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Ana Raquel Borges Barros de Matos

“Birthing democracy”
Between birth policies in Portugal
and mothering new forms of democracy in Brazil

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To my father (*in memoriam*)

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My son stapled two sheets of a notebook and asked me while I was working:

_ Are you working on your thesis, mum?

_ Yes, I am. Why?

He showed me his stapled sheets and said:

_ This is my thesis, mum, and I do not know how to do it alone. I need your help. You don't need any help with yours?

(Salvador, 5 years old)

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* Mia Couto (2009), *Jesusalém*. Lisboa: Caminho.

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[†] *Ibidem.*

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Resumo

Desde que surgiu, na antiguidade, que a ‘democracia’ vem sendo contestada, criticada e reinventada. Nas últimas quatro décadas, porém, os debates sobre a democracia têm-se centrado nas limitações do seu modelo representativo. Embora se identifiquem posições muito diferentes em relação à forma como se deve lidar com os problemas da democracia representativa, há alguma convergência quanto ao diagnóstico das suas principais ‘patologias’. Os principais problemas identificados prendem-se com a contradição entre mobilização e institucionalização da política, a apatia política e a incapacidade dos cidadãos para entenderem os problemas e avaliarem as decisões políticas, a complexidade crescente de inovação científica e tecnológica em relação às questões sociais e a sobrevalorização de mecanismos representativos.

Nos últimos anos, no Ocidente, tem aumentado a sensibilização em relação a concepções e práticas de governo surgidas noutras partes do mundo e que sugerem possibilidades alternativas para responder à ‘crise’ da democracia representativa. Uma dessas alternativas é a proposta de democracia de alta intensidade de Boaventura de Sousa Santos, uma abordagem fortemente influenciada pelos processos de (re)democratização do Sul global, iniciado com movimentos populares, muitas vezes apoiados por governos de esquerda, com o objetivo de combater as desigualdades, a exclusão, a violência e a corrupção que por muitos anos impediram o acesso à cidadania.

Nas últimas décadas, a participação tem, assim, prevalecido como a nota mais otimista em relação ao futuro da democracia, de acordo com a qual os Estados acolhem iniciativas cidadãs e movimentos populares como alavancas de inovação democrática, uma solução para resolver certos problemas, sobretudo aqueles que derivam do confronto entre conhecimentos. Trata-se, portanto, de uma forma exequível de superar um modelo de Estado considerado inadequado, assente no chamado modelo de ‘dupla delegação’.

É objetivo desta análise compreender como, em diferentes sociedades, determinadas práticas participativas se podem equiparar a práticas de alta intensidade democrática, como variam as características dessas formas de participação e como contribuem para a compreensão do que pode ser um modelo de democracia de alta intensidade. Para além disso, a análise visa ainda compreender como diferentes formas de conhecimento e de experiências se confrontam a partir de práticas participativas, que possibilidades existem para uma relação mais horizontal entre diferentes formas de conhecimento e como esses conhecimentos podem ser mobilizados a partir da pluralidade de atores envolvidos em processos de decisão.

Dois estudos de caso são usados para explorar o que equivale a distintos cenários de democracia de alta intensidade, contribuindo para a sua discussão, assim como para o seu desenvolvimento teórico-prático: um caso é o Orçamento participativo de Belo Horizonte, no Brasil; outro diz respeito aos mais recentes protestos contra o encerramento de blocos de parto em Portugal. A partir da análise efetuada, apresenta-se uma lista das principais características da democracia de alta intensidade. Constata-se que a vitalidade da democracia de alta intensidade advém: (a) da exploração crítica das proposições do Estado e dos seus aliados (b) das formas criativas e inovadoras, ainda que transgressoras, que informam e mobilizam os cidadãos.

Palavras-chave: Democracia de alta intensidade; participação cidadã; protestos; orçamento participativo; conhecimentos.

Summary

Ever since it emerged in antiquity ‘democracy’ has been contested, criticized and reinvented. In the past four decades debates about democracy have focused on the limitations of ‘representative’ democracy. Although positions differ widely with respect to how to handle the problems regarding representative democracy, there is considerable convergence in the diagnosis. Major problems are observed with respect to the contradiction between the mobilization and institutionalization of politics, political apathy and the citizens’ inability to understand problems and to assess policy decisions, the increasing complexity of scientific and technological innovation in relation to social issues, and the overvaluation of representative mechanisms.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness in the West of the conceptions and practices of government that have emerged in other parts of the world that suggest new ways of responding to the crisis of representative democracy. One such alternative has been the High Intensity Democracy proposal of Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The HID approach is strongly influenced by (re)democratization processes of the global South, ignited by popular movements often supported by left-wing administrations, aiming to fight inequalities, violence, exclusion and corruption that for many years prevented the access to citizenship.

Over the last decades, participation has prevailed as the optimistic note concerning the future of democracy. If only states would welcome citizen initiatives and grassroots movements as triggers of democratic innovation. That might overcome the problems and also especially those in which a variety of knowledge and experience clash. If only states would find a feasible way around the inadequacies of the so-called double delegation model.

This study seeks to understand how in different societies participatory practices amount to forms of high intensity democracy. How do the features of such participation vary and what do they tell us about the essential features of HID in practice across diverse contexts? How are different forms of knowledge and experience confronted with one another in such participatory practices? What possibilities are there for a more horizontal relationship between different forms of knowledge as they are mobilized by a plurality of actors involved in decision-making processes? Two case studies are used to explore what HID may amount to in different settings as a contribution to the discussion about HID and how to develop it in theory and practice: the participatory Budgeting case of Belo Horizonte, in Brazil, and the recent Portuguese protests against the closure of maternity wards. A list of HID's main features is presented. As it turns out the paramount features that keep HID alive are (a) critical exploration of whatever the state and its allies propose and (b) innovative, yet transgressive creative and innovative ways to inform and mobilize citizens.

Key-words: High-intensity democracy; citizen participation; protests; participatory budgeting; forms of knowledge.

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List of acronyms

ANT – Actor-Network Theory

ARS – Administração Regional de Saúde (Regional Health Authority)

BH – Belo Horizonte

CDS-PP – Partido do Centro Democrático Social – Partido Popular (Democratic and Social Centre – People’s Party)

CEC – Commission of the European Communities

CES – Centro de Estudos Sociais (Centre for Social Studies)

CMC – Computer Mediated Communication

CNSMN – Comissão Nacional de Saúde Materna e Neonatal (the same as NCMNH)

CODU – Centro de Orientação de Doentes Urgentes (Centre of Guidance for Urgent Patients)

COMFORÇA – Overseeing Committee of the PB approved proposals

DGS – Direção Geral de Saúde (Portuguese General Health Department)

EIU – Economist Intelligence Unit

ERS – Entidade Reguladora da Saúde (Portuguese Health Regulation Authority)

EU – European Union

GDP – Gross Domestic Product per Capita

GGOP – Grupo Gerencial do OP (Municipal Participatory Budgeting Management Group)

HID – High Intensity Democracy

HPB – Housing Participatory Budgeting

HUMPAR - Portuguese Association for the Humanization of Childbirth

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística (National Statistics Institute)

INEM – Instituto Nacional de Emergência Médica (National Institute of Medical Emergency)

IQVU – Índice de Qualidade de Vida Urbana (Quality of Urban Life Index)

NCMNH – National Commission on Maternal and Neonatal Health

OPSS – Observatório Português dos Sistemas de Saúde (Portuguese Observatory on Health Systems)

LID – Low Intensity Democracy

PAEA – Portuguese Association of Emergency Assistance

PB – Participatory Budgeting

PGE – Plano Geral Específico (Specific Global Plan)

PS – Partido Socialista (Socialist Party)

PSD – Partido Social Democrata (Democratic Socialist Party)

PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores (Brazilian Workers' Party)

PUC-Minas – Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais (Catholic University of Minas Gerais, Brazil)

STS – Science and Technology Studies

UP – Unidades de Planejamento (Planning Units)

URB-AL – Community initiative aiming at creating lasting and stable collaborative links between European and Latin American cities

UNICEF – United Nations Unit Children's Fund

WHO – World Health Organization

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Introduction

The present work intends to deal with and discuss democracy not as a given concept with correspondence to a set of stabilized practices, a product, a fixed structure or a finish model, but instead, democracy as a process, something ongoing, plural, with a polysemous sense, and an unfinished process.

Ever since antiquity ‘democracy’ has been contested, criticized and reinvented. However, in the past four decades the debates over democracy have focused on the crisis of what is referred to as its ‘representative’ model. There is a growing awareness of the so-called ‘pathologies’ that such a model presents, and several debates and proposals have been presented, focusing on the possible solutions to improve democracy. The representative democracy conception that is being contested is based on the idea that citizens within a State elect their representatives, through free and fair elections, to make decisions for them. Cyclically, and for limited periods, by voting, citizens delegate responsibility to those representatives, who will discuss matters and pass acts which then become national laws. It is this current democratic crisis, associated with the representative model of democracy that is invoking a picture of democratic deficit that is being contested and raising alternative proposals.

In this respect, although positions widely differ regarding how to handle those problems of representative democracy, there is a considerable convergence in their diagnosis. The major problems observed relate to the contradiction between the mobilization and the institutionalization of politics; political apathy and citizens’ inability to understand problems and to assess policy decisions, the increasing complexity of scientific and technological innovation in relation to social issues, and the overvaluation of representative mechanisms. Deliberative remedies, based on several mechanisms for

citizens' participation in decision-making processes, are being highlighted as the proper response to the various troubles that are seen as pervading contemporary democracies. Citizens' inclusion in deliberative processes has been advanced as the key element of the proposals to overcome the democratic representative crisis. One possible way (the most consensual) to make democracy more effective, or a good/better democracy, is then based on the expansion of participation of the electorate through mechanisms of decision-making. So, if citizens are being pushed aside from the centre of gravity of democracy, the more plausible alternative advanced to restore system equilibrium rests on the implementation of another form of organization for governance where citizens can play as main actors.

Over the last decades, citizen participation has prevailed as the optimistic note concerning the future of democracy. Participation in deliberation is happening through diverse experiences around the world, promoted by different political projects, in distinct institutional contexts and at a range of territorial scales. But those participatory proposals, however, allow different opportunities for citizen participation, and some are often and easily compared to a marketing pitfall, justifying the need to explore such proposals in detail.

Abreast of the previous concerns, a growing awareness in the West in relation to the conceptions of democracy that have emerged in other parts of the world has increased, suggesting new ways to respond to that crisis of representative democracy. Starting from the range of citizen participatory proposals in decision-making presented as capable of improving democracy, this work chooses "high intensity democracy" (thereafter HID), the proposal of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 1998, 2002a, 2007a; Santos and Avritzer, 2002) to be taken as the backbone of the analysis. Such an approach is strongly influenced

by (re)democratization processes of the global South (Santos, 2000: 342), ignited by popular movements, aiming to fight inequalities, violence, exclusion and corruption that for many years prevented the access to citizenship.

The HID proposal is being presented as a very complex but possible pathway to improve democratic standards of doing and being at politics. The basic right in democracy is then to take part in decision-making and what HID is proposing is the redefinition of participatory spaces and transgression of earlier participatory regimes in order to broaden and diversify participatory opportunities. That proposal is being presented as an alternative approach to the politics played within a representative model of democracy considered as a low intensity democracy (LID) model. The distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ intensity democracy models is especially attractive as it allows us to relate how arguments about mechanisms, motives and formats of participation play out in specific situations and what consequences the exercise of democratic governance has with respect to both the issues at hand and the rules of the political practice.

Arguments about the issues at hand and about the rules of the political game are always and often at the same time arguments about who is allowed to speak or participate as well as and closely associated with the so-called ‘facts of the matter’, and the ‘standards of rationality, justice and relevance’ participants should observe if they do not want to be sidelined or thrown out in the debate.

Thus, this investment in the study of HID allow us not only to discuss alternative democratic models based on participatory practices but also it helps us to analyze the relationship between different forms of knowledge, to the extent that it allows us to make an ‘epistemology of the absences’ concerning this theme, i.e. by identifying situations and circumstances imagined (Santos, 2000: 229). Given the priority of decision-making spaces

as the field of action for the relationship between participation and democracy at focus in this work, exploring how citizens' knowledge could be included in decisions with other technical, scientific and political knowledge also becomes a necessity. Unless of course we would assume that 'facts' and 'standards' are sacrosanct vis-a-vis politics as an exchange about political, social and ethical values. It is an assumption that flies in the face of human political experience through the ages and is therefore better categorized as part of ideological and rhetorical maneuvering by parties involved. It is an assumption as plausible as the idea that contending parties who shout 'with God on our side' are both right.

The high intensity democracy proposal is concerned with public issues and related to common interests and political activity. Thus, forms of HID are presented as carrying the potential to empower to discuss and to decide the problems of public policies and to monitor and oversee policy in their public actions. It is under such theoretical conjectures that public participation appears inextricably linked to democracy, functioning as a kind of seal of guarantee for citizenship rights, as well as for the promotion of social justice and tackling inequality.³ Accordingly, this leads us to reflect about alternative research approaches that bring back in the actual processes and practices of mundane participatory politics and go beyond forms of abstract theorizing which forget the actual contexts of struggle and contestation.

As referred to previously, scientific knowledge and technology are important dimension in such struggles and contexts. They are implicated in almost all contemporary policy decisions alongside ethical, economic, cultural and directly political concerns. This raises all sorts of questions that lie at the intersection of 'science and technology studies'

³ Part of the concerns to be discussed in this work emerges from the author's participation in a European Commission funded project: ResIST – Researching Inequality through Science and Technology CIT5-CT-2005-029052, although in that particular context of research, HID was not explicitly used as a concept.

(STS) and work in political theory that seeks to advance HID. Also very important in such an empirical turn is the intersection between STS, politics and social movement research.

In social movements' research, civil disobedience, protests and conflictual and/or agonistic relations with democracy take central stage. Combining these perspectives and their intersections will help us to distill factors and conditions that may be expected to assess the legitimacy of various formal and informal participatory devices and why some are considered to be forms of political participation or not, how they impact decision-making processes, and also how some practices may exemplify possibilities to become examples of high intensity democracy where others lead in the opposite direction. That clearly suggests the need to confront HID practices oriented to consensus with HID practices based on conflictual relations. Indeed, democracy does not only comprise consensus; part of the democratic process is based on conflictive relations, disagreement, and struggle. One may even say that conflict and always temporary compromise are more defining features of democracy than the 'rational consensus' endorsed by some of the leading protagonists of deliberative democracy.⁴ The HID proposal is framed itself in the possibility of a democratic alternative emerging from conflict, from the collective action, reminding us that most of the democracy founders movements indeed were illegal, such as strikes, illegal protests, etc. (Santos, 2005, 2007a: 101).

In this work two case studies are used to explore what HID may amount to in different settings as a contribution to the discussion about HID and how to develop it in theory and practice.

Protests seemed to configure one ground to be explored as a space for citizen participation in decision-making in relation with HID standards. Protest actions' analysis

⁴ For example, Habermas (1996); Gutmann and Thompson (1996, 1997).

provides insights into the way citizens inform their needs, opinions, solutions, pressuring to influence decisions. Accordingly, one case study has been adopted based on protests events. This case refers to the protest movements against the closure of maternity wards in Portugal in 2006 and 2007 at the initiative of the government, which was founded on an expert evaluation of existing arrangements. Another case study is based on an experience of Participatory Budgeting (PB). PB is referred to as the HID pet, not only because it is one of the most reproduced participatory devices around the world, as it was several times acknowledged as “good practice”. The selected case of PB refers to the Belo Horizonte experience, in Brazil, a device for citizens’ participation in decision-making concerning urban planning.

Considering the adopted HID debate and related discussions endorsed in this work, as well as the empirical basis chosen to reflect upon such theoretical background, the further work is organized in distinct parts: Part I provides an overview of the extant literature on the raised themes to deal with in this work; part II concerns the methodological options considered, and the description of the cases studies adopted; and Part III concerns the discussion and the conclusions.

More concretely, Part I is organized around three theoretical chapters. Chapter 1 reviews the various approaches in the debates about democracy and broader public participation that have raged over the last four decades. A major and rather basic dimension has to do with the question of whether adherents of participatory democracy conceive of democracy primarily in structural terms (democracy as a model of governance) or in procedural terms (democracy as a never ending process).

In Chapter 2 particular attention is given to participation through conflict, opening up the discussion over protests as forms of participation in decision-making. It discusses

the connections between civil disobedience, the conflict, the opposition within democracy, based on agonistic relations established between citizens and the State. Protests are discussed based upon their potential to influence on shaping public policies and controlling public actions related with common interests.

In Chapter 3 a central focus is given to the extent to which various models deal with issues of expertise and specialist and often new evidence and knowledge in relation to issues of public engagement and participation. In most discussions about political theory it is often ignored how science and technology are implicated in politics and vice versa. But given the prominence of scientific and technological expertise in contemporary society and how it structures debates and issues of voice and inclusion, this chapter provide reflections on such expertise into theoretical and empirical engagement with democracy. It reviews how STS theoretical contributions resonate with work in political theory that seeks to advance high intensity forms of democracy.

Part II of this work opens with the methodological chapter (Chapter 4). Based on theoretical background adopted in Part I, that chapter presents and justifies the main methodological options taken to pursue the required information, namely the methods and data collection techniques that were used.

The two subsequent chapters address the description of the two case studies. Chapter 5 presents and characterizes the protest actions against the recent closure of maternity wards in Portugal at the initiative of the Portuguese government, a decision founded on an expert evaluation. Chapter 6 describes and characterizes the Belo Horizonte participatory budgeting, in Brazil.

Drawing on the two empirical case studies there follows Part III, which is concerned with the discussion on “how to deepen or not to deepen democracy” (Chapter

7). It is based on the central questions raised by the theoretical background explored. It's in this particular chapter that we try to understand how in different societies participatory practices amount to forms of high intensity democracy. How the features of such participation vary and what they tell us about the essential features of HID in practice across diverse contexts. Chapter 7 also explores the relationship between different forms of knowledge in the participatory practices endorsed by the cases studies chosen. The discussion chapter also contemplates what possibilities exist for a more horizontal relationship between different forms of knowledge as they are mobilized by a plurality of actors involved in decision-making processes. Moreover, the cases discussion allows a sharper understanding on how various forms of knowledge come to flow together in the process (alignment) or, on the contrary, get juxtaposed with one another (proliferation). Moreover, there is discussion on what the implications for actors' identities and institutional framings and mechanisms in operation are; how some forms of experience become substantive, relevant or 'true' while others are ignored or dismissed as emotional, unfounded, irrelevant, disturbing or non-scientific.

The last chapter addresses the main conclusions achieved with this research and points to further pathways to be explored under this particular theme.

Part I
Theoretical framework

Chapter 1. Democracy and its discontents

“Of course, different people understand different things by democracy, and every democratic order will be thought by some not to be functioning as it should, in the corrupt control of an illicit minority, or otherwise in need of repair.” (Shapiro, 2003: 1)

1. Introduction

Democracy has always been and will always be contested, but in the past four decades the debate has focused on a particular form of democracy crisis. The representative model of democracy has been widely contested for a long time, and challenged by alternative possibilities that aim to solve what is being called the representative entropy of democracy, proposing a new enhanced model of the democratic system based on participatory principles extended to ordinary citizens. Such a picture reveals that since its invention democracy appears to be “quite simple” in what it defends, but very complex in what concerns its operation, particular beyond the representative model.

Concerning representative democracy, debates still are widely divergent, as the endless variety of authors pointing out the urgency to study the interconnections between participation and representation. At the very core of these debates are the criteria that should properly define political participation in decision-making. As it will be argued, such exchanges underscore the need for a comprehensive re-politicization of those practices through the creation of new participatory opportunities beyond the act of voting. Proposals on the openness of representation to direct citizens' intervention are being put as a possible way to deepen democracy and strengthen citizenship.

The above paragraphs frame the key issues to be addressed in this study: How to organize to high intensity forms of democracy?; How to reconcile science with different forms of expertise in a renewed model of democracy?

The present chapter is one out of three that comprises the first theoretical part of the present investigation: it starts debating democracy as a contested concept; discusses an alternative vision based on deliberative democracy theory and on participatory approaches of democracy, as well as the main strands of citizens' participation in political decision-making processes, under which knowledge relations are a central item. The main arguments made in the first paragraphs of the chapter also leads to reflections about alternative research approaches that bring back in the actual processes and practices of mundane participatory politics and go beyond forms of abstract theorizing which forget the actual contexts of struggle and contestation.

Scientific knowledge and technology are an important dimension in such struggles and contexts. They are implicated in almost all contemporary policy decisions alongside ethical, economic, cultural and directly political concerns. This raises all sorts of questions that lie at the intersection of 'science and technology studies' (hereafter STS) and work in political theory that seeks to advance "high intensity forms of democracy" (Santos, 1998; Santos and Avritzer, 2002). Also very important in such an empirical turn is the intersection between STS, politics and social movement research. In social movements' research civil disobedience, protests and conflictual and/or agonistic relations with democracy take central stage. Combining these perspectives and their intersections will help us to distill factors and conditions that may be expected to assess the legitimacy of various formal and informal participatory devices and why some are considered to be forms of political participation or not, how they impact decision-making processes. And

also how some practices may exemplify possibilities to become examples of high intensity democracy where others lead in the opposite direction.

2. Between democracy as an essentially contested concept and representative democracy as a conception with alleged virtues and shortcomings

The history of democracy has been made of permanent tensions, conceptual as well as practical and feeding upon one another throughout. The history of systems of governance is to give an account of processes that are constantly evolving, adapting, revealing themselves to be very vulnerable to regressions, conquests and blockages (Della Porta, 2003a; Creighton, 2005; Rosanvallon, 2006). Systems of democratic governance cannot simply be copied or transplanted, not just a toolbox of procedures.⁵ Democratic governance systems are based on centuries of experimentation and institutional bricolage, a bunch of procedures that must be and actually are constantly evaluated, revised and reinvented (Callon *et al.*, 2001: 163 and 327; Rosanvallon, 2006; Sintomer, 2010).

Over the last decades there has been a revival of interest in the study of democracy due to distinct reasons. One of those reasons has to do with the increasing number of democracies in the world and the extent to which they are documented and available for comparative political science. Such processes of democratization indeed have revived the interest in democracy debate, allowing, for instance, the use of a common classification concerning democratic systems and its features into three distinct groups: the old democracies, which emerged before 1950, are characterized by a high GDP, high per capita income, quality of life and are quite homogeneous, compared with each other; the new democracies, which appeared up until 1980, are more heterogeneous among

⁵ According to Sheilla Jasanoff and pronounced in a conference mentioned by Callon and others (2001: 16).

themselves; and the more recent democracies that were consolidated after 1981 and that are very diverse (Dahl, 2005; Shapiro, 2003).

For comparative purposes, academic or politically, indexes have been developed, that show the extent of development of the various countries that call themselves democratic. The authoritative EIU Index⁶ (2011: 2) reveals that although almost one-half of the world's countries can be considered to be democracies, the number of "full democracies" in the index is rather low. Only 25 countries fall into this category, while 53 out of the 165 countries considered are rated as "flawed democracies". Of the remaining 89 countries, 52 are actually authoritarian and 37 are considered to be "hybrid regimes" according to this index.

Although academic work still is maintaining an interest in democracy and the democratization processes, focusing on the analysis of democracy as a system of governance based on the set of rules and procedures for making collective decisions, as well as on who has the right to take such decisions, some interest is now turning to the

⁶ The index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories - this covers almost the entire population of the world and the vast majority of the world's independent states (micro states are excluded). The overall Democracy index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Countries are placed within one of four types of regimes: **full democracies** (countries in which not only basic political freedoms and civil liberties are respected, but these will also tend to be underpinned by a political culture conducive to the flourishing of democracy. The functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse. There is an effective system of checks and balances. The judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced. There are only limited problems in the functioning of democracies); **flawed democracies** (these countries also have free and fair elections and even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties will be respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation); hybrid regimes; and authoritarian regimes); **hybrid regimes** (elections have substantial irregularities that often prevent them from being both free and fair. Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies in political culture, functioning of government and political participation. Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically there is harassment of and pressure on journalists, and the judiciary is not independent); **authoritarian regimes** (in these states political pluralism is absent or heavily circumscribed. Many countries in this category are outright dictatorships. Some formal institutions of democracy may exist, but these have little substance. Elections, if they do occur, are not free and fair. There is disregard for abuses and infringements of civil liberties. Media are typically state-owned or controlled by groups connected to the ruling regime. There is repression of criticism of the government and pervasive censorship. There is no independent judiciary) (EIU, 2011).

question of how these values and procedures are being put in place, with greater or lesser success, by a complex network of institutions. The quality of democracy has then emerged as one of the main concerns actually identified over this thematic (Pinto *et al.*, 2012: 10).

This is a central issue in the present discussion, since a high intensity democracy model seems to imply the question of the intensity of democracy quality. Authors as Diamond and Morlino (2005) devote particular attention to this issue. They consider the quality of democracy much associated with the way citizens are taken into consideration within a system of governance, since citizens are supposed to have:

a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions. In this line, a 'good' democracy is primarily a broadly legitimated regime that satisfies citizens' expectations of governance (quality in terms of result). A 'good democracy' is also one in which its citizens, associations, and communities enjoy extensive liberty and political equality (quality in terms of content). Finally, a 'good' democracy is also a regime in which citizens have the sovereign power to evaluate whether the government provides liberty and equality according to the rule of law. Citizens, their organizations and parties participate and compete to hold elected officials accountable for their policies and actions. They monitor the efficiency and fairness of the application of the laws, the efficacy of government decision, and the political responsibility and responsiveness of elected officials. Government institutions also hold one another accountable before the law and the constitution (quality in terms of procedure) (Diamond and Morlino, 2005: xi).

Such an approach has highlighted an interest in the three dimensions contributing to the analysis of the quality of democracy: a normative dimension, a procedural dimension and a dimension based on the democracy results. Most of the debates, however, still

support the idea of a confluence of these three dimensions to an ideal of democracy (Pinto *et al.*, 2012). However, democracy appears both as a contested concept and as an evolving concept, especially relating to the very different practices fitting in the considered dimensions that develop and evolve into a different pace, and not always in the same direction.

Nowadays, the debate around democracy seems to imply the use of a combination of words in an attempt to grasp that diversity of political realities. Representative democracy is a common example on this. The representative democracy conception is based on the idea that citizens within a State elect their representatives, through free and fair elections, to make decisions for them. Cyclically, and for limited periods, by voting, citizens delegate responsibility to those representatives, who will discuss matters and pass acts which then become national laws. This means that the right to vote engenders a rich political life that promotes competing political agendas and conditions the will of lawmakers on an ongoing basis that goes beyond the election moment.

Regarding the representative democracy model, this is basically how people exercise control over their representatives. Thus, one of the most relevant definitions of democracy belongs to Robert Dahl, who sets out seven principles that define the best type of democracy to which the author calls "polyarchy", a minimum acceptable level of democracy: 1) elected representatives are constitutionally bound, 2) existence of free and fair elections, 3) existence of inclusive universal suffrage, 4) passive electoral capacity, 5) freedoms and civil guarantees, 6) the right to use alternative sources of information, 7) the right to form independent associations (Dahl, 1989: 221).

Within such a form of democratic governmental organization – the one called representative –, however, two possible consequences may emerge: the representative body

may act based on the electorate's demands and according to their party ideology; the representative body may act detached from the electorate's stance and according to particular interests and their own conscience (Urbinati, 2006). Such consequences are linked to what Diamond and Morlino (2005) above called the procedural dimension of democracy and one of the core problems raised within the current democratic entropy. So, where the perspectives of part of the citizens are not heard, i.e., systematically ignored, there is no democratic representation (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 140). Consequently, a democratic society cannot be totally fulfilled when representatives don't act according to all constituency electorate all the time, but only according to a majority – the “tyranny of majority” (Lijphart, 1984, 1999; Mill, 1993; Guinier, 1994; Philips, 1995; Shapiro, 2003).

In modern democracies the procedural pathology of representative democracy seems also intimately linked with the pathology of democracy results. A good democracy then requires that the preferences of all citizens are adequately represented in political decision-making (Buhlmann *et al.*, 2011), achievement that in a representative democracy is obviously a responsibility of the representative bodies. Both the problems identified concerning democracy entropy point out to citizens as the core elements of democracy as a system of governance. Thus, the concept of democracy seems to make sense only if the center of gravity within a democratic society becomes the citizen sphere.

However, one of the main questions also emerging is that the political systems organized around the representative principle and without provisions to protect the views and interests of minorities had overestimated the criterion of participation through the suffrage as a sufficient condition for democracy. Such a restrictive view of doing politics has even been pointed as non-democratic, once the elected group could speak and act by the people, removing them from processes where their aspirations and expectations are at

stake (Rosanvallon, 2006). Deficiencies of democracies betray their lack of consolidation and the precarious anchoring of democratic practices and for some authors, the main problem is that representation models of modern societies are not flexible democracies (Fishkin, 1991; Kitschelt, 2003). This means that representation models of democracy are not easily amenable to articulate with regular participatory practices.

Such presupposition implies the political representation as the feature responsible for the erosion of the center of gravity of a democratic society: citizens. This is one of the main issues often associated with the current crisis of democracy. Such a crisis has emerged through concrete manifestations: the erosion of citizens' trust in politicians and political institutions (Van Gunsteren, 1998; Mouffe, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2004; Rosanvallon, 2006; Stoker, 2006; Rosenberg, 2007; Pearce, 2010a); the possible political decline of interest in politics (Kitschelt, 2003; Pearce, 2010a); the risk question included in political decision-making, claiming for a more direct control of decisions by citizens (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1999; Callon *et al.*, 2001; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007); politics as experts' strongholds, owning the power to decide on behalf of the collective will, and acting in a disconnected way from the real problems of societies (Dryzek, 1990; Held, 2007); and a set of new rights claimed as central to the exercise of democracy, as the right to fully participate at the political life (Santos, 1998, 2002a; Sintomer, 2010).

All the previous are manifestations of a democratic deficit picture. The current democratic crisis associated with the representative model of democracy also invokes a normative dimension in its recognized democratic deficit. So, if citizens are being put aside the centre of gravity of democracy, one possible way to restore system equilibrium seems to be the implementation of another form of organization for governance where citizens

can play as main actors, not only considering the procedural way of putting democracy work as the epicentre of democracy concept.

Then, one possible way to make democracy more effective, or a good/better democracy, is the one based on the expansion of participation of the electorate through participatory mechanisms. But the implementation of political models based on direct citizens' participation, namely in decision-making processes, is not an easy task (Held, 2007). To those who believe in the virtues of representation, participatory models seem implausible given the difficulties of involving everyone in decisions in modern plural societies at every moment.

Considering these forces in tension, the study of public participation and its implementation remains a theme both fascinating and frustrating (Forester, 2009). For instance, for Dahl (2005: 66-67) the democratic ideal described above, to which he calls realistic utopianism, is too demanding to be fully achieved in the real world, defending that certain political institutions may be necessary to approach the ideal democracy, but may not be sufficient to completely neutralize the gap between ideal and real democracy.

Representative democracy is not an exhausted model, but a model in crisis. It is a crisis about the relations between civil and political communities that fuels experiments and discussions about new, more 'inclusive' participatory democratic devices (Santos, 1998; Fraser, 2005; Dryzek, 2009; Pearce, 2010a, 2010b). In this scope, there are different proposals to overcome the abovementioned representative entropy. Those participatory based will be explored in the next points and they evidence the need to transform democracy models into something new, i.e., to give a more democratic function to democracy (Callon *et al.*, 2001; Dagnino, 2004; Santos, 2005; Fishman, 2011). Accordingly, to democratize democracy is to call a plurality of empowered actors into

decision-making spaces (Santos, 1998; Fung and Wright, 2001, 2003). The emphasis on participation, thus, refers to a new democratic model where citizens should have equal rights to participate: all people affected by policy decisions should have the right to participate in the formation of these decisions. The respect and equal consideration of all interests by political representatives are possible only if the membership is as broad and as equal as possible. Citizen participation is then the basic element of the high intensity model of democracy implicated in this discussion as a solution to the referred crisis of the representative current model prevailing (Santos, 1998, 2002a, 2005; Dagnino, 2004; Gaventa, 2006; Cook *et al.*, 2007).

According to Jacques Rancière, the political takes shape through the eruption, in the public space, of those who are not “counted”, who are not legitimately recognized as being part of the political order. Thus, political action is basically a way of demanding to be counted in, as part of the polis. Protest is one of the main forms of giving shape to the “unaccounted for” collectives. These emerging collectives, in turn, redefine what counts as the space of interests and collectives who are legitimately included in the political/democratic process. A corollary of Rancière’s approach is that inclusion is a never ending process, which may be described as an ongoing and contested process of claiming recognition and the right to be part of the polis. There would thus be no such thing as a representation of all, or of all interests (Rancière, 2004).

The big question of this debate raises two main concerns. One has to do with the issue of control over politics. On this, the representative model of democracy allows the control over who we choose as our political representatives, but this does not imply any influence on how power is exercised between elections (Philips, 1995; Manin *et al.*, 1999). Thus, a democratic electoral system is an indispensable condition but not sufficient to

define democracy. Another relates to the quality of democracy. This is indeed a problem related with the expansion of liberal democracy in the world, and focused on how democracy has been consolidated: a concern shared by authors as Adam Przeworski, who states that “having followed liberalization, transition and consolidation, we have discovered that there is something still to improve: democracy” (2010: xiii).

To understand what makes a democratic system a “good” or “bad” system involves making reference to how the agents in which citizens delegate power through elections transform the preferences of citizens into public policies. Thus, when the mismatch between the practice of political representatives and citizens' interests worsens, greater participation of citizens in the political sphere is being presented as a solution to close the gap.

3. Deliberative democratic theory: Its basic position

As we argued above, ‘democracy’ has been an essentially contested concept since antiquity, but over time the framing of the debates has changed. In recent decades, i.e. since the 1960s, the debate has shifted towards democracy’s constitutive features, whether they are actually working according to mainstream democratic theory and what to do to improve the system. What principles to observe in making democracy work better? And what does this imply for actual practices and procedures? The adherents of ‘deliberative democracy’ stand out for their theoretical critique and reflections about democracy’s essential features and how to strengthen those.

Their views come close to the views on participatory democracy developed in this thesis, yet there are important differences. In this section the main points of the ‘deliberative’ views will be outlined in combination with critical arguments that have been

mounted against it. Subsequently, in section 4., the main features (and problems) of the ‘participatory’ model will be outlined. As we go along points of overlap as well as principled differences will become clearer, preparing the ground for the empirical case studies.

Deliberative democracy is revisited here. It is a new conceptual theory developed by the end of 1980 that emerged from the writings and its conceptualization by Bernard Manin (1987), Joshua Cohen (1989), and John Rawls (1993). Gutmann and Thompson (1996) also provided one of the most consistent arguments for deliberative democracy today, based on a principled framework for opponents to come together on moral and political issues. It was also deeply inspired by the notion of *public sphere* of Habermas (1994) and his idea of a *communicative democracy*, and on John Rawls (1997) concept of *public reason*.

Deliberation refers to dialogist practices that help to support the exercise of citizenship, here understood as a set of rules, obligations and rights that specify what it means to be a citizen (Van Gunsteren, 1998). Deliberative democracy is concerned with the set of rules governing the behaviour of both the elements of civil society and politicians, specifically concerning the way they relate to each other and how they structure their interaction system based on communication. Accordingly, these practices contribute to make system more inclusive, which apparently also improves the quality of democracy (Held, 2007; Rosenberg, 2007; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010; Pateman, 2012). The theory of democratic deliberation focuses, therefore, not on a conception of citizenship based on a formulation with an individualistic bias, but on a formulation that recognizes and values their social and communicative dimensions (Fals-Borda, 1998; Dryzek, 2009).

Deliberation means a communication process based on citizens' participation in the construction of the common good (Shapiro, 2003). In this process people are assumed according to Habermas (1996) to express needs and perspectives that can be antagonist, but which are oriented to reach a consensus, either a full agreement or more realistically a compromise. At the mainstream of this theoretical current the focus is to generate "communicative power", defining the conditions for a freely given and complied with assent of all the ones concerned with an issue. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) even define the key deliberative virtue as *reciprocity*, that is, making arguments in terms others can accept. In such perspective, the consensus obtained is a rational one⁷, based on arguments presented and discussed within a collective, but also relying on the combination between the discussion and the formation of an enlightened public opinion. By the reflective public reasoning, based on the rational debate of arguments, it has also been called *discursive democracy* (Dryzek, 1990).

If the proposed transformation is successful, decisions will become more consensual, rational and fair implying the realization of democratic values as citizens' autonomy and equality (Fung and Cohen, 2007; Held, 2007; Rosenberg, 2007; Walsh, 2007). In such a view, direct participation in decision-making process makes individuals more reflective, leading them to a more logical and rational interaction and to become more sensitive to others' needs. Rational discourse means, then, that participants adopt an orientation toward common understanding and that they are sincere (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Dryzek, 2000; Benhabib 2002, *apud* Rosenberg, 2007; Cook *et al.*, 2007; Walsh, 2007; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010).

⁷ Habermas (1984) conception of rationality is much broader than what is commonly defined – logical consistency in arguments about causes and effects and means-to-ends relations – it is a rationality including goals and values communities and nations collectively strive for.

Deliberative remedies are then highlighted as the proper response to the various troubles that are seen as pervading contemporary democracies: poor quality of decisions, low levels of participation, declining legitimacy of government, and ignorant citizens are among the more frequently mentioned (Shapiro, 2003: 22).

Empirically this theoretical framework contains a variety of formats, procedures, settings and experiences. Those can range from town meetings, designated deliberation times (as, for example, the Deliberation Day), citizen juries and deliberative polls, in which randomly selected groups become better informed on a certain issue, directly participating in decision-making processes (Fishkin, 1991; Shapiro, 2003; Sintomer, 2010).

Such participatory mechanisms relate to micro-situational examples, whose results depend on various factors (such as communication, trust, etc.). The contribution made by each one of these participatory devices must be considered under their specificities and not a panacea for the complex reality of democracy.

The deliberative approach stresses the relevance of public debate and the empowerment of the individual for the definition of common good, promoting a more robust participatory politics.

Accordingly, to talk about processes in which citizens play a direct and active role in decision-making is at the heart of deliberative democracy theory (Dahl, 1989; Dryzek, 1996, 2000, 2009; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996, 2004; Habermas, 1996; Sanders, 1997; Bohman, 1998; Cohen, 1999).

Deliberative democracy takes citizens' participation as one of its central elements, a distinct proposal from its previous formal representative – which regards preferences as given – based on its reduction to procedures for the treatment of interest-groups pluralism

that is has been happening since a long time ago and affecting the crisis of democracy legitimacy (Bessete, 1980; Shapiro, 2003: 2-3).

Deliberation emerges as a new practice that acknowledges “the people” during decision-making, and a new logic of democratic action presented as one of the most feasible alternatives to combat democratic crisis. Such an approach is open to a range of perspectives that face citizens as free and equal actors that can become legitimate owners of the decision-making in a process of self-governance (Bohman, 1998). Deliberative theorists, contrary to the representative mainstream, are much more concerned with the ways in which deliberation can be used to alter preferences so as to facilitate the search for a common good. They consider general will as manufactured, not just discovered, and citizens’ participation is the privileged pathway that allows realizing that (Shapiro, 2003: 3). The goal is clear: to get people engaged in deliberation, to decide and implement policies that serve the common good, or as Dryzek (2009: 1382) points out, “deliberation as a consequential process, with an impact on decision-making”.

But deliberative democracy, as a participatory device, implies some requisites in order to guarantee high quality decisions. A proper space and time are necessary to articulate participation with deliberation, in order to guarantee that decisions made outside the deliberative setting are not just brought in. Once that meeting space of discussion has been created, it must include all the relevant points of view, which means to define equal opportunities for each citizen that participates to express themselves (Knight and Johnson, 1997; Rosenberg, 2007; Walsh, 2007). Deliberation must, then, be a public act in order to allow those not directly involved in the discussion opportunities to become informed and react to the decision that will be taken (Benhabib, 1996; Cohen, 1996; Gutmann and

Thompson, 1996, 2004), because decisions should not be the result of parallel influences (Rosenberg, 2007; Walsh, 2007).

Another aspect is that, for some, deliberative results must have binding power for all the participants involved in the decision-making process (Cohen, 1996, 1997), reinforcing deliberation as a mechanism to combat domination, aiming to domesticating power dimensions at the democracy system (Shapiro, 2003). Deliberation must be as much as possible *free from power*, which is to say, free from explicit constraints exercised during the deliberative process, given rise to a logic of power sharing (Walsh, 2007) or distant from State power (Dryzek, 2009: 1389).

Deliberative processes must, then, engage those more affected by problems as a central principle (Forester, 1999; Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003; Dryzek, 2009; Navarro, 2010; Pearce, 2010a), or as Shapiro (2003: 148) suggests, involving in deliberation those whose basic interests are at stake in a given setting.

Undoubtedly, such processes are based on participatory devices oriented by the value of autonomy, meaning that those who participate, not only do so willingly⁸, but are recognised as capable of taking part in decision-making processes, by freely expressing their convictions, and being heard with respect and consideration⁹ (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Rosenberg, 2007; Gastil, 2008).

The basic position of deliberative democracy was the target of criticisms from early on. Further developments of theory and a more detailed review of its critics will be further developed in the next section, which justifies the registered theory developments.

⁸ Against the possibility that these mechanisms have of easily fall into compulsive methodologies (Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

⁹ In deliberative democracy approach communication is a very wide concept as are the communication forms. In this sense, individuals have capacities to participate regardless the chosen way to communicate (usually the discursive rational argumentation in the mainstream approach of deliberative democracy), which can be done in a personal register, based in personal experiences, until a more funny register to expose a given problem (Rosenberg, 2007: 10; Walsh, 2007: 45).

The main principles for deliberation leads to a focus on procedures and guarantees that people can be said to have good opportunities to participate by being granted the chance to voice their opinion and to be heard during a process of public discussion and interaction between citizens and their representatives. But that does not translate necessarily into a relocation of political power or political struggle or into different decisions. This is the argument stressed by some mainstream critics (Shapiro, 2003) to which some authors associate themselves with minority groups articulating more radical conceptions on what might be described as the dark side of deliberation (Mansbridge, 1986; Young, 1996, 2002; Fung, 2004; Mouffe, 2005). Some pointed out that norms and values that are supposed to underpin deliberative democracy place much emphasis on abilities that are associated with elite liberal culture as we know it from Western societies. Specific criticisms have been raised based on arguments, for example, that participatory and deliberative democracy are unrealistic because most people don't really want to spend their time and energy in political discussions and decision-making; that deliberative processes can exclude and silence certain perspective (Fung, 2004: 47- 49). Such critics reveal the relationship between participation and deliberative democracy as radical ideas that in full form cannot be implemented without other institutional changes (Young, 1996).

The ineradicability of antagonism and the impossibility of achieving a fully inclusive rational consensus is another major criticism against the deliberative democracy approach. Its opponents consider that the refusal of confrontation leads to apathy and disaffection with political participation. Such criticism is based on an alternative model of democracy constituted by an *agonistic pluralism*, or an *agonistic contestation* that would better envisage the main challenges democracies are facing, helping to create a democratic

view that will contribute also to mobilize passions towards more democratic designs (Philips, 1995; Sanders, 1997; Hayward, 2000; Mouffe, 2000, 2005; Young, 2002).

3.1. Latter discussion on Deliberative Democracy: Criticisms, limitations and inadequacies

As a recent investigation brought to the fore, inequality is a very complex and multilevel concept that may refer to a cycle from where three interrelated forms of inequality can be identified: of representation/participation; of access to key resources; of unequal possibilities to profit from the outcomes of political and economic processes (Cozzens *et al.*, 2007).

One of the main criticisms levelled at the deliberative approach is that it is much focused on the discursive rules of participation and in a more limited way on issues pertaining to the lack of representation. Thus, instead of focusing on a conception of power and structural inequality, the deliberative democracy approach is much focused on the discursive rules of participation. The political implication of that limited conceptualization is that striving to enhance deliberative democracy by procedural means may eventually be less participation and also less effect when it comes to reducing inequality in a roundabout and lasting fashion.

In so far as the actual political experience actually shows, such a naïve liberal idealism incurs in the extra danger of neglecting the development of stronger notions and criteria to characterize the differences between high intensity participatory models and deliberative, based on a procedural perspective. By doing so, such a well-intended approach, by attempting at discursive democracy, can easily become a mere legitimization of policies and a marketing device with which elites avoid genuine democracy and political development.

Deliberation as a mechanism of decision-making is structured around values as freedom of speech. One controversial element proposed by the theoretical mainstream relates to the *rational exchange of arguments concerned with the public good*. On this, some voices early argued against the selfishness and irrationality of human beings (Schumpeter, 1976) and on the emotions and passions that should be considered within deliberative procedures (Mouffe, 2000). Accordingly, such missing elements are relevant indicators on the need to go further on the discussion of the inadequacy of such deliberative elements within a democracy conception.

By privileging rationality, both the deliberative and the aggregative perspectives leave aside a central element, which is the crucial role, played by passions and emotions in securing allegiance to democratic values. This cannot be ignored and it entails envisaging the question of democratic citizenship in a very different way. (...) The view that I want to put forward is that it is not by providing arguments about the rationality embodied in liberal democratic institutions that one can contribute to the creation of democratic citizens. The constitution of democratic individuals can only be made possible by multiplying the institutions, the discourses, the forms of life that foster identification with democratic values (Mouffe, 2000: 10-11).

Against rational exchange of arguments, Lynn Sanders suggests an alternative method to civil dialogue proposed by deliberative democrats, which is based on the testimony as a way to communicate and expose a problem, meaning “telling someone their own story in their own languages” (Sanders, 1997: 372). On this Dryzek goes further on the opening deliberation to other forms of communication:

Some deliberative democrats, especially those who traffic in public reason, want to impose narrow limits on what constitutes authentic deliberation, restricting it to arguments in particular kinds of terms; a

more tolerant position, which I favor, would allow argument, rhetoric, humor, emotion, testimony or storytelling, and gossip (Dryzek, 2000: 48).

This is an attempt to open deliberation to those usually excluded, who have not developed the elite rational argumentation capacities the more restricted formulations of deliberative democracy imply.

In response to the initial formulations of the deliberative model the 1990s sympathetic and more radical critics like Iris Marion Young (and feminist and black studies authors) have pleaded for a wider perspective in which other forms of experience can be integrated in the envisaged deliberation that seemingly go beyond cognitive and technical rationality as framed in academia and by bureaucratic elites. More recently, some of the most recognised theorists of deliberation processes also opened the door to this wider perspective (Young, 2002; Dryzek, 2009), although still defending that this must only be considered in a conditional way. As Dryzek points out, this ‘more tolerant’ position is a conditional one and is introduced to ease the process without changing the conceptualization of rational discourse as such.

According to Goodin, for example, such alternative forms of argumentation should only be introduced in the earlier stages of the communicative processes, so that they can counteract power inequalities and generate social comfort among participants (Goodin, 2005). However, one should pay double attention to this issue when defining procedural boundaries for such processes, otherwise there is the risk of not being able to discern what and when deliberation is actually happening, creating the space for deliberation to be transformed into “anything goes” (Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010: 48; Dryzek, 2010).

