaints, of "voice", governments are largely deafened by the overpowering and ubiquitous "noise" of the austerity imperative. The urgency of this imperative, and at the same time the difficulty to comply with it, is determined by three factors. First, the need to bail out failed (or potentially failing) financial institutions whose preferred clients governments are.[19] Second, governments cannot manage their financial trouble by raising taxes because that would constitute a burden on private investors in the "real" economy and would disincentivize their continued (domestic) investment. Third, expenses can not be cut because, in order to unburden employers, increasing parts of the social security system, so far mostly covered by "para-fiscal" mechanisms of contributions, need to be covered (to the extent transfers cannot be cut) out of general revenues. Being cornered in this triangle of constraints (and being seen as being cornered by the public), the state is no longer a plausible supplier of what all kinds of demand side actors may desire it to provide. To gain room for maneuver at all, it is undergoing a slow permutation from a classical (Schumpeterian) "tax state" to a "borrowing state". Expenditures are being covered, that is, not out of present revenues, but out of hoped-for *future* revenues, the prospective tax base of which, however, is itself being decimated by the increasing parts of state budgets that are spent on servicing debt (rather than on providing services and infrastructure). With Streeck (2007: 32, 34) we can speak of "emaciated state capacity" and the "attrition of its disposable resources". The endemic fiscal crisis "pre-empts democratic choice" (Streeck 2010: 5); citizens simply have to get used to the fact that a fiscally starved state is the wrong interlocutor as it comes to demands concerning "costly" policies.

This configuration of constraints leaves little space for processes and institution which supposedly make up the core decision making site of democracy, namely party competition, elections, and parliamentary representation and legislation. After all, if decision making on taxing and spending is off the agenda, a core function of parliamentary government is largely suspended. Instead, policy-making moves to other sites which are typically out of reach for the participant agents of normal democratic politics. All kinds of government-appointed commissions and fiduciary institutions (including central banks) are being endowed with or appropriate *de facto* policy-making competencies, often of a supranational kind, as in ad-hoc peak meetings of European (or G-20) heads of governments. These bodies, including the European

[19] States are preferred clients because so-called "sovereign" debtors have a number of advantages that are absent from ordinary borrowers of financial means: they have the authority to extract revenues from citizens, they can print money, and they have no choice but bailing out "systemic" financial institutions in case they fail.

Commission, are non-partisan in their composition and involved in transactions behind closed doors that puts them by and large outside of the democratic loop of transparency and accountability; as is the case with other instances of multi-level and multi-actor governance which tend to systematically obscure and anonymize the locus of political responsibility (Offe 2008).

Public authorities are seen as having lost their grip on key issues of fiscal and budgetary policy, being driven instead by rating agencies and other forces of the financial markets. They have also, since the neo-liberal turn of the eighties (when symptoms of participatory distortion began to show up in the data), lost, in the name of efficiency, austerity, privatization, deregulation, private-public partnership, new public management, artificial voucher-driven markets etc., much of their control over the quality, price and distribution of public services. Growing parts of the citizenry (and particularly those interested in and depending upon government's social spending and services) come to understand as a consequence that participating in democratic politics is largely a pointless activity. We might speak of a *dual control gap*: Governments lose control over the financial sector and taxation, and in response citizens lose their confidence that the idea of democratic control over government policies is a credible one any longer. Not only does the new political economy of globalized financial capitalism have a diminished space for elected parliaments and their democratic role; it can also do without active citizens who find themselves cut off from meaningful opportunities for participation. "Citizens increasingly perceive their governments, not as *their* agents, but as those of other states or of international organizations, such as the IMF or the European Union." (Streeck 2011: 26) As the arenas in which policies are actually made move ever further away from citizens, the latter respond to both the form and substantive content of policies made "elsewhere" by moving away, on their part, from the official yet evidently blocked channels of political communication and influence. If "there is no alternative" anyway, why should citizens bother to find out and decide which alternative to opt for?

The obvious question that worries political elites as well as social scientists today is this: What are citizens likely to do *instead*? Obviously, it would be risky to expect that citizens' retreat from politics into a mental state of alienated silence could be a steady state, although the media market does its utmost to make it one. Alternatively, there are four conceivable developments commentators and analysts have debated on the basis of recent political phenomena that can be read as early symptoms.

The first is what I call non-institutional "DIY-politics" within civil society. Symptoms range from individuals engaging in individuals' critical consumption and consumer boycott to protest movements such as the Mediterranean *indignados* to initiatives of civic engagement which organize, through movements, donations, and foundations, self-help and private charity, in part as substitutes for inadequate public services. These forms of political participation, while being highly selective in their (largely educated urban middle class) social base, can achieve a great deal of sympathetic public attention and even the rhetorical support of political and economic elites.

The second are ephemeral eruptions of mass violence in metropolitan cities, as we have seen them, in the course of the first years of the century, originating from (mostly) poor urban areas of London, Paris, and Athens and elsewhere. They are (in contrast to the rebellions of 2011 in Cairo and other MENA

cities) politically entirely unfocused and have partly provided cover for unleashed acquisitive and aggressive mass instincts (interpreted by some commentators as mirroring the acquisitive *elite* instincts of today's stock exchange brokers). They also meet with a great deal of public attention, if of a strongly and rightly unsympathetic, as well as fearful, one. At any rate, the "return of the violent mob" (Walter 2010: 214) has been put by events on the social sciences' agenda. Wolfgang Streeck (2011b: 6) warns "that, where legitimate outlets of political expression are shut down, illegitimate ones may take their place, at potentially very high social and economic costs."

A third alternative is the further growth of right wing populism which has its strongholds in countries of the European South East (Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece; cf. Berezin in this volume) and has surfaced, to a somewhat lesser extent, in France, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. Key ingredients of the remarkably effective success formula of rightist populist movements and parties are the *strengthening of borders* (against foreign goods, foreign migrants, foreign political influence coming, e. g., from the EU) as a means to protect the "weak"; the intolerance and often aggressive *denial of difference* (from those of ethnic difference to difference of political views and opinions) in the name of ethno-national homogeneity; and the strong reliance on charismatic leaders and successful political entrepreneurs. These parties and movements became successful by organizing a game of losers against other (namely "foreign") losers. They are the only political agents of the decades since 1990 who managed to broaden their political base and enhance participation, if not of the kind of participation that is envisaged by liberal democratic theory.

Finally, there is the intense, sometimes even desperate search, both in the social sciences (Smith 2005, 2009) and by various political parties (almost across the entire spectrum) to deepen and enhance political participation through the introduction of new institutional and procedural opportunities that allow and commit people to raise their "voice" more directly, more often, and on more matters than representative institutions and political party competition have allowed them to do so far. While such projects of making democracies more democratic clearly deserve great social scientific attention and imaginative experimentation, political theorists should also look into the social conditions under which interest and political preferences are *formed* before they are voiced. It has been the key argument of the present paper that new procedures may not be sufficient to enhance high and even participation of citizens unless the *supply* of public policies and its "possibility space", as it is perceived by citizens, is prevented from being ever more restricted, as it is in Lindbloms (1982) "prison".

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