On the ‘sincerity value’ of arguments presented in the rational debate defended by deliberative democracy, some authors (Young, 2002; Shapiro, 2003) refer to a central aspect to be considered which is based on people’s possibilities to be manipulated by

argumentative discourses, due to some citizens' vulnerability to persuasion. The criticism is that an equal basis and mutual respect to express opinions in public cannot be reached within such processes, as defended. The same is to say that some people are better than others at articulating rational and reasonable terms (Sanders, 1997: 349), namely because politics is about interests and power, and not about understanding and better argumentation (Shapiro, 2003). On this, however, deliberative democrats defend that citizens' interaction in political decisional spaces forces each citizen to discuss their own interests in relation to those of others, competing between them, reinforcing co-responsibility feelings in relation to collective life and collective well-being (Cook *et al.*, 2007; Held, 2007).

Another critical aspect raised is that people cannot be "carried up the ladder" (Sanders, 1997: 354; Shapiro, 2003: 43), especially when citizens are being paid for their participation in deliberative events¹⁰ as defended by Ackerman and Fishkin (2004). Citizens should participate by their own will, in a clear recognition that participation is something that must happen freely, according to people's interest to decide about their own problems, not depending on previous selection processes of participants or by being paid to participate.¹¹

¹⁰ A 'Deliberative Research' is a study of a sample taken at random from citizens before and after the group has had a chance to deliberate seriously on a subject. The process begins by selecting a representative sample of each person and asking a series of questions on the subject to be considered in 'Deliberative Research'. This initial study is the standard type conducted by social scientists in public opinion polls. Those who respond are then invited to go to a certain place for a weekend of discussion. A small honorarium and travel expenses are paid to recruit a representative sample. In preparation for the event, participants receive a documentation carefully balanced to facilitate discussion. These materials are carefully supervised to ensure balance and accuracy of relevant experts and activists. Upon arrival, participants are randomly gathered in small groups with trained moderators. When they get together in small groups, participants not only discuss the general subject that absorbs the focus of attention for resolution. Also deal with identifying key questions that guide the subsequent explorations, and later bring these questions to panels formed by experts or policy makers with opposing viewpoints on-larger plenary sessions. Small groups and plenary sessions alternate throughout the weekend. At the end of the process, participants receive the same questionnaire which was delivered at the first contact (Ackerman and Fishkin, 2004).

¹¹ A current discussion, especially in Latin America, focuses on the relation between expression (through specific cultural forms and performances) and the articulation of what counts as a contribution to political debate and deliberation. In several parts of Brazil, for instance, participation both in PB and Health Councils are often associated with the work of collectives defining themselves as movements for diversity. These

Apart from the critical debate about the boundaries of rational argument to be observed and the abilities of non-elite educated citizens to engage in such discourse, there has been other more technical and pragmatic criticisms as well. Contested costs, wasted time, procrastination and indecision (Shapiro, 2003: 22) have been raised despite basic endorsement of the deliberative program for instrumental purposes like achieving consensus, discovering the truth and consciousness raising. Such led us to the discussion of one of the most controversial aspects raised by deliberative democracy, the consensus achievement.

Deliberationists consider that “outcomes are democratically legitimate if and only if they could be the object of free and reasoned agreement among equals” (Cohen, 1989: 22), the same is to say that “the goal of deliberation is to arrive at consensus” (Young, 1996: 122). Against this central presupposition are those who believe that deliberation must reserve space for differences and conflicts (Schumpeter, 1976; Sanders, 1997; Hayward, 2000; Mouffe, 2000, 2005).

To consider citizens as free and equal actors that can become legitimate owners of decision-making processes is another criticized element concerning deliberative democracy, because that would mean having free and equal access to time, money, skills, education and arguing, as settled by Cohen and Rogers (1983). Disadvantaged people do not really engage in such idealized forms of deliberation, which only suits a privileged few social groups (Sanders, 1997; Hendriks, 2006; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010). These are main aspects that the participatory democracy perspective, to be further explored, tries to cover.

To answer the above question requires a balanced analysis of the different approaches articulated in deliberative theory. So far, in the history of theorizing

collectives emphasize what may be called the esthetic as a key form of articulating political claims. To further developments on this approach, see George Yúdice (2006).

deliberative democracy in the 1980s and after three distinct deliberative ‘generations’ might be distinguished (Elstub, 2010). One first generation is based on Habermas’s (1984, 1996) and Rawls’s (1997) perspectives and their normative justifications for deliberation. Both authors, followed by Cohen (1989) and Benhabib (1996), are concerned with securing a strong link between democracy and liberalism, refuting all those critics that – from the right as well as from the left – have proclaimed the contradictory nature of liberal democracy (Mouffe, 2000).

Habermas’s concern is to bring to the fore the co-originality of fundamental individual rights and of popular sovereignty (Mouffe, 2000: 4). Seyla Benhabib also endorses these concerns by defending that such deliberative discourse should and will have the following conditions and consequences: 1) participation in deliberation will be governed by the norms of equality and symmetry; every citizen will have the same chances to initiate speech acts, to question, to interrogate, and to open debate; 2) all citizens should have the right to question the assigned topics of the conversation; and 3) all must have the right to initiate reflexive arguments about the very rule of the discursive procedures and the way in which they are applied and carried out (Benhabib, 1996: 77). This first generation is very disconnected from reality, particularly based on consensus, and of preference convergence around the common good and of universal public reasons.

A second generation, for example Gutmann and Thompson (1996) and Bohman (1996), seek to reconcile the theoretical argument with political reality through a deeper dialogue engaging with concrete empirical cases, leading to analyses and proposals for the institutionalization of deliberative processes based on citizens’ direct participation (Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, this work still does not properly consider the complexities of current societies, where deliberative processes, for some reason, can’t be

sustained through concrete experimentations to be framed in reliable institutions. Yet, this second generation is already concerned with the relevance of social economic inequalities of the participants and their repeated exclusion from deliberative processes. It is much concerned with the real world (Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010; Elstub, 2010). It gives expression to cultural pluralism of deliberative mechanisms; it does not defend the consensus as the first generation does, but rather citizens' commitment.

A third generation seems currently to be emerging. Recent work (Barber and Bartlett, 2005; O'Flynn, 2006; Parkinson, 2006) seeks for a more virtuous combination between normative theory and empirical research. It defends an urgent theoretical adaptation to social complexity, enhancing the existence of different communication styles and forms that can be considered and activated in deliberative processes. In such a view, emotions, for instance, are very significant ways to participate in deliberative processes. Accordingly, deliberation is not only to reach decisions based on facts and data, but also on values, emotions and less technical considerations (Gastil, 2008).

This third approach, although broader than the previous one in considering the complexities of current societies start to consider less conventional forms of governance, namely the one usually called *agonist governance* (Hagendijk and Kallerud, 2003; Nunes, 2007) or *agonistic pluralism* (Mouffe, 2000, 2005). This agonistic form of democracy happens under confrontation and adversity conditions, namely in political contexts of strong opposition to public discussion, where negotiation processes can hardly be implemented. In such contexts, deliberative solutions usually happen in counter hegemonic forms, both in the normativity of spaces as the time defended by the corporatist vision of deliberation.

Participation and deliberation assume, here, a more ecumenical picture on the forms democracy can take (Elstub, 2010) and it tries to adjust theory to the main criticisms made over time getting closer to participatory democracy approach. A new deliberation can then be identified, defined broadly to include “all activities that function as communicative influence under conditions of conflict” (Warren, 2007) or incorporating alternative forms of communication, such as rhetoric or story-telling (Sanders, 1997; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010), based not only on structured spaces for deliberation as well in a plural public arena that shapes public opinion (Hendriks, 2006).

The perspectives developed in more recent scholarly work means a progress from the strict rationalist discursive normativity thematized by scholars like Rawls and Habermas. According to Behanbib (1996) and Dryzek (2000), and from the point of view of institutionalized forms of deliberation, such wider perspectives based on "letting in" all kind of forms of communication can be problematic.

The deliberative theory, as a reaction to this criticisms, has shown in this new approach a concern with the quality of democracy, though not founded on new theoretical procedures, trying to focus on how to put theory to work, particularly searching for the consequent inclusion and participation of citizens in the sphere of collective decision-making (Fung and Cohen, 2004; Dryzek, 2009; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010). This recent approach, focused on reacting to the most critical aspects has not invested in questions that remain open. Some open issues of importance are the following: (1) Who decides which issues are presented to discussion and deliberation?; and (2) Who sets the agenda and the criteria to be used to select certain citizens?¹² These are two central unanswered questions.

¹² A randomly selected sample still plays a crucial role in such deliberative devices, proving that although a new trend of concerns are now being included in the theory, deliberative democracy still is being played through a conception of participation which remains top-down.

Deliberative devices are based on representative samples of society, much focused on the single participants that join a group of people to meet in a specific place and deliberate on issues of public interest. In fact, a more practical dimension of deliberative democracy demonstrates exactly, sometimes, a mismatch with the logic of social mobilization that underlies the logic of participatory democracy, more consistent with the mobilization of the lower classes to participate, the organization of social movements with a more comprehensive and more utopian approach (Dagnino, 2007; Rubião, 2010; Sintomer, 2010; Neveu, 2011). Authors like Delli Carpini and others (2004: 321), for instance, alert that there is a risk that “public deliberation is little more than another enclave of “gated democracy”, or in other words, a practice reserved for the more advantaged groups so they can consolidate their social positions and acquire a larger endowment of social capital.

Deliberative democracy shows dissatisfaction with some features of that institutional background which is why deliberation is seen as a necessary improvement in it. But deliberative democracy still leaves intact the conventional institutional structures and political meaning of democracy while participatory democracy is about democratization, is about democratizing democracy. Participatory democracy argument is about changes that will make political life more democratic, creating opportunities for people to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives, as well as in the wider political system (Pateman, 2012: 10).

The previous aspect calls our attention to the democratic deliberative approach to a somewhat neglected concept by the earlier approaches on deliberation, the concept of civil society. The introduction of the civil society concept at this approach turns the spotlight from the discussion on citizens to civil society. On this topic, Carolyn Hendriks

(2006) distinguishes two diverging streams of thought that advocate different roles for civil society in deliberative processes: the micro-deliberative perspective oriented towards decision-making; and macro-deliberative perspective aiming at opinion formation.

In the micro-deliberative perspective the focus is posed on the procedural conditions for structured participation of civil society members in deliberative formal fora, as a form of civil society engagement in collaborative practices usually with the state, paying little attention to civil society (Young, 2001; Hendriks, 2006: 492). In this macro perspective, the focus is on the informal and unconstrained communication that happens in the public sphere, where civil society should work discursively outside and against the state. Theorists defending this perspective face deliberation in a less structured term. According to this idea, people engage in open public discourse via associations, social movements, networks and the media (Benhabib, 1996; Habermas, 1996; Young, 2001; Hendriks, 2006: 486 and 492). Such an approach opens a window of opportunity for a new deliberative trend privileging participation from below, but fails by confining it to the informal plane, not considering these possibilities as part of institutional arrangements, or a democratic institutional engineering as defended by Shapiro (2003).

According to the former perspective, however, what is at stake is a more viable and inclusive deliberative framework, based on the idea of a deliberative procedure as “mutually interlocking and overlapping networks and associations of deliberation, contestation and argumentation” (Benhabib, 1996: 74). As Hendriks points out:

Highly unpredictable, discursive deliberation does not necessarily exclude more strategic forms of action such as protest, boycott and radical activism. In particular, they rely on ‘indigenous’ actors in the public sphere, such as social movements, to stimulate counter-knowledge and ask critical questions (Hendriks, 2006: 494).

This opens the door to the recognition by deliberationists of the relevance not only of the empowerment deliberative processes allow as well as to the relation between different knowledges under decision-making processes. This happens especially because it makes so far neglected issues to be shown off, which might function as a stimulus to become a better citizen, by promoting a debate around such issues (Sanders, 1997).

Still, an *integrated* deliberative system, able to accommodate the diversity of civil society by fostering deliberation in a variety of public spaces is needed. This takes cue from the recognition that public deliberation is not an activity restricted to micro or macro venues (Hendriks, 2006: 487), but a mix of processes that must take place in all sorts of institutions, arenas and spaces in social life.

Deliberative democracy theory proves to be an approach with increasing diversity in conceptualizing political deliberation. One first approach was deeply rooted on the communication and consensus elements, with a focus on the procedural dimension of deliberation. In a second moment a concern with outcomes produced with such form of decision-making emerged as the new core issue of this theoretical approach. Currently, a new strand is emerging (Elstub, 2010). It appears as a clear attempt in answering to theory blind spots adjusting this approach, namely by transforming deliberation into a less rigid approach, a broader and inclusive proposal, not only from the standpoint of the procedural elements of deliberation, the places to exercise deliberation as the deliberative actors. Although this recognized investment, deliberative democracy fails on answering how, not only on the previous questions, as well as concerning the question on making democracy work better, namely by keeping almost untouched the political sphere, also involved and with responsibilities concerning deliberation, citizens' interaction and democracy improvement.

4. The participatory democracy approach

Participatory democracy, although being a concept with ideological origins spread over several periods of human history, only recently narrowed its meaning by referring to specific forms of citizens' political intervention in political life. Also called *monitorial democracy* (Keane, 2008), participatory democracy is one metamorphose of representative democracy based on the promotion of new mechanisms that lead citizens to the most profound and direct control of democratic institutions, namely by their critical engagement (Norris, 1999).

Participatory democracy is different from deliberative democracy. If the focus of the deliberative democracy approach was on the way decisions should be taken, participatory democracy is focused on the discussion of participation as a right to intervene (Pateman, 2012). Accordingly, citizens participate by their own will in a clear recognition that participation is something that must happen freely, based on people's interest to decide about their own problems and not depending on previous selection processes or by being paid for. Participation here appears as a universal right to be freely exercised (Pateman, 1970, 2012; Santos, 1998; Dagnino, 2002; Santos and Avritzer, 2002).

The participatory proposal is rooted in the intersection of convergent approaches concerning democracy reinvention: radical and plural democracy and participatory democracy¹³ are two main references on that scope.

According to radical and plural democracy, every citizen is a politician and the social transformation takes place through political struggle, the antagonism, meaning that

¹³ Both approaches emerges a reaction to deliberative democracy presupposition, which will be further explored in the present chapter. The participatory democracy proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1998) and the radical and plural democracy proposed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1989). Although recognizing authors like Boaventura the Sousa Santos stamped the expression, its introduction into the academic context is due to Carole Pateman's work, namely her reference book "Participation and Democratic Theory" (1970), one of the founding works referring to the worsening of the distance between governors and governed putting a clear emphasis on the idea of grassroots democracy.

all the political construction has always held against a set of practices, which in this case are the practices of representative democracy. Radical democrats emphasize the need for collective deliberation practices instead of politics based on power relations and interests that favor an obscure process of decision-making (Mouffe, 2005; Fung and Cohen, 2007). According to the participatory democrats, representative democracy has failed to take into account cultural plurality and the new emerging identities. Participatory proposals also require profound redefinitions in democratic practices, namely claiming for cultural recognition and social inclusion at the political debate in order to "ensure pluralism and tolerance, without which participatory democracy languishes" (Santos, 2002b: 555). Both approaches are settled in the idea of transformation of power relations into relations of shared authority (Santos, 1998), both referring to different formats of democratization, built by a wide participation of social actors in decision-making processes that extend possibilities of innovative procedures.

The later participatory proposal, contrary to the radical proposal, is closely linked to the democratization processes in the global South, where new cultural meaning and social grammar redefinition allow the dispute over the meaning of practices and policies incorporation of new actors and new themes in the debate about democracy (Santos, 2000, 2002a, 2002b).¹⁴ The participatory proposal has its origins in social movements that challenged exclusionary social practices through actions that generate new forms of government control by the citizens, restoring local democratic tradition ignored by the hegemonic forms of representative democracy (Dagnino 2007; Neveu, 2011). However, the design of new forms of social emancipation has its path constructed from practices that occur in specific contexts, to give answers to concrete problems, a reason why it is not

¹⁴ Still, authors like Ian Shapiro make clear that there is no case on record of democracy's having been achieved through a strongly inclusive participation (2003: 81).

possible, therefore, "to make universal solutions, valid in any context" (Santos and Avritzer, 2002: 71).

The origins of this participatory approach are quite recent; they date back to the intensification of globalization processes that forced to rethink several aspects of nation States, including decision-making processes (Santos, 2002a; Pearce, 2010a). With the globalization and Europeanization processes, new relations between State and society started to emerge, showing new possibilities to achieve political decisions (Van Gunsteren, 1998; Newman, 2005). Here the neoliberalism designs its own participatory projects with society, by making participation a consequence of its responsibility demission, even if most of the times such participatory models don't allow effective co-production of decisions.

Globalization and Europeanization are processes that have undoubtedly helped to reconfigure the space and the boundaries of decision-making processes. New supranational entities, such as the European Union, were largely responsible for the need to rethink old models of democracy, providing new ways to proceed in decision-making processes, and to a certain extent, against the old hegemonic models.¹⁵ The abovementioned processes are elucidative of the relevance of new actors and new powers at the decision-making, in a context of social, policy, cultural, scientific and economic adjustment (Hagendijk and Kallerud, 2003). We must be aware, however, that the EU has not just fostered a rethinking of models of democracy and, in particular, of forms of participation. It has also nourished thinking on models of governance which are explicitly critical of the alleged shortcomings and problems raised by democracy.

¹⁵ Perry Anderson (2009: 79 and ff) identifies a trend in political science that explicitly advocates the benefits of what is currently described as the democratic deficit of EU institutions and of what is described as government by regulation. Thus, the EU has been the ground not only for experiments with democracy, but also for experiments with other forms of political organization whose virtues are defended because they rely on non-democratic arrangements and practices.

More recently, a slippage from the notion of participation as citizen engagement to participation as consumer choice, and of participatory devices as forms of constituting a new post-fordist public has been advanced based on the contributions of Charles Thorpe and Jane Gregory.¹⁶ Thorpe and Gregory argue for a shift towards dialogue and engagement that took place against the background of a series of policy-making crises and public controversies. The author traces how the emergence of the public participation emerged as political form suited to post-fordist conditions, facilitating the emergence of active citizens-consumers amenable to the products and services of a knowledge economy; a policy view that participation fosters "confident consumers" (Thorpe 2010: 406; Thorpe and Gregory, 2010: 273). Thus, programmes based on public participation can be considered forms of control and co-optation that promote the shaping of public as markets. Those new modes of co-optation and control adopted by elites and state agencies, however, are of limited efficacy, namely due to the role played by social movements, that are responsible for drawing on the increasing legitimacy of normative demands for the democratization of decision-making by challenging the superficiality and limited character of institutionalized 'engagement' mechanisms (Thorpe and Gregory, 2010: 296).

Participation has become a priority of political agendas around the world, and its applicability has been widely touted, albeit most of the times with no correspondence with the practices described. Citizen participation has been assumed to be the solution for the democratic crises, although currently a more general crisis is affecting its implementation (Sandel, 1996).¹⁷ Participatory practices are assumed to sustain participatory democracy, but are not yet coincident with their theoretical conception (Santos, 2005: 10-11). A

¹⁶ Both references work is based on UK policy-making on Science and Technology.

¹⁷ The democracy defect, according to Sandel (1996), to which he calls "democracy's discontent", lies in the impoverished vision of citizenship and community. Based on the analysis of the American reality, the author considers that politics has lost its civic voice, the required sense of community and the civic engagement.

situation very well described as *discursive crisis* by Evelina Dagnino (2004) or as *democratization rhetoric* by Thorpe and Gregory (2010: 273).

4.1. Conceptualizing participation

The call for more participation has taken many forms in various domains of social life. The arrangements made are very heterogeneous, both in the values that underlie them as in their goals (modes of public policy government, social control, critical expression, decision-making, etc), forms, degree of institutionalization, and their relation to collective action. This proliferation is raising serious concerns about the practices and effects of deliberative democracy and as well as about participatory mechanisms.

Participation is not easy to define because “any theory must acknowledge that different people have different beliefs about what public participation should accomplish. Further, contextual variables affect process’s character and outcomes” (Webler and Tuler, 2002: 179).

Citizens’ participation refers here to mechanisms that allow citizens to interfere in public life, such as public enquiries and referendums. All such mechanisms allow or promote the public to participate in the complete process of examining an issue, but they do not guarantee that the public would have any say in the final decision made by government.

In present discussions two dimensions appear to be central for conceptualization of participation: first, a legal dimension that frames citizens’ intervention in decision-making processes as a legal right, part of a citizen role in public life; second, a substantive dimension based on participation as one central practice guiding citizens in public life (Roberts, 2008). From here, participation emerges as a direct exercise of citizenship, where

each citizen is seen as part of a governance process, given an active engagement in politics, based on the ideal of power articulation of technical and administrative actors (Arnstein, 1969; Roberts, 2008).

In order to properly define what participation is and can be, we need to take into account the existence of those distinct ways to participate in decision-making, as well as the different expectations on the consequences that each type of participatory model may cause (Arnstein, 1969; Hagendijk and Kallerud, 2003; Rowe and Fewer, 2004).

Accordingly, conceptualizing participation promotes two distinct perspectives (Fung and Cohen, 2007: 222): a) one approach based on a wider citizens participation in public decisions, according to which citizens should have a more direct intervention in substantive issues affecting their lives, ensuring that their views and concerns will be heard and answered by public administrators; b) another approach based on ideas about effective deliberative process and how citizens may address public problems through their solutions joint discussion.¹⁸ The latter is being considered one of the most democratic aspects of democracy, referring to “collective decision-making with the participation of all who will be affected by the decision or their representatives” (Elster, 1998: 8).

Both the literature and the practices described suggest various mechanisms to engage citizens at decision-making, ranging from communication schemes based on unilateral information, consultation processes on a given subject, to real involvement in decision-making processes (Arnstein, 1969; Fung and Wright, 2003; Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Creighton, 2005). Indeed, participation can happen according to a flexible set of schemes of citizens’ interaction in decision-making processes, revealing different

¹⁸ Callon *et al.* add to the conception of participation a further central element – the question of communication and of dialogue – allowing the conception of a dialogist democracy. In fact, the democratization of democracy proposed is essentially based on the power of the word, of the voice and not so much on ordinary citizens’ opportunity to be present and to take part, but to intervene, to be heard, and to argue (2001: 337).

possibilities of framing State interaction with the citizen sphere, such as citizen juries, public consultations, citizens' forums, deliberative popular assemblies, participatory budgets,¹⁹ etc.. Those mechanisms are based on both massive participation, when related to participatory mechanisms that imply the inclusion of all members of a community, usually applied to local political sphere, or citizens' samples established through the participation of mini-publics, based on "representative"²⁰ groups of a community (Fiskhin, 2009), in accordance with deliberative democracy theory conception, or, according to Goodin and Dryzek (2006: 220) definition: "citizens groups small enough to be genuinely deliberative, and representative enough to be genuinely democratic".

Citizens' participation in the decision-making process can be understood as a new rationality through which communities become governable/governing subjects, and from this new participatory governance emerges the creation of a social actor defined as *participatory citizen* (Newman, 2005), which is also a *vigilant citizen* (Rosanvallon, 2006). In such a participatory profile, citizens have a new set of combined rights/duties: to opine, to purpose, to control, to assess, to judge and to decide (Sintomer, 2010: 169).

As Evelina Danigno (2002) states, the participation conceptualization emerges from the citizenship, which can be understood as *the right to have rights* or, moreover, the possibility to frame that possibility into more *active practices of citizenship* (Navarro, 2010) or a citizenship then created and recreated by citizens in action (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 27). Citizen participation is guided by the principle of citizenship, which both limits the power of the State as universalizes and equalizes the particularities of the subjects (Santos, 1999).

¹⁹ Recent estimates indicates the existence of about 2000 experiences functioning in the world, most of them in Latin America, but recently with large projection in Europe (by 2010 there were almost 300 cases), being recently introduced into North America, Africa and Asia (Dias, 2008; Pateman, 2012).

²⁰ It is considered that a truly representative sample is not possible to achieve.

Since Rousseau's *Social Contract* (2003) citizenship appears as a complex concept, hard to be defined. Indeed, citizenship is made up of rights and duties, which opens new horizons for citizens' self-realization. Van Gunsteren frames citizenship as "a principle of constitutional reconstruction, in the sense that citizens should play an active role in it, as well as in the sense that the constitution should foster citizenship" (1998: 7).

Citizens' participation is also a movement towards the expansion of the exercise of democratic rights beyond the limited traditional boundaries of citizenship. It began in the 1960s, due to the crisis of the welfare state that, according to Santos (1999), resulted in the "ideological triumph" of subjectivity against citizenship; in the personal and lonely subjectivity against the statist and atomizing citizenship, due to the mismatch between the needs of the population and their representatives' efforts to realize them.

One must be aware that citizenship ultimately is a cultural artifact; it's what people make of it and one central aspect of citizenship is based on the fact that citizens have a say in political decision-making (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 11 and 13).²¹ In this sense, citizenship is extensive with participation because participation is a way of defining and exerting social and political rights.

Citizens' participation is being widely promoted as the missing or underdeveloped element in the mesh of fairer and equal democracy. Since the 1980s participation began to become "part of mainstream development practice" (Pateman, 2012: 7). Effective participation is recognized as a gain concerning human development and progress (Gastil, 2008; Jacobson and Lambino, 2008; Lima, 2008; Pateman, 2012; Pearce, 2010a, 2010b). Accordingly, participatory devices are pointed out as ways to reinforce social inclusion, to enhance or restore the sense of belonging to the community (Pateman, 1970). And it is

²¹ Van Gunsteren states that "if no one actually *participates*, there is no citizenship" (1998: 153). Although his work is of valuable interest in the discussion and comprehension of citizenship, his emphasis is certainly not, as many others, on increasing citizens' participation.

often seen as a way to renew citizens' interest in politics, to renew a full conception of citizenship. In addition they also may mean emancipation (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 13), by allowing a direct control of decision-making, which means greater control over the political system (Arnstein, 1969; Pateman, 1970; Roberts, 2008) due to the distribution of power they allowed (Pateman, 1970; Bhoman, 1998; Elster, 1998; Held, 2007).

Changes which occurred in the last two decades led to the emergence of new social movements, which have developed emancipation struggles in the field of personal, social and cultural changes, conducted by different social groups, that lead to the reformulation of social interrelations, making new social subjects emerge, among which the participatory subject (Newman, 2005). This rise of civil society emerges as a pressure to reformulate the system of social rights. But these are no longer viewed as the rights to gain access to services designed and administered by the State, according to Marshall's concept of citizenship (1967), but a strong demand for an active role in defining public services and public policy (Santos, 2002a).

These are struggles for the implementation of participatory democracy as a form of political organization and represent the need to transform democracy models into more democratic models in their functioning (Fung and Wright, 2003; Dagnino, 2004; Santos, 2005; Fishman, 2011), making that depend on the exercise of the single right to participate.

4.2. How participatory mechanisms relate to distinct political projects

There are distinct possibilities to participate in decision-making, each one of them raising distinct expectations concerning the consequences that each one of them may cause for people's life and for democracy.

Different citizens' participation mechanisms are spreading all over the world with the intent to promote citizen inclusion in decision-making. For this reason, citizens' participation has been promoted as capable of bringing closer together policy makers and citizens, a recognised outcome of these processes, widely accepted as the missing ingredient of the quality of the public decisions.

The timeless "participation ladder" of Sherry Arnstein (1969) illustrates the several levels that the institutional architecture of citizen participation can have. According to her, participation emerges from a theoretical project based on eight different rungs, going from manipulation, therapy, information, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power until effective citizens' control of decision-making.²²

Rowe and Frewer (2004: 515) also relate 'participation' to the way the public may be involved, ranging from passive listeners to situations where citizens actually take the decisions. But while Arnstein approach (1969) considers 'true participation' to refer to actions involving high level of empowerment of the public, as well as a direct role in the decision process, Rowe and Frewer (2004) consider that participation is a less constrained concept in line to what Weblor and Tuler defend:

In some cases, simply providing opportunities to comment at public hearings, vote in referenda, or participate as members of an interest group or a social movement satisfies people's needs to participate. In other instances, more elaborate forms of involvement are necessary. We can identify two distinct levels of this "enhanced public participation." At the first level is an opportunity for sustained deliberation among all parties involved. At the second level is a condition of power sharing in the decision-making (Weblor and Tuler, 2002: 132).

²² At the first two steps (manipulation and therapy) the author considers that participation is absent. At steps three, four and five (information, consultation and placation) Arnstein warns us that we are dealing with fake participation or tokenism situations, the reason why only in the last three levels (partnership, delegated power and citizen control) she considers facing real participation opportunities.

The key issue at stake in these exchanges is whether we are looking at public participation exercises aimed at ‘upstream’ engagement or whether such exercises amount to little more than political marketing (Hagendijk, 2011).

According to Evelina Dagnino (2004), we are witnessing an expansion of democracy, at least in regard to its conceptualization. Such expansion is much based on the prevalent discourse underlying the need to create public spaces as well as to increase civil society participation in discussions and decision-making related to public policies.

In considering questions about the nature of participation and its forms it is important to acknowledge that the drive towards more participation often results from different factors and motives. In one and the same case participation may be stimulated as a part of mobilized reform agendas like the Washington Consensus as well as by groups that oppose such governmental agendas.

In this sense, and in order to repair the displacement of participation concept caused by the perverse confluence of antagonistic political projects, Evelina Dagnino (2004: 152-153) suggests that a resignification must be given to participatory actions, embracing those behind State imposition, including that resulting from civil society pressures, even those entailing more disruptive actions of the social order as legitimate forms to promote a more fair and equal world to live.²³

One of the most ambitious proposal to face the crisis of current democratic systems rests on the implementation of a *high intensity democracy model* (Santos, 1998;

²³ Concerning this, one may not ignore neoliberalism’s approach to participation, regarded as the active constitution of an individualistic, entrepreneurial, market-wise subject, through specific devices such as training seminars and workshops (Rose, 1996; Rose and Miller, 2007; Foucault, 2008). This approach tries to work around ideological criticisms of neoliberalism, and shows how participation, in that context, is not just rhetorical or window-dressing, but an active part of the active constitution of subjects, that should be looked for beyond the formal political system. Accordingly, even if political decision-making is increasingly restricted to voting and opinion polls, participation is articulated as part of neoliberal dynamics. However, to such dynamics based on restrictive policies of participation, Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls "domestication of popular participation" (2005: 12).

2007a; Santos and Avritzer, 2002), based on new institutional innovations counting with citizens direct participation and their subsequent empowerment within participatory governance schemes (Fung and Wright, 2003).

Both concepts – *high intensity democracy* and *low intensity democracy* - are part of the binomial used by Boaventura de Sousa Santos to clarify the so-called process of *democracy democratization* (1998). The low intensity democracy is the prevalent model nowadays, the one associated with the hegemonic neo-liberal democracy model. Such model does not recognize other forms of participation than citizens' vote in regular elections. Regular elections, thus, are the minimal and trivial forms of citizens' participation, which is blocking citizenship through processes of social and political exclusion.

Citizens' participation within high intensity models of democracy is proposed to be played through new participatory dynamics of communities and social groups, who struggle against the low intensity model of democracy mobilized by the aspiration of inclusion and citizenship. High intensity democracy presupposes, therefore, increased citizen participation. This model assumes an alternative democratic vision where participation is associated with representation and deliberation moments, allowing the configuration of new social and institutional innovations. High intensity democracy is also based on a new social and cultural grammar, founded on a democratic ethics, namely: equality and freedom in perspective with participation, entailing the play of equality and difference, of justice and recognition.

The distinction between 'high' and 'low' intensity is particularly attractive to relate discussions of mechanisms, motives and formats of participation to what they

amount to in specific situations and what they imply for the exercise of democratic governance.

The low intensity democracy corresponds to representative democratic systems. Accordingly, decision power remains concentrated in the representative forces without any possibility of being shared. The possibility of HID, in turn, is based on direct citizen participation in political life, especially in decision-making processes. In this version of democracy, public space is not restricted to institutional State apparatus and its influence on social life is experienced also through other forms of organization beyond the State.²⁴

High-intensity democracy has as its main corollary the shared exercise of power, able to transform social relations and political practices in order to reach decisions that best adapt collective problems experienced. Nevertheless, not all forms of participation contribute to the implementation of high intensity democracy. High intensity practices are the expression of the fight against social, political and cultural inequalities, and usually they emerge from below. This alternative to the low intensity democracy depends on the accomplishment of basic presuppositions: by strengthening demo-diversity, considering and embracing participatory experiences that point to the improvement of forms of public deliberation and participation in density; by strengthening local experiences in order to make them influence locally, nationally and globally; and moreover, democratic experimentalism is seen as a new way of successful participatory experiences by originating the new social grammars mentioned above (Santos and Avritzer, 2002) .

²⁴ Theorists of PB, namely in Brazil, such as Tarso Genro (1996; 1997) have come up with the concept of "non-state public space" considering that there is a process of inventing new spaces and settings which do not fit comfortably into either the State or civil society as more commonly understood. Public space, or according Genro's nomenclature, the "non-state public sphere" is, so to speak, the anteroom of the State, the channel through which the various associations take their demands to government agencies. A "non-state public sphere" is not so different orbit legitimation of social actors and their demands, it is before the court for transmission to the State claims a priori fair and legitimate (Costa, 1999).

High intensity democracy has in its horizon the promotion of transparency by citizens' permanent vigilance of decision-making, as claimed by Pierre Rosanvallon (2006), although performed through institutionalized forms of participatory governance (Fung and Wright, 2003). It embodies a new set of rights beyond the first generations claimed by Marshall (1967),²⁵ based on the right of recognition and of participation, a new boundary for citizenship. Accordingly, a new conception of citizenship is required, going beyond the cyclical moments of elections and meaning an ongoing action played by citizens or an active citizenship, based on the *parity of participation* (Fraser, 2005) between citizens.

4.3. The main critics of the participatory democratic model

Participatory democracy, although claiming for more intense practices of democracy, is not exempt of criticisms. One may distinguish eight forms of critique of the participatory democratic model. Each form of critique points to or originates different concern as we will see below.

First, there are those pointing out that more participation has been proposed as the solution to the democratic crises. The literature on this topic has often attributed a very ideological and rather utopian meaning to this proposal (Webler and Tuler, 2002; Contandriopoulos, 2004; Rowe and Frewer, 2004). Accordingly, the dimension and the complexity of the modern State restricts citizens' direct participation, the reason why participatory democracy is considered a non realistic approach, not even practicable (Dahl, 1989). Despite this criticism, and according to the less radical authors, participation is not denied as a crucial element in good governance (Stoker, 2006).

²⁵ Civil, political and social rights.

Second, we can mention criticisms concerning *the illusion of participation* (Chauí, 1990). Accordingly, participation considers the possibility of individual citizens, privatized and depoliticized who imagine that the expression in public of their anxieties, their fears, their desires, would convert them into active political subjects. This is one of the most radical expressions of participation without consequences.

Third, there are those who consider that there is an over prescription of citizens' participation. Such argument is based on the fact that democracy should not require participation of all people all the time (Fishkin, 2009: 1), but of most of the people, some of the time (Dryzek, 2009: 1399). This raises discussion on the criteria that should guide citizens' selection in participatory mechanisms (Hendriks, 2006; Pearce, 2010b). The excessive mobilization of citizens' to participate is considered a disruptive action of the order and of social stability, creating too much noise in the system (Fishkin, 1991; Dryzek, 1996). Accordingly, the more massive the direct involvement of citizens becomes the slower and inefficient the democratic system will turn. If we add to this portrait the discussion of the different capabilities to participate and its consequences on a system required be to efficient, one may conclude that participation is being criticized mainly due to its "amateurism".²⁶

Fourth, attention must be given to the quality of participation, suggesting that different forms of citizen involvement at decision-making should not be classified tout-court as participation, given the existence of symbolic forms of participation in the political systems, where citizens have no power to influence decisions (Arnstein, 1969; Fung and

²⁶ If participation is intended, even in its more restrictive versions, to bring in "common" citizens into public debate and, eventually, deliberation on certain subjects, it is expected that these citizens will be neither professional political agents nor experts in the topics under discussion. However, there is the need, postulated by some of the formal devices for public participation, such as consensus conferences as well in some versions of other participatory arrangements, such as PB (and their schools for citizenship) or councils for public policies, of "training" or "educating" the citizens who are to become competent participatory citizens.

Wright, 2001, 2003; Pearce, 2010a, 2010c). Moreover, consultation, information and participation in decision-making are often conflated (Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Purdam and Crisp, 2009). Different forms of participation refer to deficit inclusion situations while others assume a genuine citizens inclusive format.

Fifth, a participatory democratic model may entail citizens' participation as compulsory. Accordingly, some participatory forms of governance may easily fall into tyrannical forms of participation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001).²⁷

Sixth, a deficit of effective participatory practices due to the lack of representativeness of socially excluded groups and the failure to prioritize the involvement of those whose voices are seldom heard (Delli Carpini *et al.*, 2004; Norris, 2011) also pointed as one strong criticism against the democratic participatory model.

Seventh, some authors are concerned with the unsatisfactory degree of institutionalization of some participatory practices (Abelson *et al.*, 2003; Nunes, 2007), namely because the voice of the citizens needs an order of institutions to sound and to have effect (Van Gunsteren, 1998: 29).

Eighth, the scale constraints posed by direct participation, which implies a decline of deliberation and participation quality as we move from face-to-face small groups to larger territorial scales, involving more actors (Dahl, 1989; Mill, 1998; Todd and Taylor, 2004; Nunes, 2007) is one last form of critique.

Such critiques comprise participation as a naive politics conception, based on the idea that only a social informed minority has skills to represent those who have not. Opponents to participatory democracy consider it a very expensive utopia that current societies cannot afford due to the amount of skills, resources and available time that does

²⁷ For example, some participatory budgeting processes establish that the income to invest in a region depends on the minimum number of voters of that region involved in the process.

not exist, even when reality, based on long lasting experiences, namely those coming from the South, prove exactly the opposite.

4.4. Governance, inequality and participatory democracy

Democracies based on the assumption of double delegation – citizens’ delegation of power to scientists and experts, granting them the monopoly of knowledge production; delegation of power to politicians, granting them the monopoly of decisions – generates inequalities and exclusions (Callon *et al.*, 2001: 169 and 337). Concerning the democracy debate nowadays, one of the main questions inequality is causing relates to the way such situations are constraining citizens’ ability to equally share the political agenda setting and the informal dimensions of policy-making (Fishman, 2011).

Inequality is a corollary question in relation to democracy discussion. Discussions on democracy will always have the inequality problem to take care, although we have become accustomed to the coexistence of democracy with substantial inequality (Shapiro, 2003: 104). So, if on one hand the economic and social inequalities already affect citizens differently; on the other, the failure to consider those most affected groups in the contexts of decision-making aggravates their situation, especially because they cannot participate in defining fairer solutions to the problems they live with. Accordingly, inequality is one of the major problems of democratic societies both in the way it is challenging the concept of democracy as the political action itself. As solution consequence, inequality is raising the need to analyze and discuss a possible combination between democracy and participation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, deliberative democracy theory doesn’t properly address the inequality question. Participatory democracy proposal, however, seems to better frame the inequality question in its several manifestations: of

representation/participation; of access to key resources; of unequal possibilities to profit from the outcomes of political and economic processes (Cozzens *et al.*, 2007). Participatory democracy makes inequality emerge as one central concern regarding the whole proposal of dynamic organization.

Participatory democracy is based on a project firmly anchored on the formulation of public policies to properly tackle inequality through new participatory practices. Accordingly, participation is framed under the principle of inclusion of citizens' control of the politics; especially those who were usually excluded from the decision-making sphere. Citizen participation sustained in new mechanisms is then the substantive issue of the institutional dimension of decision-making processes and public affairs management within the high intensity democracy model.

Within this framework, governance seems to be the linking concept that appears to bridge new democratization processes, by responding to market failures, with inequality questions and its implications. But governance itself is a very complex concept, referring to several situations. Hagendijk and others (2005: 17-20) propose that we look to a broad and complex typology of governance²⁸ as the proper way to get to the point of citizen participation, trying to capture several possibilities for citizens engagement in politics. The presented typology contemplates distinct situations: *discretionary governance* (policy-making takes place with virtually no explicit interaction with 'the public'. Decisions are taken with very little input to the policy process by any group outside the institutions directly responsible for policy); *corporatist governance* (the processes of negotiation take place within a closed or highly regulated space, so the decisive feature is the question of admission and recognition of legitimate stakeholders); *educational governance* (assumes

²⁸ This typology concerns Science Technology and Governance in Europe.

that conflicts or tensions regarding science and technology policy are founded on a lack of knowledge on the part of the public. Hence it is necessary to educate the public through dissemination of scientific (expert) knowledge in order to create an informed public of scientific citizens that understand the experts' assessment of the problems and possibilities of science); *market governance* (when the "invisible hand knows best" what must be done; market governance is based on the notion that science and technology can be governed through the economic mechanisms of demand and supply); *agonistic governance* (takes place under conditions of confrontation and adversity, when decisions have to be made in a political context where positions are strongly opposed); and *deliberative governance* (based on consensual agreements developed within the framework of the public sphere serve as foundations for legitimate policy decisions).

Typologies like the one presented reveal that a new emphasis on the concept of participation only makes sense if we take into account a plurality of actors in governance processes, as well as on the plurality of distinct situations. But as mentioned, new participatory practices appear in a context of democratic crisis: crisis of legitimacy and crisis of governability (Santos, 2005: 16; Sintomer, 2010: 27). The major challenge that governance has to face is, hence, to know if it can solve the issue of the unequal distribution and of difference within societies. The solution appears to be within State transformation possibilities:

The crisis of legitimacy is based on the idea of popular sovereignty and popular participation, which is the foundation of the necessary equation for a truly empowering social change: there is no benefit without participation; and there's no participation without benefit, and the right to determine the benefit is of those who participate (Santos, 2005: 14).²⁹

²⁹ Quotations of the documents analyzed and interviews were translated by the author and are entirely her responsibility.

Good governance practices are being fostered over more citizens' participation, resting in the formula "making public decisions openly and solving problems competently" (Webler and Tuler, 2008: 125). In this sense, good governance practices coincident with the participatory model can be translated into spaces of deliberation emerging from citizens (Cornwall, 2002). New forms of citizen participation appearing from the grassroots, and from struggle, are taken as a legitimate strategy to combat political and social forms of inequality not only expressed in living conditions, as in the way citizens engage in such processes (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Newman, 2005).

Participation is the essence of "new" *governance* exercises, based on the complex art of making the political machine work, acting as the centerpiece made by agency, institutions and systems that are autonomous from each other, but working together through mutual interdependence (Jessop, 1997; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Kooiman, 2003; Rosenberg, 2007). Governance assumes the relation between State and Society as central, making it dependent on the existence of several structures, actors, processes, capabilities, vocabularies and mechanisms, but above all, on the new relation between those who govern and those who are governed (Reis, 2007). Participation framed under the participatory democracy model and according to new political configurations presents new possibilities to deal with the inequality issue:

a) by opening deliberative processes to social collectives, which represents the implementation of a new decision power distribution. Such possibility can be associated to forms of struggling against installed power, and promoting accountability of decision-making that can lead to social transformation (Santos, 1998);

b) by allowing a broad participation of citizens in political decision-making processes, where each citizen uses their own knowledge to properly solve problems

affecting them giving rise to cognitive justice possibilities (Santos, 2007b). Concerning decision-making processes, this also contributes to the reconfiguration of the relation between power and knowledge (Fals-Borda, 1998; Santos *et al.*, 2004; Nunes, 2007; Pearce, 2010c; Navarro, 2010);

c) by promoting holistic forms of governance based on non instrumentalized ideals of making public decisions. In such perspective, each citizen has the same right and opportunity to participate, contrary to passive citizenship forms stamped by political apathy (Rosanvallon, 2006; Pateman, 2012).

Empowered participatory governance is here central (Fung and Wright, 2003: 5) playing an aggregative role, relying upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation.

4.5. Democracy implications for the study of grassroots initiatives of participation

The participatory democracy proposal, albeit with ideological roots scattered throughout history, have gained a new life, a new meaning and a precise definition of the problem that it deals with when participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre, Brazil, marked the history of political participation in 1989 and, then, when the World Social Forum happened (2001). The strong bond of participatory democracy with social movements became clear, and the need to include these forms of action in the analysis of participation and democracy (Dagnino, 2007). It seems to be this militant side of participation, more inclusive, more popular, that is pushing for the creation of new high intensity forms of democracy. At this point the logic of social mobilization should be emphasized as crucial to the analysis of participatory democracy. It constitutes the great emphasis that distinguishes participatory democracy from mechanisms of deliberative democracy, the

latter more tied to academic and technocratic contexts (Avritzer, 2002; Rubião, 2010; Sintomer, 2010; Pateman, 2012), and for this reason this work will be empirically focused on cases where citizen participation marked by social mobilizations was present. That is the reason why the next chapter is dedicated to explore the relation between social movement theory and democracy, paving the way to the empirical analysis of protests as participation and as well as possibilities for high intensity democracy forms.

Some of the disjunctions of democracy discussed throughout this chapter justify an investment in the study of grassroots initiatives for political mobilization and participation in order to see how the democratic deficit is being fought (Norris, 2011). The democratic deficit and growing erosion of public confidence in politics and politicians somehow corresponds to the growing scrutiny and interest in new forms of citizen involvement in politics, namely in decision-making processes. Given the democratic deficits registered in representative practices of elitist control over decision-making, civil society seems increasingly organizing into participatory practices. Citizen participatory practices are ranging from those created by the State in recognition and attempt to clog the referred democratic deficit to more agonistic practices of political interaction based on conflict. The intention of this work is to figure out which role distinct participatory formats emerging from below are playing in promoting high intensity forms of democracy. The way participatory grassroots initiatives of participation and political representatives articulate into new institutional democratic configurations is also a topic emerging from the discussion in this chapter.

The distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ intensity models of democracy is particularly attractive to relate discussions of mechanisms, motives and formats of

participation to what they amount to in specific situations and what they imply for the exercise of democratic governance.

Work to be developed is organized around citizens' participation as the central ingredient that can make high intensity democracy work. Given the framework presented in this chapter, we intend to move on to understand how distinct mechanisms grounded in different participatory practices may result in high intensity forms of democracy. That presupposes figuring out how to organize to a high intensity process of democracy. Moreover, the role played by citizens is also central to frame new practices and new participatory devices as increasing the intensity of democracy and favoring the emergence of a participatory citizen. It is also relevant to understand how interaction is established between new participatory actors and 'old representative agents', the way power, authority and empowerment attributes can be shareable among all agents intervening in the democratic processes of high intensity.

To increase participatory democracy practices presupposes several institutionalities based on new procedures and democratic learning. However, such processes may also reveal the limits to high intensity practices advancement based on both the political will of governments and the people who participate. Thus, analysis may be of consequence for ascertaining whether the implementation of certain participatory forms can result into complex dimensions of governance, more or less associated with the reproduction of traditional political practices that still persist. In addition, this study may also consider possible blockages to both the occurrence and density of citizen participation into democratic intensity, depending on the context and the democratic characteristics of the contexts to be consider, requiring very specific empirical studies. The present study has also strong implications on how to redefine citizenship. Such a redefinition presupposes a

dual dynamic of democratization, which requires the exercise of active citizenship, capable of promoting each subject of civil society to a conscious and active role concerning their own development, but also able to redefine the role of the State.

This study reviews positions about participation in the political literature in its relation with democracy intensity. In much of that literature science and technology are fueling controversy about participation. We will therefore proceed by discussing political theoretical viewpoints and where and when appropriate we will deal with knowledge, information and expertise. Further on this work a chapter will explore specifically and in more detail the S&T and knowledge questions.

Debates on citizen participation in decision-making processes not only foster new democracy conceptions, but they bring out as well the relevance of the relationship between different knowledges under those processes. A participatory approach to democracy is built on the idea that citizens have specific knowledge and capacities to engage and intervene in policy-making processes and to influence technical decisions.

The model of low intensity democracy does not recognize a plural version of participation and consequently it presents itself as a residual model, based on a monoculture of knowledge. One central limitation of the representative model of democracy is the lack of legitimacy of decisions beyond those based on scientific, technical or expert knowledge. The possibility to analyze high intensity democratic practices, once based on a plurality of knowledges, will allow the emergence of new knowledge configurations. Such new knowledge configuration may be a possible source of quality decisions, one strong indicator on the pathway to the democratization of democracy.

Chapter 2. Protests as citizen participation in political decision-making

During a union demonstration in July 2010, my son asked me:

_ Mom, what did people write on the placards they are holding?

_ Well, they wrote things they don't like happening in their lives and how they want to change them.

That evening I found a post-it on our fridge door with a drawing of a soup plate and a spoon with a cross on top. My son was trying to protest against it, showing his will against mine and trying to influence my decision on his diet plan. His protest was successful, at least that night.

1. Introduction

Even when we elect those who represent us politically, we do not have to agree with them in all matters, all the time. Disagreement, opposition, contention is part of the political process and a necessary condition of democracy. Protest events are one possible contentious demonstration that may happen both in democratic and non democratic contexts.

As the previous chapter brought to the fore, politics nowadays has very little in common with the passions and the conflicts that shaped citizen engagement with politics during the past century. Times have changed, politics have changed, and the main causes for which people are fighting are no longer the same. Social movements and protest actions triggered nowadays are expressions of very specific political conflicts, expressing a clear contestation of voting as insufficient space for citizens' political participation. Such current forms of collective action are demanding for the transformation of democracy into a more participatory system, a plural political space concerning decision-making.

The analysis to be undertaken in the present chapter focuses on the discussion of public protest events as legitimate forms of public participation in decision-making, by

exploring the relevance of citizens' mobilization through conflict as a participatory phenomenon and how such actions can fit into the proposal of high-intensity democracy.

To provide an analysis focused on protest in its relation to democracy and public participation does not mean subscribing to the thesis of a crisis of politics; on the contrary, one of the aims of this work is to analyze alternative ways of being and doing politics beyond the realm of political parties, namely as practices of deepening democracy.

Within this scope, political analysis trends are identifying new citizens' participation configurations that are pretty much based on consensual relations. Protests as subject of analysis represent an opportunity to study democratic configurations without neglecting conflict as a participatory possibility. Such concern also derives from some intellectual discomfort with the traditional paradigms used for studying citizens' participation in decision-making, too firmly based on consensual mechanisms especially conceived for people's participation, limiting the scope and the meaning of both participation and influence on decision-making caused by conflictual forms of collective action.

Given this background, the present chapter aims at analyzing protests as a form of citizen engagement and participation in politics beyond the formal channels of representative democracy and of deliberative democracy. Thus, this work intends to rethink protests' current formats and their relevance in democratic societies, especially their power to influence decisions and their importance in advancing democratic practices. It argues for a pluralistic view of participation, where other spaces outside of organized forms of participation can figure, namely among the participatory theoretical references that tend to overvalue formal spaces when compared with spaces associated with other forms of political action, such as protests. The current chapter explores the way theory has

been framing participatory formats, aiming not only at an exercise in the sociology of the absences regarding citizen participation theory, but also in the sociology of the emergences concerning protests as participation.³⁰

The interest in this particular question comes from the observation that space for participation concerning decision-making, even in the most developed democracies, is not the same for all citizens. For this reason, marginalized people tend to challenge the lack of democracy and of participation by creating their own pathway into the decision-making processes. In this scope, protests seem to represent a concrete opportunity for citizen intervention in decision-making processes in order to reverse the decisions in their favor, a form of participation out of the set of organized forms of participation but with the same or a more relevant potential impact in decision-making.

The chapter is organized thematically. It begins with an introductory investment in social movements' theory to understand protests' current formats and to frame protest actions in their relation with democracy and politics; then it turns the spotlight to protests as opportunities to participate in decision-making, exploring why protests happen in democratic spaces, questioning their legitimacy as democratic practices, and figuring out what such actions can represent in terms of possibilities for democratic change; after that reflection, the chapter seeks to bring closer protest actions as participatory performances linked to certain democratic cultures, and the Portuguese reality is used as an example of the latter; finally, one last point focuses on the specific reasons why people protest, and what for, trying to reflect on the visible goals that protest actions can achieve but also on the unforeseen outcomes that protest actions may produce, namely concerning citizens'

³⁰ "Sociology of absences" and "sociology of emergences" are both concepts of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006, 2007b).

influence in decision-making processes and in comparison to “formal” participatory procedures.

2. How social movement actions matter to citizens’ participation in politics

Since the 1960s, social movements and protest actions have become inextricable components of Western societies in their relation to democracy, and consequently a vein to be theoretically explored.

Collective action – based on a wide range of coordinated efforts, gives us an account of the interaction possibilities between politically relevant actors, which promote social movements as sustained and popularly based actions made of collective claims (Tilly, 2004: 474) – has become a major ingredient of the political process by deeply affecting political outcomes, directly or indirectly.

Until 1965, the approach to social movements was settled as an irrational form of collective action, whose roots were anchored in the principles of the psychology of crowds. Protests were seen as indicators of social anomie, whose leaders acted driven by unconscious impulses followed by irrational crowds (Flacks, 2005). An important turning point in such a research field, however, happened in 1965, when Mancur Olson introduced in the analysis “The Logic of Collective Action”, focusing on the problems of the traditional theories on group behavior, presenting his central argument that only in some particular cases is group behavior prompted by irrational causes. In his seminal work, Olson also argued that collective action would only take place if individuals were rational egoists and the group was large (1965: 108).³¹

³¹ A key issue that will never be solved concerns the idea of “rational” and “irrational”, namely what counts as “rational” and “irrational”, and for whom. In theories like Olson's “Logic of Collective Action”, selfishness and interest seem to be associated with rationality, whereas other motives (outrage, for instance) would count as irrational as long as they cannot be clearly attached to interests.

Olson's approach opened up a new discussion concerning collective mobilization as rational action, as meaningful acts, driven by the prospect of necessary and beneficial social change. Since then, such conflicts started to be framed as purposeful and organized actions happening in the political domain; a normal phenomenon in social life (Eder, 2003: 61; Tilly, 2004; Flacks, 2005: 54); an extension of normal everyday politics as "politics by other means" (Goodwin *et al.*, 2001: 4). Consisting of actions performed by conscious actors making rational choices (Della Porta, 1999: 85; Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 9), protests started to be recognized as playing an important role in society.

The literature in this field distinguishes Old and New Social Movements. Old social movements, consisting of the collective actions performed from the 19th to early 20th century, are linked to demands for civic, political and social rights, such as work, class and gender contentions; New social movements emerging after the 1950s are based on new conflicts and new claims deriving from the emerging post-industrial society, such as women's rights, rights regarding sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, health, environment, as well as the right to democracy, information, pluralism and participation in collective life.

This passage to 'new social movements', more than a turn on the subjects claimed, represent a fundamental critique of the social order and a central expression of the discontent with the model of representative democracy and its functioning. They assume at the very core of their claims a change in the conventional way of doing politics (Offe, 1985; Della Porta, 2007), by performing *alternative public spheres*, where it is possible to debate politics, strategies, and also new ideas about democracy (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 276).

Actions triggered by new social movements are driven not by the prime interest in State intervention to guarantee security and well-being, as happened with old social

movements, but by the concern with the expansion of political-administrative interventions in citizens' daily lives (Melluci, 1994; Della Porta and Diani, 1999). New social movements also advocate a participatory democracy based on the idea that citizens' active participation is an opportunity not a burden (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 168; Della Porta, 2003a, 2003b: 112; Diani, 2003: 47). They symbolize a new conception of democracy from below, based on the conception of political power involving decentralization, consultation of the interested citizens on certain public policies, presenting themselves as institutions of that direct democracy emerging from below.

The direct democracy favoured by social movements rejects the principle of delegation, viewed as an instrument of oligarchic power, and asserts that representatives should be subject to recall at all times. (...) Representative democracy is based on formal equality (one person, one vote); direct democracy is participatory, the right to decide being recognised only to those who demonstrate their commitment to the public cause. While representative democracy is often bureaucratic, with decision-making concentrated at the top, direct democracy is decentralized and emphasizes that decisions should be taken as near as possible to ordinary people's lives (Della Porta, 2003b: 112-113).

Protest actions can be considered as expressions of democratic innovation (Tejerina, 2005: 82); innovation referring not only to what is claimed for in the public sphere, but also concerning democratic organization required by those who protest (Melluci, 1994). In cases where the institutionalization of social movements into "normal" politics happened, and where the weakening of the political parties is a reality, we start nowadays to witness the rise of new waves of movements in a sort of "new-new movements" (Della Porta, 2003b: 107), stressing questions concerning the quality of democracy and citizens' participation in line with the high intensity democracy project.

Protests appear now as part of a *contentious politics* (McAdam *et al.*, 2001) or a *contentious pluralism*, a necessary condition of democracy and a distinctive political form of doing politics: “contentious pluralism brings to public politics a transformative imagination of democracy that builds a new world from within the old one” (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 286). It is a force for social change in shaping institutionalized politics, in interacting with those key antagonists and challenged groups (Kousis, 2004: 278). Thus, “by demanding that democracy live up to its potential, people challenge and seek to change both the common practices of social interaction and the formal political institutions that they encounter” (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 274).

At this point, social movement and protests must be distinguished. A social movement represents lasting collective efforts that involve some organization in order to make change happen, a way of doing politics that usually draws on protest action as its privileged way to make pressure for change (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Auyero, 2004; Flacks, 2005: 48). Although distinct from one another, social movements and protest events are closely related and inextricably intertwined. Protests represent the most typical form of action used to perform and to voice social movements’ claims. Thus, social movements do not exist without protest actions, but protests can happen outside a social movement, as an oppositional event, an attempt to demonstrate antagonism to a certain situation or decision.

More concretely, protests can be defined as specific actions oriented to influence public decisions performed through the public expression of a conflict (Diani, 2008: 56). One of the possible models assumed by such a form of collective action is that based on the idea of operating as a pressure group concerning politics that depend on short-term policy decisions on specific issues, no matter how important (Diani, 2009). In that sense,

they assume a very common pattern of political behavior usually defined as “unconventional methods of intervening in a government’s political decision-making” or as an “unconventional action in which indirect channels of influence are opened through the activity of a series of collective actors” (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 168 and 192).

The various unconventional forms of participation are ordered along a single continuum from least to most extreme. This continuum is marked by several thresholds. The first threshold indicates the transition from conventional to unconventional politics. Signing petitions and participating in lawful demonstrations are unorthodox political activities but still within the bounds of accepted democratic norms. The second threshold represents the shift to direct action techniques, such as boycotts. A third level of political activities involves illegal, but nonviolent, acts. Unofficial strikes or a peaceful occupation of a building occupy this step. Finally, a fourth threshold includes violent activities such as personal injury or physical damage (Dalton, 1988: 65).

Protests are also often defined as the performative art of politics (Juris, 2008), whose main purpose is to make visible those who cannot be heard and to fight a state with which they do not agree, partially or as a whole.

To mention politics as a performative art makes protests burst into social contexts as an ideological staging, the art of recognition of citizens’ empowerment, a citizenship performance; a kind of challenge in order to check how far it can be taken, motivated by the fact that those who protest feel their condition as citizens affected. In this sense, they represent convulsions seeking social and political change (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Giuni, 1999; Della Porta, 2003b; Tilly, 2004; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a); a typical response of disagreement that includes a variety of behaviors, ranging from shy complaints to more violent acts. They include an open expression and a demonstration of criticism

(Della Porta, 2003b: 103), both evoking the intention to interfere in political life beyond the regular vote.

Protests also represent the art of performing communication, in a kind of *participatory communication* (Rudolph, 2004: 65), which happens even when direct dialogue between oppositional actors is turned off. Thus, protests “enable us to act and communicate when faced with fear and uncertainty. Fear and uncertainty are ever present where inequality defines the standing and capacities of actors, but action and communication drive the public sphere to overcome attempts by powerful actors to control it” (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 286). Concerning this particular aspect, where some approaches see loud noise, others see a communicative process.³² “protest movements do make noise, as they try to communicate their demands, with slogans, banners, antics, rallies, and marches. But these sorts of actions give the movements some voice” (Piven, 2008: 2).

Communicative rituals are then inseparable from protests,³³ performed through both verbal and non-verbal messages in a kind of indirect communicative performance.³⁴ Protests thus function as indisputable sources of new information on a given controversial issue (Burstein, 1999: 12), also meaning different knowledges in opposition or competing,

³² Protests and contentious forms of politics invoke particular practices, techniques and technologies, which are invented, inherited and learnt to strengthen communication (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Death, 2010).

³³ Technological development is a resource that can't be ignored here. It has been favored by new protest tactics, allowing the reduction of the costs of mobilizing citizen interest groups and facilitating their effortless and immediate response to their dissatisfaction, renewing popular power that is now based on new forms of mobilizations (Piven, 2008: 8); it also allows new forms of communication. One should not forget, here, the discussion of the relationship between technology and democracy. A simple assumption is that new ICTs change the way people relate to each other; it is certainly relevant to assess if it happens for better or for worse. One conclusion achieved by a study on the matter (Tranvik, 2004) is that ICTs not only favor protest actions, as said above, as they favor more interaction, despite not being face to face, as Robert Putnam (2000), for instance, defended. They favor democracy in the sense that they foster horizontal connectedness, allowing people to acquire social and political skills that are transferable to the offline world. ICT's, then, in a certain way, can foster new civic engagement forms, being protest one example of that democratic manifestation.

³⁴ Albert Hirschman (1970) is one central reference on the need to enrich protests with concepts as “voice”, which must be activated, and “loyalty”.

invoking particular regimes of truth and knowledge (Death, 2010), afforded by *epistemic communities* (Diani, 2009) which are simultaneously *communities of practice* (Brown and Duguid, 1991). Within this scope, four varieties of oppositional knowledge can be identified: 1) counter-informative (which provides the ‘untold story’); 2) critical-interpretive (raises questions of meaning); 3) radical-envisioning (considers and explores alternative pathways); and 4) transformative (describes how alternatives may be achieved) (Woehrle *et al.*, 2008). Oppositional knowledge reveals a potential to stimulate “critical thinking” skills among their members, reinforcing the empowerment process associated with protesting. Thus, to become part of a protest action empowers citizens who, in isolation, would not confront the state, nor create consequences within society (Diani, 2004: 137; Rudolph, 2004: 66).³⁵

Protests are also characterized as high density rituals (Juris, 2008), in a possible equivalent to high intensity democracy episodes, resulting from the bodily awareness of co-presence among ritual participants who are physically assembled and share a mutual focus of attention, as well as a potential to intervene and influence politics.³⁶ But to make protests visible and more effective in their claims, mass media became central mediation actors in such processes, due to the fact that the strength of such actions greatly depends on the fact that “the whole world is watching”.

³⁵ Although lined with the dramatic dimension of those who live unequal and unfair situations (Della Porta, 2003b; Piven, 2008), protests also comprehend joyful and festive dimensions, able to produce new sociability spaces where “anger is glued to laughter”. Such forms of action provide arenas not only for eliciting images and identities, but also for living moments of freedom, liberation, and joy (Mendes and Araújo, 2010: 102).

³⁶ Although the body has been stressed as one of the key elements of protest events analysis (Sasson and Rapoport, 2003; Mendes and Araújo, 2010), namely concerning participation process, it has been arising little interest in social movement literature. The role of the body in performing protests so far remains undertheorized and therefore vague and inconsistent. In this context, the body produces, elaborates, and articulates political ideologies that should be more seriously taken into account. The body does not only serve as a medium for change, as it also can effect change as such. The body seems to be the main vehicle of participation, of presence and of communication in such events.

Since long ago, the media arena has been the ground for the *politics signification* (Snow and Oliver, 1995), a kind of platform for a mediated communication where speeches, interviews, advertising, editorials, and press conferences happen to promote their interpretations, but also pressing for legitimating participation in decisions through such actions. In this context, a central concern is being expressed by social movements' analysis: the autonomization of the media from every political control, given the impact on democracy that they can cause (Della Porta, 2003b: 111).

Protests also mean creativity, one of their successful means to capture media attention given the unusual, the spontaneous, and the dramatic that protests usually rely upon. Emotionally satisfying events more easily gain media commitment to a cause when compared with less visually and emotionally compelling incidents that go unnoticed (Juris, 2008). Such visibility also functions, most of the times, as a pressure near the core of decision-making. This emphasis on “being seen” and “being noticed” is a significant strategy of such actions, and the media are the window where a “we” is constructed, becoming publicly acknowledged and recognized (Auyero, 2004: 437). In this respect, protests not only perform a struggle against something, they also fight for visibility.

This form of collective action has been demonstrated to have great potential to bridge daily life with institutional policy in a kind of non institutional interstitial spaces of politics, of claims for legitimacy: the legitimacy to have a voice, to interfere in public decisions; to demonstrate, and display intelligible, alternative solutions beyond those practiced in institutionalized politics. For that reason, protests, by performing politics in a conflictual manner, make visible the demarcation of the boundaries between “us” and “them”, i.e., protesters and authorities and politicians who make decisions (Auyero, 2004: 435). Such demarcation makes more sense if we think of protests as representations of the

lifeworld, declaring and reflecting the world as already constituted and where people live and face their problems and needs.

To mention the “real life”, the lifeworld and the concrete and felt needs of people is to mention the public sphere as defined by Habermas, a place for encounters and disencounters, for claims, for public opinions. But such public space, however, is like a Pandora’ box opening (Eder, 2003: 63), where politics happens according to different rules:

The presence on the street or in any other public space always open a new perspective on the politician, a questioning of the powers and the established structures, an event that can produce new collective subjectivities, new records and new definitions of the truth (Mendes and Seixas, 2005b: 4).

In sum, protests represent the claim for more and better communication, more and better participation in political life concerning the public good. Nowadays protests represent a claim for more and better democracy, an inclusive democracy made of direct formats for participation (Della Porta, 2003b; Tejerina, 2005). Generically speaking, protests themselves represent a cause, which justifies the need to deeply explore the current relation between protests and democracy.

3. Protests and democracy: How do protests fit into the current picture of democracy?

Protests happen both in democratic and non democratic systems. Even in non democratic systems, this form of collective action can be successfully developed.³⁷

³⁷ The work of Marie Laure Geoffray (2010), for example, shows that even in social systems based in vertical forms of power and resting upon social repression, different forms of protest may emerge in a more or less “normalized” way. In such cases, protests differ from the practices of everyday resistance, and become naturalized as daily practices of survival, as well as dissent practices in opposition to the government.

Social movements and their practices usually emerge within democracy or to push for democracy, but by no means do all social movements promote democracy or translate its principles. Once a social movement becomes available as an effective way of making public claims, it also becomes available not only to democratizers, but also to non-democratic and even anti-democratic activists. Such assumptions reveal that the relationship between social movements, related forms of action and democracy can be quite tense and complex (Tilly, 2003: 21-23).

Nowadays, forms of collective action like protests are legitimately considered part of the workings of Western democracies; more concretely, protests represent a citizens' right, despite also being the target of repression in democratic contexts, as will be further discussed.

According to McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly,

(...) a regime is democratic insofar as it maintains broad citizenship, equal and autonomous citizenship, binding consultation of citizens at large with respect to governmental activities and personnel, as well as protection of citizens from arbitrary action by government agents"
(McAdam *et al.*, 2001: 264).

So, when such requirements are absent in a given society, protest is an open possibility to restore or to conquer democratic relations. Ideologically speaking, to talk about protests is to talk about democracy considering that such actions, besides demonstrating what is understood as being wrong, call for dialogue and negotiation between those who govern and those who are governed (Mendes and Seixas, 2005b: 3). These kinds of actions have as their main target to contribute to the definition of a new model of democracy, reason why organizations behind them have been described as symbols of a participatory and decentralized conception of democracy (Della Porta and

Diani, 1999: 163). Thus, despite the bone of contention that may lead to protest, in practical terms, protesters, *challengers* (Gamson, 1990) or *interest groups* (Burstein, 1999) act upon conflictual actions to conquer citizens' inclusion in democratic policy-making. For that reason, protests constitute one central challenge to representative models of governance (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Della Porta, 2003b; Flacks, 2005).

Democracy and popular contention are, then, presented as two interdependent features, even if quite often seen as incompatible (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Della Porta, 2003a, 2003b; Flacks, 2005; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a). It is in this line of arguing that contributions to this field of work came to display protest events as constitutive dimensions of democracy, not as a deviation or pathology (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Ruch *et al.*, 1999; Flacks, 2005: 49).

Through protest citizens seek to subvert the power relations they encounter in public politics in three different ways: procedural, rhetorical and demonstrative. 1) Procedural: when they use accepted, legal procedures to hold the state and dominant actors accountable to their own principles; 2) Rhetorical: when they engage in fiery rhetoric and protest that challenge power directly; 3) Demonstrative: when they develop behaviors that demonstrate to the public how alternative visions of the political might work (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 277). Protest figures among subversive ways of doing politics, also grounded on the idea of a *counter democracy* possibility, a kind of “new” democratic space where surveillance over the formal democratic institutions can be played out:

It is not the opposite of democracy, but rather a form of democracy that contradicts the other: the power of the indirect democracy spread in the social body, the democracy of the organized challenge in face of the democracy of electoral legitimacy. This counter democracy is linked to the democratic legal institutions. It seeks to expand and extend their

effects; establishing itself as a buttress. It must therefore be understood and analyzed as a true political form (Rosanvallon, 2006: 16).

Western democratic systems assimilated and institutionalized the right to protest as one of its features, at least through its legal recognition. This “normalization” is indeed a stage in protest institutionalization as a regular, normal and acceptable collective practice. However, some democratic States still feed the gap between what can be considered a democratic practice as it is inscribed in the law and its concrete application, namely by criminalizing such events in political discourse or by repressing them through police pressure.

Portugal is one example of that gap. Antonio Francisco de Sousa (2009a) reflected on the transformations of Portuguese democracy over the last two decades. Sousa considers that since the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 the Portuguese democracy has slowed its pace.

According to his legal approach, two fundamental rights can serve as major indicators of the maturity of a democratic system: the right of assembly and the right of public demonstration,³⁸ both expressions of the institutionalization of protests as “natural” features of democracy in almost all the States based on the democratic rule-of-law. Portuguese democracy, at the present moment, far from being a satisfactory form of democracy and of citizenship, appears as based on a solid legal structure of democratic rights, with a significant gap, though, between these legal definitions and actual practices regarding some areas of collective life (Sousa, 2009a: 78).

³⁸ Each Portuguese citizen is entitled to the right of assembly and demonstration, as established by the chapter of "rights, freedoms and guarantees" of the Portuguese Constitution, April 1976, in the latest version after the most recent the constitutional amendment (this right is also enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights, in force since 1953).

Given such a framework, public protests are being used as weapons both to winning, extending and maintaining democratic rights, appearing as strong indicators regarding citizens' inclusion in political systems (Diani, 2003: 80). An inclusive system is not hostile to protest organizations, giving way to dialogue and recognizing the legitimacy of its action as part of the democratic function (Gamson, 1990; Burstein, 1999). In other words, it would be expected that where citizen groups that usually act through protest enjoy some access to the policy-making process, protest-oriented activities are likely to be relatively less central in civil society, and protest is less likely to appear as a necessary option.

Within democratic societies, protests can also easily turn into disorder or even extremely violent acts. In such cases, disobedience breaks the legitimacy of protest as a legal right, making it easy for authorities to claim that the fragile line defining the boundaries of protest as a democratic right has been crossed, thus turning it into a criminal act. Most definitions of civil disobedience include the legitimacy of opposing some forms of law, an illegal action that is performed to expose and to change what is considered to be a morally inappropriate law. Moreover, such forms of collective action seem coincident with high intensity democracy expressions, based on the assumption that the more social movement and protest action happens, the more democratic a society will be (Goldstone, 2004; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a). Of course, this does not avoid the possibility of protests being extremely violent acts and with socially adverse impacts for societies and for democracy, namely because there is no necessary connection between social movements and their forms of action and democracy (Tilly, 2003, 2004). In fact, the concept *bad civil society* circumscribes the movements of civil society opposed to democracy (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001), but these are not considered in this analysis.

Francis Fox Piven (2008: 9) is one central reference in this discussion, defending protests as a legitimate right to challenge the rules, and an integrated part of democracy strengthening process. Institutions create rules, ideas, and routines that inhibit the attempts at breaking the existing order. Such rules are a basic postulate of collective life, shielding people against the totally unexpected, but they also make possible complex forms of cooperation within society, because people indeed have diverse (and contentious) ends to pursue, and as they are at the same time social and cooperative creatures, they will inevitably try to use their relationship with others in pursuit of those ends, even through opposition, because:

institutional life socializes people to conformity while at the same time institutions yield the participants in social and cooperative activities the power to act on diverse and conflicting purposes, even in defiance of the rules (Piven, 2008: 5).

According to such a perspective, both “legal protests” and protests marked by disobedience represent power from below, and both are part of democracy. In the perspective of Foucault (2000: 324), “there is no power without potential refusal or revolt”.³⁹ Or, as Dupuy (2002) simply puts it: protests are the politics of the people. Thus, protest actions cannot just be seen as symptoms of democratic malaise, instead they also constitute themselves as moments of reinforcement of democracy, by allowing citizens to demonstrate for their preferences. For Rancière (2004) the true political participation lies in the creation of the unpredictable person, that one occupying the streets in protest, because it is from this movement that democracy is born.

³⁹ The Foucauldian political thought also contributed to the study of the relationship between power and protest, namely through the notion of counter-conducts (Death, 2010). The idea of counter-conduct captures the close interrelationship between protest and the forms of government they oppose, meaning that power is relational rather than being possessed or located (Foucault, 2000).

Such a perspective provides a more optimistic vision concerning protests in their relation with democracy, different from the fatalistic approach based on the argument that citizens' protests are manifestations of political disaffection and political disengagement: collective action as protests can be seen to represent clear symptoms of the fight for change, of a strong commitment to politics, part of a pluralistic way of doing politics. Moreover, "being in the streets in protest is a demonstration of capacity and community" (Mendes, 2005: 164).

Groups marginalized from decision-making use a variety of performative and subversive methods of protests to show their right to intervene in political decision-making. In so doing, they are advancing a more participatory and egalitarian politics in new times and places through a process of *contentious pluralism*, a concept brought to the fore to function as an alert to look up to popular movements and their changing political structures, how they explore the promise of democracy rethinking the gap between democracy as an ideal and the ways in which people actually experience it, as well as to imagine possibilities of agency and democratic reform that take account of the power dynamics that marginalize groups in the public sphere (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 273).

Contentious pluralism is aimed at subverting the means, mechanisms, and ideologies of political exclusion, in any kind of regime (...) a way of subverting power relations, occurs in both predemocratic and democratic contexts because democracies are designed to exclude certain groups and claims as much as they are designed to let citizens have a voice in their own governance (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 274).

From here two central conclusions must be drawn based on the relationship between democracy and protest events: a) democracy and protests are mutually reinforcing; b) the legitimacy of democracy cannot be defined according to the respect for

its processes, it must be able to efficiently include citizens in its processes as a guarantee of their rights, beyond the formal recognition of the latter.

4. Bridging protests and citizen participation in decision-making

The leaders of Western democracies are still inclined to impose criteria of democratic representation as the appropriate manner of taking decisions, delegitimizing oppositional groups' claims for participation. But, as discussed in the previous chapter, a political system based entirely on representative model is being widely contested, namely because participation and efficiency seem to be colliding most of the times within representation democratic models.

Citizens' political participation is nowadays one of the major topics of the world governments' agendas and democratic participation in political life raises some of the most fundamental problems of our time.⁴⁰

Although some analyses appear to deny the exhaustion of civic withdrawal and political disengagement in contemporary politics (Burstein, 1999; Furedi, 2004; Mendes, 2005; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a; Holston, 2008), based on the mobilization of citizens for protest, namely of young people (Seixas, 2005), most analysts insist on the death sentence of citizens' interest in political life due to their disenchantment with the way democracy is working, namely concerning its representative model (Todd and Taylor, 2004;

⁴⁰ The European institutions are increasingly discussing the various forms of citizen involvement in decision-making. The White Paper on European Governance (CEC, 2001) recognizes the principle of participation through open consultation to citizens and their associations as a key element of the European Union governance. Based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the context of the debate on the "Future of Europe", the European Commission has asked the identification of ways to manage constructive change through the active involvement of citizens in decision-making. It is also reported that "failure to achieve this objective could feed a «citizenship deficit» or even encourage protest" (CEC, 2001: 10). The experience of the Convention for the drafting of the Fundamental Rights Charter also provides examples of a greater involvement of "civil society" in the EU decision-making system.

Rosanvallon, 2006; Stoker, 2006; Cook *et al.*, 2007; Rosenberg, 2007; Held, 2007; Pearce, 2010a).

This seems to happen due to the existence of a soft State, which contributes, as a rule, to a low level of political legitimacy concerning citizens' direct engagement with politics. Corruption, nepotism and the like are generally regarded by citizens with contempt. This does not inspire popular trust and gives an idea of progressive disengagement, but what is being neglected is that it also can encourage citizens' mobilization through protests actions, for example. That means people still are engaged with politics, they just don't cooperate with the formal political institutions if they don't trust them (Della Porta and Vanucci, 1997; Hadenius, 2004: 57).

That assumption reopens the debate upon the need to consider new heterogeneous conceptions of participation in policy-making debate (Evans and Plows, 2007: 827). Protest actions happen quite often concerning decision-making. Accordingly, their presence and relevance should be reconsidered, as well as their value as "participation".

As mentioned before, protests represent a common response of disagreement concerning the way politics is being performed, namely the way decisions are being taken, although protests don't figure among the standard and conventional (but instead as unconventional) possibilities of public participation in decision-making (which is not surprising, because it would be like as if governments recognize their own inability to govern). Scientific literature approaches focused on protests and on officially organized initiatives for enhanced citizens' participation are really vast, but most of the time they are a world apart. The literature focused on citizen participation tends to emphasize the analysis of mechanisms specially designed for that purpose, in a certain way marginalizing other participatory spaces; on other hand, collective actions like protests are usually treated

under the social movements' approach, where they are actually treated as spaces for participation, but without an accurate reflection about their impact on politics and on decision-making. Protest events still are often neglected as spaces for citizens' participation, although both phenomena are linked, and despite a recent increase in the recognition of that association (Della Porta, 2003a, 2007, 2010; Diani, 2004, 2008; Flacks, 2005; Alteri *et al.*, 2008; Pellizzoni, 2008).

Thus, citizens' engagement⁴¹ in policy-making seems to take place in accordance with the rules of the democratic game (Hadenius, 2004: 47), and those rules are being adapted throughout the history of democratic systems. It started with opportunities like voting; being a member of a political party; intervening in political meetings and discussions, etc.. More recently, new direct participatory devices have been implemented, recognized as more inclusive. These include citizen forums; citizen juries; participatory budgeting, among others, and some of them are often mentioned as exemplary cases of high intensity democracy, as is the case of participatory budgeting. But although such participatory decision-making mechanisms have been increasing, they still remain an exception rather than the rule in most democratic systems (Alteri *et al.*, 2008; Della Porta, 2008; Pellizzoni, 2008: 93), and in many cases they happen "by invitation", that is, through selective procedures which leave out many of those with a stake in the issues under

⁴¹ When referring to citizens' engagement with politics, we are dealing with opportunities for participation in political life and political decision-making processes, involving actions directed at influencing aspects of life of a wider public (Furedi, 2004: xv). Here, engagement cannot be reduced to individual activism, but is an attitude and an orientation towards interaction with others. As Pellizzoni puts it (2008: 94), anyone can be part of a crowd without participating. We can interact with others in the absence of a specific intent. Participation is undertaken as part of a wider public dialogue that seeks to establish or alter the prevailing consensus on an issue or issues. To be engaged in such processes implies a deep implication in the protest tactics to be developed, and an intimate relation with the aims they defend. As Diani (2009) claims, engagement can be associated with the embeddedness of certain instances of collective action in their social environment. The author suggests that a similar involvement can be pursued when the focus is on individuals' participation in associations. In this sense, we must advocate that to be engaged is quite different from participating in a protest event. To be engaged presupposes a deeper and more durable involvement with the protest repertoire, while participation can be limited to a singular, sporadic and fortuitous presence in such a demonstrative act. "Optimal" participation, with potential to influence deliberative processes is, then, what we would call engaged participation.

discussion. Besides that, only a few participatory procedures actually have some empirical impact on political decision-making (Loeber *et al.*, 2011: 601), since little tangible results seem to be achieved through them (Furedi, 2004: viii), the consequence being that these domesticated forms of participation can also be responsible for causing citizen alienation. It is thus not only necessary to broaden participatory spaces and dynamics beyond consensus as to take into consideration the impacts caused by that alternative and contentious ways of doing politics.

Another aspect is that the space for public policies is not equally available to all citizens, even in the most developed democracies (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 273). For this reason, marginalized people challenge the lack of democracy and of participation by creating their own pathway into decision-making processes. Participatory development concerning citizens' intervention in political decision-making has been under critique since the 1990s, not only due to its demonstrated effects on citizens' group marginalization, its manufactured consensus for plans already made, but also for closing off alternative pathways for transformation. Literature on citizens' political participation, with few exceptions,⁴² is still restricted to particular forms of participation that serve very specific purposes. Specific devices are usually presented as conceived to allow a broad citizens' intervention in policy-making processes. Those participatory conceptions, however, display an attachment to a very restrictive and normative conception of democracy. Thus, protest actions are often considered, explicitly or implicitly, as illegitimate forms of participation in decision-making under the rules of the democratic game, which can be justified by typologies grounded on distinctions such as those of "conventional" or "unconventional" forms of participation (Rucht, 1990; Della Porta, 1999, 2007; Della Porta

⁴² Hagendijk and others (2005), and Nunes (2007) represent exceptions on this, where protests figure among typologies of citizens' participation in decision-making framed as agonistic forms of participation, although restricted in their analysis to decision-making processes related to science and technology related issues.

and Diani, 1999; Rosanvallon, 2006; Diani, 2008). Such rhetoric indeed displays the distinction conventional/unconventional as an ingrained habit of thought, resisting admitting the place that social movements and protests have and play in democratic politics, namely concerning the citizens' right to participate in decision-making in matters related to their interests and their lives (Burstein, 1999: 8).⁴³

Although protests are being classified as unconventional forms of participation (a semantic distinction), they should not be theoretically considered as mere alternatives to the conventional ways of directly intervening in decision-making, but as complementary forms of participation (Della Porta, 2003a; Goldstone, 2004; Tilly, 2004), reinforcing their participatory potential and impacts. When citizens are deprived of choice and option concerning decisions affecting them, and when those more standardized forms of participation are not available or are not adequate to express the citizens' will in a democratic way, two facts became unavoidable: the growing disenchantment with the working of democracy; but along with that, the channeling of that disenchantment to new possibilities of action where protests appear as one strong possibility to influence politics.⁴⁴

The link between protest and participation seems quite clear at this point: while other domesticated forms of participation, like voting, do not allow dialogue and direct citizens' intervention, protests appear as an opportunity to exercise democratic power, even if based on challenge and rupture (Flacks, 2005: 63; Piven, 2008).

Under protests actions, citizenship is projected in relation to an ideal type of democracy, something that is always indirectly claimed, considering that such forms of

⁴³ The author even considers political parties and social movements as having similarities in terms of action, although the latter have no legal status when compared with a political party (Burstein, 1999: 8-9).

⁴⁴ Bröer and Duyvendak (2007) claim risk politics as being responsible for this conflictual relation between people and policy makers. Indeed, contrary to many others, they defend that risk politics are not producing distance between people and politics, but a high level of intertwinement between them. Such intertwinement, however, seems to produce closeness, but through conflict: "in situations of uncertainty, authorities get a big say in the definition of the situation: policies produce risk awareness and political identities. Participatory policy-making alerts citizens and presents an opportunity for mobilization" (Bröer and Duyvendak, 2007: 4).

collective action arise as ways of responding to a citizenship regarded as imperfect, to be contested through claiming actions on basic rights, from housing, health, work to the right to directly participate in policy-making (Tilly, 2004; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a). So, generally speaking, most of the claims made through protests actions are one way of struggling for the right to participate in policy-making. Social movements and protests can thus contribute to generate opportunities to produce or to reinforce citizenship through the emancipatory potential they carry (Diani, 2008).

The way social movements frame citizens' participation is challenging some approaches to the subject. Some of these approaches rest their arguments upon the recognition of participation and conflict relation as democratic possibilities (Mouffe, 2000, 2005; Rancière, 2004; Alteri *et al.*, 2008; Della Porta, 2009; Baert *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, the social movements' purpose meets the same concerns of the radical democracy approach on the acceptance of conflict and agonistic struggle into democracy and deliberation (Mouffe, 2000, 2005; Della Porta, 2005; Bächtiger *et al.*, 2010; Elstub, 2010) through the adoption of a more pluralistic view on participation, more adequate to current experience.

A key assumption is that most of the protests nowadays are inextricable from public participation in decision-making. Protests turned into actions made of participation and for participation; protests make those who engage in them feel part of a collective effort, being the essence of the action itself – participation –, strengthening the sense of belonging (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). Protests aim to find ways to reach the power structure and to create opportunities to participate in decisions where such power is not distributed, namely because it is clear that those who become engaged in such forms of action act as full participants in political life, not as “puppets likely to be manipulated”

(Mendes e Seixas, 2005: 4). But they also represent participation as a matter of will, autonomy and intentionality, a framing that comes close to Thoreau's (2001) essay on *Civil Disobedience*, from 1849, on the right and obligation to follow our conscience, by understanding that it is not desirable to cultivate respect for the law at the same level of respect for rights. In that sense, protests are not intended to undermine the role of the State, they only criticize the State regarding its malfunctions, and in a radical way (Alteri *et al.*, 2008: 8). Accordingly, such dissent actions reinforce the assumption that protest should not be faced as a poor routine substitute for politics in terms of participation. A social phenomenon classified as ephemeral and destined to fade away if other forms of doing politics and of political participation expand. Instead they can be faced as open options enshrined as a citizens' right to participate in democratic States, moreover with potential impacts to influence political decision-making.

The potential impacts of such forms of actions have been one neglected dimension in the relation between protests and participation. If we think of organized forms of participation, for instance, of typologies of citizens' participation such as the one advanced by Sherry Arnstein (1969), one could question where such forms of collective action would fit in what she calls the "ladder of participation".⁴⁵ Concerning this particular approach, some authors suggest that we stop looking up the ladder and start to look around, seeking and evaluating new processes of democratization of decisions, i.e., other relationships between society, politics and deliberation beyond the traditional arrangements for public participation (Loeber *et al.*, 2011: 600).

Indeed, protest actions have at least the same power as the intermediate levels of consultation represented in Arnstein's ladder of participation, informing at the same level

⁴⁵ As previously explored (see page 48), this framework distinguishes between eight levels of participation, which differ in the extent to which access and autonomy are granted to participants.

(or even better) on population needs and claims (Burstein, 1999). As most of the time these actions arise through popular initiative, protests also have some added value: citizens and their organizations decide when and in relation to what protest may happen, they open up a space for unrestricted involvement and they function as socialization processes for other participatory stages, by empowering citizens for other forms of engagement.

Therefore, we can consider protest actions one of the broadest and most inclusive ways of promoting citizen participation in decision-making processes, namely because protest actions place no limits of gender, age or race (Barreto *et al.*, 2009). Neither is it restrictive regarding the number of participants, this being one of the reasons why protests have long been associated to a political resource used by those who do not have direct access to policy-making (Lipsky, 1965), but insist on creating it.

Accordingly, through protest, citizens do not participate less in politics, including decision-making, they just participate differently. From this approach, processes of differentiation and complementarity of modes of political action emerge, not trade-offs and decline, by allowing a broad participation, represent a new *democracy of the public*⁴⁶ (Della Porta, 2003b: 111).

In a paradoxical fashion, greater distrust of democratic institutions seems to be strengthening democratic participation (Kitschelt, 2003: 81; Neveu, 2011). Given the recognized capacity of protests to deepen democracy, such forms of collective action, when framed as participation, may stand for manifestations of high intensity democracy.

Nevertheless, we must not ignore that although we may consider protest as a form of participation, recognizing its capacity to influence politics and decision-making, most of the times protests also claim the institutionalization of certain practices, in order to

⁴⁶ Inspired by the definition of Manin (1995).

guarantee the continuity of participation in a more regular way and to avoid being locked into ephemeral conflicting relations performed by those who may not be strong enough to influence public decision-making. The creation of associations or other civic organizations can represent a new stage of empowerment for citizens' participation concerning decision-making, which may also facilitate conflict mediation (Diani, 2004: 137) as well as guarantee that the protest will have consequences, even if these are limited in scope.

5. Protests, democracy and participation: The Portuguese case

Protests are one expression of political interactions associated with patterns of democratic actions within the spaces in which people live, resting largely upon the features of the broader political system that frame such kinds of actions.

The connection between protests as participation and democracy is quite complex, albeit, in most of the cases, protests tend to function as a kind of dependent variable in a given participation framework, depending on the democratic features where they happen and their openness to citizens' capacity to influence policy-making and, more generally, the political process (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Diani, 2003; Rosanvallon, 2006). Accordingly, participation may vary in line to national democratic contexts and their democratic features, namely political culture and institutional arrangements (Loeber *et al.*, 2011: 599).

Another related aspect to consider under this topic of analysis is that distinctive forms of participation are designed according to the conditions in which democracy is experienced. Citizens' involvement with politics and their participation in decision-making indeed seems to vary widely depending on the national context. In member countries of the European Union, for instance, exercises in citizen participation not only display wide

variety, but they have been shown, in most cases, to be weak in their binding effects on policy-making. Public consultation is the most common participatory tool used to allow citizen participation in relation to policy-making, and when it happens it quite often arises after decisions have been made, as a kind of legitimating strategy.

In democracies where regular citizen participation such opportunities through organized devices are absent, collective action, as protests events, tend to emergence, most of the times appearing as the only pathway for citizens' direct intervention for influencing political decisions (Nunes, 2007: 67), although protests and transgressions may be essentially constitutive of democracy in all political systems (Rancière, 2004; Rosanvallon, 2006).

In Southern European countries, like Portugal, Spain and Italy, opportunities for formal citizen participation display similar features, suggesting that the model of participation prevailing in these countries rests upon the key role of an agonistic model of governance (Hagendijk *et al.*, 2005). These similarities arise from the sharing, by these countries, of some features of their political history and culture: long periods of dictatorship followed by the establishment of democracies, following ruptures associated with revolutions (as in Portugal), defeat in war (Italy) or negotiated transition (Spain).

In such contexts, opportunities for participation in decision-making related to public policies seem to be closely associated to efforts in collective mobilization, where protests have a prominent role. In democratic contexts such as the ones of the countries just mentioned, institutionalized forms of deliberative democracy are rare. Protests thus appear as a major form of making public the claims of citizens and of specific groups or collectives in society, the absence of institutionalized or formalized arrangements for deliberative public participation.

Portugal seems to be one clear example of how closure of citizens' participation in deliberation and decision-making on topics of public interest (except through corporatist forms) has had the effect of deliberately 'de-selecting' popular participation as a contribution to democracy in the period of 'normalisation' which followed a plethora of popular and citizen initiatives in 1974-75. Protests thus become a major outlet for public demands and a central feature of an agonistic form of governing, appearing in tension with a discretionary mode, whereby the government, parliamentary majorities and state departments and agencies invoke their democratic legitimacy or their responsibility for promoting the common good as a justification for shutting off citizens from participation in decision-making.

Portugal is still a country singled out for its scarce initiatives in experimenting participatory procedures, erecting a set of robust barriers to participation and active citizenship (Hagendijk *et al.*, 2005: 14; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007: 114; Lopes, 2007: 90ff; Lima, 2009; Serapioni *et al.*, 2012).⁴⁷ Some features from the past tend to hold on, such as the persistence of a State relating to citizens in an authoritarian fashion (despite attempts at reforms in public service and training of civil servants). Exemplary instances of this arise not only in the ordinary difficulties of everyday relations between citizens and the State, but also through recurrent episodes of illegitimate behavior and abuse by politicians in their relations with citizens, organizations or social movements who attempt to exercise their rights, including the right of access to information, the right to protest or the right to public demonstration (Nunes, 2007: 67). This kind of behavior is often justified through a cultural devaluation of protests as an illegitimate form of intervention in the action of elected political representatives and of public officials, a position widely shared by other

⁴⁷ The mentioned works refer the barriers to participation and active citizenship in diverse public policies domains such as Science and Technology, Culture, Education and Health.

democratic systems where elites delegitimize contentious pluralism (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003). Despite attempts at delegitimizing the actual exercise of rights which are rhetorically recognized, collective action appears as the only means available for citizens and vulnerable groups to press for political change (Pearce, 2010a: 100).⁴⁸ Nevertheless, protest also happen in societies that are not just “less developed” than more fully developed democratic systems.

It is important, however, to consider as well, in cases like this, the weak capacity for the institutionalization of collective mobilization beyond local contentious action and, in particular, their consolidation into social movements with a national scope (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007; Nunes, 2007).

On such forms of collective action, however, the history and the memory of experiences of collective mobilization, mainly during the revolutionary period (1974-75), still play today a decisive role (Cardina, 2008; Cerezales, 2011; Fishman, 2011):

Political equality, emphasized in the scholarship on the deepening of democracy, offers a useful theoretical backdrop for our analysis of political life after a revolution because a fundamental feature of contemporary Portuguese democratic practice—linked to its revolutionary origins—is the place it affords the protests of relatively poor and powerless actors in the setting of the country’s political agenda and in some policy-making processes (Fishman, 2011: 2).

The frequent use of public protest by citizens seems to be, in this particular case, a cultural and historical heritage, especially in situations where people feel more closely the effects of problems associated with access to, and quality of, public services (deficiencies in transportation and roads, sanitation, access to health services, functioning of schools,

⁴⁸ Just to give an example, the 2008 Latin-American Barometer Corporation opinion poll found that 63% of those surveyed believed that protests are a normal part of democracy, and 59% that they are an indispensable way for demands to be heard (Pearce, 2010a: 100).

security, etc.). Most of these initiatives emerge at the local level and, with some exceptions, tend to last only as long as the problem persists (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007: 195; Mendes, 2005: 163; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a: 124; Nunes, 2007: 66).

Given this caveat, it is accurate to say that, over the last decades, some strong collective mobilizations have emerged in Portuguese society, namely over issues related to health and education, supporting the idea of protest as a common participatory practice, a legitimate channel for being heard and informed about decision-making processes affecting peoples' lives, a collective practice performed by those with less power to influence decision-making. Portuguese citizens may thus be described as highly prone to public protest (Cerezales, 2011; Fishman 2011; Mendes, 2005; Mendes and Seixas, 2005a; Matias, 2010).

But if the Portuguese revolution opened the road to keeping the memory of protest as a legitimate way of intervening in political life, it was not enough to counter the trend towards the appropriation, by elected or nominated politicians, of the claim to the monopoly of decision-making which has prevailed up to now, nor to institutionalize forms of public participation which were inscribed in the 1976 Constitution.⁴⁹ Despite the frequency of protests, there are only few examples of protests having led to dialogue and change. Most protests are, thus, still devalued by government and state as participatory practices, ignored or often labeled as disruptive acts of the public order, even in democratic countries like Portugal, where protest is recognized as a right and protected by the Constitution. The criminalization of protest and its delegitimization is frequent, and the use

⁴⁹ The Portuguese Constitution in its version of 1976, drafted by the Constituent Assembly elected following the first free general elections in the country, defended in its article 9 b), as fundamental task of the State, the right to "ensure the organized citizens' participation in solving national problems (...)", requirement that was reformulated to its current version (Portuguese Constitution resulting from the VII Constitutional Review of 2005), where is now task of the State "defend political democracy, safeguard and promote the democratic participation of citizens in the resolution of national problems". The versions of the Portuguese Constitution can be consulted at http://www.pgdlisboa.pt/pgdl/leis/lei_mostra_articulado.php?nid=4&tabela=leis.

of anti-riot police to control or disband public protest is a common disciplinary technology (Nunes, 2007: 66; Cerezales, 2011).

The debate at the core of this chapter raises a central question regarding the mobilization of civil society as the answer to the demands for democratization. Civil society and its involvement in government have been celebrated as a panacea, “a silver bullet that can cure the ills afflicting post-modern societies, States and economies” (Rudolph, 2004: 64). At this point, we cannot ignore that in most of the democratic countries where representation is largely articulated through specific interest groups, the large-scale challenges brought about by social movements and the actions they trigger seems to be, in fact, marginalized within the polity.

According to Mendes and Seixas (2005a: 107), and following the proposal of Goldstone (2004), protest actions in Portugal should be read as indicators and as promoters of democracy. If on the one hand protests indicate the shortcomings of a participatory democracy, on the other they should be analyzed as an integral part of the democratic process, and no decrease in its intensity is expected as a result of the improvements of the democratic institutions. Concerning certain issues, the majority in a country is not the same as the majority in parliament (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 174) and protests are expressions of that, reason why they can be defined as expressions of a democracy played by other means (Goodwin *et al.*, 2001), normal extensions of politics and democracy.

6. After all, why protest, and what for?

As participatory actions within politics, protests can serve at least three different purposes: to mobilize popular support in relation to a certain issue; to force a communication act; to reverse a decision/a situation. Actually, these three objectives may

be subsumed under the following: to transform discontent into mobilization in order to achieve political change. Protests indeed can produce political change in three different ways: by altering the power relation between challengers and authorities; by forcing changes in policy; by provoking broader and usually more durable systemic changes (Giuni, 1999: xxiii). People protest to solve collective problems, to repair injustices, to produce public goods or support specific ethical and moral principles (Diani, 2008: 56). But protests serve mainly to directly influence politics. They aim at bringing the elite's attention to certain political problems; bringing new people into positions of power in government; suggesting and supporting political alternatives; increasing the difficulty and costs of policy implementation to such an extent that the government alters its conduct; and/or changing coalition conditions by altering the government's policy options (Meyer, 1999: 188).

It is the existence of the right to publicly demonstrate dissatisfaction about political decisions that allows articulating and contemplating alternatives, other possible realities, without calling on transcendence. Protests can and do perform such transformative actions, even when they end up being ephemeral or incidental. They are at the same time and for the same reasons a fertile ground for the transformation of individual subjectivities, affording new shared beliefs, new solidarities and new collective identities.

As has been suggested earlier in this chapter, by being part of activities associated with protest, citizens become empowered for social change, especially those who are at the losing end of socio-economic inequalities (Piven and Cloward, 1993; Della Porta, 2003b; Mendes and Seixas, 2005b: 4; Juris, 2008; Piven, 2008). Protest has long been regarded as a privileged resource of the powerless: "it is one of the few strategies in which even

politically impoverished groups can aspire to engage” (Lipsky, 1965: 1), or as Charles Tilly stated it:

protest, for example, centers the analysis on responses of relatively powerless people to wrongs they have endured; it calls up images of people who mostly suffer without rebelling, but now and then band together to say they have had enough (Tilly, 2004: 473).

Protest actions are one way of struggling for a different world, largely based on the mobilization of those often described as “the have nots” (Mendes and Seixas, 2005b: 6). Unequal power relations are one particular reason for the eruption of protests in society, motivated not only by conflictual interests, but by the conditions that people think will allow transforming dissatisfaction into action (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Della Porta, 2003b). It is significant, at this point, to underline the relevance of the political opportunity such processes afford in order to best achieve their goals, which is to say, the best opportunity to trespass into the formal world of politics interactions to promote change. Change, injustice and inequality, however, are not the only motivation justifying participation in protests. Some personal gratification can also figure among the motives to take part in a protest action, as protests “go hand in hand with the joy of participation itself” (Mendes and Araújo, 2010: 102).

Despite the impressive growth of the literature on collective action and its significant contributions to the analysis and theorization of aspects of mobilization related to the anatomy of mobilization process – namely protest movements’ process analysis from its emergence to its decline, passing through the analysis of specific elements like cooptation of allies, repression, and so on – a specific focus still is circumscribed to the persistence of very recurrent topics (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 24). Themes like violence, relevance of the media, and the quest for environmental and economic

sustainability still prevail as core issues. Outcomes and consequences of protests and social movements – or the answer to the question “what is protest for?” – are one area of analysis that remains understudied (Amenta and Young, 1999; Giuni *et al.*, 1999). At the time of writing, little work is available to assess these aspects. This can be partly justified by the fact that social movement analysts are uncertain about the theoretical basis of movement power (Piven, 2008: 2). Since the publication of major reference studies on that topic (Piven and Cloward, 1979; Gamson, 1990), some steps have been taken, but there is still a need for further work in this field.

This discussion remains closely linked to the debate on the more effective tactics able to produce a visible impact, in a more disruptive way, namely by using violence (Piven and Cloward, 1993; Della Porta and Diani, 1999), by acting in a non-violent way through innovating in creative tactics (McAdam, 1983) or both, depending on the movement and the situation (Koopmans, 1993).

What has been mostly analyzed at this level is the policy impact of such actions or the policy outcomes of such forms of collective action, although some other relevant impacts can be taken into consideration, even if they are empirically more difficult to achieve (Giuni, 1999: xxii).

There is some resistance to accepting and trying to grasp some of the incommensurable impacts of protest actions. Indeed, protests can produce both external and internal effects. Externally they allow activists to communicate political messages, while generating deeply felt emotions and political identities; internally, when driven by passion, people can perform their own politics (Juris, 2008), which is to say that when no other form of participation is possible, protests can, at least, allow the accomplishment of what is felt by protesters as a participatory duty.

The assessment of the successes and failures of protests is questionable if we only pay attention to its obvious, observed changes related to its demands (Della Porta, 1999). Besides that, what must be taken into account is that participants and external observers certainly have different perceptions concerning what counts as a success or a failure of a given action (Giuni, 1999: xxi). Thus, because protests are processes based on struggle, on contention and opposition, we should avoid taking the easy position that protests win or lose according to whether they achieve or fail to achieve the aims they set at the beginning. Sometimes, citizens' demands end up modulated and honed to mesh with ongoing institutional arrangements and the powerful interests with stakes in those institutions (Piven, 2008: 2), thus making it difficult to provide a fair assessment of the impacts of such actions.

Consequences are often unintended and not directly related to the original claims associated with the triggering of the protest. Protests, then, usually generate unforeseen (Amenta and Young, 1999; Giuni, 1999; Della Porta, 1999; Tilly, 1999), indirect (Burstein, 1999; Meyer, 1999) or just partial or subtle consequences (Gamson, 1990), beneath, beyond or besides the goals previously defined (Tilly, 1996; Della Porta, 1999; Giuni, 1999). This means that more attention should be given to the whole picture of collective benefits such actions may produce, such as the capacity to put an issue on the political agenda (Amenta and Young, 1999: 39) or to influence public perception of a certain issue (Burstein, 1999: 15; Della Porta, 1999: 66; Meyer, 1999: 188; Juris, 2008: 82), for example.

The expected outcomes of protests may not always be directly related to a prior established program, but they can result in parallel outcomes, namely the transformation of people's lives, co-optation of unexpected leaders, renewed repression, new practices, the

generation of a rival movement, or the transformation of the organization of protest into a permanent pressure group. This wide range of effects far surpasses the explicit demands, one of the reasons why it is so hard to treat success and failure in relation to protest actions (Tilly, 1999: 268).

The analysis of success and failure usually emerge associated with the “logic of numbers” (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 174), linking the success of protest events to the counting of the number of protesters it mobilizes in the public space, namely through marches, rallies or concentrations. But this kind of body count provides a weak indicator of the outcomes achieved by protesting, namely because such actions can mobilize hundreds or thousands of people who have not explicitly endorsed the set of claims set before going out in demonstration. Moreover, the number of people engaged in a protest only indicates success or failure when to make a cause visible and to mobilize people to the street is itself an aim to achieve. Besides, numbers may vary over time, because those involved know that it is not always easy to avoid the weakening of protests over time and their consequent dilution or erosion, namely because organizational work and presence at the front line and on the streets requires discipline and personal sacrifice (Flacks, 2005: 57). But even being an easy prey of fatigue and by varying the number of those involved in the public space over time does not mean that protests do not have a potential positive impact, namely as an affordance of conditions to demonstrate dissatisfaction and discontent and to bring out pressure for change.

As protests evolved over time and were acknowledged as a particularly effective range of strategies of persuasion, the role of the mass media and of powerful actors associated with public agenda setting brought to the fore the need for those lacking power to mobilize the support of more powerful groups.

Taking this aspect into account generates accounts of protests as forms of action from the grassroots which, however, involve initiatives to recruit a wide range of actors providing different forms of support and visibility. According to this view, the effectiveness of protests will be strongly linked to the winning of the sympathies and support of those who have more resources to invest in decision-making (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 169).

Another neglected aspect in the analysis of collective action, and of protest in particular, relates to the emotions played out in specific actions. This neglect seems to go hand in hand with the resistance, within theories of democratic deliberation, to recognizing emotions as a mode and form of argument (Elstub, 2010). Studies of protest movements seem much more interested in attributing the success of these movements to the achievement of their stated claims, than in considering the key role of emotions in the experience of being part of a protest; the pleasure of participating in a protest brings many joys that can justify engagement in the action, even though no cognitive resource is available to the participant to assess whether success is possible or likely (Taylor and Whittier, 1995; Jasper, 1998; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Goodwin *et al.*, 2001).

For those singling out emotions as relevant pieces of analysis concerning protests, emotions are not totally incidental to protestors: anger and indignation, fear and disgust, joy and love, are a constitutive dimension of doing politics. They can be played as a powerful resource to influence public opinion and decision-making and to facilitate co-opting public opinion on a given cause. For instance, proponents of non-violent action defend that if anger and indignation often spur participation, a movement animated primarily by such sentiments is doomed to failure. This is an account of politics made of passions, a dimension often neglected due to its non-rationalistic way of facing problems

and pursuing solutions that still pervades critical approaches in the literature on social movements and collective action.

Such an approach is extremely relevant for the elucidation of the relation between protests as participation, and it is part of the answer to the question: “why” do people participate? Indeed, emotions have a great resonance on participation, because behind a certain conflict “participation itself is a sole motivation and the goals of protest hardly matter” (Goodwin *et al.*, 2001: 3).

This account of indirect impacts of protests on politics and decision-making cannot be ignored, especially when conventional participatory approaches are being criticized for closing off alternative pathways for participation. What also cannot be ignored, for example, is the influence of protests on the electoral process and its completion: by considering elections as a key mechanism for communicating information in democratic politics, protests tend to be highest during electoral periods, not only because that form of collective action provides precious information on a certain controversial issue, but because politicians can figure out what people really want during protests and change their electoral concerns accordingly (Burstein, 1999: 5). This kind of social mobilization does not limit itself to challenge public decisions, as it challenging politics in a broader sense. It quite often criticizes the way in which decisions are made, demonstrating some ignored and unexplored potentialities for promoting change and influencing the formal political process.

7. Conclusions

Political conflict, disagreement, actors and their claims change over time while protests persist as a “natural” and constant feature of politics in all political systems. Such

mobilizations are not a priori regarded in this thesis as something fated to end; rather we must rethink their formats and relevance in democratic societies, especially their power to influence decisions and their importance in advancing democratic practices in all political systems.

The connection between protests, participation and democracy is very complex, but protests are extremely rich phenomena for the study of citizens' participation in decision-making. They provide a precious amount of information on controversies raging in society and on the capacity of citizens to influence policy-making or, more generally, the course of politics. They also draw our attention to the unforeseen impacts that such protest actions may produce on decision-making processes and on the extension and strengthening of democracy. They raise important questions about their relationship with government responses and especially initiatives to enhance public participation and the motives and perceived interests that inform these initiatives.

Although protests are still regarded by some as mere tactics of persuasion and coercion, a dramatic way of pursuing solutions for collective problems, quite often through procedures whose legitimacy is questioned, protests are also defended as part of the regular functioning of democracy, as well as a valuable part of the dynamics of political participation.

Chapter 3. Science, technology and policy-making in knowledge(s) societies

“And my sunset?” the little prince reminded him: for he never forgot a question once he had asked it.

“You shall have your sunset. I shall command it. But, according to my science of government, I shall wait until conditions are favorable.”

“When will that be?” inquired the little prince.

“Hum! Hum!” Replied the king; and before saying anything else he consulted a bulky almanac. “Hum! Hum! That will be about – about – that will be this evening about twenty minutes to eight. And you will see how well I am obeyed.”

The little prince yawned. He was regretting his lost sunset. And then, too, he was already beginning to be a little bored.

(The Little Prince, Antoine de saint-Exupéry)

1. Introduction

Science and technology indeed permeate the culture and the politics of modernity, says Sheila Jasanoff (2004a: 1), and this work once again corroborates that assertion. During the previous chapters science and technology affected or was somehow fundamental to many of the arguments raised. In most discussions on political theory, how science and technology are implicated in politics and vice versa is often ignored. But given the prominence of scientific and technological expertise in contemporary society and how it structures debates and issues of voice and inclusion, we have to integrate reflections on such expertise into theoretical and empirical engagement with democracy. And, fortunately, Science and Technology Studies offer a rich resource for that.

Participation appeared in the previous chapters as an essential pillar to sustain a democratic model of high intensity. One of the questions of such a model is how to conceive of the relations among different sorts of knowledges and experience (see Chapter

1, section 4.5.). Given the authority attributed to science and associated expertise in contemporary society and culture, as well as the deeply embedded suspicion that science cannot deal at all or at least not very well with ethical and existential questions, an exploration of the various - though often indirect - roles of science and technology in HID is required. And all the more so, as present day developments in science and technology also intensely fuel current controversies. They address not only the inequality questions abovementioned, but questions like risk and uncertainty as well, which certainly pose new challenges to the citizen participation approach and to HID as proposed by Santos and others (Santos, 2002a; Santos and Avritzer, 2002).

The dialogue of different forms of knowledge and its reflection on final decisions through new knowledge configurations is one of the central features of high intensity democracy (Santos, 2002a). In this respect it goes beyond models of participation and deliberation that conceive of 'inclusiveness' mostly in terms of participation of people and groups under HID, the notion of inclusiveness also refers to practices, forms of knowledge and cultural heritages that should be voiced and present in deliberative spaces that are not a priori tilted against them or even closed in the name of science as practised in academia and government laboratories. So, participation is a potential channel to put different forms of knowledges in direct contact, potentially creating the conditions to produce solutions based on the referred knowledge plurality.

This chapter presents, first, some aspects of the relation between science and society as analyzed in the field of STS⁵⁰ in order to introduce, in a second moment, the possible relations between science and other forms of knowledge in decision-making processes. The arguments to be presented converge to the idea of participation forms as the

⁵⁰ Some reference works are: Haraway, 1989; Galison and Stump, 1996; Harding, 1998; Barad, 2001; Kleinman, 2005.

pathway to high intensity forms of democracy exploring the ways of effectively addressing science and technology matters.

2. The relations between Science and Society

The emergence of science as the flagship of modern rationality has gone hand in hand with highly visible attacks by scientists and politicians on what was seen by them as views based primarily on ignorance, superstition and ideological bias. Historically the scientist has tended to either ignore or debase other forms of knowledge in society through direct confrontation (Haraway, 1989; Harding, 1998; Barad, 2001; Santos, 2006). To this day, science often still doesn't recognize, or plays down the value of, other forms of knowledge (Mignolo, 2003; Santos *et al.*, 2004; Visvanathan, 2006; Santos, 2007b). When considering the possibilities for citizen participation in decision-making contexts where scientific knowledge is directly or indirectly involved, there is a strong tendency to assume and reproduce the supremacy of science over other forms of knowledge. All sorts of programs to educate citizens with respect to the relevant science and to fight what is seen as a knowledge deficit on behalf of the citizens are somehow doing just that (see section 3 below for an elaboration). By consequence, science is presented as the benchmark for assessing any form of knowledge involved in decision-making. Accordingly, science still moves in society as a hermetic and autonomous form of knowledge and rationality or as Santos (2002a, 2007b) defended, as a hegemonic form of knowledge. In Portugal, for example, the use of science and scientific and technical expertise on the part of governments in decision-making processes has been increasing. This kind of expertise is being used for the evaluation and management of risk to allow for legitimate political decisions considered safe by experts (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007). In contexts like this, science still is authoritative knowledge, to be assessed by peers on its own terms and not to be

mixed with other forms of expertise. This contributes to the idea of a separation between science and society.

An important study in this tradition is the work of Helga Nowotny and others (2001). It proposes the urgent need to rethink that particular relation and its implications. The focus of the debate that the authors promote is based on the proposal of a new mode of knowledge production that they call "Mode 2".⁵¹ This variety of spaces considered by Mode 2 comes to challenge the production of *socially robust knowledge*, the attribute of robustness depending on its deep involvement with the social context in which it is produced (Audetat, 2001: 950; Nowotny *et al.*, 2001).⁵² According to this perspective, citizens' participation is not only required but it is legitimated within the relation between science and society.

Scholars from STS (like Wynne, Irwin, Jasanoff and many others) have played an important role in proposing and defending citizen participation in decision-making with respect to technological change and innovation. As a part of that they have pointed out that although often not well versed in basic science, citizens have shown themselves to be able to assess the wider implications of such change for their well-being and livelihoods and to

⁵¹ Basically the Mode 2 proposal is presented as an alternative to Mode 1. The latter stresses the strong divide between academia and society in the way especially fundamental research was institutionally organized. The production of knowledge and successes of science are seen as dependent on science as an autonomous sphere, intellectually and socially. Mode 2 assumes that this Mode 1 regime, once dominant, has been eroding and that contemporary progressive science is based on close interaction between science and parts of society, industry and government in particular (see Nowotny *et al.*, 2001). This Mode 2 model is not only anchored on an interdisciplinary perspective of science, but it assumes as well a close connection between science and its application context - society. Under this proposal, a new public arena is defined, where spaces for new regulations of science, moulded through processes of negotiation, mediation, consultation and dispute, appears as central.

⁵² This "new" view, however, has some limitations, among which the non consecration of knowledge production without reference to the university. Moreover, it ignores the diversity of knowledge production configurations that can emerge, associated with different configurations of power relations.

deconstruct and criticise what is presented as evidence and rational argument in controversy.⁵³

On the basis of his experience as an activist in such an area, Richard Sclove highlights the need to create adequate opportunities for citizens to express their personal aspirations, their views on the common good, and their understanding on democracy. Sclove's basic argument is that the necessary conditions must be created to allow that *everyone contribute* to policy-making (Sclove, 1995: 180). Accordingly, the author points out the main reasons to broaden citizens participation: 1) a larger and diverse number of participants increases the chance of new creative insights; 2) it ensures that a more diverse range of prior social needs, concerns and experiences will be reflected in the design process; 3) a broadened participation may improve enhanced opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas (*ibidem*: 181). However, the author also points out that the ideal of a strong democracy is very difficult to achieve, given that the most important decisions occur within political institutions characterized by opacity and action, often without adequate public accountability of bureaucracies, or through market mechanisms (*ibidem*: 239).

From the arguments just presented a central issue emerges for the core debate endorsed by this work: the possibility of scientific controversies based on agonistic relations with the State may contain HID potential. In studying possible examples of HID, the relationships between different forms of knowledge, as well as the contexts of opposition that mark such disputes, should be taken into account. Especially, the frontiers

⁵³ To get sharper analysis of the various forms of expertise of experts and citizens Collins and Evans have proposed the so-called "third wave" of STS (Collins and Evans, 2002). This approach represents an attempt in the shift of the research focus to topics like power, agency, accountability and democracy. Within its scope, citizens' participation in decision-making dealing with scientific issues might be enhanced by specifying particular forms of expertise they have and how this may be integrated in designing and managing 'participation.' This proposal was, however, strongly criticized by other prominent scholars in STS like Arie Rip (2003), Bryan Wynne (2003) and Sheila Jasanoff (2003a). They argued among other things that the proposed 'third wave' shift is in a way essentialist and does not sufficiently account for the multiplicity of relations between politics and science, nor on how policy is incorporated in, and inseparable from, science.

of discussion reveal ‘contact zones’ between different forms of knowledge to be closely analyzed. One way to analyze what goes on in such ‘contact zones’ is based on the concept of *hybrid forums* developed by Callon and others (2001). Starting from there João Arriscado Nunes (2007: 62-63) groups forms of collective action with respect to science related controversy into six broad categories, where one category, that is based on the collective action promoted by social movements and based on the agonistic relation with State, as well as the political activism, assumes prominence (i.e. health and environment, health activism, therapeutic, access to health care services or environmental, may host scientists, professionals and citizens). Although these kinds of relations emerge with some centrality, their direct connection with HID possibilities still is understudied.

In the triangle formed by scientific knowledge, participation and democracy the question of risk emerges as a central theme in STS. Reference to risk provides a rationale for the need for citizen participation in decision-making. However, science in relation with risk societies has an ambivalent role: first, most of the discussions that are happening are concerned with the risk caused by scientific and technological outcomes; second, risk regulation is performed by the same experts implicated in the production of these risks (Jasanoff, 1994: 2). Not surprisingly therefore, risk appears as one central and unavoidable issue in the debates over the relations between science and society. Accordingly, the argument put forward is that knowledge societies as we know them today are societies in which information, risks and the proliferation of uncertainties are recognized as defining features of life, politics and markets (Beck, 1992; Jasanoff, 2004b; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007). Knowledge societies are risk societies (Bertilsson and Elam, 2002; Jasanoff, 2003b; Nunes, 2007: 2). Risk is one of the most prominent reasons why people demand more intervention in decision-making processes. Risk and uncertainties have long fed the levels of distrust

among citizens on decisions combining politics with science (Nowotny *et al.*, 2001; Irwin, 2006; Nunes, 2007). In contemporary society risks and uncertainties are also often the direct outcome of the “growth” of certain kinds of knowledge. All this has – and should have – implications on the relations between citizens and decision-making, which should be acknowledged and explored. Thus, “risk is still seen as an opportunity for the democratization of political processes” (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007: 169).

The concept of social vulnerability, or vulnerable social zone, was recently co-opted to this particular context of risk analysis. What is new in the concept is the need for a more systematic and continuous approach to the generating processes and the characteristics of populations and regions with greater difficulty in dealing with the impacts of risk events – which may be natural, biological, and/or technological. According to such conceptions, it is recommended that the social groups most exposed to risk situations – the most vulnerable – participate more in the debates dealing with these issues, as well as in decision-making associated with them (Porto, 2007). Risk appears in this context as directly affecting peoples’ lives, posing new problems but also requiring decisions in which those affected should play an active role.

This debates just summarized strengthen the argument advanced in this work about the possibilities and the importance of opening up the sphere of decision-making to social groups which are usually excluded from the latter. An even stronger case can thus be built for citizen participation: concerning where scientific and technical issues are at stake. And yet, it is also important to note that in many controversies science and technology are in some form implicated, but are not at the center. In the Portuguese case to be further explored, controversy and contestation about science, i.e. the data on the minimal number of deliveries required to maintain quality and safety, was much central than in the debates

in Belo Horizonte that this work looked at. One might say that there is an understandable bias in STS to look at political controversy with special attention to explicit instances of contestation over the scientific evidence. For the analysis of HID in practice it is important to look ‘symmetrically’ at the ways and the moments at which various forms of knowledge enter the exchanges and are framed relative to one another, be it implicit or explicit. Although STS work is central to the discussion of the relation between Science and Society, we cannot ignore that most of that work overvalues natural sciences in relation to other sciences despite all sort of sciences are intimately mixed or blurred with society. Moreover, there are many cases in which explicit scientific evidence is less visible or absent while there are other concerns that are really dominant and that must be taken into account.

3. Knowledge relations and policy-making

If the previous point set out to clarify the relation between science and society and the need for citizen participation in decision-making concerning scientific and technological matters, this point tries to explore the place of science in public decision-making and its relation with other forms of knowledge, namely those associated with citizen participation.

Risk, as mentioned, may lead and fuel the emergence of public controversies dealing with scientific knowledge. It not only increases fear on the side of those potentially affected by different kind of risks, but it is also responsible – depending on the relation between political system and civic participation – for the increase in protest actions as forms of public response to the social perception of risk and the way it is being framed by public decisions (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007).

Such questions addressing the relations between science and the public were never linear. The approach that prevailed until recently was based on a conception of scientific literacy or "public understanding of science". This approach started to be discussed around the 1950s and had a double purpose: to educate the public on scientific and technological matters and to promote public support for scientific research and its funding (Nunes, 2007: 57). This approach, despite some insight into the understanding of how an undifferentiated "public" related to science, had little effect on democracy, since it advocated a passive attitude by "lay" people towards the expertise of scientists and the cultural authority of scientific knowledge, not giving space for citizen participation. This approach came to be known as the *deficit model* of scientific literacy (Michael, 1996),⁵⁴ according to which no democratic debate was possible between scientists and citizens due to their asymmetric relationship. Accordingly, the reduction of possible conflicts should rely on the public recognition of science as the authoritative form of knowledge capable of understanding the world and changing it through technological interventions.

The growing dissatisfaction with the assumptions associated with that model, and in particular its lack of an adequate response to emerging problems associated with the unintended effects of large-scale technological systems and controversial forms of science and technology nor recognise benefits in such a relationship, has been a major influence, especially since the 1980s, on the search for new forms of citizen involvement in public debate and decision-making involving science and technology. This became a major topic of research in Science and Technology Studies. One of the claims of both diverse publics and STS researchers was that opportunities should be afforded to demonstrate the capacity of so-called "lay" citizens to understand and relate to the world of science and

⁵⁴ According to Mike Michael (1996: 109) the term was dubbed by Bryan Wynne in 1988 during a Science Policy Support Group Workshop in Lancaster University.

technology.⁵⁵ The attempts at achieving that aim, however, proved to be themselves highly controversial.

In the 1970s citizens began to demand a more democratic control of science, demanding, especially since the 1990s, citizen participation in decision-making (Dickson, 2000: 917; Irwin, 2006; Roberts and Mackenzie, 2006). Such claim was based on the awareness and consciousness that scientists care mainly about their own projects and political leaders about their own very specific interests. Major public controversies such as AIDS, nuclear energy, GMOs, have been held responsible for the erosion of public trust in science and, more generally, in the double delegation model (Jasanoff, 2005; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007). Thus, mistrust replaced "knowledge deficit" as the preferred explanation, now considered outdated. This "new" explanation in terms of mistrust is related to the increased relevance of the new (and renewed) risks in society, which made citizens more vulnerable and more aware (Porto, 2007).

The need was thus acknowledged to move away from a model based on the recognition of experts as the only owners of knowledge, and from a one-way process of communication confining lay people to the position of receptors of a knowledge produced elsewhere, to a new model open to a broader conception of what counts as knowledge, as well as a dialogical model of democracy, allowing for the mutual engagement of diverse forms of knowledge, including of those in vulnerable conditions. Thus, other forms of knowledge were not recognized nor valued in decision-making contexts involving issues of science and technology.

As alternatives to the assumptions based on the deficit model, new currents of thought emerged, enabling new perceptions about science and moving from a conception

⁵⁵ João Arriscado Nunes (2007: 55) notices that the major weaknesses of the deficit theory are associated with the homogeneous conceptions it offers of "science", "knowledge", "scientist" and "public."

of *public understanding of science* to that of *public engagement with science*. These were strongly anchored in a range of participatory processes called by “collective experiments” (Callon *et al.*, 2001) or targeted at the *extension of politics* (Latour, 1998), providing an increasing degree of openness of science to what was no longer regarded as an undifferentiated public, but a diversity of publics. Different names were proposed for these processes, including, among others, *social ownership of science* (Alonso, 2008; Cuevas, 2008) or *civic epistemologies* (Jasanoff, 2005).

Civic epistemologies is a conceptual tool for planting the politics of science and technology firmly in the social world that, according to Sheila Jasanoff, is where it belongs. “Civic epistemologies refer to institutionalized practices by which members of a given society test and deploy knowledge claims used as a basis for making collective choices” (*ibidem*, 255). Civic epistemologies, then, function as an analytic frame for the forms of public trust and reason displayed by modern politics, as well as the policy consequences flowing from them. According to this approach, science, no less than other politics, must conform to these established ways of public comprehension in order to gain broad-based support, namely when science helps to underwrite significant collective choices (*ibidem*: 249 and 271). At this point we can see the same participatory concerns in relation to deliberative processes, based on participatory devices, with particular application to decision-making processes involving science and technology.

It is important to ask how the arguments and views above relate to the much more abstract hypothesis of *double delegation* (Callon *et al.*, 2001) already discussed in Chapter 1. ‘Double delegation’ stands for the way in which ‘the sovereign’, i.e. the citizenry in a democratic regime, has transferred the task of making decisions about the scientific and technical aspects of the world to scientists and decisions related to the political and

administrative sphere to officials (elected politicians and appointed bureaucrats). This model seemed to have elective affinities with representative democracy that refers to the delegation with respect to political and administrative questions. Thus, the double delegation analysed by Callon and others can be seen as an expression of "double pathology of democracy", not only associated with the crisis of participation but also with the crisis of representation, analysed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002a, 2002b).

While the image of 'double delegation' may hold true historically and still applies to much of today's way of going about social and political problems that are science related, it can be said to be in deep trouble. Unprecedented challenges to health, environment and the well-being of citizens arising over the last decades of the 20th century have shown the inadequacy of the double delegation model as a way to deal with problems in which science, technology and political and ethical choice become more and more mixed if not blurred. This has fuelled debates on the need to move towards more open forms of government capable of providing responses to the growing uncertainties associated with the dynamics of late modern societies. It is not difficult to see how strongly this resonates with the proposal of HID. HID may be a pathway to overcome the inadequacy of double delegation model, introducing in the debate the possibility of citizen participation forms, as discussed in chapter 1, as one possible solution. Contrary to the double delegation inadequacy, HID proposal presents opportunities of double empowerment: political and epistemological (Santos, 2002a). The assumptions of the HID proposal are fundamentally two: one epistemological and socio-political. Concerning the epistemological assumption, it is based on the epistemological diversity of the world, the idea that knowledge is neither pure nor complete, that what exist are constellations of knowledge (Santos, 2000: 229; 2002a: 14-15).

Obviously, the representative model of democracy rests heavily upon expert advice to legitimate decisions. Expertise, however, is itself contested as much of the work in STS of the last decades has shown and documented. Expert opinion and knowledge are themselves shaped by politics, and they often fall prey to fraud and misconduct. But perhaps the most striking form of political shaping of expertise is its subordination to the logic of profit (Roberts and Mackenzie, 2006: 158) or to the market (Jasanoff, 2004b). Science is increasingly caught up with business, and expertise is at the service of states which actively shape societies based on the market as the major form of social ordering (Cuevas, 2008: 69). On this, Sheila Jasanoff (2004a: 1) says that when analysing the defining phenomena of human history, those arising under the nexus of science, technology, culture and power, it is possible to figure out that large segments of social sciences retreat into a conspiracy of silence.

“Science for the people” is proposed as the solution to the referred problems, based on the central idea of “technologies of humility” as a substitute of “technologies of hubris” (Jasanoff, 2003b). Based on citizen participation in governing science, and although Jasanoffs’ analysis is very focused on uses of particular technologies, it is suggested that decision-making should seek to integrate the “can do” orientation of science with the “should do” questions of ethical and political analysis. By doing that, citizens would become active in this process, a source of knowledge, insight, and memory. This is also the proper way to treat vulnerability within policy-making (*ibidem*: 244).

Focusing on the analysis of knowledge confrontation within policy-making dealing with science, different relations can be explored. One type of relation is of *exteriority*, referring to situations in which a reverential attitude prevails in relation to the knowledge produced by experts and scientists. In this type of relation, scientific knowledge

is produced in a distant sphere and lay people recognize their lack of specialized knowledge and thus rely on experts. Another type is of *alignment*, that can be central or peripheral (according to the defence of techno-scientific positions that can be dominant or not), but showing a close and active relationship with scientific statements, especially when argument about certain matters is needed. A relation of *resistance-opposition* happens when people resist the production and/or use of certain kinds of knowledge, informing against negative impacts or risks that such knowledge might contain. One last possible type relation is based on an *articulation* relation, which allows the recognition of heterogeneous actors' involved in knowledge production and the agonistic nature of their relations (Nunes, 2007: 52-53).

Such typology also suggests the possibility of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic relations between scientists and part of the public. The hegemonic mode departs from a hegemonic view of science based on participatory practices, which only serve to legitimate science dominance. Those practices are based on selection and homogenization criteria of the participants, reasserting the authority of some types of knowledge and consequent disqualification of some others. In some cases, participation may become mandatory as part of specific projects and initiatives, often involving the “education” of participants on the matters being debated, according to criteria of relevance defined by those who organize the participatory exercise (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). This means that participation and related knowledges may be constrained by institutional contexts, and as such, participation becomes part of a system of representations (Mosse, 2001). Such a participatory education may then be viewed as manipulation instead of incorporation of peoples' knowledge into decisions. The major warning of authors like Cooke and Kothari (2001) converge to the need to pay attention to the complexities of the relationship between power and

participation, including concerning the knowledge debate raised by participation in decision-making.

On the other hand, a counter-hegemonic mode frames agonistic forms of participation, according to which broader criteria for inclusion are enacted through the claim for participation as a right and as a way of influencing decision-making (Santos *et al.*, 2004: 71; Nunes, 2007). More recently, other approaches have emerged highlighting not only citizens' right to participate, as their need and their right to put values like citizens' engagement, responsibility, transparency and participation at the centre of decision-making processes (Pestre, 2008: 103).

The proper course to be followed seems then to win back citizens' trust, since they no longer agree to be involved in "blind schemes" (Dickson, 2000: 919). In debates concerning science and technology citizen participation has a double demonstration effect: to denounce the problems that affect people and to endow with visibility those who are being affected (Nunes, 2007). Participation once again is reinforced as the proper response not only to achieve better decisions as it is the grand narrative for more democratic decisions. Sheila Jasanoff (1994, 2005), however, argues that neither a "technocratic" approach, based on scientists as primary validators of the policies with technical content, nor a "democratic" approach, based on public participation as the antidote to abuses of expert authority, serves public policies. Accordingly, none of the approaches takes adequate account of the nature of science or of politics because in both paradigms decision-making can be co-opted through strategic choices. A richer and more realistic account of the role of expertise in public decisions is then required, as well as of public participation. Controversies are, then, privileged spaces where different knowledges are put into contact. According to Callon and others (2001: 174 ff), a possible path to

overcome conflictual relationships between knowledges in situations like controversies is associated with introducing a new political conception of decision-making, free of “prostheses” and constituted by what the authors call *hybrid forums* above referred as allowing the emergence of new configurations of knowledges. This approach invites decision-making processes to be inclusive in terms of the concerns of those affected by problems, the concerned groups, functioning on a basis of translation, formulation and negotiation – cooperation – of/on the problems and the solutions. In sum, working together in collaborative experiments (Callon, 2003).

Participation is therefore dependent on the way the “public” is represented in decision-making, and on the function attributed to them in the legal and institutional design of participatory mechanisms, as well as on the political and socio-cultural contexts involving these processes (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007: 172).

The tendency registered in this debate is to broaden citizen’ inclusion in these kinds of processes concerned with specific forms of knowledge. Such conceptions of citizen involvement through forms of participation where citizens knowledges can be taken in account during decision-making seems to be, in part, equivalent to models of political organization also recognised as high intensity democracies (Santos, 2002a, 2007a) or “strong democracies” (Barber, 1984; Font, 1998), a possible direction towards a more active involvement of citizens in public policy contexts involving science and technology, based on new forms of citizenship and exemplified by the work around the concept of *scientific citizenship* (Irwin, 1995; Wynne, 1996; Irwin and Wynne, 1996; Bertilsson and Elam, 2003; Hagendijk, 2004).

Under the topic of governance, the relationship between science, technology, society, and citizenship has been guided by the principle of openness of the political

process to a wider range of citizens and organizations. The rule is, then, according to the European guidelines in this area, to ensure the “full and genuine participation” of all parts of all stakeholders in these processes, including the general public (CEC, 2003: 13). Nevertheless, there are tensions and gaps between the intended openness and the actual participatory practices. As discussed in the previous chapters, not all forms of participation are democratic, nor ensure that knowledge of those who participate and are affected by the measures are taken into account in decision-making.

These proposals presented above offer new directions for the engagement of knowledge production and citizenship, namely on a basis of co-production of new forms of knowledge (Jasanoff, 2004a; Santos, 2000, 2006; Nunes, 2007), one central reference in this debate, and its idiom seems to be part of the grammar of high intensity democracy.

Such are also proposals of cognitive justice, cognitive democracy and cognitive citizenship, based on the recognition and sharing of diverse forms of knowledge, once they demand a parliament of knowledges where the sense of cognitive pluralism must prevail (Latour, 1991).

The debate on cognitive citizenship is particularly interesting in the context of the ongoing debate about the pathologies of democracy and the tension between high and low intensity democratic forms (Santos, 2002a), where themes of participation and the relationship between participation and representation are central. We should, however, examine the conditions in which this debate emerged and developed and how it has been linked with a set of experiments of involvement and participation of citizens in public debates and decisions involving science and technology (including experiments in Portugal). But it is equally crucial to identify the constraints, obstacles and dilemmas that have marked these debates and sparked heated discussions about what counts as

participation and the way it defines citizenship and democracy. It is in this context that it is important to extend the reflection on the theme from broader concepts such as cognitive citizenship, cognitive democracy and cognitive justice (Nunes, 2005, 2007). Those experiments and democratic forms of collective action of citizens in other parts of the world justify the use of concepts like cognitive democracy or cognitive citizenship, associated as they are with interesting contributions about the promotion of active citizenship and a high-intensity democracy that cannot dispense with the active involvement with science, knowledge and technology.

4. Conclusions

Public life is regulated by public policies and those still seem to be regulated by scientific knowledge. Such discussion gives us an account of the mutual constitution of science and politics. Some of the most central debates brought into this chapter highlighted the fact that Science and Society are intimately related.

What the historical contribution of STS particularly gives to this debate is focused on the need to explore how the relationship between science and society works in mundane social and political practices. Namely how scientists and public get involved with one another and how governments seek to promote the acceptance of science and related social change. However, STS studies on the relationship between science and society has been too focused on the natural sciences (climactic science included). Regarding this relationship, however, two sorts of considerations has been neglected: 1) all sort of sciences are in intimately mixed or blurred into society, i.e. economics, management or medical sciences (just to name use some of the scientific branches linked to the case studies), and all are also part of this debate; 2) in addition, controversies indeed deal with a

scientific aspect, but there are other concerns that are really dominant and that must be taken into account.

Moreover, participation has been used as the missing piece that is needed to repair the relationship between science and society, and this clearly brings to the debate the question how different knowledges can come together in that relation. At this point the idea of co-production of knowledge seems to be in accordance with the idea of cognitive justice, based on the fact that all sorts of knowledge can be reconciled in society. Then, to be interested in how forms of knowledge come together in HID practices means to look at these various knowledges in a more symmetrical way. That idea of symmetry rests on the idea of co-production previously explored, understood as distributed forms of government resting upon a possible articulation of different forms of knowledge (Irwin, 2006; Nunes, 2007: 15 and 22), as well as in the idea of cognitive citizenship, strongly related to discussions on new forms of citizenship and democracy, based on active citizenship through participation and based on the recognition and sharing of diverse forms of knowledge as relevant within decision-making contexts (Nunes, 2007).

The idiom of cognitive justice also converges into the symmetry question between different knowledges, according to which the diversity of actors and the diversity of knowledges they mobilize should be placed in dialogue, in “meeting places” (Mignolo 2003: 53) or in epistemic contact zones (Santos, 2007c, 2009), with the potential to carry forward a new “epistemology of vision” (Santos, 2000, 2006), of endowing with visibility to new forms of knowledge that have mostly been ignored, silenced and marginalized in decision-making processes associated with public policies.

What all authors and approaches reviewed in this and other chapters seem to agree on is that knowledge is complex: plural, situated, located and culturally embedded, etc..

And most of them probably will agree that the current institutional arrangements and practices stand in the way of addressing and solving social problems more adequately and more efficiently. Decision-making is one relevant stage where different actors play different roles associated with the diverse knowledges they bring into the process. Possibilities of innovative relations are opened up, and some of them find their way into different forms of hybrid forums and other arrangements for public participation. Some of these end up reasserting the authority and epistemic privilege of science, others achieve some form of inclusion and dialogue involving diverse forms of knowledge. From here, central questions emerge to be addressed in the empirical chapters to be further analyzed: a) what sorts of knowledge and experiences are brought to discussion about the problems at stake under the processes to be studied; b) what sorts of knowledge/experience is at stake in organizing participatory processes; c) how is the authority and relevance of these knowledge assessed and who plays a role in this; d) when various sorts of knowledge are in conflict, how is conflict dealt with?

Part II
Methodology and Case Studies

Chapter 4. Methodology

1. The research methodology

All research work constantly consists of options. Methodological choices are central and can determine the way research follows, conditioning the expected results to be obtained. According to the theoretical background that is the basis of the present work, the intention was to make the best choices in order to proceed with new knowledge production based on the focused themes. What is about to be presented here is the set of methods and data collection techniques that were considered, and a source of inspiration for the analysis of the central questions raised by this work.

1.1. The methods

Given the epistemological presuppositions of the present analysis, the first choice was to adopt a qualitative methodological approach. Although the question of democratic intensity that sustains this analysis may be suggestive of a quantitative approach able to translate such intensity into numbers, the core questions which this study aims to answer led us to the adoption of a methodological qualitative approach. In fact – and considering the analytical framework adopted, as well as the core questions this work intends to respond – democracy, studied through citizen participation in decision-making processes, implies an analysis based on the interactions as they emerge and develop between the social actors involved that only a qualitative approach would capture.

To understand how to organize for HID, to capture the dynamics that characterize such processes, as well as how different knowledges can be reconciled under such democratic proceedings, implies a close observation of such interaction contexts.

Moreover, considering the analytical context adopted, based on citizen participation in decision-making processes (based on the arguments and experiences of everyday problems that citizens can bring to decisions), the analysis intends to capture the motivations of the different actors involved due to a greater citizen participation in decision-making, how participation processes happen, how people get involved in politics, as well as the conceptions they have of participation and democracy. From here, other choices emerged, namely the adoption of the Extended Case Study Method as the more adequate means of reaching the aims stated above.

Although the Extended Case Study Method was applied and explained in the 50's and 60's by authors like Max Gluckman, Clyde Mitchell and Jaap van Velsen, it was later recovered and further developed by Burawoy in the 90's (Mendes, 2003: 4). Burawoy's (1991, 1998) conceptions on that method are those adopted here.

The present research relies on two central case studies chosen to illustrate the problems worked out: a) the protests based on the Health Minister's decision to close Portuguese maternity wards; b) the Participatory Budgeting of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. These choices were based on the Case Study Method and the extended capabilities that it entails, namely looking at situations from below, but mindful of the external forces that shape them. This method provides a thorough analysis of the cases selected through observation of their uniqueness and differences, which is only possible by performing a detailed study of their multiple interactions and complexities.

In its formulation, the Extended Case Method has as its main objective the rebuilding of existing theories (Burawoy, 1991, 1998). For Burawoy, four principles provide the framework for an Extended Case Study, and those were taken into account in the present work. The first is that of the inter-subjectivity that must be established between

the researcher and the actors with whom he or she engages during the research process. The second is the need to enter the "lived world" of the actors involved in the research. The third is the definition of relations between local processes and "external forces". Finally, the fourth is the theoretical reconstruction allowed by its use.

The purpose of using the Extended Case Method in this work is to put to the test a number of theoretical contributions through a detailed analysis of the cases selected. According to the Extended Case Method, the object of analysis is the situation and causality comes from the invisible link between their elements.⁵⁶ Moreover, social change is explained, according to the Extended Case Method, by the social movements (Burawoy, 1991).

This work starts from an existing theory, namely the theoretical proposal of HID (Santos, 2002a; Santos and Avritzer, 2002) and it seeks to re-examine it empirically through the adoption of the two particular cases to be further described in detail, the main reason why that method is adopted. Thus, although the Extended Case Method is not a comparative approach, it draws on cases which are selected for their exemplarity as instances of specific processes or phenomena. This means that the present investigation does not entail a comparative analysis, but instead an exercise in detailed, theoretically informed analysis of two processes which provide a contrasting view of citizen participation processes under two different modes of governance and in two different countries. The intention is to identify partial connections between those processes and places under review, as defended by Strathern (1991: 26) which allows inter-connections as defended by Jaap van Velsen (1987: 371). The selected case studies, focused on distinct

⁵⁶ In fact, situational analysis was the original name of Extended Case Method, as practiced by Manchester School Anthropologists, like Jaap van Velsen, who still prefer the use of the term *situational analysis* given the situation centrality in the analysis (1987: 345).

experiences of citizen participation, function exactly as exemplary cases that can provide entry points for fruitful confrontation in their similarities or contrasting analyses.

In addition to the methods already mentioned, it is also important to consider the use of the postanalytical ethnomethodological perspective proposed by Lynch and Bogen (1996). According to that approach, history and documents should be seen as resources that are constructed locally by the actors involved in the processes of interest, allowing a reconstruction of the history, context and memory of the processes at the core of the selected cases.

Social Movement theory, for example, points to the dangers of post-event analyses when protests are being investigated. As happened in one of the case studies, at the beginning there was an attempt to avoid the selection of a case study focused on protest actions which had already ended. The choice of still ongoing protests, however, while certainly having some advantages, would face other constraints, like the impossibility of evaluating the collective action under study. The postanalytic ethnomethodology approach, anchored in narratives and documentary analyses was thus regarded as a useful tool, especially regarding the reconstruction of chronologies of events and the expectations of the actors involved about the future.

Actor-Network Theory (ANT), though not systematically drawn upon in the present research, was a strong general inspiration for my empirical work. It proved to be important for the study of the mobilization of actors, their alliances, the making of associations and dissociations (Callon, 1986a). As a sociologist, my practice was to follow that making and unmaking of associations and connections within the processes under study (Latour, 2005).

For the analysis of controversies ANT was also a valuable resource as it encourages the recreation of situations in which the representations and roles of actors could be and were questioned, discussed and negotiated.⁵⁷ The main aim was “to follow and respect” the actors involved in the analysis (Callon, 1986b). Here, ANT encourages studies to be carried out that respect the principle of *actors’ autonomy*. Actors know what they do in normal and mundane situations and often beyond them as the researcher learns with them, not only through their actions, but also through an exploration of their motivations and the way they put their projects into practice (Latour, 1999). The *agnosticism* defended by Callon (1986b) was a valuable guide for my own action. My position as a researcher was not to judge, evaluate or criticize actors’ actions, but rely on their arguments about the social, on the way they built their identities and their arguments.⁵⁸ *Symmetry* as a principle (*ibidem*) was also part of my approach, taking the role of a translator, who deliberately chose to include statements and perspectives of the actors in the analysis.⁵⁹

This analysis is itself also the outcome of a *situated knowledge* production (Haraway, 1988), as a way of relating to actors’ (and researcher’s) modes of producing knowledge. As stated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995: 235), “writing is to write something from the side of «something» and never from the center”. According to his perspective, the object becomes a subject ‘by other means’, by a critical and reflexive

⁵⁷ One of the case studies selected concerns a controversy on health.

⁵⁸ Jaap van Velsen also argues that to a sociologist interested in social processes there are no points of view right or wrong, there are just different points of view (1987: 369).

⁵⁹ Concepts like *agnosticism* and *symmetry* are central to ANT: *agnosticism* means that the social scientist does not evaluate, criticize or judge the actors when they talk and argue about the social, prepare their cases and mobilize identities or entities to illustrate their arguments; *symmetry*, in turn, assumes the role of the scientist is to be a translator who deliberately chooses the statements and the perspectives to be include in the analysis. The concept of *free association* has some relevance here, and it means that the social scientist does not apply a schema or a pre-established analytical protocol to his/her analysis, but rather, it relies on montages and compositions made by actors in the world, either with entities and natural materials, social, technological or other (Mendes, 2010: 449).

perspective. Both were pursued in the present analysis. The research and myself as the researcher are modeled on the principle of "modest witness" (Haraway, 1997), asking who speaks and who is committed to study, who does not enter into the agonistic struggle and strategic mobilization of allies, but who does not remain invisible under the guise of scientific distance. As a researcher, I constantly got my hands dirty engaging with the phenomena I took as my topics of research.

Finally, in order to avoid some of the criticisms leveled at ANT (Star, 1996; Mendes, 2010: 448), even if such an approach only partially inspired this work, namely the "produced" absences and silences, I aimed to make a detailed reconstruction of the processes, to analyze how 'absences' are produced and maintained.

1.2. Theoretical background and empirical choices: The research strategy

Recent developments have contributed to the idea that public participation in decision-making processes is part of the solution to major problems of democratic societies rather than a sign of incompleteness or failure of these systems. Besides that, although participation is being presented as a field of work in expansion, recent studies suggest the urgent need to reconsider some theoretical dispersion, and thus the necessity to reopen the debate on new, heterogeneous conceptions of participation (Evans and Plows, 2007: 827). Those are reasons why this work adopts participatory mechanisms to carry out the analysis, evaluating how research on participation is likely to contribute to current debates on democracy and, in particular, debate about high intensity forms of democracy.

There are two central questions targeting the present analysis which it tries to answer: What kind of experiences can be framed under the classification "high intensity democracy" and why? How science can be reconciled with other forms of knowledge under those processes? Based on two distinct public policies embodied by distinct

participatory mechanisms, those questions have a central hypothesis guiding them to the answer: does citizen involvement and a broadening of what counts as relevant knowledge contribute to the effectiveness of decision-making in public policies? Effectiveness here is understood according to the results of participation in decision-making. More specifically, it refers to citizens' participatory action ability to influence decisions, making them more tailored to their needs.

These questions also aim at the understanding of whether, in the particular context of the conception of public policies, the engagement of citizens with their specific knowledges, through direct participation mechanisms, contributes to functional systems of high intensity democracy. More specifically, how can citizen engagement in policy-making contribute to the reduction of inequality, and to a more inclusive society?

The purpose here is to critically analyse new forms of democratic experimentation, also known as technologies of participation, some of them initiated and mobilized by social groups in vulnerable situations, in order to test their effective influence on decision-making, as well as their ability to reverse inequality scenarios, giving an account of an alternative democracy conception based on the discussion of the meanings of *participatory democracy*. Also tested is the relevance of the concept *co-production of knowledge* in public policies conception, by figuring out how experienced based knowledge competes with science in the formulation of high intensity democracy conceptions.

Starting from two diverse situations, the intention is to analyse how different experiences arise and inform actors' behaviours, how actors are organized and how they shape participatory social technology processes in order to evaluate their capacity to influence public policies and to define what can be considered as high intensity democracy.

A central aim is also to investigate those participatory mechanisms as tools for the (de)construction of hegemonic knowledge. In order to do that, the selection of the case studies respected the intersection between different dimensions:

- Territorial, a scale dimension considering distinct local background contexts for participation and democracy exercise;
- The degree of organization and institutionalization of different participatory experiences;
- Different policy-making domains.

2. The case studies

The empirical studies selected shape different experiences of citizen participation. They provide the materials which allow the drawing of a matrix of analysis able to support a deeper understanding of how to define high-intensity democracy and the meeting of different knowledges in shaping public policies.

The first case study is an account of a controversy that mobilized strong protests against the restructuring of maternal and child health services in Portugal, lasting for two years. The second one is based on a participatory experience in a large city in Brazil, designed from bottom up, which has existed for 18 years, and is strongly institutionalized as part of local politics.

The two case studies were selected for the way they provided exemplary instances of the processes of interest to this work, as advocated by the Situational Analysis framework. Both cases address the central questions and issues that emerged during the investigation.

2.1. Case Study A: Protest actions motivated by the closure of maternity wards, Portugal

The present case study focuses on health policy. It refers to a controversy that followed the decision by the Portuguese Health Ministry to close a number of maternity wards in several regions of the country. That decision was based on a report by the National Committee for Maternal and Neonatal Health (NCMNH), assessing child and maternal health services in Portugal. The report was delivered to the Health Ministry on March 10th, 2006, and on March 14th, based on its key findings, the Ministerial Dispatch number 7495/2006 was signed,⁶⁰ listing the maternity wards to be closed. One major conclusion of the report was that births should be concentrated in maternity wards performing a high number of deliveries per year in order to ensure the safety of mothers and newborns and the quality of care.

The controversy started to take shape during the first days of March 2006, after the media publicized the main results presented in the report. The major focus of contention was the statement that "the efficient provision of care in places with technical and human resources is guaranteed only in hospitals with 1500 deliveries a year". A few days before, when the Ministerial Dispatch was published in the Official Journal, this criterion was restated, with the result that out of the 50 maternity wards of the National Health Service, 27 were acknowledged as having technical conditions to keep functioning, and 23 did not fulfil those conditions (15 had less than 1200 deliveries a year, 12 less than 1000, and 5 less than 500). Based on these figures, 16 Portuguese maternity wards were to be closed according to the Ministerial closure plan, although in the end only 9 did close.

⁶⁰ The Dispatch was issued in April 6, 2006.

This is one of the most controversial health decisions ever taken in Portugal, triggering several protest actions in the locations affected, and lasting uninterruptedly for two years.

The option to study this case was based on the intention to consider protest movements as analytical spaces to exercise direct participation and democracy, even though protest was not included in some of the typologies of participation discussed in earlier chapters. In addition to that, there were some intriguing aspects of the theoretical discussion of protest as participation in Portugal: although the country has often been described as having a weak tradition of public protest, recent studies show exactly the opposite (Mendes and Seixas, 2005a; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007; Cardina, 2008; Cerezales, 2011). Moving on from these studies, it is important to analyse the effects of such a form of collective action, to monitor, describe and evaluate its impact on public policies, their design and implementation in Portugal.

2.2. The data collection

According to the Extended Case Method, a combination of several techniques of data collection was used. For case study A, these techniques included the following:

a) 27 semi-structured interviews with key informants were conducted:⁶¹ 4 members of civic movements mobilized against the closure of health units; 3 elements in charge of patient transportation services; 4 directors of closed maternity units and other maternity units that patients were redirected to; 2 members of the NCMNH; 14 local citizens of the affected regions (see annex 2). The criteria for the selection of these interviewees were the following: members of civic movements as spokespersons of the citizens taking a stand against closure; those in charge of patient transportation services

⁶¹ The interviews were made between 2008 and 2010.

due to their key role in the controversy over the number of deliveries happening in ambulances during the transportation of pregnant women from the units which were closed, as well as the conditions for that transportation; directors of maternity units, who were in a privileged position to provide informed comments on the assessment of the services which were closed, as well as on the impact on other units due to the concentration of births diverted to those units; members of NCMNH were expected to comment on how their expert advice was taken by the government and on their concerns about the consequences of ignoring their recommendation, included in their report, to promote citizen participation in the implementation of the reorganization plan; local citizens of the affected regions were included as well to assess, in an exploratory way, their sensitivity to the recent protests and to the implementation of the closures decided by the government. All the interviews made in the scope of this work were transcribed and subject to content analysis (Bardin, 2008; Guerra, 2008).

b) Documentary analysis of all the reports and other documents related to the issue, namely all the legislation regulating maternity wards and protocols to the provision of maternal and neonatal health care; the NCMNH report; complementary reports on the evaluation of maternal and child health care provision. The written materials produced by protest movements and organizations were also analysed.

c) Analysis of national newspapers, namely news on the topic published in two daily newspapers (Diário de Notícias and Jornal de Notícias) and a weekly newspaper (Expresso). An online search of the terms “maternity wards closure”, “maternity wards protests”, “childbirth ambulance” was carried out for the period 2004-2010. A total of 1114 news items were identified and collected. A preliminary reading of the collected items was made to select the news addressing the issues of interest for the research. A final

set of 497 news items were selected and processed using Bibexcel software. Originally developed for bibliometric analysis, this software allows, through a previous work of variable coding, to order the information in the items and cross reference them. The variables considered in the analysis were: source (newspaper); publication date; place(s) mentioned in each news item; title of the news item; the actors identified; their position in the controversy; the journalist signing the item; central issue reported; secondary issues reported; identification of protest actions; kind of protest actions.

Suggestions from Social Movements' analysis were taken into account, namely on the dangers of an analysis based exclusively on press accounts, due the exaggerated interest or disinterest given to some protest actions against others. In order to address this problem, a combined analysis of a) and c) was performed.

d) Participatory observation was a further procedure for data collection. Due to my own pregnancy, coincident with the period of data collection, it was possible to observe and register in a fieldwork diary relevant information on the process under analysis, as well as, through informal conversation with health technicians at the maternity ward where I was being monitored, obtain relevant information on the impact on that ward of the closure of neighboring maternity wards.

e) A public debate (whose participants included an obstetrician, a doula, midwives, pregnant women, leaders of civic movements against the closure of maternity ward, a member of an association for the humanization of childbirth (HUMPAR) and the director of the National Observatory for Health Policies) on the issue of the closure of maternity wards and the humanization of birth took place at the Centre for Social

Studies.⁶² The positions of the participants and the debate with the audience were transcribed and subject to content analysis.⁶³

This particular case study was expected to provide input to redefine the meaning of participation based upon the current influence that collective action processes, with a more informal character, less organized, oppositional (Barry, 2001), can exert on the shaping of public policies, reconfiguring what it means to be a participative citizen.

2.3. Case Study B: Belo Horizonte Participatory Budgeting, Brazil

Belo Horizonte is the capital city of the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. The Participatory Budgeting of Belo Horizonte is an urban planning policy directly performed and supervised by local citizens. It was implemented in 1993, when the Worker's Party (PT) took political control of the Municipality. Based on this new practice, the local population was called to intervene directly in decision-making processes, deliberating and taking responsibility regarding urban investments from 1994 on.

In Belo Horizonte, PB is a biennial process functioning in several steps directly involving the local population in the definition of the urban projects that they want to see carried out in the geographical area of the Municipality where they live. The methodological process of PB is itself defined through citizens' engagement, and improved regarding the acquired experience of each cycle.

During regional assemblies, citizens can present their proposals, which are then voted and organized in accordance with priorities identified from the whole range of

⁶² February 11, 2010.

⁶³ The debate was later published under the title "Saberes em diálogo: Da (des)humanização das políticas de saúde materno-infantil em Portugal às possibilidades de co-produção de conhecimento" (Knowledges in Dialogue: from mother-child health politics in Portugal to possibilities of co-production of knowledge) (Matos *et al.*, 2011).

proposals made by citizens. After a project is approved, citizens are also responsible for the supervision of the material and financial implementation of the project.

This PB is being constantly adapted to local circumstances. Since its inception, new processes have emerged associated with a broadening of interventions in each region. Such is the case of Housing PB (which became an independent and financially autonomous process in 1994, given the dimension of the housing needs of the local population), and, since 2006, the Digital PB, the first of its kind to be implemented worldwide.

The latter process allows the population to vote via internet, with technical assistance provided by the Municipality. Since 2008, voting by phone has been allowed as well. These innovations function as strategies for increasing citizen involvement in decision-making.

This local process has functioned continuously for 18 years and has been recognized as one of the best practices of its kind in the world, having received a number of awards from international organizations. Since it has served as "model" for similar experiences, it is possible to perform a "reverse social engineering" of the process, which involves decomposing the social technology policy to understand its operation (Callon, 2008).

The option for a Brazilian participatory practice, exemplified by the participatory budgeting of Belo Horizonte, became a plausible choice because of this country's recently revitalized democratic tradition, based on citizen participation and social control (Dagnino and Tatagiba, 2007). This choice appeared to function as a counterpoint to the Portuguese case study and its democratic context, taking into account in the analysis different traditions of democratic experimentations both in the North and South due to distinct pathologies affecting democracies (Nunes *et al.*, 2007: 5).

2.4. The data collection

For this case study, the following procedures for data collection were used:

a) 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants with active roles in the local PB process – technicians (see annex 3). In order to understand how the process developed over time and its adaptations, key informants were identified for different stages of the process. They also provided their accounts of the response of the local population to PB. Although more detailed research with citizens would have been valuable, limitations on the time and resources available for fieldwork – which was part of ResIST, a project funded by the European Commission –, did not allow it.⁶⁴

b) Documentary analysis of the information available at the PB site:⁶⁵ legislation, photographs, statistical indicators and methodology and guidelines for each cycle of PB.

c) Analysis of the quarterly PB journal available online (from 2009 to 2011): 9 published issues for each of the 9 municipal regions, in total 81 numbers analyzed.

d) Non participant observation of videos available through the PB portal.

Although most of the available information on PB is concentrated on and controlled by the Municipality, the discrepancy between real-time citizen participation in each biennial cycle of the process and the time available for field work led to the use of this material as the only source for observation. Despite its limitations, it proved crucial for an understanding of how a social technology like PB works.

Both case studies were regarded as experiments with the potential to provide relevant input to an evaluation of transnational experiments in public participation. Protests and the PB process seemed to adequately respond to the intention to contrast diverse

⁶⁴ ResIST – Researching Inequality through Science and Technology, project funded by the European Commission - CIT5-CT-2005-029052.

The above referred interviews were made during December 2007.

⁶⁵ <http://portalpbh.pbh.gov.br/pbh/ecp/comunidade.do?app=portaldoop>

participatory experiments, in order to evaluate their capacity to influence decision-making processes, as well as fuelling innovation in democratic practices and in the reconfiguration of the relations between lay and expert forms of knowledge.

Chapter 5. Protest Case Study

“Who does not fight, always loses; who fight, sometimes loses, sometimes wins, and sometimes makes some way that may lead to more satisfactory results in the future.” Silvina Queiroz, Member of the Civic Movement “Nascer na Figueira” (To be born in Figueira da Foz), February 2009.

1. Introduction

This chapter gives an account of the Portuguese maternity wards closure, one of the case studies under analysis. It describes the process focusing on the decision to reorganize maternity wards and the restructuring between March 2006 and December 2007 decided and implemented by the Minister of Health of the 17th Portuguese Constitutional Government, António Correia de Campos.

On the basis of an evaluation report from an expert commission – the National Commission for Maternal and Neonatal Health (NCMNH) – the Minister decided to implement the Ministerial Dispatch number 7495/2006. This document frames the reorganization plan of the perinatal emergency services. The central argument in the legislative initiative stresses the need to strengthen and promote safety and quality services. The key decision was to concentrate births in health units that performed at least 1500 births per year, which was seen to be sufficient from a safety point of view by the NCMNH. According to the Commission and the Portuguese Government, the number was based on a consensus amongst experts at the international level, i.e., a recommendation of the World Health Organization. Yet no specific references to studies, literature or collective opinions were provided for this in the commission’s report. Of the units left open despite the low number of births registered there, three are located close to Lisbon.

The minister decided to keep them open under the argument that closing them would overcrowd the remaining Lisbon wards. Another three clinics which were not closed despite their failure to reach the prescribed figures are located in the region of Beira Interior (Central Portugal), and local health authorities have not decided to this day which of these units should remain open. The remaining one, in the North, was not closed, even though it had less than 1500 births per year, due to the ministerial decision to receive births which were earlier allocated to a nearby unit designated for closure.

In most regions affected by the aforementioned measure, public protests ignited. In some cases, these protests continued for more than two years. The protesters put forward critical analysis and alternative interpretations of the evidence on which the government's decision was allegedly based. Due to the conflicting interpretations, the closure operation became one of the longest-lasting nationwide public controversial events recorded in Portugal for at least a decade.

The analysis presented here seeks to describe the decision-making process leading to the government decision, identifies how the regions were affected by the process and analyses the way local populations reacted to the implementation of the decision. It relates these responses to the responses of people and groups involved in the controversy and the arguments they presented.

2. The maternity wards closure measure in Portugal: A story with a history

The restructuring of maternal and child health services conducted in 2006 and 2007 in Portugal was not an isolated political episode. During the controversy frequent references were made by the parties involved to previous interventions and their effects on infant mortality and neonatal mortality. Infant mortality and neonatal mortality are key

reference points for a countries' performance with respect to prenatal and infant health (Richardus *et al.*, 1998; Nogueira and Remoaldo, 2010: 86). As in most Western countries considerable advances have been made to reduce mortality on both scores in Portugal.

In order to understand the recent controversies in Portugal it is important to say a little more, first, about the indicators and, second, how Portugal has performed with respect to these in recent decades. Subsequently, earlier policy measures and facility management will be discussed as these provide key elements to the struggle we focus on in this chapter.

2.1. Infant, perinatal and neonatal mortality statistics and the politics of size and location

Some statistical indicators have been mentioned as decisive both in the evaluation made by NCMNH and the ministry decision. The central indicator was the infant mortality rate over the last decades. However, we must not neglect the relevance of some other indicators for a more comprehensive characterization of childbirth conditions in Portugal.

Those include indicators such as infant mortality,⁶⁶ perinatal mortality,⁶⁷ and neonatal mortality,⁶⁸ all of which are shown to be sharply declining in Portugal over the last decades. The infant mortality rate is, then, one privileged indicator used to frame the increasing improvements of the country, which made Portugal move from one of the last places in the world ranking to one of the 10 countries with the lowest child mortality rates (Unicef, 2007: 57; WHO, 2011), currently around 2,4‰ (See Figure 1).

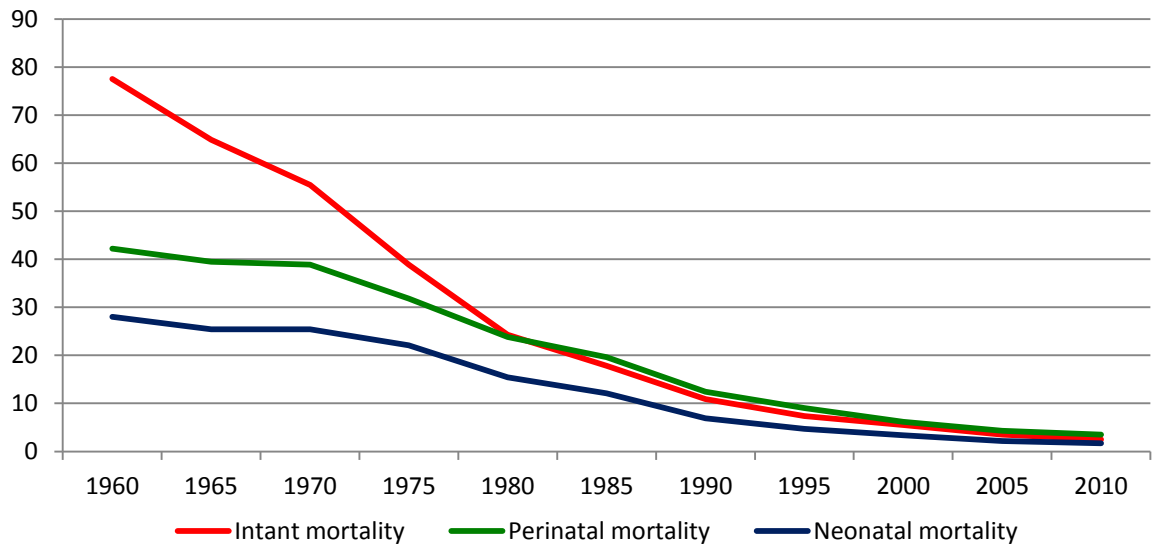
⁶⁶ Infant mortality rate: number of deaths of children under 1 year per 1000 live births.

⁶⁷ Perinatal mortality rate: number of dead fetus with 28 weeks of gestation or more, plus the live births died with less of seven days old per 1000 births.

⁶⁸ Neonatal mortality rate: number of deaths of children under 28 days old per 1000 births.

Figure 1

Infant mortality, perinatal mortality and neonatal mortality rates, 1965-2010 (‰)



Source: INE, PORDATA.

It is true, though, that between 1990 and 2010, Portugal has reduced child mortality rate from 10.9‰ to 2.4‰. A thousand children died in 1990, while today, the number of children who die in the first year of their life is around 426, out of which 191 die in the first week and 286 in the first month.

Portugal's performance as regards to perinatal mortality seems not to be as positive as it is in relation to infant mortality. The country is in 12th place of the EU-15, with a rate of 4.6 per thousand. Unlike child mortality, that is measured up to 12 months of life, perinatal mortality covers a period that goes from the 28 weeks of gestation to the seventh day of life.

So, if we consider the period ranging from the 22nd week of gestation to the first week of life, Portugal goes down one position in the ranking of the EU-15, with only Ireland (9.7) and the United Kingdom (8.3) displaying worse figures. In this case, according to comparative data from the World Health Organization in Europe, compiled by

the Portuguese Health Directorate, the mortality rate rises to 7.75/1000. This is an extremely important indicator. If we consider the period covered by this rate, the moment of delivery is included, and this rate thus becomes a privileged window into the conditions of childbirth in the country. The current figures suggest the need to improve maternal and child health beyond the usual public statements on the quality and safety of childbirth.

In this area of analysis the choice of the indicators above seems to be central to the assessment of policies, both current and to be implemented. The leading indicator to support the political decision under analysis has always been the infant mortality rate, as the ministerial dispatch makes clear. The perinatal mortality rate, however, would be the indicator likely to be most affected by the reorganization of maternity wards

The perinatal mortality rate may, then, be used as an indicator of the quality of antenatal and perinatal care. This indicator depends on a number of factors and important determinants that need to be assessed separately before reaching conclusions about quality-of-care issues. In this sense, an analysis focused on this indicator would illustrate the relationship between quality of antenatal and perinatal care and risk factors for perinatal mortality and how these lead to the perinatal mortality rate. It would indicate as well how differences in registration procedures and practices influence the final mortality figures published by individual countries (Richardus *et al.*, 1998). The assessment of such risk factors would certainly enrich the discussion about the measure taken and provide input for the improvement of standards of care during birth and pregnancy.

However, infant, perinatal and neonatal mortality rates show remarkable progress in the last decades. Such improvements cannot be dissociated from the improvement of economic conditions in Portugal over the last decades, in areas like education, food, housing, income and health, especially child health (clinics, consultations, vaccinations,

medications, health education) (OPSS, 2001, 2002; Sakellarides *et al.*, 2005; Sousa, 2009b).

In this regard, the improvement of the above mentioned indicators has been accompanied by an undeniable expansion of scientific and technological capabilities. These were allies of a growing awareness of the importance of implementing effective public health measures. The scientific and technological advances registered in obstetrics, pediatrics, and in neonatology over the last century have particular relevance in the reduction in mortality rates observed. But the improvements in the national health system are also important. The creation of pediatric services and other health institutions of public assistance providing care for newborns and infants, many of them part of integrated national policies, were particularly important. Thus, the improvement of the socio-economic-cultural conditions of the population, the scientific and technological developments, the improvement and qualification of health care in Portugal, generally, and in obstetrics and pediatrics in particular, are key factors to explain the continuous fall in mortality rates, especially those associated with childbirth and child and maternal health.

Having said this, it is important, however, to consider more closely the geographical distribution of access to healthcare. In fact, geographical inequalities seem to have been somewhat neglected in decision-making. To suit the different types of supply of care to the needs of people it is important to integrate information relating to different spatial scales (Santana, 2005). Such geographical differences make “territory” a privileged space for political action and analysis.

The geography of health has been one of the specialties that devote attention to the question of territorial inequalities, particularly in relation to economic development and urbanization. It is often believed that widely spread and accessible health care follows from

economic development, but the relation is not that simple (Santana, 2005; Nogueira and Remoaldo, 2010). If it is true for Portugal in general that health facilities have improved with the increasing development levels, it is also true that this has not happened evenly in all regions and all population groups (Nogueira and Remoaldo, 2010).

Moreover, in the past 20 years Portugal has observed severe discontinuities in health policies. These changes are not limited to the normal electoral cycles, but often occur with ministerial changes within the same government. These discontinuities document the difficulty of implementing health reforms in Portugal, especially the need to create regional and national networks of healthcare to ensure access to health care in an integrated manner (Amendoeira, s/d).

In the present case of maternity wards, the NCMNH based its suggestions on geographical indicators such as accessibility to health services (despite those who reacted against the measure considering that this relationship was not properly taken into account). But it did not take into account other cultural, economic and educational inequalities of the population in relation with territory. The relationships between all these factors are still understudied with respect to the Portuguese health domain. The geographical inequalities expressed through that distance/proximity to health services as recommend by the NCMNH didn't take other factors into consideration, such as the weather conditions and its interference in the time taken to travel a certain distance, for instance, as is expressed in the following quotation:

The normal is to improve the quality of services provided, but in this case it was the opposite. This hospital has always served the people and serves the counties of Chaves, Boticas and Montalegre, bringing the number of citizens dependent on their services increasing the number of citizens that depend on this service. "Regarding the distances, João

Baptista insists that" the population of some areas of the region is already currently more than 45 minutes away from the hospital and the distance between Chaves and Vila Real is over 70 kilometers by highway. In addition, the reality and the depths of winter are totally unlike other areas of the country, one aspect neglected in the decision-making (Batista, 2007).⁶⁹

The recognition of territory as a basic element in the characterization of populations, their health problems, and their health needs is central and must not be undervalued in public policy-making. The territory, more than a simple political and operational space for public policies, including health policy, is where the interaction between population and health services happens. A specific territory is inhabited by a population with a given socio-demographic and socio-epidemiological profile, associated with certain health problems and needs (Nogueira and Remoaldo, 2010). Neglecting the territorial anchoring of health and health care provision increases the risk of generating inequalities in access to and effectiveness of health care.

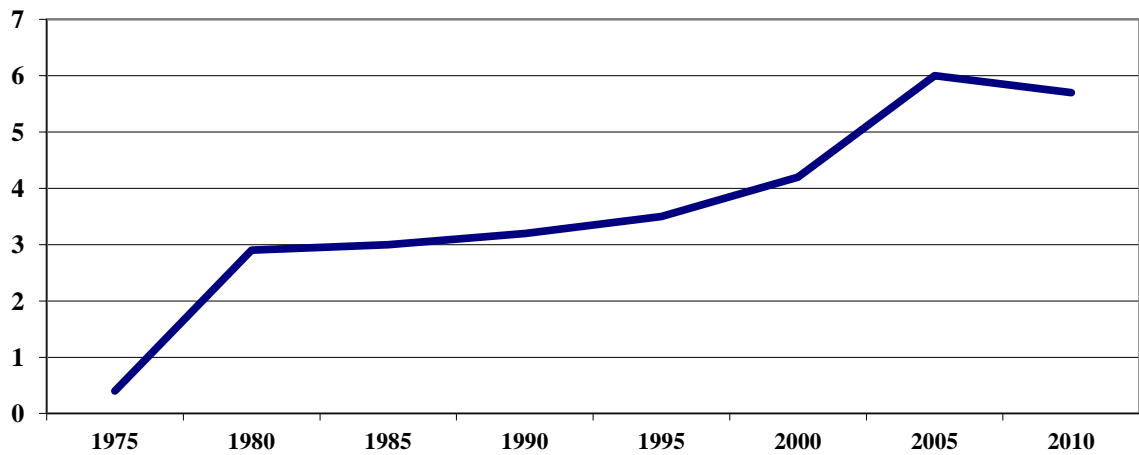
The decision to close maternity wards was justified as a way of reconciling the reduction of costs of health care with the improvement of the quality of the services.

The institutionalization of a National Health Service after the democratic revolution of 1974 led to a continuous increase, over the following years, in investment in the public provision of health care (Figure 2). However, since 2005, the trend has shown signs of slowing down. The new trend of economic contention corresponds to the period when the restructuring of maternal and child services, among others, was decided and implemented.

Figure 2

⁶⁹ The field work was done in Portugal and in Brazil, where Portuguese is the Official language, for that reason data collected are all in Portuguese. Quotations of the documents analyzed and interviews were translated by the author and are of her entire responsibility.

State expenditure on health as % of the GDP, 1975-2010



Source: DGO/MFAP, INE-BP, PORDATA.

A government wishing to improve its performance with respect to the above key indicators, such as infant mortality, and hoping to reap the associated benefits, should expand its services to support mothers and infants. But that brings up the question of what kinds of facilities should be created, what their optimal dimensions would be and where to locate them. Discussions over these matters draw on more than aggregate national statistics, moving beyond an assessment of allegedly technical matters into debates which are political. Governments tend to try to stick to what they define as solid, technical and evidence-based arguments. Boundaries between hard evidence and mere opinion, sometimes dismissed as “politics” are less straightforward and more blurred than suggested. This is especially the case where the debate about minimal size and location offsets what amounts to a politics of space in which the technical and the political, the center versus periphery, and social class and regional identity come into play. And obviously – as the controversy analyzed here shows – the politics of participation and the

politics of space intersect in such situations and open up for scrutiny the democratic principles which are at stake.

2.2. Portuguese policies before 2006

The 2006 reforms were certainly not the first. Their most important predecessor was the package of changes implemented in 1989, by the then health minister, Leonor Beleza, which included the creation of the Portuguese Committee for Maternal and Child Health.⁷⁰

The NCMNH became responsible for central measures that strongly affected the quality of the care for mothers and babies: ranking of hospitals, support for perinatal hospitals support, differentiated perinatal support, maternal and child unit referral networks, coordination of professional units, introduction of the mandatory pregnancy health bulletin, and the concentration of births in units offering better conditions. At that time, the latter decision led to the closure of about 150 of the 200 maternity wards, i.e., 75% of the existing services.

At that time there were about 200 health units where babies were born and that did not meet all the conditions the Commission stated as necessary. To think about the closure of those units it was necessary to talk with the medical authorities, local politicians, including mayors, because this would represent a loss of prestige to those regions. First they protested, but soon they realized that fewer babies and women died due to the decision. In fact, no other health area reached indicators as good as these (Aroso, 2010).

⁷⁰ Initially called Portuguese Committee for Maternal and Child Health, this expert committee was later extinguished. The Ministerial Dispatch number 24256/2003 extinguished that committee and created the National Committee for Maternal and Neonatal Health.

The 1989 restructuring measures are often described as the basis for the remarkable improvements in maternal and child health indicators registered since (CNSMN, 2006; OPSS, 2006; Campos, 2008).

This precedent was a reference during the later discussion of the closure of maternity wards measure, with the decision makers focusing on the number of deaths before and during childbirth.

From 1989 onwards there have been attempts at creating larger maternity facilities under the assumption that the quality and success of services depends on the number of deliveries in general and on interventions in high-risk deliveries that a facility performs each year.

Based on that assumption, some closures happened between the two broad moments of the reorganization of maternal and child health services, in 1989 and in 2006. In 1999, the Socialist Party government (PS) closed the maternity ward in Ovar, in Central Portugal. Before that, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) government had inaugurated the refurbished hospital of Elvas (in Southern Portugal, close to the border with Spain), without reopening the maternity ward which had been closed during the 1989 restructuring. The government that followed (PS) later reopened it.

In 2004, a further evaluation of these services, made by a newly constituted NCMNH, was delivered to the Health Minister, Luís Filipe Pereira, member of the conservative government coalition (PSD-CDS/PP) then in power. The report supported the need to adopt measures for improving maternal and child health services. These included the suggestion to concentrate births in health units providing safer and higher quality services. Nevertheless, the minister chose not to implement them at that time.

The ongoing work of NCMNH, however, restated the conclusions of the previous assessments, reiterating the same recommendations. Based on the latest version of the expert report evaluation (CNSMN, 2006), António Correia de Campos, Minister of Health of the new PS Government, decided to implement the concentration of births, as advised.

More precisely, this decision was taken just four days after receiving the report, on March 14th, when the minister signed the Ministerial Dispatch 7495/2006. He decided to close the maternity wards recording less than 1500 deliveries per year. Those births would be concentrated instead in larger units located nearby. It should be noted that that criterion of 1500 births per year was only one of the factors discussed and recommended in the report.

The Dispatch states that "the provision of efficient care in locations that meet the required technical and human resources is guaranteed only in hospitals with 1500 deliveries per year. This ratio would allow health professionals to perform a sufficient number of births in order to face rare situations and to be prepared to address them."

In addition, in these health units the permanent presence of at least two obstetricians, a neonatologist, a pediatrician and an anesthesiologist (among other resources, human and technical, also mentioned in the Dispatch) would be guaranteed.

The measure was intended as well to accomplish some other objectives, such as the lowering of the rates of cesarean sections, one of the highest registered in Europe. But economic reasons were always associated with this restructuring, and mentioned in the expert committee report, even though the Government never admitted it during the controversy that ensued.

There are 23 maternity wards with serious deficiencies due to their small size and low activity and because of the aging obstetricians practicing in our country. Those professionals are now scarce and are not being replaced by younger

colleagues. The obvious solution is to rationalize existing resources. But the binomial quality of services provided versus mobility of the population must be well reasoned, case by case. If not, each closure will be regarded as the announcement of a gradual abandonment (Moura, 2009).

Based on the aforementioned criteria, 27 out of the 50 public maternity wards which were functioning at the time met the conditions to keep the units open, while 23 failed to meet them. Among these, 15 had less than 1200 births/year; 12 had less than 1000 births/year; and 5 less than 500 births/year.

According to the Dispatch, the decision to close was based on an assessment of the conditions of each maternity ward and in some cases the 1500 births per year was not respected, which means that despite the use of that criterion as a major justification for closure, it was not used consistently.

3. The controversy erupts: March 2006

Soon after the ministerial decision in 2006, criticism and suspicions were voiced. The announcement of the decision within four days of the presentation of the NCMNH report raised the suspicion that the decision had already been made before the Committee made their recommendations known to the government.

The first announcement of the decision, and of which units were to be closed was made by the health minister at the Parliamentary Commission on Health, on the very same day he signed the Dispatch (March 14). It was unclear whether he had discussed his plans with the NCMNH beforehand; in fact, the Committee later complained to the media that he had selected just one piece of advice from their report.

Two days later, on March 16, the left wing parties questioned the health minister on this issue during the parliamentary debate. The newspapers reported that the debate was

very weak, mainly due to the fact that the decision had been already made.⁷¹ From this moment on, no further public debate happened. The minister was asked again about his decision during parliamentary debates on health, but to no effect.

Further controversy over the closures was ignited by a study conducted by the National School of Public Health (Costa and Lopes, 2007). The study focused on the analysis of the 50 Portuguese public maternity wards and was based on several key health indicators: number of caesarean sections performed; postpartum complications; mortality, among others, collected and analyzed for the period 2000-2004, but without cross-referencing them with the number of births in each health unit. The study was based on the results provided by the maternity wards and not on the conditions offered by each of them. Its results contradicted those of the NCMNH, and it showed that the maternity wards that the government decided to close were not those displaying the highest figures for mortality or postpartum complications.

This study was delivered to the General Health Directorate of the Portuguese Ministry of Health (DGS) in May 2006, when the closure of maternity wards was already being implemented. Thus, the results had no impact on the decision. However, before the decision was taken, the Regulatory Authority of Health also defended the need to carry out further technical studies to substantiate the decision. At stake was not the credibility of the NCMNH evaluation, but which criteria should be developed and applied in deciding which wards were to be closed.

4. Closing wards: General considerations versus situated practices

In the process of closing maternity wards political decisions overlapped with some of the technically argued proposals included in the expert group report. The expert

⁷¹ Government Dispatches do not have to be approved by parliament beforehand.

group was composed of twelve members, eight men and four women.⁷² The members of the group were obstetricians, pediatricians, neonatologists and obstetric nurses.

There are some mismatches between the suggestions made in the experts' report and the decisions taken by the Health Minister. As stated earlier, some maternity wards mentioned in the report which should have been closed remain open until today. This situation was justified in the ministerial dispatch in these terms: "to keep open the Torres Vedras maternity ward until the conclusion of the commissioned study about Extremadura/West (covering Alcobaça, Caldas da Rainha, Peniche and Torres Vedras) hospital planning; not to close Cascais and Vila Franca de Xira maternity wards because it would overload Lisbon maternity health units". Besides that, it planned "the construction of new health units in such places". In a way, the 1500 births/year standard imposed by the ministerial decision was subverted by the government itself, by not closing units in Cascais or Vila Franca de Xira, with a number of births per year below the figures defined as compatible with minimal standards for safety and quality. But beyond that, and as already mentioned, not only were those units not closed, but new health units were planned for construction there.

Cascais is in a very bad situation, Vila Franca also. Torres Vedras is a little better but is not good. As we said in the report, all the units with less than 1500 births should be closed (Branco, 2006).

This supports the idea of the government exercising some discretionarity during the implementation of the decision. This affected negatively the inland territories of the country, as we can see in the next figure, although the first public statements to the press,

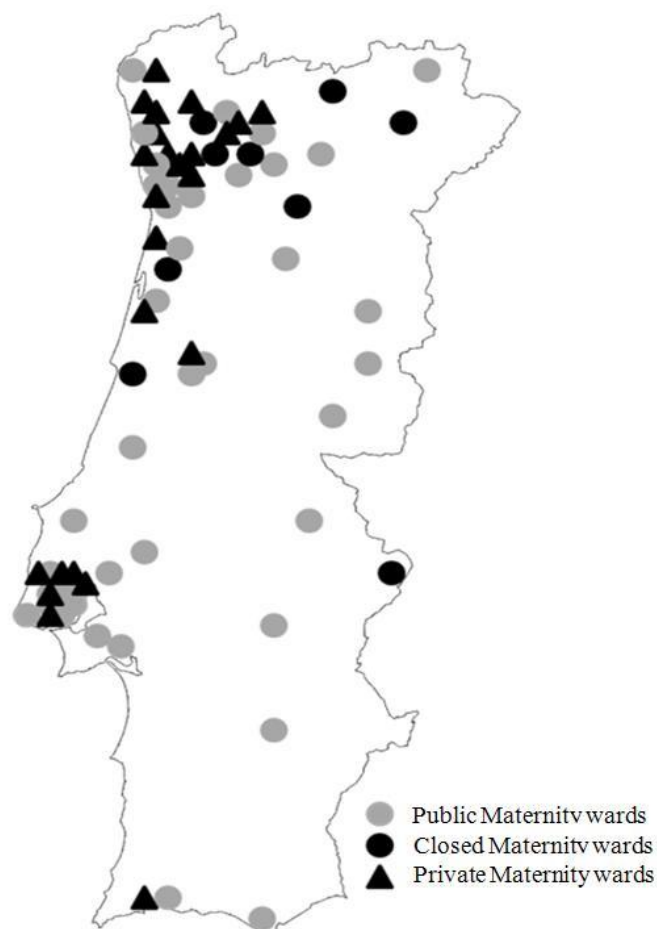
⁷² The NCMNH was created in 2003 by Ministerial Dispatch number 24256/2003. Initially composed of 11 elements, in 2005, through the Ministerial Dispatch number 17283/2005 its constitution was amended and one more element was appointed to its constitution. The same dispatch replaced the Physician and Professor Albino Aroso at the presidency of the commission by the as well Physician and Professor Jorge Branco.

made by the Health Minister after the official publication of the decision, said closures would be based on a principle of “consumer selection”:

Births that continue take place in units without conditions are related with the lack of information or atavism of some pregnant women who do not pick in time the safest place just going to the nearest units (Campos, 2006).

Such a statement illustrates quite vividly the *deficit model* refereed in chapter 3. References to the “lack of information or atavism” as expressed by the Portuguese Health Minister explain women's bad decisions on their ignorance with respect to evidence based health care.

Figure 3
Distribution of maternity wards in Portugal



But some other contradictions emerged from the analysis of the ministerial Dispatch. One has to do with the argument advanced by the government that decisions were to enhance the freedom of Portuguese women to choose quality services as they saw fit. This meant that women would be in a position to choose certain health units where health care services were recognized as safe and of high quality. That would explain why some units were having less than 750 births. Women's choices would have contributed to the erosion of demand for some other health units supposedly with less favorable conditions. Thus, what the government did was to legitimize its "better option" as already made by "well-informed" women. Yet in doing so, and closing the units with less demand, the difficulties in accessing the "best units" were disregarded.

Although the ministerial Dispatch argued for the freedom of choice of the mother, the document contradicted itself by imposing the concentration of births in specific health units.

The Portuguese Observatory of Health Systems, in turn, drew attention to a point which had been neglected during the process, related to the effects of the decision on the depopulation of some regions of the country and the ageing of their residents. The Observatory regarded the decision as an ad hoc measure revealing a "lack of governance", arguing that "the Portuguese cannot be treated differently or discriminated against just because they live in certain geographic areas" (OPSS, 2006: 45). The whole process actually raises a more general problem related to the lack of due engagement with issues of territorialization (Santana, 2005).

In order to have a more detailed picture of the implementation of the decision and its consequences and the accompanying protests, we should consider what happened at each of the localities affected by the closure.

- **Amarante**

Located in the North of the country, this health unit performed an average of 1100/1200 births per year. It closed its doors on the 2nd of December of 2006.

One of the arguments put forward by the local political authorities to contest its closure was related to the fact that after investing a large amount of money in the refurbishing of obstetric services in previous years, the Minister now suddenly decided to close the maternity wards.

In the rallies against the decision, the mayor played an important role. The largest protest rally was organized by the Social Democratic Youth, who distributed leaflets and mobilized the resident population. The Communist Party also joined in during a visit to the site, arguing that there were no valid reasons to close this unit, except for its not meeting the requirement of 1500 births per year.

Three months after the decision became public the Health Minister visited the city and met Armindo Abreu, the mayor. After that, the mayor accepted the closure of the maternity ward in return for the requalification and improvement of the unit.

The mayor of Amarante accepted the closure of the local maternity ward in exchange for the continuation and upgrading of that health unit, a guarantee given yesterday by the Health Minister António Correia de Campos after an official meeting. (...) The decision to close the maternity ward, challenged by the local population, was accepted by the mayor who understands that 'people's interests are now safeguarded' (Abreu, 2006).

In his opinion, the agreement protected the interests of the local population. This put an end to the protest.

- **Barcelos**

According to demographic data, Barcelos, another municipality of Northern Portugal, was the area of the country with the youngest population, due to its high birth rate. The decision to close the maternity ward was thus regarded as a disincentive to having children, although Portugal as a whole has one of the lowest birth rates of the European Union. The decision to close this health unit gave rise to one of the most persistent protests.

Before the decision to close the Barcelos maternity, it had 1032 births per year, but its mortality rate of newborns was lower than that of the unit in Braga, which was to remain open, and to which pregnant woman from the area would be referred. According to activists and local politicians who contested the measure, there were no objective reasons for this closure in the light of the technical criteria presented by the NCMNH beyond the 1500 births/year.

According to the protesters there was a range of arguments against the closure. One of them was the recent refurbishment (less than six months before the decision to close be implemented) of the Pediatrics Service and the modernization of the maternity ward with cutting-edge equipment. To close it now would mean a total waste of that investment. The decision to transfer the new equipment at a later date appeared as evidence that the protesters were right.

Another argument put forward was the wide geographical dispersal of the 89 parishes which constituted the municipality of Barcelos. According to citizens, the closure of the ward would lead to a significant increase in the number of babies delivered in ambulances during the transportation of the pregnant women to Braga.

The town council of Barcelos was the center of the protests and mobilization of the population. Major protest events started there. Two civic movements were created to fight for the maintenance of the health service: the Municipal “Committee for the Protection of the Maternity Ward”, and later the “Women’s Movement Against the Closure of the Barcelos Maternity Ward”. While the former was created by and led by the council, the latter was created by local pregnant women who rebelled against giving birth in a health unit located elsewhere. This second civic movement had some singular features. Although it worked in conjunction with the other movement, this group was responsible for the petition “We want to give birth in Barcelos”. On top of that they organized a visit of pregnant women from Barcelos to the Portuguese parliament during the debate over the closure of the maternity ward proposed by the opposition parties.

The very first action taken by the Municipal Council was to present a preliminary injunction to the court of justice to suspend the closure. This injunction was granted, which gave some hope to the local population. But then the Health Minister counteracted by claiming that “public interest” required closure and had the injunction overruled so that the closure decision remained effective.

Nevertheless, the Minister’s declarations on this particular situation sparked further protests. This time the issue was taken to the medical board of the local maternity ward because of the “objective danger to mother and babies” associated with delivering in Barcelos, which he had used as an argument. Due to such statements, the 14 obstetricians and pediatricians working at the health unit expressed their intention to sue the Health Minister, declaring that they were morally and professionally offended.

On this topic one of the obstetricians working at the maternity ward expressed his anger as follows:

We comply with everything in the report of the committee that prepared the study on maternal and child health. We just do not fulfill the 1500 births per year. (...) We feel insulted, outraged. The Minister has never visited us, never saw our conditions. And the Committee responsible for the report also never talked to us either (Gil, 2006).

This particular closure was the only one which succeeded in gathering the leaders of the opposition political parties during the largest protest rally organized by the municipal council, in Lisbon, in front of the Prime Minister's Official Residence.

Even though the closure was enacted, the local civic movement still works to defend the emergency service of the Barcelos Hospital. The people involved in this civic protest movement continue to believe in the reopening of the health unit, especially because a lawsuit against the decision is still pending and has not yet been decided by the courts.

- **Chaves**

Located in the interior North of the country, on the border with Spain, this maternity ward was the last unit to be closed, December 27, 2007. The reason for the delay was the ruling of the Minister, included in his Dispatch, that this maternity ward would only be closed after the improvement works on the main road that connects Chaves with Vila Real, the location of the maternity ward which would take over the cases from the Chaves health unit.

In 2007, 307 children were born in Chaves, of which 60% by cesarean section (the country's highest rate).

Although the Defense Committee of Chaves Hospital, which had been in place before the controversy, disagreed with the decision, João Batista, the mayor of the city, was the most visible face of that opposition. He argued that some places in the region were

already 45 minutes away from the local hospital in Chaves. Therefore the closure would amount, in many cases, to a 70 km trip which could not possibly be considered as an adequate response, especially during winter, when main road access is sometimes closed due to the snow.

After the controversy erupted, regional political authorities visited the city and met the mayor, presenting to him some health investment plans for the region, including: two new ambulances; a helicopter for emergency transportation; 7 million Euros to purchase new health equipment and to restructure the hemodialysis unit. Besides that, regional authorities also met officials in charge of the health services in Galicia, a Spanish region, in order to establish cooperation agreements with the local hospital in Verín, a Galician town, thus granting access of Portuguese patients to some medical specialties, which, however, did not include assistance in childbirth.

After the closure, the Municipal Council, pressured by some population groups, filed a preliminary injunction to reopen the service.

- **Elvas**

Located in Southern Portugal, on the border with Spain, Elvas was one of the places where the measure was most strongly contested. The health unit was closed on June 12, 2006.

This health service witnessed the lowest number of births per year (about 260) in the country. Besides that, it had no pediatric service (internment service) and neonatal unit, which meant that some babies born in Elvas and requiring further care had to be transferred to other hospitals: Portalegre (60 km away) and Évora (90 km away).

Another relevant aspect mentioned during the evaluation undertaken by the NCMNH was both the high number of caesarean sections performed (94 in 260, amounting

to 36% of the total of births in Elvas, when the national average is 25%, and 17% in the EU) and the lack of use of epidural anesthesia.

Since this region is located near Badajoz, a Spanish city, some Portuguese women have given birth at the two private clinics (Clideba and Naranjos) in that city, resorting to private health insurance. Some women stated that, since they were in the region when signs that birth was imminent were felt, they were attended at the Spanish public hospital Infanta D. Cristina.

Two main arguments dominated the controversy at this locality. One was the agreement established between the Portuguese and the Spanish Government in order to guarantee that Portuguese pregnant women from this region would be allowed to give birth in the Spanish city of Badajoz, 12 km away from Elvas. One of the arguments against this arrangement was one of nationalistic sentiment. The local population argued that the babies born in Spain would become Spanish, even though legislative measures were produced to prevent that.⁷³ But people also contested the high financial amount involved in the agreement, claiming that such money should be invested in the improvement of the Portuguese health unit.

A further argument derived from a peculiar situation. The land where the maternity ward of Elvas was built on had been donated by a local wealthy resident woman – Mariana Martins –, and a foundation with her name was created. She stated that the donation was subject to the State keeping the local Maternity ward on that land. Given the technical reasons for closure presented by the expert report, the health minister decided to close the unit. A consequence of this was the claim by the Mariana Martins Foundation for compensation of 50.000€ per each month of the suspension of the local obstetric service,

⁷³ This new situation raised some legal problems at the beginning, when babies started being born in Spain, requiring legal regulation of unexpected situations. For instance, the one hour difference between the two countries originated in some difficulties for the registration of newborns.

although no legal action was presented in court. According to Melo e Sousa, the maternity ward director:

The closure of this health unit is illegal since the Mariana Martins Foundation has a contract in writing with the administration of the Elvas Hospital determining that the hospital can only be in service if the maternity ward keeps functioning too (Sousa, 2006).

Due to the negative impact of the measure, a civic movement was created to fight the decision - the “Pro-maternity Movement of Elvas”, which took the lead of the protest actions that followed, mostly in conjunction with the Mariana Martins Foundation, as happened with two restraining orders, filed the first by the Foundation and by the civic movement. But before the result of those legal actions was known, the maternity ward was closed.

Four years after the closure, and despite the strong protest actions which happened in the past, local citizens and local authorities are quite satisfied with the new relationship established with the Spanish Hospital of Badajoz.

Pregnant women are advised to make a first appointment in Badajoz approximately at 20 weeks of pregnancy, when a morphological ultrasound should be performed. If no problems are detected, pregnancy continues to be followed by the Portuguese general practitioner/obstetrician, and the woman returns to Spain at 38 weeks of pregnancy to begin monitoring the fetus there. In this case, citizens who contested this alternative arrangement ended up satisfied with it.

If I could choose between giving birth in my town, here in Elvas, and in Badajoz, I would have no doubt! Or between Évora and Portalegre,

which are tens of kilometers away, and Badajoz, which is just next door, I prefer to give birth in Spain (Interviewed 1,⁷⁴ 2009).

The satisfaction is related to the quality of the services and hospital conditions provided in Spain: pregnant women are entitled to a single room with a private bathroom and are permanently accompanied by a close relative (usually the father of the baby), which is not common in Portuguese maternity wards:

The hospital is better, there are better conditions and we are treated as citizens like them (the Spanish) (Cláudio, 2008).

Currently, due to shortages of health care provision in Elvas and to the distance to services located elsewhere, local authorities are looking for further agreements with the Spanish health services.

Figure 4

Campaign billboard used during the Municipal elections in 2009⁷⁵



During local elections, in October 2009, the same political forces which opposed the decision to close the maternity ward included in their electoral program the intention to

⁷⁴ Designation used for those interviewed who wished to remain anonymous.

⁷⁵ On the billboard can be read “reopen the maternity ward; guarantees to the local hospital”.

reopen the local maternity ward but based on a different proposal: to work together with the Mariana Martins Foundation to promote home birth with adequate medical assistance.

- **Figueira da Foz**

Located in a coastal town of Central Portugal, this maternity ward delivered an average of 600 babies per year. It was closed on November 4, 2007. Some months before the decision to close this unit was made, the same health minister awarded this service with the prize “Hospital of the Future”, supported by the project “Parental Education for Birth”.

This locality mounted a strong opposition to the measure and organized a number of protest actions before and after its implementation at the local level. Local protest events were organized by the local opposition political parties (Democratic Socialist Party and the Communist Party).

A local civic movement was created to defend the maternity ward – “Born in Figueira”, which promoted several protest actions.

The arguments put forward to contest the measure were based on the problems arising from the distance between Figueira da Foz and the alternative health units located in two neighbouring cities, Leiria (54 km away) and Coimbra (40 km away).

21 days after the closure, 3 births occurred in ambulances, which led to the intensification of the protests. The circumstances in which those births occurred led to investigations ordered by the Health Minister, triggered by the doubts raised by the municipality. The conclusions were that if the maternity ward had not closed, one of the births on the road would have been avoided. Even so, the decision was not reversed, and more births in ambulances happened.

Based on this new situation, the local Casino offered the local health authorities an ambulance for the transportation of pregnant women.

One year after the closure, the population was still seeking the reopening of the health unit.

Figure 5
Billboard alluding to the number of babies born in ambulances
(Figueira da Foz - Coimbra)⁷⁶



- **Lamego**

Located in the interior North, this health unit witnessed an average of 650 births per year. It was closed in July 3, 2006.

In response to the decision to close the ward, a local movement appeared, led by local women – “Movement for Lamego” –, but whose action was discrete during the

⁷⁶ This photo was kindly provided by the Civic Movement ‘Nascer na Figueira’ (“To be born in Figueira da Foz”). There we can read (One year of the maternity ward A14 - the name of the road that connects the cities of Figueira da Foz and Coimbra).

controversy, despite the five births in ambulances that happened during the first year after the closure.

After the first public competition for the construction of a new hospital in Lamego was aborted, and a few months closure was decided, the same minister approved the new construction.

- **Mirandela and Bragança**

These health units are located in the interior North of Portugal.

Mirandela was one of the scenes of the largest protest events aimed at the closure of maternity wards. The local ward was closed on September 11, 2006. In response to the decision to close the ward, a local movement appeared – “For Mirandela” (Por Mirandela).

The decision to close the ward in Mirandela was not imposed by the ministerial Dispatch. This decision was left to the Hospital Center of the Northeast (composed of three local health units: Mirandela, Bragança and Macedo de Cavaleiros), and the choice of which unit to close would be between Bragança and Mirandela. The popular struggle in this region, at the beginning, was to maintain the two health units open.

What is at stake from this decision has to be understood in the light of its expected impact on one of the major problems of this region, namely desertification. The chair of the first expert committee, Albino Aroso, in first assessment by the committee, stated the need to take into account the problems of regions like this before any decision was taken, once more drawing attention to territorialization as a key, though often neglected issue.

What was expected to be the outcome of an agreement, within the local health authority, to decide which unit to close, soon became a confrontation led by the mayors of the two municipalities against each other, protesting not only against the decision, but also against the intention to choose one unit over another to remain open.

When the content of the Dispatch became known, and facing the possibility of a closure, it seemed that both local authorities were willing to fight together for the maintenance of the two health units. Such an attitude, moreover, was publicly supported by entities which joined the struggle, such as the Trade Unions of Bragança, who delivered to the regional political entities a petition signed by 13.000 people in favour of the continued existence of both maternity wards.

However, faced with the inevitability of a choice, the two municipal councils moved from what seemed to be a joint position to a public confrontation. The unavoidability of a confrontation became obvious when the mayor of Mirandela decided to set up billboards with the saying “Portugal ends here”, with the mayor of Bragança responding with billboards stating “Yes, we are Portugal”.

Before the decision was made, data related to a comparison between the two health units were published in national newspapers that covered this process. In the year before the decision, Bragança recorded fewer births than Mirandela (360 and 445, respectively); Mirandela had a higher demand for appointments in medical specialities related to pregnancy and childbirth (2212 and 1297 obstetric appointments, respectively); with regard to complementary means of diagnosis (ultrasound and obstetric examinations), Mirandela carried out more examinations (66,548 tests and imaging in Mirandela and 33,331 in Bragança); Mirandela serves 7 counties while Bragança serves 5; in Mirandela it was possible to administer epidural anesthesia and babies were protected with an anti-theft system; both conditions did not exist in Bragança. Bragança, however, had more obstetricians than Mirandela.

Despite available data, and although no reasons were given for the decision, the ward in Mirandela was to be closed, and the service in Bragança was to be kept open.

One relevant aspect of this particular case concerns the geographical particularities of this region, such as the weather, namely during the harsh winters. This was a potential risk factor that was not duly considered in the decision, as is brought to the fore in this excerpt from a daily newspaper article:

The bad weather conditions influenced yesterday one more birth performed in an ambulance when a pregnant woman was being transported from Mirandela to Bragança at 7:15 pm. The woman called for help at 5.30 pm, when she had all the symptoms that she would give birth soon. The ambulance which was transporting the patient received orders to go to Vila Real while an Emergency Medical Car would meet the ambulance, but due to the snow the ambulance was forced to return (...), the road was cut off. Given the time lost on the road, the delivery had to take place in the ambulance, and a girl was born. As the mother suffered a hemorrhagy, it was necessary to use snow ploughs to clear the way to the maternity ward of Bragança, where the ambulance arrived two hours and a half after delivery (Pires, 2009).

After the closure of the Mirandela maternity ward, new problems fuelled the controversy. This happened because of the choice made by some local women who decided not to attend the Bragança maternity ward, but another one they regarded as offering better conditions – Vila Real –, although this was far from the alternative proposed by the ministerial Dispatch.

The long distance that had to be covered to bring these pregnant women to Vila Real has, since then, been raising new problems: the number of births that still happen in ambulances has increased, and the Vila Real maternity ward is becoming overcrowded, due to the number of women from both Lamego and Mirandela who are now transferred there. In fact, only 10% of Mirandela women chose the Bragança maternity ward to give birth. As a consequence, over the last years, there has been no significant increase in the

total of births in Bragança, the annual average being still under the 1500 required. Due to this situation, the possibility of an agreement between Zamora, in Spain, and Bragança for the provision of health care, including during pregnancy and childbirth, is on the table.

In Mirandela, four years after the closure of the ward, the court decided not to accept the request for a second restraining order presented by the Municipal Council, and a project for a private maternity hospital to be built in the city was recently announced.

- **Oliveira de Azeméis**

Oliveira de Azeméis is located in the coastal area of Central Portugal. The local maternity ward did not only fail to reach the figure of 1500 births per year, but it also displayed shortcomings in the human resources required to guarantee quality services. The decision to close this unit was taken on June 2, 2006.

There were no major local protests, maybe because the health minister visited the place a few days after the decision became public. In a meeting between the minister and municipal authorities, it was agreed to close the maternity ward, but also to refurbish the local hospital and a new service for psychiatric care.

- **Santo Tirso**

Santo Tirso is located in the North of the country. The maternity ward was closed on June 21, 2006.

The maternity ward performed an average of 700 births per year. After its closure, women residing in Santo Tirso could choose to give birth in the maternity wards of Oporto, Braga or Vila Nova de Famalicão.

The Municipal council created a movement to defend the cause of the maternity ward, the “Committee for the Protection of the Santo Tirso Maternity Ward”, which led the

resident population into protest actions. Its very first action was to bring to court a restraining order, which, at first, was judged positively, leading to the suspension of the closure. However, the health minister countered with a court action based on “public interest”, and the health unit ended up being closed.

In January 2007, the health minister approved the constitution of the Hospital Centre of the region, which would have its main location in Santo Tirso, as well as the reassignment of the maternity ward, which would become the new ambulatory surgical unit.

One year after the closure, the controversy seemed to have faded away.

- **Guarda, Covilhã and Castelo Branco**

The ministerial Dispatch which ordered the closure of a number of maternity wards mentioned that only one of these three units, located in the interior of the country, would remain open. This decision would be taken by the Hospital Centre, more specifically by three administration boards, to be created, which has not happened to date.

In May 2007, due to the contestation and opposition which emerged during the previous months in those cities, the health ministry declared publicly that it had been forced to postpone its constitution and that the “Central Hospital of Beira Interior” would be created in two consecutive steps.

At the same time, the health minister took responsibility for the remodeling of Guarda Hospital, confirming that its maternity ward would be kept open, since it was the most active of the entire region. Under the new Central Hospital, which was to be created only in 2011, Castelo Branco e Covilhã, one of the maternity wards, in Castelo Branco or Covilhã, had to be closed.

The region around Covilhã seems to have been much more active in the defense of the local maternity ward than Castelo Branco, arguing in particular that the health unit cannot be closed because it is integrated in a university hospital.

5. Why the decision led to protests?

At this point we should look at the reactions of the diverse social actors who transformed the decision to close maternity wards into one of the most controversial of the last decade in the health domain in Portugal.

According to some interviews, the controversy derives mainly from the lack of public participation during the decision-making process:

Each Portuguese citizen has among his central rights the right to indignation and to protest. What happened due to the closure of maternity wards (...) is something very characteristic of this government, a deep ignorance of reality, of what people really want. A highly disrespectful attitude towards the will of the population, of the other reasons that we notice in negotiating whatever it is (Queiroz, 2009).

In addition, those who felt affected by the decision to close the wards claimed that there had been no room for dialogue, even before the decision became known. As Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe (2001: 49) claim, controversies are regarded as a consequence of the deficit of communication and information:

All of us, as citizens, don't want the maternity wards to be closed. (...) If there are no conditions, improve them. We cannot accept that easy way of closing things without listening to us (Interviewed 2, 2009).

Local citizens and their political representatives did not understand the reasons why they were not informed about the measure and regretted that they only came to know it through the media. The Portuguese parliament itself was officially informed of the

decision in the same day the Ministerial Dispatch was signed and made public, on 14 March 2006.⁷⁷

Three aspects emerged from citizens above quotations: (a) we were not asked; (b) they don't do what we want/need; (c) we were not informed, i.e. the decision-making process was not transparent. As we saw in chapter 1, the lack of transparency to citizens is a staple ingredient of the critique of representative democracy in political theory as much as in real life politics. In agonistic democracy it puts the question of inclusion and exclusion from decision-making at the center of attention not just with respect to who has a voice but also what kind of concerns and knowledge enters the political equation. A decision is likely to be regarded as more legitimate if those affected by the decision consider that the procedure has been 'fair'. The lack of access to the procedure raises suspicions about its fairness and increases the feeling of exclusion. Such suspicions are often voiced not just in terms of the key questions, but in combinations of substantive and procedural concerns. To dismiss a controversy because of a continuous preoccupation with procedural issues runs the risk of missing the point that every controversy is at the same time implicitly a debate about democracy and its boundaries (Hagendijk and Irwin, 2006).

Most of those actors that positioned themselves against the decision felt they had not any opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the decision-makers to present their arguments. These protests were regarded as the proper way to attempt to reverse the decision:

I just regret that the president of the Health Administration of the North has come to tell me the date on which the maternity ward will be closed, he did not have the dignity to bring the real reasons of the closure to a

⁷⁷ According to article 12.º (g) of Law N. 27/2002, November 8, it is the sole responsibility of the Health Ministry to close health services. This is not a matter subject to prior parliamentary discussion because it is an administrative act (2nd Degree) not a legislative one (1st Degree).

discussion with us. He merely said what we had already read in the technical report. This process can be anything but transparent (Silvano, 2006).

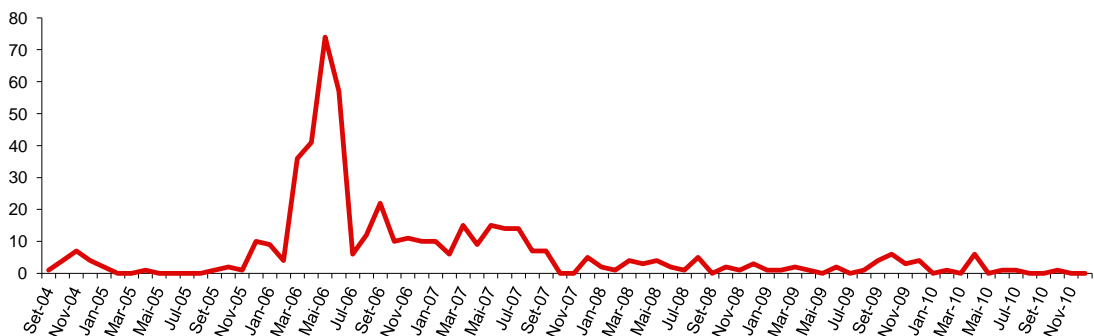
This quotation shows how much the decision antagonized and alienated the politicians from Lisbon policy-making.

Although the press analysis mentioned some citizen mobilization when the decision was still a matter of speculation, the contours of the controversy only became well defined when the ministerial dispatch was published. At that time protest actions were launched in some of the places affected due to the lack of explanations by the minister of health.

The minister of health had and still has the obligation to justify very clearly the technical reasons, objectively, on which he based his decision to close each one of the maternity wards. Every citizen needs to know the reason why the maternity ward of his region was closed. The government advanced a few generic reasons, which are being contested, opposed, but they never spoke the whole truth. Even considering sensitive indicators, which may offend some professionals, the minister has the obligation to be clear. It is not enough to say that he is right, he has to prove it, and so far the explanations are insufficient. (Interviewed 3, 2009)

Figure 6

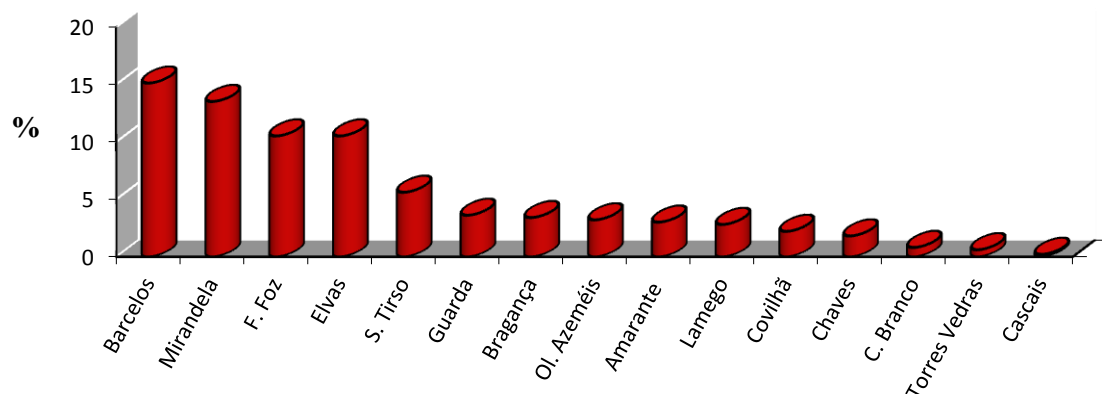
Published news about maternity wards closure, 2004-2010



During the months after the Dispatch became public, local populations started launching protests closely following the schedule for the closure of the wards included in that document. Later, as there was no reaction from one of the sides involved in the controversy, and because the schedule was actually being implemented, protests started to fade away and opposition moved to local media, to blogs or web pages created by the civic movements against the decision to close the wards.

Figure 7

Published news by affected locals, 2004-2010



The Figure above includes the published news, by place, in the newspapers which were analyzed. It shows the places where the largest number of protest actions occurred, as well as their duration. Interestingly, places like Guarda, Covilhã, Torres Vedras and Cascais figure among the places where protests were held, even though the local maternity wards were not closed, as determined in the dispatch.

Episodes of political unrest and citizen mobilization like these raise questions about some common conceptions about the weakness of Portuguese civil society (Mendes

and Seixas, 2005a). It is, then, highly relevant to investigate such actions as strategies for accessing decision-making processes and influencing their aims and outcomes. In that context, to try to realize the main objectives they pursue and if they are indeed accomplished.

The recorded protests defined the announced threshold (1500 births/year) for the closure of the health units as their priority target of action and argument. For the experts who joined the NCMNH, who advanced with that indicator, the relevance of the latter derives from an international consensus, endorsed by the World Health Organization. However, in several searches to confirm this information, no confirmation of this could be found, and contradictory information appeared.

For instance, a scientific article titled “Does size matter? A population-based study of birth in lower volume maternity hospitals for low risk women”, published in the International Journal of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (Tracy *et al.* 2006), concludes that the numbers of neonatal deaths are lower in hospitals with lower activity (about 100 to 500 deliveries per year) when compared to other hospitals with more than 2000 deliveries.

In France, in 2003, the health minister, Jean-Francois Mattei, based on the same general arguments advanced by the evaluation report submitted by NCMNH, established the threshold of 1000 births/year for closing this type of unit in the country. That threshold was one central focus of controversy. This suggests that figures of this kind are used in a flexible way, depending on context and on the aims of those who use them. But, in any case, these examples undermine the authority of the figure of 1500 births, which was central to the Portuguese debate, as stated by a member of the NCMNH.

Only in hospitals that perform about 1500 deliveries per year can people be born safely. This is not a magic number; it's a consensual average, accepted at the international level, which allows professionals to deliver

a sufficient number of children in order to face rare situations that sometimes happen, and to be prepared to solve them so that nothing happens to women or newborns. (...) A minimal condition is also the permanent presence in these hospitals of two obstetricians, an anaesthetist and a paediatrician with training in neonatology and, in particular, in early resuscitation (...) (Moura, 2009).

6. Who defended the decision and its implementation?

One of the parties involved in the controversy was the Portuguese Government, namely its health minister António Correia de Campos, who signed the official document defining the road to the closure of some maternity wards and the concentration of services (and births) in some units.

As the suggestion to concentrate births was made by the NCMNH, one might think that they consistently supported the government position. After the minister signed the Dispatch, however, the same experts complained that the government did not pay adequate attention to their advice in order to inform and discuss the measure with the affected population and their representatives, something the report had indeed recommended, among other recommendations not taken into account:

What we advised was not strictly followed. In our opinion all the maternity wards with less than 1500 deliveries per year should be closed. We only have an advisory role, we do not have executive functions. The minister decided to close what he thought he should close. (...) Nobody asked me to go anywhere to enlighten the population (Branco, 2006).

The College of Nursing also agreed with the closure of the maternity wards, like the NCMNH, they agreed on what they regarded as the technical substance of the decision, but not (although they did not explicitly state it) with the political process which enacted it. They demanded greater investment in nurses' training, regarded as one of the main

"conditions for the operation of maternity wards", and they insisted on the need to consider the number of skilled professionals available (nurses with expertise in obstetrics and neonatology), reinforcing the need to provide the maternity wards with sufficient numbers of these professionals. Regarding the proper transportation of pregnant women, the College of Nursing was very critical in relation to the risks associated with it:

Portugal has 1241 nurses with expertise in obstetrics, but not all are practicing. This number is not enough. If there are not enough nurses in health centres and hospitals, how can they monitor a pregnant woman in an ambulance? (Simões, 2006)

The College of Nursing indeed supported what they regarded as the technical core of the measure, but they were extremely focused on the need to improve the transportation of pregnant women, noticing that ambulances are not equipped to transport pregnant women and newborns. For them, the measure should also include the provision of appropriate vehicles and means.

Some other health organizations took position on the issue. The Portuguese Observatory of Health Systems, for instance, agreed that the measure was positive and necessary, but it also considered that the process should have been conducted in a different way, through collaboration with the population and its representatives during the decision-making process.

7. Those who took position against the measure

7.1. The population and political parties

The population from the places affected by the closure plan was a central actor in this controversy. We must not ignore the fact, however, that their mobilization was in part driven by local branches of political parties who stood in opposition to the government. In

some cases, mayors spoke on behalf of the population and led the protests. In some other cases, the presence of the political opposition was noticeable through the appearance of party leaders as leaders of “civic movements” created to struggle against the decision.

Of the seven civic movements created in six of the regions affected by the measure, two of them were created by the municipal council. The others emerged from citizens’ organizations, and two of these were created by local women (Barcelos and Lamego).

Figure 8 and 9

Expressions of political opposition (political parties) to the measure⁷⁸



The local political oppositions to the Dispatch became central actors in the controversy and they were responsible for mobilizing the local population and leading them into protest actions.

Of the nine municipalities affected by the decision, six were governed by the main opposition party (Democratic Socialist Party)⁷⁹, and three by the Government party

⁷⁸ These billboards are signed by the biggest opposition political party (PDS - Democratic Socialist Party). In the first picture it says "The PS (Socialist Party) government has closed the maternity wards and obstetrician emergency services in the hospital of Figueira da Foz in 2006. The poster was located near the entrance to the hospital. In the second poster says "Socialist Government closes maternity ward."

(Socialist Party)⁸⁰. It is interesting to note that the health minister visited two of the regions affected by the decision, Santo Tirso and Amarante, both governed by his political party. In both cases, the official visit of the minister and his commitment to the future construction of new units for other health specialties was effective in preventing further protests. On the one hand, we should wonder about the reasons for the minister only visiting municipal regions of the same political colour in response to protests. Such an approach may reflect an attempt to avoid confrontation with the local population where protests were more intense, i.e. the regions in which the political opposition has a firm base. And that might be seen as indicating a lack of openness to dialogue with citizens and protests as forms of exercising democracy and participation. On the other hand, it may also indicate some partisan favouritism, or ‘pork and barrel’ politics of a particular sort. While political bargaining and ‘pork and barrel’ politics is seen as a normal feature of pluralist representative democracy, it becomes a different matter if such activities are organized mostly along party lines and occur after instead of before the actual formal decision-making. In such cases it is better considered as a part of political marketing and implementation management than democratic politics. The relationship between the protests and these compensatory measures will be further explored in chapter 7.

7.2. The health professionals

Some health professionals, especially obstetricians working in the maternity wards to be closed, joined the protests. Their visibility in the protest was limited. The Obstetrician Group of the Portuguese College of Physicians adopted a positive position towards the closure decision. The main concern expressed by some of these professionals

⁷⁹ The municipalities of Barcelos, Figueira da Foz, Mirandela, Oliveira de Azeméis, Lamego and Chaves.

⁸⁰ The municipalities of Elvas, Santo Tirso and Amarante.

was, in part, related to the end of some obstetric tasks for which they had been trained for, including delivery of newborns, although they had the possibility to continue to monitor pregnant women. In addition to that, these professionals complained of not being heard during this process and of their units not having ever been visited by the minister or the expert members responsible for the evaluation. As a consequence, the measure deeply affected these professionals, who received no kind of information or any decisions concerning their professional future:

We feel unused and second-class professionals. (...) The future of the professionals of the closed units has not been safeguarded, and that bothers and disturbs a lot. For now the only thing we know is that we have to work 12 hours of emergency service in another health unit. We have many misgivings regarding our future (Silva, 2006).

Some general practitioners⁸¹ (responsible for primary health care), even though they did not express an official position, stated their disagreement with the closure of maternity wards.

The monitoring of pregnancy is essential and should be done by obstetricians in health units with the necessary technical resources as a way to prevent child deaths. Hence, it is very important to have a good network of hospitals, obstetricians, general practitioners and with good national coverage. Good obstetricians who can and should cooperate with general practitioners, advising properly and giving them support, identifying risks. Then pregnant must be monitored in units with the highest security. If this professional articulation does not exist, and it doesn't, with the closure measure risks will increase. (Excerpt from the field work diary. General Practitioner who wanted to remain anonymous: June 15, 2009)

⁸¹ In Portugal, each family is attended by a general practitioner, designated by the Health National System, to provide health care for all the family members.

Those health professional feared that the number of pregnancies to be monitored by them in the health centres would be significantly increased. General practitioners lack of specific training, especially in relation to risk pregnancies, was the main argument raised by them against the closure measure. This reinforces the criticism of ignoring aspects of the situation and the inadequate planning of the measure, especially in relation to how the health services would respond to the attendance of pregnant women. These arguments, and the financial difficulties of the population to access private health services, pointed to new risks affecting the politics of childbirth in Portugal.

7.3. Fire Brigades

The local fire brigades, partially responsible for urgent patient transportation, proved to be against the measure taken, namely against the way it was implemented, expressing serious concerns about its lack of planning and discussion with key actors involved in the processes, like themselves, and fearing negative consequences due to its improper implementation. At the national level, the National Fireman League, the confederation of the local corporations, made official statements to the national press criticizing the Health Minister for ignoring them during the decision-making process.

More concretely, local corporations involved in the transport of pregnant women argued against the lack of planning and their non-involvement during the implementation of the decision to concentrate deliveries:

The CODU⁸² sent me to [the alternative maternity ward] and we stood at the hospital door. The woman's waters had broken and she had frequent contractions and stayed at the front door of the hospital. The crew got there and there was no time... The whole emergency service stopped and

⁸² Centro de Orientação de Doentes Urgentes (Guidance Centre for Urgent Patients).

she gave birth there. After that, they asked us to take the mother with the baby to the maternity ward which takes charge of her (Moreira, 2009).

Due to this kind of situation they also complained and claimed the right to participate in the decision-making process:

I heard about the closure of the local maternity ward... As a commander, I was never informed. I've heard about it! Neither the hospital, nor INEM⁸³, or ARS⁸⁴ informed me of the planned closure process. In the beginning, it was very confusing (...) We took mothers-to-be to the hospital because we didn't know about the closure of the maternity ward and when we got there, «These guys are crazy! What are they doing here?» At the beginning, CODU also didn't know that the emergency service could not attend women in labor... Well, during the first few months it was a real mess! We got to the hospital with the pregnant woman and the emergency services would just send us away. (...) In practice, the fault was with those who put the measure to work, because nobody warned us (Interviewed 4, 2009).

The fact that no one had informed the transportation service for patients in emergency situations (INEM/Corporate Fire Services) of the planned changes also emerged as a strong argument during the protests, and especially regarding the scarce availability of emergency vehicles as well as their inadequate technical equipment or the monitoring of the pregnant women by specialized personnel, as recommended by the Ministerial Directive, which never happened.

[A local institution] offered an ambulance to the population. That ambulance works exclusively with pregnant women. We have that vehicle, but the INEM forgets that, as a Permanent Emergency Centre, officially we only have one ambulance, and when it goes out for two hours with a pregnant woman, if there is another emergency there is no

⁸³ Instituto Nacional de Emergência Médica (National Institute for Medical Emergency).

⁸⁴ Administração Regional de Saúde (Regional Health Authority).

ambulance to transport sick people! They closed the maternity ward but they never bothered about the means available. We were never consulted in order to know if we had or had not the appropriate means. (Moreira, 2009).

8. The stakes of the controversy

As we saw in the overview of the protests at the various locations, a range of arguments were brought forward. Some were more directly related to local affected effects, others, more generally, to the measure itself. These more general arguments deserve closer scrutiny. They can be summarized as follows.

8.1. The technical inadequacy of the measure and the way it was implemented

All sorts of technical arguments play an important role in controversies. It should be remembered that in this respect the closures are a phase in a process of restructuring that started much earlier, in 1989. The disagreements of 2006 and 2007 may have had less to do with the “war of numbers”, but rather with the way the decision was implemented and the dismissal of additional conditions and arguments that should be taken into account, according to citizens and municipalities, in making final decisions about implementation.

During 2006 and 2007 opponents objected to the "purely economic criteria" of the measure, accusing the government of using "arguments of terror" and pointing out that, on balance, there were not enough arguments in favor of closure in various cases (Campos, 2008: 257). For instance:

There is no risk associated with giving birth at this maternity unit. The mortality rate here is almost nonexistent. It is more risky to give birth in ambulances, between Barcelos, Braga, or at home, as before (Moura, 2006).

The technical argument associated with the threshold of 1500 births per year was also the target of counter arguments:

A central hospital in Lisbon has 2000 to 2500 deliveries per year, but has 50 obstetricians. Another, in the periphery, has only one thousand, but it has seven or eight (obstetricians): who has more training? (Arroz, 2006).

Many of the problems associated with implementing the measure were made public in a dramatic way during the transition period to underscore the unacceptability of the decisions and the problems they created:

A woman, 18 weeks pregnant, with pain and strong contractions, went last Monday to the Hospital of S. Gonçalo in Amarante. She couldn't walk, so she stayed in the car while her husband went to the emergency unit to call for help. However, one of two administrative officials refused to register the case and sent the man to call "112" or go to Penafiel, since there was no longer an obstetrics service. She told the man to read the ministerial Dispatch. The pregnant woman had to be assisted at the hospital entrance by the team of the Emergency Medical Vehicle called to the place. The care was provided in front of an astonished and angry crowd (Vinha, 2007).

8.2. The neglect of geographical and demographic specificities

One of the most obvious problems, crosscutting the controversy, arose from a demographic factor with potentially serious consequences for the whole country – the depopulation of the countryside.

The protests, perhaps more than the expression of an opposition to a concrete decision, proved to be one more popular cry against a political program based on discrimination against certain remote regions of the country.

The growing trend of demographic concentration in the coastal regions of the country has not been counteracted by investment policies in order to keep people in the countryside of the inland regions, so protesters argue. The closure of public services in the interior, based on expert evaluations, has been a trend over the last decades, and its effect has been further migration, depopulation and ageing of the resident population. This is arguably a circular problem following from a centralized political vision based on the rationalization of costs and investments allegedly associated with population concentration: investment in inland Portugal has been decreasing because the population decreases, and people move to coastal areas or abroad because there is no investment:

What political power should do is to listen to those who live here and contest the expert opinion. If they want to develop the interior region of the country and settle people in certain counties, they have to provide quality of life where they live (Interviewed 5, 2009).

Protests, then, represented an attempt to break away from the ‘desertification’ of the countryside. People opposed to the measure showed a genuine concern about the implications of the closures for public health. In this context they can be said to act with reference to a version of the precautionary principle: “let us be heard before they make things even worse”. This concern became more obvious when protests over the closure of maternity wards joined the movement for the defense of public and proximity services, in which health issues have a prominent place due to the conviction that health care facilities should be close to citizens:

We should protest even more. The whole countryside should not vote in the next elections. The government takes everything from us! They close schools, hospitals, and there are no jobs. Someday we’ll have nothing (Interviewed 6, 2010).

These arguments based on the territorialisation of rights and of inequalities were strongly held by citizens and their political representatives during this process. One of the most frequently used was that of the need for proximity, for maintaining public services close to citizens, even though this is sometimes dismissed, especially by experts, as a form of atavism:

Every Portuguese citizen wants to have a health centre next to his house, a pharmacy in front and a meat shop next door, he also wants to have a backyard to sow potatoes and some kales as well as a vineyard that gives wine without quality (Cunha, 2006).

Associated with this neglect of demographic and regional concerns are the arguments about the geographical variations in birth rates and the overall economic and social situation of the country. Portugal has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. Closing maternity wards is both a consequence of that trend and an encouragement of it.

Local populations also stand for their local and regional identities, stating that the decision is unfair not least because babies will have to be born in places sometimes far away from their place of residence, from the place where they “belong”, even though legislation on this matter allows newborns to be registered at the place of residence of his/her parents (or of one of the parents). Nevertheless, some citizens still argue that what defines one’s local identity, more than belonging through residence in a particular place is being actually born there.

Figure 10, 11 and 12

Expressions of identity opposing to the closure of maternity wards⁸⁵



Note: Billboards located in places where maternity wards were pointed out to close.

8.3. The lack of transparency of the decision and the lack of consultation

In chapter 1 we defined ‘transparency’ as the openness of public decision-making to citizens’ participation in terms of procedures as well the presentation of arguments and concerns that have a bearing on the possible outcome. Transparency, then, is associated with citizen engagement as well as with mutual responsibility between citizens and political representatives concerning policy-making, procedurally and substantively. It is, as we saw, one of the central issues in the critique of representative democracy. First, it relates to both substantive and procedural issues. And as far as substantive arguments are concerned it relates to the ways in which various kinds of knowledge, expertise and experience are considered and how they enter the overall equation. But it also relates to issues of the inclusion and exclusion of people, values and considerations. In political practice and in social mobilization the pluripotent character of the ‘lack of transparency’ make it an almost always ‘ready to hand’ argument to mobilize people, to intervene in procedures and to object to proposals. No wonder the lack of transparency and public

⁸⁵ First figure - “We want to be born in Mirandela”; second figure: “I want to be born in Torres Vedras!!!”; third figure 3: “ An attack on life. We want to be born in Barcelos”.

participation during the decision-making process is also stressed by those who contested the measure:

The real problem is not the closure of maternity wards in general. It is whether this one should be closed or another and why. What are the criteria? The problem is that those who are sitting at the desk taking decisions do not know what is happening on the ground and how complicated things can be out there. The problem is that those in Lisbon think they know everything! (Gonzaga, 2006).

Another topic associated with the lack of participation concerns the overvaluation of the technical reasons over and above other sorts of reasons that could have influenced the quality of the decisions. For example, a motive like the following:

When we give birth to a child, we need a lot of support and care from the family. Now it is very complicated to have our family visiting us. We're there alone (Interviewed 7, 2009)

In parliamentary discussions, the minister of health argued that under the imperatives of representative democracy “he was the captain and they, members representing citizens, would only be the passengers” (Campos, 2007). This does not do away, one may assume, with the need to address the concerns and questions of the passengers. Yet, when political expertise takes the form of an authoritative discourse, questions from concerned citizens are often simply ignored, instead of addressed (Callon *et al.*, 2001: 49). The minister’s perspective on participatory decisions matches his broader attitude of ignoring popular protests whenever it suited him.

8.4. The lack of planning of the closures and its consequence

After the closures were implemented the news media started to report increases in the number of births during transportation. Although this turned out not to be accurate, it re-enforced the argument that the implementation was badly managed. As the director of one of the wards argued:

There are people far from here who came to give birth in our maternity ward who have much more difficulty getting here, but those cases don't appear in the newspapers! (...) There are people from areas of Coimbra who have much more difficulty reaching the maternity ward than Figueira [a closed maternity ward] (Moura, 2009).

Yet, what did happen was that during the transition ambulances went to maternity wards which had already closed, causing upheaval and the impression that things were badly managed. This led to a temporary increase in the number of births in ambulances during the adaptation period.

The Portuguese Association for Emergency Assistance (PAEA) opened a new controversy in relation to this particular issue, by complaining about the total lack of planning and pointing out the lack of improvements in the transportation system as the Dispatch had announced.

In a report on the new situation, the PAEA stated that “any closure of maternity wards without ensuring an effective network for help can endanger the lives of mothers and newborns”. In the same document, some problematic points were mentioned as critical: i) ambulances should only have to provide pre-hospital emergency care; ii) there are not enough ambulances as required according to the law; iii) most of the ambulances do not have the required equipment for assisting childbirth; iv) the medical teams are not qualified to replace a specialist in obstetrics; iv) the medical teams are not qualified to

replace a specialists in obstetrics; v) high risk situations (risk delivery, fetal distress, resuscitation of the newborn) require highly qualified medical professionals.

8.5. The lack of people with the required qualifications to assist with birthing outside hospitals

Another question that became central to the controversy was the availability of qualified staff associated with the transport itself and the distances to the remaining maternity wards. As the Dispatch mentioned, the transportation was to be carried out by qualified professionals. Yet, the College of Nurses pointed out that there were not enough professionals to respond to that requirement. As it turned out, many of the problems reported had to do with this issue (Ordem dos Enfermeiros, 2008).

The customary procedure in case of a birth emergency was to call an ambulance to transport the pregnant woman. In the vehicle, besides the pregnant woman, there is also the driver and a primary care professional. If delivery starts before arriving at the maternity ward, two situations can occur: those who travelled with the pregnant woman provide the necessary assistance and subsequently take the mother and the newborn to the nearest maternity ward. Alternatively, another emergency vehicle with a doctor may be sent by the Central Emergency Operations, to meet the ambulance and to help with the delivery. Obviously, the liability question in case something goes wrong is important with respect to these arrangements, an issue related to the qualifications of those who attend childbirths.

In an official communication, the College of Nurses expressed their concerns about some aspects which they claimed had not been adequately dealt with by the government. One of these was the already mentioned need for timely and rapid transportation. They contested the idea that ambulance crews were adequately trained to

provide health care to pregnant woman and newborns, despite the investment made in training these professionals since 2004.

8.6. The uneven assessment of public and private services

Besides the public maternity wards Portugal has 28 private units. Their presence is an essential component of the health care system. Yet, the assessment of their quality was based on different criteria from those applied to public services. This caused further controversy. Opposition parties in parliament argued that these private services should be evaluated in the same way as the public ones.

A report from the Health Regulation Entity (ERS, 2007) about the situation in the private services, which was publicized during the protest years, created alarm about this situation. The study of the 28 units concluded that only two of them⁸⁶ were above the threshold of 1500 births per year. In the others the average was 150 births per year, about 10% of what was required of public units to remain open (See Table 1). Opponents wondered what that might imply for quality, if the criterion of the number of births was as central as the expert Committee and the government claimed.

⁸⁶ Hospital da Cruz Vermelha (Red Cross Hospital) and CUF Descobertas Hospital, both located in Lisbon.

Table 1
Total number of births performed in Portuguese Private Units, 2007

Total Births	% cesarean
2686	52
1572	68
1115	43
916	86
758	71
621	79
352	71
342	75
325	83
319	76
307	53
272	93
222	85
164	73
154	86
272	93
222	85
164	73
154	86
128	67
45	67
40	75
40	98
30	90
19	89
18	72
7	100
0	--

Source: ERS, 2007.

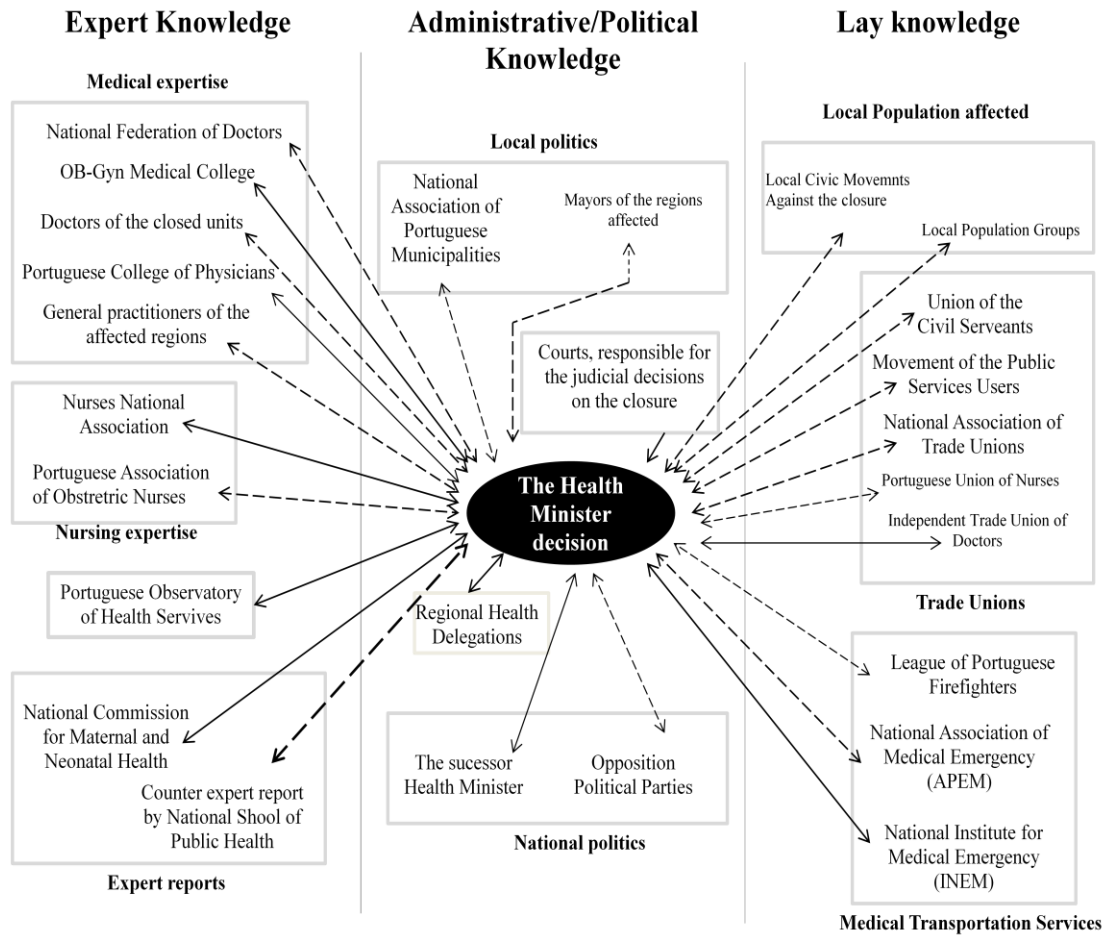
Another aspect of the unequal treatment of public and private maternity wards has to do with caesarian sections. While public wards resort to cesarean sections as a last resort intervention, in private wards they are performed on demand of the woman. With low numbers of deliveries in the private sector, this raised added concerns about the quality and safety of private health care in this area.

Remarkably, new private units turned out to have been opened in Mirandela, Santo Tirso and Chaves while public ones in the same region were closed. This is part of a trend to promote private health care delivery, apparently even when the quality is below the standards imposed by the government sets for public wards.

9. The complex relationship between knowledges

Controversies contribute to the inventory of the relevant actors involved in a given process, as well as to the identification of possible connections between the issues being discussed and other problems that some groups are striving to make visible. But they also allow the emergence of new actors and unexpected relations between them (Callon *et al.*, 2001: 52; Matias, 2010: 97). Each actor can be associated with a certain kind of knowledge that relates to other forms of knowledge through dialogue, debate or negotiation. The following figure displays the range of actors and knowledge relations associated with the case under study.

Figure 13
Actors' knowledge relationship



We draw here on the work of Harry Collins and Robert Evans (2007: 14) and their proposal of a periodic table of expertise, i.e., the range of forms of expertise which may be used when individuals make judgments (Figure 13).

Following Collins and Evans, a distinction is made between two main categories of expertise: ubiquitous expertise and specialist expertise, both roughly represented in the figure above under the category of lay knowledge. Ubiquitous expertise refers to a huge

body of tacit knowledge⁸⁷ that every member of a society must possess in order to live in it, where popular understanding is included, and which is associated, here, local population groups and civic movements opposing the closure of maternity wards.

In the original table by Evans and Collins (2007: 14), ubiquitous knowledge,⁸⁸ would correspond to what is described here as lay knowledge, which also includes the expertise of some specialists such as that related to patient transportation or trade union activism. Both of these groups of actors tended to disagree with the ministerial decision, with the exception of the Independent Union of Physicians, and the National Institute for Medical Emergency, the latter part of the Ministry of Health.

The middle column represents administrative and political knowledge. The reason for this distinction is based on Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe (2001: 174 and ff) concept of double delegation. The intention here is to give prominence to those levels of delegation which rest their authority and legitimacy – at least in part - on specialized forms of knowledge – delegation of political and administrative capacity to elected or nominated officials of the state and to civil servants (administrative and political knowledge); delegation of technical and scientific expertise to scientists and experts (represented as expert knowledge). The internal relationship between administrative and political knowledges takes the following form: there is an opposition between local and central government, namely enacted by the mayors of opposition parties. Four of those mayors, during the controversy, changed their position on the decision and became allies of the minister, accepting a trade-off between the closure of a ward and investments in the

⁸⁷ The common knowledge related to things you just know how to do without being able to explain the rules for how you do them.

⁸⁸ Corresponding to low levels of specialist expertise, like knowledge of the kind of facts needed to succeed in general knowledge quizzes.

improvement of other local health services. The mayors of Amarante, Santo Tirso, Oliveira de Azeméis and Chaves are included here.

The first column of the figure brings together the actors representing technical and scientific delegation (Callon *et al.*, 2001), those classified as experts. They also refer to what Collins and Evans (2007: 45) describe as meta expertise, involving an acquaintance with the substance of the expertise being judged. Here, medical expertise groups are internally divided concerning the issue under debate. Those against the measure are the ones professionally affected by it: doctors of the units to be closed and general practitioners concerned with the possible of pregnancies they would have to follow. Under the same arguments, The Portuguese Association of Obstetric Nurses expressed similar concerns, associated with the uncertainties they would face professionally.

Concerning the relevance of oppositional knowledge during a controversy, distinctions can be made between specific forms of knowledge. Under the category of forms of oppositional knowledge are included those associated with opposition to the decision, regardless of whether we are dealing with expert or lay knowledges. Woehrlé and others (2008) identify four varieties of oppositional knowledge: (1) counter-informative (provides the ‘untold story’); (2) critical- interpretive (raises questions of meaning); (3) radical-envisioning (considers and explores alternative pathways); and (4) transformative (describes how alternatives may be achieved).

Some oppositional actors with a central role in the controversy may fit into the classification proposed above. Civic Movements, local populations and the mayors of the affected localities are associated with arguments which shape oppositional knowledge of the types 3 and 4. The counter expert report provided by the National School of Public


Health plays here the role of type 1 oppositional knowledge, based on the assessment of the situation drawing on several indicators allegedly neglected by the NCMNH.

Oppositional knowledge also allows the cultivation of “critical thinking” skills among those who hold it (Woehrle *et al.*, 2008: 234). In this case study, expert knowledge was indeed privileged in relation to other knowledges which could influence the decision. Nevertheless, the decision that was taken allowed the appearance of new configurations of knowledges, in accordance with the recognized potentialities of a controversy, which is not just a convenient way to share information or a mere battle of ideas, but a process of constituting hybrid fora in which new explorations and learning processes emerge (Callon *et al.*, 2001: 50).

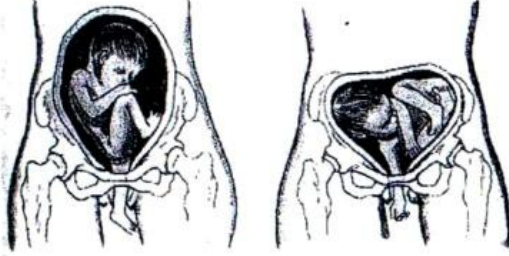
Given the increasing probability of more deliveries happening during the transportation of pregnant women to neighboring health units, some fire brigades invested in the training of their agents, largely on a self-teaching basis. In so doing, they tapped some of the knowledge previously confined to formal training, as is the case of the instructions for attending labor included in a manual for firemen (Figure 14).

Figure 14

Page manual to support birth delivery



- ✓ Nestas circunstâncias, deve cobrir o membro com um penso esterilizado, transportar a grávida com as pernas e as ancas elevadas, por exemplo, com cobertores.
- ✓ O transporte será iniciado sem perda de tempo, administrando à grávida oxigênio a 3 l/m.



8.3. Convulsões Da Grávida Durante O Parto

- ✓ Outra eventualidade que pode ocorrer durante o transporte, é o desencadeamento de crises convulsivas por parte da grávida. Nestas circunstâncias, a conduta a adoptar, deve ser a mesma que para quaisquer convulsões. Esta situação é sempre extremamente grave, ficando, a grávida, muitas vezes, a seguir às convulsões, em coma.
- ✓ Por esta razão, a grávida deve ser transportada o mais rapidamente possível para a maternidade, deitada para o lado esquerdo e com apoio do oxigênio 3 l/ minuto.
- ✓ Porque os estímulos provocam novas convulsões, o transporte deve ser feito suavemente, sem luzes nem sirenes nem manobras bruscas.

Source: Manual to help birth organized by a firefighter corporation commandant (Responsible for Urgent Patient Transportation Service).

It is also relevant to mention that some obstetricians working at the units which were closed saw their field of action restricted and their clinical practice reduced since they would attend fewer births.

Some indicators also provide inroads into the complexities of knowledge relationships on attendance of childbirth (Table 2).

Table 2
Number of births in Portugal, by local, 2003- 2011

	2003	2005	2008	2011
Home	671	568	844	719
Hospital	104453	101746	96064	89654
Other place	177	109	1050	211
TOTAL	105301	102423	97958	90584

Fonte: INE, Health Statistics.

Despite the general decrease in the total number of births during the period under review, which is in line with the decrease in the national birth rate, it is clear that the number of births at home and in “other places”⁸⁹ is increasing. In case this scenario results from a choice by the woman and not from situational contingencies, this requires the presence of new actors in those places, with specific knowledge, trained to attend childbirth, which, as can possibly be the case of midwives, point towards “a new birth paradigm”. The Childbirth Movement in Portugal⁹⁰ is a very recent phenomenon and it involves different types of organizations, namely experts in experience-based organizations such as HUMPAR and a more heterogeneous set of movements associated with professionals in the field, such as obstetric and maternal health nurses and midwives, as well as doulas. HUMPAR plays here a central role in the discussion of a new birth paradigm. It is a multidisciplinary platform for actors from all sectors of civil society linked to pregnancy and childbirth. This association promotes an alternative and less

⁸⁹ The attempt to clarify what counts as births in "other places" near the INE resulted in the following clarification: That information is provided by the statistics of births and follows the clearance of live births and dead births, whose data are collected through entry document of live birth or fetal death birth. The relevant observation variables have not changed methodology in the recent years, namely keeping the variable Local delivery, with three response options: 1 - Domicile, 2 - In hospital/clinic; 3 - Another place (not specified).

⁹⁰ This information was provided by a research project funded by the European Commission: European Patient Organizations in Knowledge Society (EPOKS), available at EPOKS website: http://www.csi.ensmp.fr/WebCSI/EPOKSWebSite/index.php?page=findings_childbirth#portugal.

interventionist model of giving birth based on the concept of humanization of childbirth.⁹¹ But as yet we lack a detailed analysis of these, the above figures and how they relate to changes in health care policies.

Considering the coincidence of this extraordinary increase of births “in other places” with the implementation of the closure of maternity wards, this can be extremely relevant to the analysis and for a possible evaluation of the measure, if not in terms of its direct consequences, at least in the way it relates to other dynamics already in place regarding choice of place and method of childbirth among Portuguese women.

One possible explanation for this trend, proposed when these data were publicized, was indeed the increasing number of births, particularly in ambulances, during transportation to hospitals. When faced with such a possibility, António Correia de Campos emphasized that this was an unfounded claim, because according to information collected by the High Commissioner for Health, in 2007, the number of children born in ambulances had been decreasing: 126 in 2004; 85 in 2005 and 81 in 2006 (Campos, 2008: 259).

It would be important, then, to access official data after 2006, the year when the measure was implemented.⁹²

10. Conclusions

This work gave an account of a controversy based on a political decision for which the minister requested scientific/technical justification, specifically through an evaluation by a group of experts on maternal and child health. Despite the many suggestions made by

⁹¹ HUMPAR took part in the production of a Consensus Document on Childbirth. That document is intended to be an instrument for designing and enacting a National Strategy for the Humanization of Childbirth in Portuguese hospitals.

⁹² Such data were certainly collected in the 2011 Census, which had not yet been published when this work was finished.

the NCMNH and included in that report, the government neglected many of the warnings given in the assessment made and took the decision to close nine maternity wards without any information or consultation with the local authorities and populations, which ignited a controversy compounded by the specificities emerging at the locals or regions affected by the decision.

This was indeed a decision which stood at the intersection of social, legal and political dynamics. The protests against the closure of health units – including emergency wards in several localities across the country – had a crucial effect on the public assessment of the performance of the health minister António Correia de Campos and led to his replacement by the government on January 29, 2008. The new minister, Ana Jorge, ensured that the process leading to the closure of maternity wards would not be reopened. She admitted, however, that the threshold of 1500 births/year should not have been the main criterion for the restructuration of this part of the health system, and that the distances between the residence of users and alternative health units should have been more central to the decisions.

The minister assured that the process of closing hospitals will not be reopened, although she admits that the numerical criterion (number of births less than 1,500 per year) should not be the only indicator to restructure these services. What should have been taken into consideration, for example, were the distances between users and hospitals (Jorge, 2008).

Even if considerably weaker, some protests continued after the replacement of the minister, showing that the central issue was not the minister per se, but his decision, which the people affected wished to revert.

Participation revealed to be a neglected topic during this particular decision-making process: no form of citizen participation or citizen interference was allowed before, during or after this decision-making by those who spoke on behalf of the representative model of democracy. The protests, despite being acknowledged as a legal way to participate in public life, were “undervalued” by policy makers as valid forms of citizen participation. Although protests were not overall successful they led to adjustments and consideration of the problems raised. If in some places protests were used by local politicians to get local compensation, in others the government had to review its relation with citizens. We cannot ignore, however, that what result from protests may be assumed as the equivalent of an extensive consultation of population, and health minister declarations like the following justify citizen participation through protests as forms of HID:

On the first appearance of the new health minister in Parliament, before the Health Committee, the most common words pronounced by her were “access”, “confidence” and “dialogue” with the population. The same dialogue that Ana Jorge wants to reopen with the mayors. (...) The minister did not commit to timelines for new closures, since “the country is very asymmetric, with very different conditions” (Araújo, 2008).

Non-inclusive decisions indeed spark protests, and that agonistic relation with the State has the potential to be transformed into HID. The value of HID is, then, the creation of spaces to protest against inequality and exclusiveness. From the exclusion of maternity wards’ closure, citizens manage to put an issue on the agenda and in deliberation, as well as highlighting the diversity of knowledge and experience with the problem at hand. Although protests are still regarded as mere tactics of persuasion and coercion, a dramatic way of pursuing solutions for collective problems, quite often through procedures whose

legitimacy is questioned, this empirically based chapter advanced the argument that protests are a valuable part of a comprehensive dynamics of political participation, namely due to their informal or subtle influence on decision-making, usually classified under “no impact” or simply neglected. In that sense, if a high-intensity model of democracy is defined by action aimed at the expansion of spaces for participation, plurality, and citizens’ inclusion in deliberative processes, protests episodes can be resignified as instances of patterns of intensification of democracy.

This particular form of collective action also contributes to the redefinition of the meaning of participation, based upon its potential influence on shaping public policies and controlling public actions related with common interests, despite their fragilities in transforming and consolidating themselves within permanent institutions of the State, or recognized by the State.

Protest can thus be best described as endowed with uncommon plasticity, as lacking defined boundaries and as, potentially, having no limits as to content and form. It is part of the regular functioning of democracy, and conveys interest in more direct forms of participation. Protests appear as a major form of citizen engagement and participation in politics, beyond the formal channels of representative democracy and of deliberative democracy, a public statement of citizens’ commitment to a broadening and strengthening of prevailing models of democratic polity.

Chapter 6. Participatory Budgeting Case Study

"We are mainly in the dark about the cultural and institutional factors that influence democracy's viability." (Shapiro, 2003: 7)

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a presentation of the Participatory Budgeting (PB) experience of Belo Horizonte (Brazil), the second case study chosen for the present investigation.

If the previous chapter aimed to give us an account of how protest actions can be framed as participation and of how such movements can relate to deepening processes of democracy, the present one is based on an experience emerging as well from the bottom up, but involving citizens' direct intervention in decision-making processes concerning local urban planning.

The PB is one of the most widely recognized experiments under participatory democracy, often mentioned as a HID practice. It was originally created in South America, more specifically in Brazil, and then "exported", reshaped and adapted in different regions and countries of the world. Its implementation started an open discussion on urban governance, public management, citizens' participation and citizens' empowerment, as well as on new possibilities for democratization.

Currently, some conditions enable innovative experiences in governance based on citizen participation. The PB is one of them. In this kind of experience, citizens are considered the central actors of deliberation and decision-making related to some aspects of urban planning. Participation within a number of PB processes has long been regarded as one of the strongest examples of high intensity democracy (Santos, 1998; Santos and

Avritzer, 2002). PB may be framed as “a game” opening up a space for the mobilization of civil society, politicians and decision-makers through a continuous interaction process. These experiences have encouraged the emergence of new participatory institutional configurations (Santos, 2006; Cabannes, 2007; Murta and Souki, 2008; Avritzer, 2009), promoting a new framework for complementarity between State and Civil Society associated with an instrumental logic (Dagnino, 2002).

The analysis of PB in Belo Horizonte raises questions which are central to this work. One of them is the right to participate in politics through new devices, associated with the emergence of new participatory subjects: these are acknowledged as capable of contributing to solving their problems as citizens inhabiting urban areas, through the mobilization of forms of knowledge they master and through the construction of a new kind of public space where collective decisions emerge.

Since one of the aims of this work is to understand how forms of high intensity democracy emerged and work, to study it, i.e., revisit a specific and often cited experience of PB, provide a key and privileged setting: it allows an understanding of the workings of PB as a lasting participatory device; its different stages can be followed as a strategy to capture possible relationships between civil society and political institutions; participation can be observed both as it is planned and as it happens; the influence participation may have on decision-making and the quality of life of citizens can be assessed; the different areas of knowledge mobilized in the process can be identified and followed as they converge, dialogue or dissent within new configurations; contributions to citizen empowerment and problem-solving may be evaluated; and the contribution of a specific assemblage like PB to new standards of democratic life may be subjected to empirical trial.

This chapter is structured as follows: first, it provides a historical framework of

the rise of PB in Brazil and outlines the particular history of the process in Belo Horizonte. The following section presents and discusses the main objectives set for PB, how they are pursued and how the process itself has been adapted and improved over time. Next, the stages of PB are described, with a privileged focus on how citizen participation occurs and how relationships between local elected officials and citizens have developed. Finally, an overall assessment of the process is provided through both quantitative data on its achievements and citizens' perceptions.

2. The historical background of PB

PB is a process based on the direct engagement of citizens in urban planning and decision-making related to budgetary allocation, usually at the local (municipal) level. General descriptions present PB as a democratic process allowing citizens to intervene directly in the distribution and management of available municipal resources for investment, according to a definition of priorities based on identification of needs, and in the implementation of a fairer distribution of those resources (Santos and Avritzer, 2002; Santos, 2003). The process thus contributes to the transparency and accountability of municipal finances, made possible through the responsible exercise of citizenship (Santos, 2006: 346).

Experiences like PB are happening not only due to the growing popular pressure for participation in political decision-making, but also because of the existence of political projects open to participatory processes, which in many cases have been implemented as State policies. Thus, over recent decades, the number of experiences of PB has been growing all over the world.⁹³ This also represents an attempt, even if still limited, at

⁹³ Recent publications mentioned the existence of about 2000 PB experiences around the world, mostly in Latin America. Recently, they had a significant expansion in Europe (especially Spain, Italy, Germany,

redistributing power and authority between State and citizens. PB, however, does not stand in opposition to representative politics as we know it; rather, in most cases it appears as part of often innovative configurations of representative and participatory democracy.

The origin of PB dates back to 1989 and to the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, pioneer in this experiment. The conditions for the emergence of this participatory procedure are linked to the democratization process that took place in Brazil during the late 1980s, with roots in the 1970s, a period of often described as that of the creation of a civil society in Brazil (Dagnino, 2002). The discussion and elaboration of the democratic Constitution (1988) is a good example of a participatory process, since citizens were able to propose amendments to be included in the text. Participation itself was inscribed in the Constitution as a fundamental right of citizens, and spaces for citizen participation were considered part of the architecture of the State. These are based on a broader conception of citizenship, achieved by empowering citizens and allowing the inclusion of socially excluded or discriminated groups in decision-making (Dagnino *et al.*, 2006: 14).

The expansion of PB within Brazil, Latin America and more recently North America, Europe, Africa and Asia is an interesting and significant phenomenon in so far as it allowed a different dynamics of appropriation and implementation of political projects and policies. In fact, PB has become a procedure welcomed by municipal administrations of both left and right wing parties and coalitions, although under different formats and for different reasons: search for a tighter budgetary control; fight against corruption; citizen empowerment; or enactment of redistributive policies. In Brazil, the original impetus for PB was focused on the inclusion of popular classes into the political process as a strategy to reverse the definition of priorities in the allocation of public resources, which tended to

Portugal, France and the United Kingdom, where almost 300 cases were identified in 2010), as were introduced into North America, Africa and Asia (Dias, 2008; Pateman, 2012).

disproportionally favor the urban upper and upper middle classes.

PB is one of the best studied participatory practices, widely recognized as linked to the (re)democratization processes of the 1980s and 1990s in the global South, particularly in Latin America. PB in Brazil has its origin in a historical convergence of popular urban movements and left-wing municipal administrations. Most of the initial experiments were launched by municipalities governed by the Workers' Party (PT) or by coalitions led by the PT, drawing on new devices associated with forms of governance introduced by left-wing governments (Recio and Falck, 2008).

In Brazil, PB was part of the promotion of a range of procedures for collective action and public participation, some of them going back to the years before the military dictatorship (1964-1985). These procedures were acknowledged as effective tools to fight inequalities, violence, exclusion and corruption that for many years prevented access to citizenship for all Brazilians⁹⁴ (Avritzer, w/d: 6; Santos, 2003: 417; Pateman, 2012: 13). PB experiments found all over the world, however, display differences which are linked to the diversity of political contexts: whereas in Latin America PB experiments are more associated with the struggle against inequality and social exclusion, European experiences have often been linked to the need to improve efficiency in local public administration (Allegretti and Herzberg, 2004: 18).

The comparative assessment of PB experiences around the world raises some relevant questions. Generally speaking, PB can be credited with three main sorts of achievements: promoting social transformation by broadening citizens' rights and opening up spaces for decision-making expanding citizen involvement; creating innovative democratic institutions beyond the limits of representative democracy; becoming a new

⁹⁴ Paulo Freire's circles of culture and popular education initiatives are one unavoidable example of these procedures.

process for the design, implementation and monitoring of budgetary policy (Wampler, 2003: 56). The point is that not all of these results are achieved by all PB processes in the same way. In fact, although participatory democracy, social transformation and the invention of radical democratic forms of politics were strongly linked to the original PB experiences, the diffusion of PB followed heterogeneous paths in design, practice and impacts. Despite the original impetus of PB associated with participatory democracy and an innovative conception of citizen engagement in decision-making, a significant number of currently existing experiments in PB worldwide seem to have been reassembled mainly as technologies for managing budgets. As Carole Pateman recently emphasized, there is a distinction between (a) PB as a major step in democratizing democracy and (b) so many of the wide variety of experiments in citizen participation or consultation now called Participatory Budgeting (Pateman, 2012: 14).

Brazilian experiments of PB were expected to bring the popular classes closer to local politics, as a way to incorporate their proposals in the definition of priorities in the allocation of public resources. Traditionally, these tended to disproportionately favor the urban core of cities against urban peripheries and the middle and upper classes against the popular classes. PB allowed a greater involvement of citizens in decision-making on a key like the spatial distribution of (part of) the municipal budget, namely those citizens who made up the popular classes. Despite some difficulties in taking off, the involvement of the latter tended to grow over time. PB thus became a major tool, in many municipalities, for a more equitable sharing of municipal resources through popular deliberation (Wampler, 2000: 3).

In their early versions, PB processes were intended to empower every single citizen to participate in decisions related to the distribution of public financial resources,

even if these decisions challenged the options of elected local governments. At the time of writing, this is not necessarily the case for all PB initiatives. Diverse versions of PB have emerged, some of them stressing the virtues of the process as a mode of involving citizens in decision-making related to budget “rationalization”. In those cases, citizen participation in PB is strongly linked to their sharing responsibility for budget cuts deemed unavoidable or indispensable by local governments.

Territorial planning is a central part of the procedures making up PB. It requires an active engagement of participants in decisions which amount to contributions to the reassessment and redesign of existing planning instruments. Since PB involves decisions on investments in infrastructure, in some processes, its influence on the (re)design of urban spaces is likely to be considerable and responsive to the collaborative definition of collective needs. The redistributive orientation of PB, at least in its original versions, also means that principles of social justice were a constitutive dimension of these relationships (Gomes, 2006: 8). Currently, however, it is possible to find PB experiments with no redistributive effects, and even with no explicit aim of achieving redistribution.

As an urban government tool, PB was recognised by the United Nations as one of the best participatory practices in the world, and recommended by the World Bank as an effective tool for budgetary control. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003: 453) warned that such recognition happened not due to the democratic potential of PB, but in recognition of its technical virtues, namely as a means for the promotion of efficiency and effectiveness in the distribution of budgetary resources.

The design of PB implies the use of some forms of representation, even though they are different in composition and form of election of their members from traditional party-based political representation, first and foremost because citizens represent

themselves through schemes of delegation of authority delegation on people from their own social groups (Cunha, 2007: 26).

Some general assessments of PB acknowledge that the process is more feasible at the local scale – the municipality –, sometimes questioning the possibility of operationalizing it beyond the local sphere. PB thus appears to many as an instance of direct democracy, only feasible on a small scale, pushing democracy beyond the limitations of representative institutions and involving new actors in decisions directly affecting them. This allows the transformation of social tensions into shared projects, to be achieved through an interactive dialogue with local institutions (Allegretti and Herzberg, 2004: 6). Yet, we are aware of the limitations that some PB processes currently demonstrate when compared with its earlier versions, namely its drift towards a “managerial” conception (for instance, through the sharing of responsibilities with citizens for the management of shrinking budgets), versus the earlier emphasis on democracy, citizen empowerment and the struggle against inequality. Nonetheless, some PBs have retained their features as participatory democratic procedures, associated with deliberation, decision-making and redistribution, and these are the ones which are of most interest to this research.

3. The origins of the PB in Belo Horizonte

PB of Belo Horizonte is considered one of the most consolidated experiments of its kind, having been in place for almost two decades. It provides an exemplary case which allows a detailed investigation of the topics central to this work.⁹⁵

Participatory Budgeting was implemented in Belo Horizonte in 1993, with the rise

⁹⁵ The selection of this case study was also due to the participation of the author in a European Commission-funded project – ResIST (Researching Inequality through Science and Technology - CIT5-CT-2005-029052) – where Belo Horizonte PB was one of the cases studied.

to power of a Popular Democratic Government, led by the Workers' Party.⁹⁶ This was a remarkable period of political transformation in urban governance, with significant advances in the implementation of more accountable practices based on clear criteria, instead of the opacity characteristic of previous administrations.

The local population was thus called to intervene directly in deliberation and decision-making related to urban infrastructure investments from 1994 on. This process thus appears strongly linked to the intention to innovate politically by allowing citizen participation in local decision-making during the periods between elections.

The enactment of PB was a major electoral commitment of the Popular Democratic Government. Given the fragile financial situation of the municipality at that time, the establishment of PB soon became recognized as a strong sign of political courage, due to the capacity displayed by the local government to put into action such a process despite the scarce budget (Gomes, 2004: 5). This was a political effort which is still widely referred to a model of democratic management.⁹⁷

The PB of Belo Horizonte has now been in force for 18 years,⁹⁸ with no interruption or major discontinuity in its conception, content, and mode of implementation, despite the continuous effort to adapt the process to changing urban/demographic circumstances (*ibidem*: 4). Since its implementation, 80% of constructions included in

⁹⁶ During the 1992 election, the Workers' Party led the coalition that would rise to power in 1993. The coalition was led by Patrus Ananias, who became mayor of Belo Horizonte, and who is, until this day, recognized as the major driver of PB in this local context.

⁹⁷ As mentioned above, the PB of Belo Horizonte has received several international awards in recognition of its innovative and successful practice of popular participation, promoting the strengthening of the democratic process, namely: II Distinction of Good Practices awarded by the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (2007); Service Public Award by the United Nations (2004) in the category "Improving Public Services Processes"; Semi-Finalist Award in the 2005 Cycle of Innovative Experiences of Public Management and Citizenship; runner-up of the Reinhard Mohn Prize (2011), "Vitalizing Democracy through Participation".

⁹⁸ It is common to associate the durability of the process to the presence of Fernando Pimentel, one of the mentors of this local process, in several political positions in the municipal government: as Land Secretary; Planning Secretary; Vice-Mayor and, in 2003, mayor of Belo Horizonte. Currently, he is the Minister of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade of the Federal Government of Brazil.

urban planning were defined and carried out under PB.

Throughout the history of PB, various initiatives were introduced in the process, intended to improve it, as illustrated by the following examples.⁹⁹

A first example goes back to 1994, when an attempt was made by the local government to establish a “sectoral PB” aimed at the implementation of broad and coordinated discussions on a range of public policies: health, education, social development, environment and human resources. This first attempt did not work, the same initiative was proposed again at a later date.

It is important to highlight here the ‘territorial’ basis of PB. According to the view developed there, needs and priorities are territorially based and investments are allocated according to territorial divisions. This is also what we see in the example of PB discussed here. Each region is internally organized by neighborhoods determining the PB functioning, from citizen participation, assemblies, and proposals as well as budget attribution. Concerning the latter, half of the amount available for the PB is equally distributed among the 9 regions and the other half is distributed in accordance with vulnerability index that will be further developed.

In 1995, an integrated coordination board was created within the municipal organizational structure, including the municipal departments responsible for the implementation of the projects approved under PB, the regional administrations defined under the process and composed by citizen representatives, the thematic secretaries and the management board (*grupo gerencial*) of PB.

Since 1996, a specific process of PB for Housing has been in place. This domain of municipal investment was endowed with an autonomous decision-making process and

⁹⁹ For further developments on the historical context of the PB of Belo Horizonte, see Gomes (2004).

an autonomous budget as well. The autonomization of this process is, in part, a direct consequence of the claims made by the social movement for housing, which had suggested establishing this specific PB as the solution for housing needs and as a response to the absence of solutions presented by the Federal Government.¹⁰⁰ This autonomous process is still in operation. It is intended for families who do not own their homes, and who organize themselves in groups to promote a collective decision-making process to deliberate on housing construction.¹⁰¹

Since its creation, the Housing PB has risen to a prominent place in municipal housing politics, addressing, in particular, the needs of disadvantaged social groups. A sectoral logic thus intersects the territorial logic constitutive of the original PB. But its success is pretty much dependent on participation rates. Families interested in participating in the Housing PB process have to seek the nearest “Movement for Housing Centre” and join it. There are currently about 172 of those housing units distributed across the 9 regional units of PB. The discussions of the Housing PB happen every two years, within the so-called "Forum HPB", and aims at the definition on the amount of benefits offered for a certain period, which is proportionally distributed among the 172 units. Initially, the distribution of benefits was based on the number of members in each housing nucleus. Currently, the calculation of benefits depends on the participation of families in Forum HPB. Thus, the more families participate in the Forum, the more benefits will be allocated to them. This format promotes and gives visibility to the mobilization power of the leaders of the core participants in the process.

In 1998, the intention was announced to discuss and deliberate on an articulated

¹⁰⁰ This particular process was a mirror of the situation of the country at that time, with the crisis of the National Housing Financial System and the dissolution of the National Housing Bank.

¹⁰¹ The process involved housing families that do not have their own homes, who receive up to 5 minimum wages/month, and who have lived in Belo Horizonte for at least two years.

process of sectoral politics aimed at avoiding the fragmentation of policies and control the waste of resources. Since then, the population of Belo Horizonte has been able to deliberate on a range of municipal politics (health, education, social development, environment and human resources) which go beyond investment related to urban planning. This appeared as a panacea for existing problems of disarticulation, especially at the local level, demonstrating the viability of articulating existing social responses to claims related to recognized needs. The responses are now being built with the population. Currently, the municipality of Belo Horizonte is still promoting, under the aegis of PB, a convergence of policies which used to be conducted separately.¹⁰² This is taken up as a strategic action to respond in a more effective way to poverty and social exclusion.

In 1998, too, major changes were introduced in the general PB process, which were discussed and decided jointly by the municipal board and the local population. One of those changes was the introduction of Specific Global Plans (*Planos Gerais Específicos - PGE*)¹⁰³ in the process, meant to enhance investment in more disadvantaged neighborhoods and slums.

In that year a municipal pre-conference on budget priorities was organized at which the delegates of the sectors of health, education, social development, housing and culture presented the main problems of each sector as well as their suggestions for

¹⁰² Since 1998, several initiatives are articulated to reinforce concerted action. The municipality of Belo Horizonte thus took over the coordination of the project “Social inclusion through intersectoral policies” established in 2000. This project arose in the context of international cooperation between municipalities in Latin America and the European Union – “Rede 10 Urb-AI” – oriented to combat urban poverty. Another example is the “PB citizen program” established in 2001, whose action was oriented to families. Besides that, this particular program is based on a logic of decentralized policies, based on popular participation for this definition. The program, in addition to the provision of basic services and basic equipment, also aims at rearranging living spaces and invests in the reconstruction of family, community and social ties.

¹⁰³ The Specific Global Plan is a planning tool conceived to assist the local government and the community in decision-making on how, when and where to invest. This instrument consists of texts, graphs, maps and photos designed to enable a greater control of the strengths and weaknesses of the urban reality of Belo Horizonte. This planning tool also enables the monitoring and evaluation of the dynamic evolution of the territories most in need, and facilitates fund raising from sources external to the Belo Horizonte Municipality.

improvements. The pre-conference also established the installation of the city commission, composed of representatives from various segments of society.¹⁰⁴

In 1999, the first conference of the city was organized. The first city council was elected at the same conference. The conference of the city defined the priorities for public policy and the its commission elected the city council, a body made up of representatives of civil society actors that would be responsible for monitoring the definitions of the conference.

The year 2000 was also an important moment in the history of PB. For the first time, about 80 Planning Units (Unidades de Planejamento) were established. These were defined according to territorial criteria and for the definition of the urban projects to be implemented. The same year witnessed the development of new participatory mechanisms for the involvement of more advantaged (middle class) social groups in the process, namely by creating participation minima in middle and upper class neighborhoods. Budget cuts would happen if these minima for participation rates were not met. These initiatives were meant to broaden citizen involvement in the process, but the involvement of groups with higher income did not put into question the priority given to the poorest regions of the municipality.

Starting in 2001, the PB Municipality board implemented new conceptions and new practices based on indicators of social vulnerability and of the quality of life of the local population. As a consequence, starting in 2002, the PB officially resorted to the

¹⁰⁴ The city commission was elected from among the delegates of the pre-conference and began its work in March 1999. It provided a space for dialogue between civil society and the Municipal Administration in relation to the processes of Participatory Budgeting in 1999. This commission approved and supervised the preparation of the 1st City Conference held in 1999. Its mandate ended in September 1999, the Commission was replaced by the City Council.

application of the “Quality of Urban Life Index” (IQVU)¹⁰⁵ as a tool for the distribution of resources between the different regions. The IQVU is a multidimensional index, composed of 35 indicators organized in 10 variables representing the more important dimensions of urban quality of life, with different weight: supplies (8%), culture (3%), education (13%), sports (3%), housing (18%), urban infrastructures (16%), environment (6%), health (14%), urban services (11%) and urban safety (8%). This indicator quantifies the spatial inequalities within the urban space in terms of access to and availability of goods and services. While common indicators are focused on persons, IQVU is focused on indicators of access to goods and services.¹⁰⁶ This index identifies the territorial areas with most needs, working according to the adopted logic of the inversion of priorities. To invert priorities means the move towards investing in the most vulnerable areas of the city. In this PB process, the inversion of priorities is based on three essential dimensions: a) political participation, by granting decision power to those who were not used to intervene in decision-making; b) sectoral politics, in order to prioritize politics of social interest; c) territorial, by giving priority to the poorest neighborhoods in matters of infrastructure (material poverty).

In 2002, mechanisms were created as well for the approval of investment projects in priority urban areas, with a view to urban and social inclusion.¹⁰⁷ The introduction in the PB of a calculation formula allowed the identification of the Planning Units (UP’s) with

¹⁰⁵ The calculation of the IQVU is based on the following formula: $E*1/y$ (E = number of inhabitants in the region; E = 2.7182818; Y = average income of the region). In fact, in 1994-1996 a partnership was established between the municipality of Belo Horizonte and PUC-Minas (the Catholic University), which enabled the construction of the IQVU methodology, used for the first time in 1996, based on 1994 data. In 2000-2001, a new calculation based on data for 2000 was introduced in the PB. In 2007, the municipal planning department updated the IQVU data for 2006/2007. The information available at the Municipality concerning PB planning for 2013/2014 mentions a new IQVU update.

¹⁰⁶ For example, IQVU does not focus on illiteracy, but on the existence of, and access to, schools, cultural centers, and bookstores.

¹⁰⁷ It defines, for instance, that 56% of the PB projects in a given year will be invested in priority areas, which results in the articulation of urban policies with social policies.

lowest IQVU, which would be given priority, expressed, for instance, in the application of a larger slice of the municipal budget available in those areas. The need was recognized as well to mobilize population of the UP's with higher IQVU. During this process of resource allocation, a separation between UP's was made. The UP's with higher IQVU are since then classified as a "special group" and the others as a "common group". The "special group" currently represents about 30% of the municipal population and receives 10% of the total amount of the resources of PB. The rest of the available amount (90%) is for the "common group" of UP's. As for the distribution of the resources, populations living in villages and slums of the "Special Group" are, then, relocated into the nearest UP of the "common group".¹⁰⁸ The calculation of this index also considered: a) the provision of essential urban services at a given UP; b) the access of residents to services offered in those territorial units by using public transportation services.

In 2003, it was established that all the regions of the municipality would have at least one of their projects approved in each cycle of the process, and in 2004 new methodological adjustments were made aiming at the restructuring and application of new planning tools.

A last example of the attempts to enhance participation goes back to 2006 and concerns the implementation of a complementary process of PB: the digital participatory budgeting. This was a pioneer experience of its kind in the world. In a document prepared by the municipality to promote this new procedure it was stated that, considering the

¹⁰⁸ Quotient calculation: Special Group = $\frac{\text{population}}{\text{IQVU}}$; Common Group = $\frac{\text{population}}{(\text{IQVU})^2}$

Quotient calculation: Participation index = $\frac{\text{quotient}_{up}}{\sum \text{quotient}}$

Calculation of the resource received by UP: resource received_{up} = participation index_{up} X \sum resources.

success of participatory budgeting as an instrument of integration of popular participation in urban planning, the time had come to broaden the process through the inclusion of actors who do not participate in the “traditional” form of PB (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2006).

Figure 15
Digital PB promotion flyer



For the first time, such a tool allowed the population to deliberate by internet on a range of investments to be made in the different regions. While the “traditional” PB is restricted to each specific region, in digital PB citizens vote on proposals for the whole municipality. In 2008, participation by phone was also introduced in this parallel participation process.

4. The central goals of the PB of Belo Horizonte

The PB of Belo Horizonte was developed as a form of participatory politics to be combined with representative politics. It puts the emphasis on proximity and attention to the needs directly expressed by local population.

The sports ground was a project of great importance to this community. Before, the place was ugly and was not cared for. After the PB work it became well planned, and now we have a new leisure area with green space, walking circuit, court and toys for children. (...) To keep the area always clean, we created the group "Friends of the square" and we help in its conservation (Ferreira, 2008).

This particular process also advocated the reduction of the existing gap between political representatives and their electorate as a strategy to overcome the increase, over time, of political apathy.

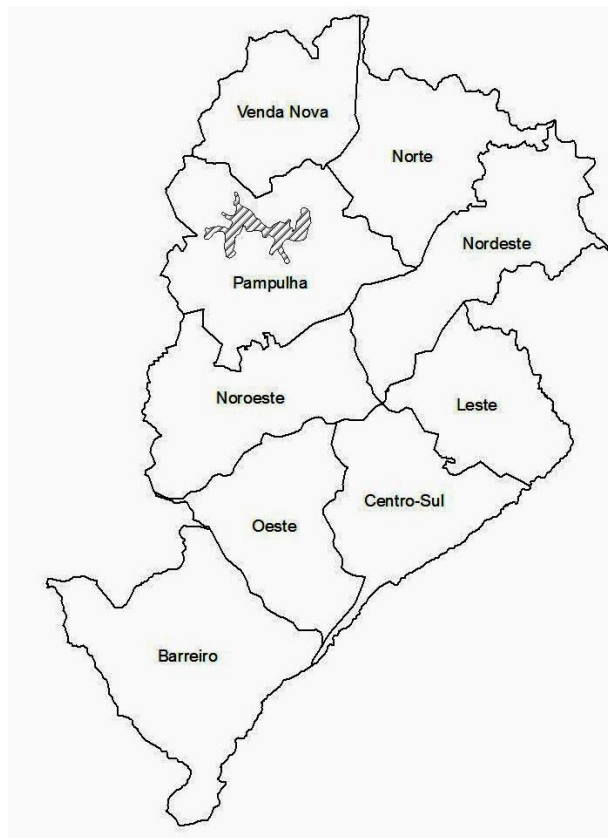
The process is steered by the Municipal Secretary of Planning, Budget and Information. Every two years,¹⁰⁹ the allocation of a part of the municipal funds for investment is discussed with the population. Decisions thus taken under PB have to be submitted to the discussion and deliberation of citizens as well as civic and social organizations. The residents of specific regions or neighborhoods of Belo Horizonte are those eligible to participate in the process.

The municipality of Belo Horizonte is territorially organized into 9 administrative regions,¹¹⁰ each of them organizing public regional assemblies (described in more detail below), to discuss the budget proposals.

¹⁰⁹ Until 1998 the process was held annually. Thereafter the process became biannual.

¹¹⁰ The regions are: Venda Nova, Norte, Nordeste, Leste, Centro-Sul, Oeste, Barreiro, Noroeste, and Pampulha.

Figure 16
Map of regions of Belo Horizonte Municipality



The “original” process, also called “regional PB”, is a kind of matrix from which complementary processes derive (namely Housing and Digital PB). Regional PB declares as central the accomplishment of two goals: 1) a larger implication of the citizens in the public sphere of decision; 2) the implementation of a participatory pluralism in order to legitimate decisions, acknowledging the binding power of decisions taken by citizens.

5. Methodological description of the PB of Belo Horizonte

As stated before, the Municipality of Belo Horizonte is organized into 9 administrative regions. These regions are the territorial basis for the PB process. Internally, each region is divided into sub-regions¹¹¹ and the latter into Planning Units¹¹² - a privileged

¹¹¹ Currently there are 42 sub-regions in the PB of Belo Horizonte.

territorial unit for the audition of the priority needs to be fulfilled through the building of infra-structure.

The distribution of the available resources rests upon the following principle: half of the amount available for the PB (50%) is equally distributed among the 9 regions. The other half is distributed in accordance with the IQVU index application, which determines that the higher the index rate, the lower the amount of resources to be made available to a certain region. In addition, resource allocation is also based on the application of the exclusion map of exclusion in the city, which was itself based on the IQVU. Both criteria reinforce that the distribution of resources must be directly proportional to the population and inversely proportional to income, ensuring a better allocation of resources to the poorer and more populated regions.

This participatory process is organized in three distinct phases: a) the Secretary of Planning presents to each regional the results of the previous round of the process (the number of approved proposals and the phase of enactment of each approved proposal); b) the municipality publicizes the available resources to be invested through the PB procedure; the proposals for discussion and voting are presented; c) regional assemblies are held.¹¹³

Considered in more detail, phase one involves the following steps described next. In the first round of regional assemblies:

- 1) Every two years the Municipality calls the population to participate in the opening of the PB through assemblies that happen in one of the regions;

¹¹² The PB is based in 80 Planning Units, although only 79 are included in the calculations, because one of the units corresponds to the University Campus of Minas Gerais Federal University.

¹¹³ Information on the process can be found at <http://portaldeservicos.pbh.gov.br/portalservicos/view/paginas/resultadoPesquisaGeral.jsf>.

Figure 17
PB opening session 2009-2010



Source: Belo Horizonte Municipality.

2) The Municipality representatives explain the procedures of the PB, present the available budget and deliver to the representative of each neighborhood the forms to be filled in with citizens' claims;

Figure 18
Regional PB meeting



Source: Municipality of Belo Horizonte.

3) Every representative of each neighborhood meets the populations and, jointly, they decide which is the priority investment to put on the form. Then the claim form, signed by all those present, is returned to the municipality jointly with the minutes of the meeting. The Municipality has the capacity to give feedback to the populations on the viability of the required investment.

Then the second round of sub-regional assemblies (each region is divided into neighborhoods) happens as follows:

4) The Municipality presents the available budget for each sub-region according to the IQVU index. This procedure allows the selection of 25 proposals by region. At this stage the regional delegates representing local citizens are elected.¹¹⁴ Then the Municipal Secretary of Regional Administration selects the proposals in line with the technical guidelines established. The technical assessment of proposals is made by the various agencies of the Municipality, as a condition to proceed with the proposals of the population. Proposals are evaluated according to technical and legal guidelines. If any legal or technical obstacle appears, the community must complete a form rectifier, replacing the request for another;

5) After the election of delegates, within the second round of assemblies, “priority caravans” are organized, one for each region. Those are composed of elected delegates who will visit all the sites related to proposals voted as priorities;¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Delegates are elected according to the number of participants in the assembly: 1 to 200 participants – 1 delegate for every 10 participants; 201 to 400 participants – one delegate for every 15 participants; over 400 participants – 1 delegate for every 20 participants. In addition, each region is also entitled to one delegate in representation of each community association legally constituted.

¹¹⁵ The priorities caravans, by visiting the sites related to proposals, allow the priority inversion. By seeing locally the need to invest in a certain project, some communities can abdicate partially or totally their amount and favor another one they consider more urgent since it is located in a poorer community.

Figure 19
Priorities Caravans



Source: Belo Horizonte Municipality.

6) Regional “priorities forums” are carried out. This is the last deliberative phase of the process, where proposals are finally voted. During these meetings, the Municipality presents the costs for each proposal. A general meeting with all the delegates takes place, and 14 of the 25 proposals are selected. The delegates to constitute the COMFORÇA (Overseeing Committee of the PB Approved Proposals) are elected;¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ The role of this committee is to oversee the enactment of each approved intervention, and to discuss the technical problems that may emerge during the enactment of each approved proposal. The committee meets every month with the municipality.

Figure 20
Voting on proposals



Source: Belo Horizonte Municipality.

7) A meeting of representatives of the 9 regions and the COMFORÇA takes place in order to deliver to the Mayor the infra-structure plan to be executed.

Some methodological procedures must be taken into consideration. Each year, given the budgetary constraints, the PB imposes a limit of proposals to be implemented. In order for a given sub-region to receive all the resources it claims, it must achieve a minimum of participants in the assemblies, since failing to comply with this rule will imply a proportional decrease of resources. The latter will, then, be distributed proportionally among the remaining regions meeting the required minimum of participants. If none of the regions meets that minimum, the financial resources not allocated are returned to the Municipal budget.

Community participation is essential to elect the major urban projects for all residents. Without participation there is no achievement (Silva, 2010a).

This way of encouraging participation through financial penalties is quite controversial because it is, in part, a way of devaluing the efforts of those citizens

committed to the process. For example, dynamic citizens committed to the process will be penalized if their neighbors do not engage with PB in the same way. The reverse is also possible, because less committed citizens will benefit from the strong engagement of some neighborhoods. Despite this controversial question, this local process of PB promotes a large organization and mobilization of citizen collectives in order to provide conditions for a joint deliberative process on public needs.

Another methodological feature, already mentioned above, is the effort made under the process to articulate different policies that otherwise would be scattered:

Another thing I want to mention is that the PB of Belo Horizonte is closely linked to the urban planning as a whole: in its articulation with social measures, with the master municipal plan, with the specific global plan (...). This articulation between the PB and other planning tools means that there is no municipal action – sectoral actions on health, urban environment, urban planning – that is not scrutinized under this articulation objective and the respective municipal organs are involved in the process. (...) Another concrete example of this is the programme “BH Cidadania” (Belo Horizonte Citizenship), which is concerned with families in a situation of social vulnerability. The programme promotes the living conditions of these families through the income generation, jobs, education. Different programmes are indeed integrated and articulated (Interviewed 8, 2007).

6. Digital participatory budgeting

In 2006, the municipality of Belo Horizonte started the implementation of a complementary process: digital participatory budgeting. In its first edition, in 2006, this initiative received the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy’s award for “Good Practice in Citizen Participation”, in acknowledgment of its innovative character.

More recently, in 2008, the vote by phone was introduced, allowing the voters of Belo Horizonte to choose proposals by calling a free number (723 0800 2201). Digital participation was maintained and the site now holds a space for popular participation, debate and discussion, including chats held with representatives of the municipal government, thus helping to clarify the doubts of the voters, and promote democratic and participatory practices.

In practical terms, the digital process now allows for one more investment project in each region. Voters in Belo Horizonte, 16 years or older,¹¹⁷ can participate by choosing nine projects, one in each region.

The method implemented for the participation in this process differs from the traditional PB in several aspects:

a) The Municipality and the COMFORÇA select 36 projects to be voted on, taking the responsibility to select significant projects for each region in an attempt to promote the municipality as a whole;

b) People do not participate in assemblies and do not elect delegates;

c) The proposals are selected through an online voting process and by phone;

d) Each citizen is able to vote for proposals in the 9 regions (in the “traditional” procedure, the discussion and voting process is territorialized, which means that a citizen is allowed only to participate in the selection and voting of proposals in his/her region of residence);

e) The proposals subject to voting are chosen by the municipality and the COMFORÇA;

f) Each person can vote only once.

¹¹⁷ Electoral number is needed to vote electronically, fulfilling the principle of “one person, one vote”. Digital participation is possible through the site www.opdigital.pbh.gov.br or www.pbh.gov.br.

To implement this procedure, the municipality had installed, up to 2011, 270 voting points in the city and provided training courses to citizens who would attend those, to help citizens with their vote.

Figure 21

Digital PB – Voting point of Pátio Savassi (2009-2010)



Source: Belo Horizonte Municipality.

These voting points were strategically located in areas with lower income population (namely in slum quarters), although everyone with access to a computer can vote. The digital PB was also promoted in conjunction with a government program of digital inclusion.

The introduction of the digital PB also tries to overcome some obstacles identified in the regional process:

[The digital PB] is a way to see the city as a whole and to recover the idea of city. In the regional PB people can only vote in projects in their regions. (...) The digital PB allows for (...), for instance, a recovering project of a cultural centre or an avenue that links two regions. Such projects will serve the region as a whole and don't have that local character (Interviewed 9, 2007).

It also promotes the participation of social groups that traditionally never engage in the process, including young people:

The Digital PB is a complement to the regional process that allows the participation to be broadened. The digital PB creates an expansion of voters (Interviewed 8, 2007).

In the beginning, one of the main criticisms was aimed at the barriers raised by digital PB to the face to face discussions in assemblies, regarded as one of the major gains of this process. This also raises the question on the quality of participation, which cannot be measured only through the number of participants (Boschi, 2005: 186). In order to combat such limitation, chatrooms on the internet were provided, including some with the participation of local politicians.

The introduction of information and communication technologies (ICTs) at the service of democracy, as well as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), redefines democratic participatory practices, freeing them from some of the usual time and space constraints. This also suggests new social and political scenarios relying on the possibilities of virtual democracy, based on new forms of communication and interaction that have implications for traditional political procedures, deeply rooted in modern societies.

This also represents a strategy to promote more inclusiveness in the process, especially of those young people who do not participate in the PB and of members of the upper social classes. Besides that, it was intended to promote the info-inclusion of citizens who used to have no access to ICT's.

The use of material technologies serving a social technology as the PB of Belo Horizonte can allow the access and discussion of information available in virtual platforms, enabling other forms of interaction besides the one enacted during the assemblies.

In the PB of Belo Horizonte, the ICTs can work positively, especially as a strategy to encourage the participation of those who would never participate in other ways. We cannot ignore the fact that the digital PB is presented, in particular, as a strategic complement of participation developed in a separate process, and is not meant to interfere with or replace the operating structure or outcomes of the regional PB.

7. 18 years of PB in Belo Horizonte: An evaluation

The way PB is designed to function confined this practice to the core of experiments classified as high intensity democratic experiments (Santos and Avritzer, 2002). Decisions about the use of public resources are made directly by the population, according to their stated will and identified needs. This shared management mechanism, existing continuously since 1993, has binding consequences and allows the articulation between the expertise of public servants, politicians and citizens experience based on the reality of their neighborhoods.

PB is one of the best programs created by the municipality; it leaves to the discretion of the population to choose the most important projects for the community. After all, only people know what the needs of the region are and we chose our priorities. What is missing now is encouraging, increasingly, the participation of all (Silva, 2010b).

Only those who live in a particular neighborhood know what the region needs, governors have no way of knowing that (Souza, 2010).

The meetings in the sub-regions, regional assemblies with citizens, the priority caravans and the regional fora mobilized, since its beginning, more than half a million people (297,258 in the Digital PB; 347,932 in the regional PB and 36,000 in the housing PB). These people actually decided on where – and for what purpose – to invest public resources in the city (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2008: 6). Over the past 18 years, the

PB completed around 1.000 projects decided by the population.

We go from house to house inviting people to vote in our proposals. If it were not so, perhaps some projects would never leave the paper. Only with unity and participation do some projects have the chance of being approved (Pereira, 2010).

In its trajectory, the PB of Belo Horizonte has been witnessing a gradual increase of citizen participation in the process, suggesting that it is becoming more attractive, dynamic and increasingly engaging for people. The joint effort made by politicians, administrative board and population to constantly adapt the process in order to encourage the inclusion and participation of people thus seems to be acknowledged. The process is seen as being in constant adaptation and improvement in recognition that it is not a perfect model of participation.

After 17 years of struggle we have reached major achievements, step by step. Now we must broaden discussions and more democratic participation (Jesus, 2011).

Despite the registered general growth over time, the main problem seems to be the small percentage of participants when compared to the total population of the city (2 375 444 inhabitants according to the latest population census - 2010).

Table 3
Citizens' participation in PB

Year(s)	Nº of participants
1994	15.216
1995	26.823
1996	38.508
1997	33.695
1998	20.678
1999/2000	22.238
2001/2002	43.350
2003/2004	30.479
2005/2006	38.302
2007/2008	34.643
2009/2010	44.000
Total	347.932

Source: *GEOP/SMAPL*. Updated in April 2011.

The recorded figures for participation over the last years, despite some oscillations, seem to indicate a growing popularity of the process and the growing trust of the citizens in it. Such credibility is certainly based on the fact that this PB appears as a continuous, consolidated participatory practice over time, and its investment in new procedures signals a will to extend participation to all the social actors of Belo Horizonte. Nevertheless, authors like Boschi (2005: 186) argue that is not only the number of participants that matters; above all, what is important is the quality of participation:

The mobilization to the construction of our project was done “mouth to mouth” and knocking on every door to call people to participate (Cipriano, 2011).

My wish is that more people attend the meetings because there is actually

possible to work through the neighborhood, but for that people have to participate (Batista, 2011).

Although the PB has been in place for 18 years, the work done on the analysis of the impact of the measure in the quality of life of the local citizens still lacks appropriate assessment. Even though its impact on a range of aspects of the lives of citizens is undeniable, it still proves difficult to access and analyze.

I attend the sports center (...), the fitness group gathers around 100 persons three times a week. (...) I used to have depression and I suffered from knee pain and now my physical condition and health improved a lot since I started visiting the center. (...) This place is part of my life. I made many friends here (Gomes, 2011).

Its major impact seems to be in the urban periphery, where the improvements, though not very visible, have some impact because they are related with the response to basic needs.

The PB is a way of giving voice to the residents of the periphery (Ferreira, 2011).

Look, we have few indicators. (...) We work with the evidence of change. First, with the PB, you have the evidence of change at the urban periphery zones. Before, we had situations of open sewers, areas of risk... An important fact is that 75% of the approved projects are in slum housing developments and in infrastructure works, mostly in the suburbs. (...) We will improve the living conditions of these populations. (...) But there are already some results. For example, there is a PB project within a radius of 500m from each household (...) it can be a new school, a health center, a school that was reformed... (Interviewed 9, 2007)

Some recent data reveal that 1394 projects were approved within the PB of Belo Horizonte in its 18 years of existence.

Table 4
Number of projects approved in the PB

Regional	Total	%
Barreiro	163	11,7
Centro Sul	142	10,2
Leste	167	12,0
Nordeste	151	10,8
Noroeste	163	11,7
Norte	167	12,1
Oeste	158	11,3
Pampulha	121	8,7
Venda Nova	161	11,5
Total	1394	100,0

Source: *GEOP/SMAPL*. Updated in April 2011.

Since 2003/2004, the PB methodology has incorporated the concept of priority areas. These areas are considered as the mostly in need and they have more "weight" in the voting process, which increases the chances of their proposals, or of proposals benefitting them, being approved. This is a way found by the Municipality of Belo Horizonte to efficiently allocate public resources, by maximizing the welfare of the poorest people living in those priority areas.¹¹⁸

We also conquered the PGE 1999/2000 [favoring the investment in more disadvantaged neighborhoods and slums] which brought benefits to the "Viva Village". Through it we will win the title of owners of our properties which is an old struggle of these residents (Duarte, 2010)

¹¹⁸ A map was of the social exclusion in the city was drawn, from which priority areas for action are defined, based on key indicators, such as the proportion of poor people; number of poor people; illiteracy rate; average education levels of those aged 15 or over; number of households with water and proper waste disposal. Superimposed on this map is the map of health risk, determining the various risk areas. Those have a special weight in the projects to be implemented.

As shown in the table below, only the PB of 2007/2008 considered as priority areas less than 50% projects (46.9%). In the PB of 2005/2006 the projects included in the priority area accounted for 60.7% of the approved projects.

Table 5
Number of projects approved in priority areas of the PB of Belo Horizonte (%)

Regional	PB Cycle				
	2003/2004	2005/2006	2007/2008	2009/2010	2011/2012
Barreiro	71,4	73,3	81,8	63,6	64,7
Centro Sul	60,0	71,4	71,4	83,3	77,8
Leste	54,5	70,0	55,6	33,3	56,3
Nordeste	45,4	38,4	38,5	38,5	60,0
Noroeste	41,7	66,7	50,0	69,2	66,7
Norte	91,7	80,0	35,7	64,3	72,7
Oeste	35,7	41,7	25,0	27,3	33,3
Pampulha	40,0	16,7	10,0	18,2	25,0
V. Nova	60,0	81,8	70,0	66,7	60,0
Total	56,1	60,7	46,9	51,4	57,8

Source: *Fonte: GEOP/SMAPL*. Updated in April 2011.

The diversity of proposals approved provides an overview of the coverage areas of the process.

Table 6
Number of projects approved in the Regional PB 1994-2011/2012

Area	Regional PB	%
Culture	18	1,3
Education	135	9,7
Sport	52	3,7
Housing	15	1,1
Infrastructure	558	40,0
Environment	26	1,9
Health	154	11,0
Social	43	3,1
Villages urbanization	393	28,2
Total	1394	100,0

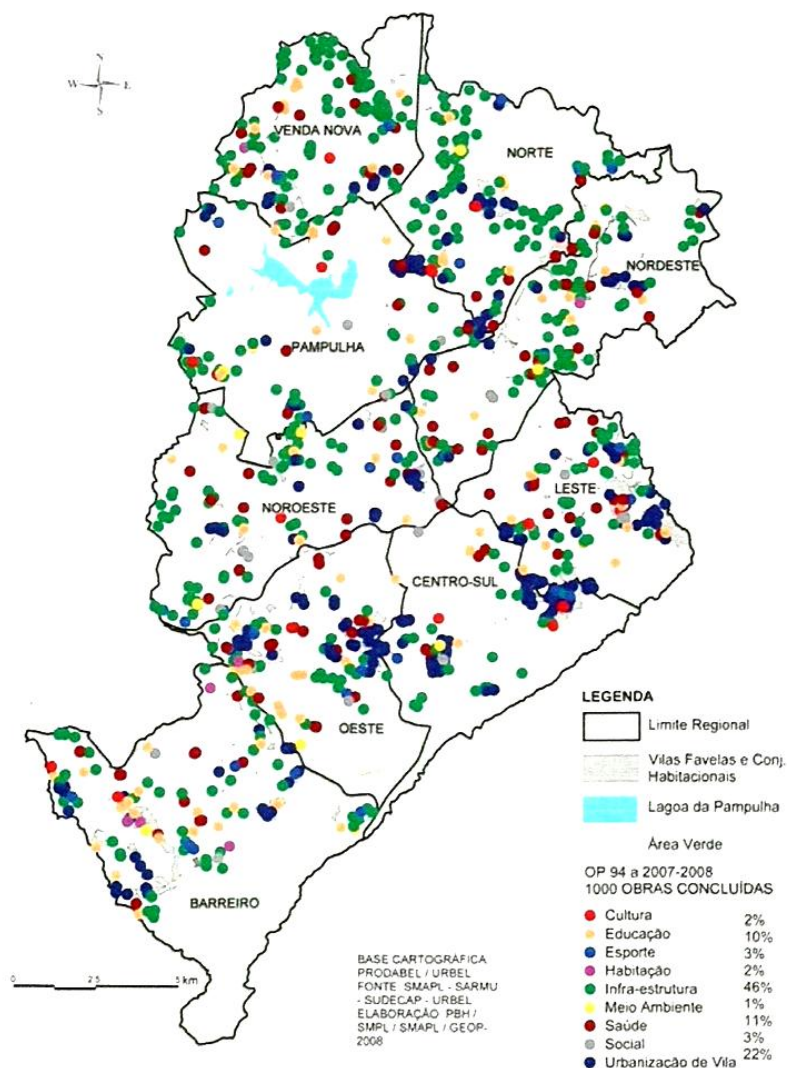
Source: *GEOP/SMAPL*.

Of the 1394 projects approved in the PB, most are related to infrastructure

projects (40.0% of the total), urbanization of villages (28.2%), health (11.0%) and education (9.7%), as above.

Figure 22¹¹⁹

Projects concluded in the Regional PB by area, 1994-2007/2008.



Source: Belo Horizonte Municipality.

The reduction of inequality is a structural feature of this process. Such a concern seems quite obvious when we look at the institutional design of PB based on three

¹¹⁹ Translation of the colors of the legend, from top to bottom: red-culture, yellow-education; blue-sport, pink-housing; green-infrastructure; yellow-environment; red-health; gray-social equipment; blue-urbanization.

fundamental principles: autonomy, participation and equality between citizens (Cunha, 2007).

With the widening of the “Água Street” we had access to various services that we did not have before, as the bus line, which is now at our door, gas delivery and medication, in addition to frequent police patrols. Before the road was dirt and we were all dirty when we left home due to the mud. And when it rained the situation became really bad. We had to wear plastic bags to prevent us from getting dirty when we fell (Paixão, 2011).

Well entangled in the debate over new models aimed at facing the liberal crises of democracy, the PB appears as a new tool for the promotion of social inclusion within the political sphere through collaborations between politicians and local population. And if citizen participation is key to a fairer and more equal city, procedures have to be adapted in order to accomplish that:

There are three PBs where we applied the criteria for approving projects in areas of social inclusion, which are the poorer areas of the city and with very high vulnerability; risk areas of economic, social violence. On average, over the past three PBs, 70% of the proposals have been concerned with these areas. This reinforces the idea that the PB is impacting on living conditions of these populations (Interviewed 8, 2007).

At the PB resources are well distributed, but the expectation is that the process gets more refined because the process has come to help society. Has come to help the citizen! (Barboza, 2010)

Inequality underlies the territorial distribution of resources, which means, for instance, that at least one proposal is approved in each sub-region, as well as the promotion

of an equitable distribution of resources and definition of priority areas according to IQVU, map of exclusion, Global Specific Plan¹²⁰ (*Plano Global Específico*), etc..

The process is permeable to some subversion in the relation between inequality and participation. One example on this is the case of the territorial units with the highest IQVU which are also encouraged to participate in the process. A specific amount corresponding to their IQVU is guaranteed to these sub-regions, which is not achieved through participation, guaranteeing that these regions will also be entitled to have projects implemented. Such a rule reveals, indeed, a concern with the territorial coverage of PB projects, but it can also reflect a subversion of the participation principle: without this specific rule, and given the weak participation of these populations, no projects would be implemented there due to the lack of participation. However, the establishment of such a rule ensures that the investment will be made regardless of the levels of participation.

The aforementioned example is suggestive of how the fight against inequality can lead to complex schemes of participation. In fact, what is supposed to be a high intensity democracy experience may also result in a bunch of complex rules and procedures that easily become contradictory. Another example concerns the fulfillment of a minimum level of participation; otherwise those regional amounts are allocated to the territorial units where participation is guaranteed, as is the case of the territorial clusters where population is not very participative, and with highest IQVU. Such a rule reflects a tendency of those who are not interested in participating just because they are socially advantaged. Thus, the obsession with participation rates, rather than with the quality and genuineness of participation, can contribute to a new reproduction of old inequalities. The coercion to participation should not be legitimized as a rule in a participatory process resting on

¹²⁰ This plan functions as a guarantee that isolated projects, or projects responding to temporary needs, will not be approved for slums and poor neighborhoods, but there will be interconnected projects in order to guarantee a consistent structure in terms of urban planning.

democracy and positioned against inequalities. Such an attitude can be easily translated into the vocabulary of the “tyranny of participation” (Cooke and Kotari, 2001).

The difficulties of involving citizens are, then, despite their growing involvement over time, one of the most visible problems of PB. For this reason, some measures and procedures were adapted to call all social groups to be engaged. To this should be added that the PB of Belo Horizonte has not reached yet a balanced participation of the local population, namely in terms of age and gender (Gomes, 2004).

The PB is very important and necessary because it is through it that we can show the strength that people have. Those who are involved in the daily meetings of COMFORÇA or at the Assemblies already recognize this importance, but now we need to stimulate the participation of the younger; otherwise we will have serious difficulties in continuing our work (Oliveira, 2010).

While circulating the idea that the process is a powerful tool in combating social exclusion and reducing inequalities, one cannot ignore its limited capacity for inclusion. Indeed, the PB complies with that clear intention by allowing the participation of all the citizens in the decision-making processes, but more than inclusive, the PB is a powerful way of making visible some existing exclusions (Cunha, 2007: 18).

8. The mobilization of knowledges in the PB

Like some similar processes of participatory budgeting, PB in Belo Horizonte rests upon a diffuse enrollment of different areas of knowledge in the definition of participation and its rules, which can be adapted and improved for each cycle of the process according to the experience acquired. The citizens’ experience-based knowledge and their privileged knowledge of the area is arguably part of the workings of the process.

From the intersection of the circulation and dialogue of different forms of knowledge – lay knowledge of citizens, expert knowledge of the PB technical expertise –, such a process is recognized as very flexible, open to being constantly improved and adapted to people's needs and current social circumstances.

Within the scope of PB, “expert” knowledge may be described as the expertise dealing with the design and implementation of budgets, according to the technical, legal and administrative procedures regulating municipal accounting; "lay" knowledge in turn, would refer to the everyday knowledge of local citizens concerning concrete needs felt in their daily lives and their own perspective on the proper way to respond to them through the building of infrastructures. The relation between both forms of knowledge allows the opening of the “black box” of the municipal budget, which used to be managed by technicians, allowing concrete problems and solutions identified by citizens to be turned into investments.

Lay knowledge, usually ignored in decision-making processes on matters like municipal budgets, is called to an active role. This knowledge rises from the participation of citizens in the process. Every one of them can find room to express publicly his/her feelings on the city/neighborhood planning, particularly on the urgent needs to be responded to. The information constructed on the basis of their experiences is taken into account not only during the public discussions, when proposals are made, but also during the process of prioritization. These collective moments of discussion and definition of priorities are an expression of a process of broadening democracy process not only by opening discussion to the participation of all citizens in the discussion, but considering as well their specific knowledge and capacities as these emerge during deliberation, and endowing the latter with binding power.

Although citizens' plenary sessions are privileged moments for the circulation and combination of different areas of knowledge, the process also addresses population-based bodies – or representative bodies of the population – which act as mediators between the PB technical board, politicians and population. These collective bodies aim at the circulation and proper dissemination of the knowledge produced during participatory moments. COMFORÇA is the PB body which primarily ensures such functions. These elected members are responsible for transmitting local needs to the Municipality board, having the power to decide, by checking directly the needs of the localities, and, if necessary, invert priorities. COMFORÇA represents the highest expression of citizens empowerment in this process due to the duties and responsibilities they take on: to follow and monitor the budget execution, the schedule of works, the spending and accountability within the process, especially as related to the definitions of the Forum for Budget Priorities. It is also their responsibility to designate at least two of their permanent members to follow the process of opening the bid proposals of investments approved by the Forum of Regional Budget Priorities and to discuss the behavior of members of COMFORÇA, namely denunciations of personal gains which, if proven, may result in exclusion from that body.

In a clear expression of transparency, in order for COMFORÇA to fulfill its duties, the Municipality must make available the necessary information on the implementation of projects, as well as organize meetings with representatives of the regional Participatory Budget to discuss the progress of budget execution of investments approved in the Budget Priorities Forum. In addition, the COMFORÇA meetings are monthly and open to all citizens who wish to participate, but with the right to vote restricted to its members.

The confrontations of diverse forms of knowledge within PB, beyond being significant contributions to decision-making on investments, are regarded as democratic ways of thinking the city:

The PB has brought the possibility of people becoming builders of alternatives by providing a way to make needs and desires meet. It represents the transformation of dreams into reality. By appropriating the PB, citizens of any social class have access to a range of expertise to ensure the practice of citizenship (Bocão, 2010).

Considering popular engagement with this process, lay knowledge is regarded as playing a prominent role in this local PB, namely through the power invested in the local citizens which allows them to exercise some control over the deliberative procedure, “having a last word” concerning decisions that will affect them. As mentioned before, the task force constituted by local citizens – the COMFORÇA – holds a diverse range of skills within the PB process, and its actions are binding.

[The COMFORÇA] monitors and knows all the rules of the PB and all the changes that are proposed. Very often the proposed changes come from the COMFORÇA, which incorporate citizens’ suggestions. Concerning the buildings, they do the monitoring and the evaluation at the end of the process as well as at the end of each cycle of PB (Interviewed 10, 2007).

This citizen body controls and monitors at different levels – technical and financial – the investment projects decided by the local population, bearing witness to the capacity of lay people to control processes in several domains which used to be considered as the turf of qualified professionals and experts.

The influence of lay knowledge on PB is also visible during the work of the evaluation committees which are constituted as part of the process. These citizens

committees are entitled to define and adapt the rules of the process, meaning that, even from the methodological point of view, PB is committed to citizen empowerment, namely through the distribution of decision power among social groups which have traditionally been ignored in the definition of State action (Nez, 2007: 26).

In the next PB 2011/2012 I hope that the completion of the projects approved by the community may happen faster. That is one aspect that has to be improved. The election process and delivery of the buildings must become speedier (Zeferino, 2010).

More recently, since November 2009, the “PB Magazine”, a quarterly publication, has been published and distributed; it is edited by each one of the 9 municipal regions, containing detailed information about the local process, with citizens’ testimonies on the PB and other relevant information concerning the whole process. This magazine, through its content, may also appear as a new platform of knowledge sharing between different actors involved in PB.

Although, in general terms, the PB process appears to be functioning according to a horizontal logic as far as the relationship between different forms of knowledge is concerned, a more hierarchical approach emerges when some specific aspects are considered. This is the case of all the metric tools used to classify the vulnerability of regions, such as maps and statistical indicators. These background tools of the process, based on technical rules, are confined as an exclusive domain of expert knowledge. Powerful concepts like “vulnerability”, “IQVU” or “Priority Areas for Social Inclusion” are expressed through measures built and discussed by experts or scientists, ignoring the possible contributions that local citizens, with their situated forms of knowledge, could add to the construction of such indicators. One clear example of this is the partnership between the municipality of Belo Horizonte and PUC-Minas (the Catholic University) for the

adjustment/improvement of the IQVU methodology. Such abstract concepts as “vulnerability” or “quality of life” thus stay within the reserved domain of expertise, marking the limits to the contribution of lay knowledge to the joint definition of the process, anticipating here the existence of expert knowledge reserves blind to engagement with other forms of knowledge. The making by PB of room for the mutual engagement of different forms of knowledge is, to be sure, based on the recognition of the capacity of those who experience the problems to contribute to adequate responses to them, as well as of the valuable contribution of those who live close to problems to help with the definition of priorities. But the mobilization of lay knowledge still has its limits, and the boundaries are reasserted through the granting of epistemic privilege to various forms of expert knowledge.

9. Conclusions

PB in Belo Horizonte is a continuous and yet continually changing experience of citizen participation which has gone on for almost two decades, searching for tighter budgetary control and fighting corruption, but also aiming at citizens’ empowerment and the enactment of redistributive policies.

During this period, a strong commitment to local citizen participation led to a continuous adaptation of the PB model to new circumstances, but also to an increase in its complexity, in order to respond to a broad range of situations and expand its inclusiveness and attraction.

Looking “inside the PB machine” amounts to looking at an innovative experiments in citizen participation, with a potential to strengthen political ties between elected representatives and local population; to strengthen the functioning of a high

intensity democracy through the promotion of innovative democratic procedures; to let citizen participation happen by sharing power with citizens for decision-making and the control of municipal investments. Citizens are indeed central actors in the process and their participation has a major impact on deliberation on urban planning.

If we consider high intensity democracy as the everlasting political innovativeness implied in opening up new opportunities for groups of citizens to intervene in decision-making, then, PB in Belo Horizonte may certainly be considered as part of these experiences; not only due to participation, intervention and decision by citizens, but also because this particular process is and remains, unlike other similar experiments, rooted in a lasting political struggle for and commitment to strategies to deepen and expand high intensity democracy as developed in the theory chapters. This is documented in the empirical analysis of the events and the process over time. Events and processes demonstrate the unique feature of openness to new convergent participatory processes which work in a coordinated way, such as Housing PB and Digital PB. Moreover, the matrix process, also called regional process, operates in coordination with a range of municipal policies, trying to cover, as much as possible, different political actions and social interventions within the Municipality. Such changes do not occur overnight, nor are they introduced without struggle and discussions, also with citizens themselves. Rather the contrary, and the evidence shows that the appropriateness and democratic progressiveness of new initiatives can and are themselves topic for vigorous discussion and struggle to define what democracy requires, which is the essence of HID as a processual notion.

Due to its long trajectory of constant evolution and complexity, it does not seem possible to consider the Belo Horizonte process as a temporary or a disposable participatory urban planning policy exclusively in the hands of a bunch of

sociotechnocrats. It still is and remains a key platform for the coordination of actions between State and civil society at the local level.

As a series of opportunities to involve new actors in deliberation, the PB process has shown to be quite flexible. It has so far shown a strong adaptive capacity to meet the needs presented as priorities by the population. It has not turned out to be a hermetically institutionalized formalized decision-making process, but one based on its own success as much as on learning from mistakes and struggles. But despite the general positive picture of the PB of Belo Horizonte sketched here, there are also some potential threats to be considered if one works from the HID perspective as we are. One point concerns precisely the framing of decision-making through conditions defined as “technical and financial”, embedded in formulas and facilities, requiring extra resources to be invested to allow the use of these formulae and associated processes of participatory engagement. An example of such a threat may be the use of ICT facilities. These may not just extend the possibilities to engage, such extensions may on balance be actually limited. This may increase the difficulties for citizens to participate, i.e. their abilities to assess and question what experts and political professionals say and propose. If this were to happen, the balance of the mutual adjustment struggles between citizens and state power would be shifting towards more technocratic and social engineering formats at odds with what HID amounts to as we have defined it at the outset of this research.

For those who freely adopt the process as a way to intervene in decisions related to municipal investments, this process is an opportunity for empowerment. Here, the idea of putting an end to a knowledge monopoly really starts to make sense. Local citizens become, within PB, reflective actors with a capacity to discuss and decide on how to define collective needs and problems, the nature of these problems and way to address them.

Although the PB process proves to be a positive contact zone between diverse forms of knowledge, resistance to an intelligible dialogue is still essential for its high intensity character. We illustrated that in the case of the elaboration of indicators, concepts and formulae which sustain part of the process and of the potential veto power over citizens' decisions associated with technical requirements. More than translate what local "living conditions", "inequality", "exclusion" or "vulnerability" can be, these formulae and calculations clearly neglect citizen experience on such issues, leaving out, in a certain way, lived or experienced dimensions. This certainly affects the way high intensity democracy can be understood and practiced.

As shown above, the success of PB, from the point of view of HID and especially with respect to redistributive effects and the promotion of democracy, can be said to depend on two conditions: 1) the existence of a political platform of and for municipal government committed to the creation and working of PB and other participatory devices; 2) the strength and vitality of social movements and organizations that have and develop their ability and capacity to intervene in PB and make it a truly highly intense form of democracy in progress. So far, cases like the Belo Horizonte process show that the balanced and productive fulfillment of both conditions is essential and has been in place. Future careful handling of the inherent challenges and tensions posed by the combined conditions by all parties and people involved will decide on the sustainability of PB as a high intensity form of democracy. The constant ambiguities and flux in the context and also the content of PB as an agonistic process represent the key challenges but also the main fuel for PB to remain in the game for HID.

Part III
Discussion and Conclusions

Chapter 7. How to deepen or not to deepen democracy? That's the question!

1. Introduction

Starting from reflections on the two selected cases, this chapter tries to provide answers to the central questions. This reflection emphasizes the two core questions that this work has been pursuing: How can high intensity forms of democracy be organized? How can scientific and technical knowledge be reconciled with other forms of expertise in a renewed model of democracy?

The strategy adopted to provide the required answers is to strike a balance between the specificities of each case study, i.e. displaying and exploring different forms of citizen engagement and participation and tease out conditions and developmental options and the role of citizen's involvement in defining and handling these. Possible connections between representative and participatory democracy will be discussed in relation to the relevant decision-making processes. The discussion will be on the one hand about an argument that advocates representative forms of government, and on the other hand approaches advocating participatory dynamics to enhance high intensity forms of democracy. Obviously the Portuguese case study is formally associated with a model of democracy that privileges formal representation with restricted institutional forms of public engagement. PB is the pet example of those advancing extended participation as a correction of what is said to be an overly limited representational format. The protest case study more precisely represents a case of mobilization as confrontational HID in the otherwise restricted, formally representational context of the Portuguese political system. Thus, the two case studies provide us with connected yet distinct empirical examples of forms of HID that will allow us to have a clearer understanding of each one of the

participatory forms' weaknesses and strengths concerning HID.

The Protest and PB cases document two possible and distinctive responses to what has been described as pathologies of representation and of participation affecting democratic regimes designed according to the dominant liberal-democratic model. A central question to be pursued in the following analysis is to understand how they contribute to the transformation in the conception and practice of democracy towards a more civic participation. Moreover, whether and to what extent this transformation is actually achieved is a matter which requires careful and detailed analysis based on the empirical research of cases selected for their exemplarity.

In both cases citizens are heavily involved in participatory politics. In the protest case citizens manifest opposition to measures that reflect a government style that might be characterized as discretionary. The protest movement itself can, however, be seen as a form of HID under the definition given in chapter 1. Belo Horizonte's use of participatory budgeting has over the years been hailed as a showcase for high intensity democracy. The creation of a procedural system to give citizen groups firmer control over their livelihoods made them the key element of the process, from the beginning until the end of budgetary decisions and their implementation in urban planning.

Both cases are treated as examples of HID as they create new spaces for vigilant civic participation in decision-making in the name of the people. But they do so in radically different formats. What are the main differences in the process? What do they imply for what we have called the constitution of the 'participatory citizen'? And what sort of expectations are the result of these forms of intense participation? These questions are dealt with in section two of this chapter. Subsequently, we will explore, in section three, another aspect of the HID model, namely the way in which in each case a wide variety of

knowledges are brought to the table and confronted with one another to make decision-making more inclusive as well as responsive to the everyday life experiences of various categories of citizen.

2. Deepening democracy: Two possible pathways

According to the framework adopted, citizen participation appears as one essential requirement to put democratic transformation in motion. Different forms of citizen participation in decision-making processes - PB process and protests - will be detailed according to some of their main features in order to understand the main differences between processes and how that implicates with an HID conception; how processes contribute to the definition of a "participatory" citizen; and what the result of those different forms of participation is.

2.1. PB and protests as citizen participatory forms: Procedural, historical, cultural and territorial features

The cases represent two ways of organizing for participation; two distinct types of direct intervention in political decision-making outside election periods. Moreover, both signal that democratic cultures, as described in the chapters dedicated to each case study, help us understand participatory technologies as products of cultural and historical relations.

Comparing the cases obviously also highlights the different approach taken by the State towards democratic transformation and its importance for the actual performance of HID initiatives. Portugal is still a country marked by a scarcity of initiatives in experimenting participatory procedures, registering a closure of citizens' participation in deliberation and decision-making on topics of public interest (except through corporatist forms), and that seems to be explained by some features from the past, such as the

persistence of a State relating to citizens in an authoritarian fashion. In contexts like this one, opportunities for participation in decision-making related to public policies seem to be closely associated with efforts in collective mobilization, where protests have played a prominent role since the plethora of popular and citizen initiatives in 1974-75, after 40 years of dictatorship.

In the case of PB, the conditions for the emergence of this participatory procedure are linked to the democratization process that took place in Brazil during the late 1980s, a period often associated and described as the period of the creation of a civil society in Brazil. Participation was inscribed in the discussion and elaboration of a Democratic Constitution in 1988 as a fundamental right of citizens, and spaces for citizen participation were considered part of the architecture of the State. Thus, experiences like PB happened not only due to the growing popular pressure for participation in political decision-making, but also because of the existence of political projects open to participatory processes coming from the period concerned.

In the case of Portugal, the absence of formal and regular participatory opportunities concerning matters directly involving citizens' lives, and the authoritarian type of relationship between citizens and the state and between citizens and elected officials, have broadened the space for protest actions, like the one addressed in the case study, to become privileged forms of citizen action. Protests like the ones described in the case study are representative of what Evelina Dagnino (2004) called *discursive crises*, characterized by the discrepancy between a political discourse advocating the promotion of citizen participation and the failure to recognize participatory practices when they emerge. These protest events have highlighted the fact that Portuguese democratic culture is still characterized by an excessive authoritarianism of the State, with decision-making

occurring within a confined space. Policy-making is thus still based on the idea that elected representatives and State officials are the exclusive and legitimate owners of decisions, as this case so well demonstrated.

Accordingly, protests against the closure of maternity wards were not seen by representatives at any time as a legitimate form of participation by citizens, as a legitimate way to question the way the decision was taken. That means that even within a legal framework in which protests are defined and accepted in principle as participatory forms, the tendency is to devalue participation as an institutionalized form of action. Protests were seen as actions of public disorder, an emotional, unfounded, irrelevant, and disturbing form of action, having a negative impact on government action as well as on people's health. Given such a context, public protest easily becomes a common resource for participation for those who want to be engaged, even if it is ignored or dismissed as participation by the Health Minister.

A participatory process may then be defined as a process through which citizens (a) make themselves accountable in an area of decision-making which was previously treated as the turf of elected or nominated political agents, civil servants or certified experts or expert bodies, (b) claim their right to have a say in decisions which affect them, especially when these decisions are controversial or contested by some part of society, and (c) organize themselves to participate in or influence the decision-making process.

The PB of Belo Horizonte represents a specific process of creating opportunities for citizens to influence and control the decisions on the allocation of a part of the municipal budget for investment. The analysis of this process displayed a tight set of procedures guiding the interaction between all the actors involved in municipal urban planning and decision-making. Participation is organized in a sequence of stages,

established through collaboration between citizens, municipal officials and elected politicians. Successive stages of such a PB process consist of the identification of collective needs, the drawing up of proposals, their discussion and negotiation, until their implementation and monitoring.

Under this participatory process, the interaction of actors is dependent on rules co-constructed by all the participants and included in a guide, “Methodology and Guidelines”, reconsidered, adjusted and reissued for each new cycle of PB. PB is thus a process designed to be controlled by local citizens in conjunction with municipal representatives. Moreover, it is a process with both its timing and its space subject to tight regulation that leaves little margin for spontaneous, unorganized citizen participation. The rules of the process, however, can be and are improved and readapted at each cycle, based on an assessment of past experience, of problems and mistakes, but also of good and effective practices. These procedural features make PB dependent, to a large extent, on dialogue and interaction among all participants.

Protests, in turn, appear as another form of participation, but conflict, exclusion and dissent, rather than dialogue and direct communicative reason, are its prime movers. Thus, they do not rely upon a common set of rules structuring regular and predictable interaction between the parts in contention. These actions, instead, represent a process of participation emerging from the demands of those affected by, but yet excluded from, a particular decision. In protests as participation we can identify a tension between two processes: non-inclusion, defined by not taking account of citizens and local administrations who have a stake in what is being decided; and participation as the collective action in which people and groups are mobilized to interfere with the

exclusionary decision-making and to demand the reversal of the decision and to claim the right to be involved, and, eventually, to dialogue, negotiation and/or consensus.

Briefly stated, and looking back to both case studies, PB emerges as a participatory process resulting from the coordination of efforts of formal political institutions and actors and civil society, while protests are used as participatory platforms emerging from dissent concerning particular decisions.

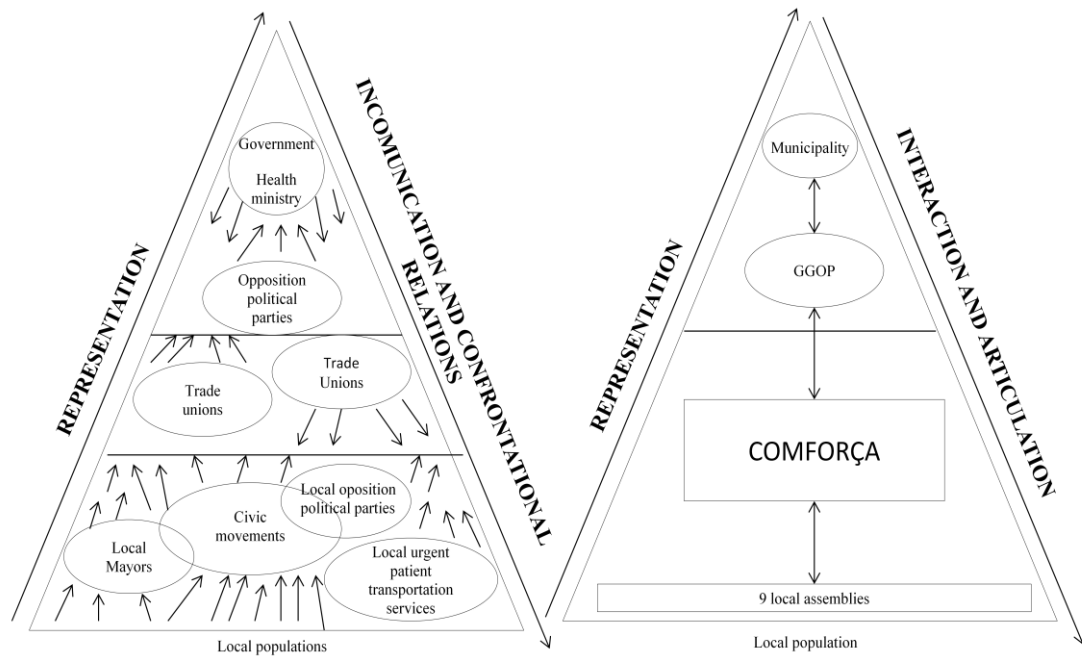
Figure 23 displays the distribution of the main actors within processes in order to capture the major features shaping interaction patterns in each of them.

While protests represent models of interaction guided by tension and disagreement, causing this process to contain a more heterogeneous disposition of actors (who press for or against a decision), the PB represents a firmly regulated interaction platform for participation, based on the aim of consensual relations made through dialogue and negotiation.

While interaction patterns in protest are driven by tension and disagreement, ending up in a fission between actors who press for and those who oppose the decision at stake, PB provides a more ordered and disciplined platform for participation and agonistic contention between as wide a variety of voices that (may) emerge. PB is organized as a public search for agreement or consensus about budgets that might be feasible and implies adjusting the investments and spending to needs expressed by the citizens. The specific assemblage of PB, however, is designed to avoid the kind of fission and exclusionary mechanisms that is generally associated with protests and conflict.

Figure 23¹²¹

Distribution of actors' in protest actions and PB¹²²



This mapping of the distribution of actors in both processes merits the following comments:

a) The distribution of authority and power is at the core of both processes, even though they are differently shaped. In PB, power and authority are distributed along the sides of the pyramid, as the procedure itself accommodates the possibility of questioning and challenging the capacity to decide on a given matter. In protests, the relationship motivated by an exclusionary form of decision-making created a process of confrontational interaction. Thus, protests represent a challenge of the settled forms of power and authority as performed by the representative form of discretionary governance.¹²³

¹²¹ Figure was elaborated by the author.

¹²² COMFORÇA – a task force constituted by participatory elements representing citizens near the Municipality; GGOP – Municipal PB Management Group.

¹²³ For a more detailed relation of actors' disposition, see figure 13, page 196.

b) A designed parity and symmetry frame actors' interactions within the formal settings of PB (even though that framing neither eliminates nor suspends existing inequalities) while tension and asymmetry are features commonly identified during actors' interaction in protests actions.

Within these configurations, dialogue and interaction – or the lack thereof – emerge as central elements to both forms of participatory process: to PB because agonistic communication is the starting point; to protests, because the claim about the unacceptable lack of communication and interaction is the leitmotiv to engage in such forms of collective action.

In PB we can identify privileged stages where dialogue between participants is the major determinant. These regular moments planned over face-to-face interactions to extract points of communality and differences are often much less pronounced in the conventional procedures of representative politics, if they occur at all. Remember how local Portuguese administrations were not consulted at all before a formal decision was taken. In the PB case dialogue and agonistic communication are key elements in the entire process design. They are translated into policy-making mechanisms to agonize in formats that are geared to producing good governance. Based on such open discussions, a fluent progressive interaction flows from one stage to the next using procedural rules to reach conclusions in an open and orderly fashion. Over the years all sorts of specific measures have been taken to mobilize participants and to improve the design of PB. More recently, the PB Journal has become not only another way to promote transparency over the decision-making processes, but also another example of fostering mobilization, empowerment and engaging actors within this process.

As in PB the importance of communicative formats is decisive in the protest case: positively as well as negatively. Negatively, the protests were often based on anger about the government's disregard for dialogue and negotiation. Positively, as the sustainable mobilization of widely supported protests depends on communication and strategizing across the coalition. But to capture the effects and the learning process one has to delve deeper.

In the analyzed maternity ward case, claims and arguments were certainly heard by the government. No reasons were advanced for the Portuguese Health Minister not publicly explaining to citizens the decision taken. Discretionary governance, as we have known it in Portugal, is notorious for its lack of concern with the public justification for its decisions. But discretionary governance is a high risk strategy in most contemporary democratically organized societies. It triggers opposition very quickly, especially if it concerns the direct interests of people and if negative consequences become fodder for old and new media coverage. Demonstrative actions developed all over Portugal represent, first, an attempt to reverse the decision, second, to demonstrate dissent, and third, to communicate with central government. Protest techniques were, first, used to force dialogue and negotiation among affected groups on strategies, demands and mobilization. As a result, the objectives of protest movements and their internal and external movements change over time as the case study shows. Due to the lack of resonance from the policy makers, protest movements kept developing new tactics, depending on their assessment of the most likely ones to succeed in forcing dialogue.

As to be expected, the measure to close wards in various regions resulted in diversity in the responses from citizens and localities across the country. It energized notions of regional inequality that are a staple feature of Portuguese politics, as in other

countries. As regions were differentially affected by the measure, the localities affected developed specific protests, using different resources, techniques and devices (see annex 1). In the regional differentiation the distinct cultural, economic and social features were played upon and brought forward as arguments as well as ways to mobilize people. Given the long roots of such elements and the fact that they are laden with memories and emotions, marked by strong regional identities, they are a potent source for territorial confrontations between populations and the State. In this respect, and as documented at length in chapter 5, protests should never be studied as the application of a bag of tricks but studied with respect to these specific local and historical features. Whether particular mobilization attempts work depends on a mixture of general mobilization techniques in the specific settings. It is from this combination that a successful intense engagement emerges.

Yet, across the regions there are obviously also similarities with respect to how protests are conducted. In the various local movements citizens set up and chanted their slogans, painted signs and banners, wore T-Shirts with statements alluding to the cause, waved flags and distributed stickers. Municipalities and Civic Movements also invested in blogs, radio and Internet discussions. Posters were distributed in the regions, drawing attention to the problem under discussion, and local citizens were mobilized to send thousands of postcards, by surface mail, to the Minister of Health. Citizens were also mobilized for protests and participated in vigils at strategic chosen places; they joined slow marches or rallies, with much noise associated, in a clear attempt to be heard and to voice their silenced arguments that remained ignored. They also circulated petitions to send to the government. Even courts of law were activated, namely by filing injunctions at local courts. These acts of demonstration had a sharp symbolic dimension: the presence of black flags hung at public buildings in a clear reference to the "killing" of health units; national

flags at half mast as a sign of local mourning; the use of the white color in association with life and newborns. Humor and satire, as expected, were also present.

These techniques were then combined over two years of protest as a way to interfere with the decision, revealing that although the demand for participation is relevant by itself, it is more likely to be successful when spaces are created to make dissidents' voices heard.

The creativity, the innovative forms, the play on amusing and humorous formats and more generally the transgression of normal life and politics as usual are important ingredients of why it is possible to say that the protests actions create a new open space for debate and demonstration of dissatisfaction among citizens, fed by their mobilization.

In relation to PB, the protests are not participation moments confined to a given time and space and subject to formalized procedures. Instead, they are driven by a sense of opportunity.¹²⁴ Particular procedures like PB may indeed enhance or facilitate HID, but it is always citizens' action which drives democracy towards higher intensity. It is important to stress, considering the two cases, the relevance played by territory in both the participatory processes, suggesting that HID practices are focused on local and regional spaces where the State and everyday life of the citizens are most closely aligned or in collision. The PB is a process where participation is organized around the territorial principle and a protest showed how territory is distinctively affected by the same measure and how that triggered arguments, forms of action and protest organization.

¹²⁴ Opportunity is here defined as the key moment for protest to look after one's needs and interests and to demonstrate disagreement and dissatisfaction with a decision taken or proposed and to claim for dialogue, an agreement or a solution.

2.2. Participatory citizenship and the constitution of a pro-participatory government

The obvious differences between the participatory processes analysed highlight that a participatory citizen, as well as a participatory government, can be differently constituted. This section tries to discuss how a participatory citizen becomes constituted and news spaces or participatory spaces get defined.

Regarding protests, although these do not configure a form of institutionalized participation, these movements allow for the emergence of a collective participatory actor, who is moved by a “duty to participate”, based on his/her interest in issues of collective importance. Despite the impossibility of taking for granted any kind of impact on the decisions they wanted to influence, those who engaged in protest actions against the closure of maternity wards were moved by that duty, a sense that "doing so might help make it so". Protests represent an approach to participation based on the idea of the possibility of creating an alternative to what currently exists, clearly delimiting its own potential from the idea of resignation or conformity with the prevailing state of things.

The PB, despite often being promoted as participatory democratic technology, in fact only allows participation at precise moments, and in some stages of the process only of certain citizens, those who have been elected by their peers. In protests participation is an open process where, in principle, anyone may join at any moment.

Considering actors’ interaction within the scope of the participatory forms under analysis, protest events construct clear barriers to dialogue. This impacts negatively on actors’ interaction in the process, although mass media serve as facilitators of a communicative process of conflict. At this point a distinction should be made between interaction among participants in protests, on the one hand, and participants in protests and those who defended, designed and enacted the decision to close those health units. It is

concerning the latter that the barriers to dialogue and communication refer to. And it also concerns those interactions that media as facilitators of communication refer to. The questions related to dialogue or communication, and to the obstacles to these, take very different forms and have very different implications for the dynamics and outcomes of the protest actions. The boundaries of this work concerning that interaction process rest on the analysis of the strategies/attempts to promote communication of the citizens' claims and their arguments as well as the consequent reactions of the receivers of those "messages". It is in this "limited" basis that we are allowed to talk about the lack of direct communication. On this subject, the media come in to complicate this picture, mostly because they served as facilitators for both parts in conflict, serving as the main stage to make information exchange happen through an indirect process of communication.¹²⁵

The PB, on the contrary, is structured in a way which provides a frame for symmetrical and horizontal relationships between the actors involved and a "suspension" of existing inequalities as a condition for participation, with detailed rules for interaction and an orientation towards the search for consensus. Thus, in the PB experiment, a participatory actor emerges from symmetric and 'equal' relations established between citizens and political actors. In the PB of Belo Horizonte conception, power and authority are horizontally distributed. The process promotes direct moments of interaction and dialogue. Concerning the latter, relevant information regarding decision-making on urban planning symmetrically flows among actors, which favors their balanced interaction within the process.

The Belo Horizonte PB, being a construct for regulated participation, allows the precise identification of the moments where the participatory actor emerges. That is the

¹²⁵ The clarification of the role played by the media would probably require a specific study beyond the boundaries of this work. Nevertheless, their importance was so decisive that press analysis sustained part of this analysis.

case of citizens' representatives' election – the delegates of COMFORÇA (a task force constituted by participatory elements representing citizens near the Municipality). Within this particular PB experience, citizens are defined as registered voters at the age of 16 and over. This, however, does not make a citizen a “participant” in the process. Attendance of assemblies is a requirement for a registered voter of Belo Horizonte to become a participant. Moreover, a participatory citizen is not the citizen voter who shows interest in becoming part of the process, but the one who actively engages in deliberation, as well as being willing to take responsibility in the process. Accordingly, under the PB two distinct types of citizen participants seem to emerge: 1) the members of COMFORÇA, representing the participatory citizens with responsibilities under the process; 2) the members of the assemblies that although not assuming responsibilities under the process, engage and interact within the first stages of the PB.

Regarding the elements of COMFORÇA, they represent a kind of “hybrid” participatory citizen, since they represent citizens but they are trained and empowered for participation by the municipality political board. PB indeed is a process requiring participants to acquire a set of skills associated with the rules for discussion and presentation of proposals, as well as with the use of tools such as maps, charts or other devices to support decision-making as discussed in chapter 6 (see section 8). Such an empowerment requirement, that only some acquire, reveals the PB process as based on exclusionary procedures concerning a broader participation, as well as a way to promote inequalities between the citizens involved in the process.

The participation allowed by the regular citizens' attendance in the PB first stages of the process causes another profile of the participatory citizen to emerge. Indeed, this one assumes no responsibility in the process besides the feeling of duty to get involved, to

make proposals and to discuss them collectively. Although limited in the connection with the political municipal representatives, such an opportunity cannot be neglected as an HID procedure. From these broader moments of participation citizens' needs emerge through the proposals made, and its consideration by other public policies becomes possible, since PB works in conjunction with other sectorial policies.

But alongside the emergence of a 'participatory actor', one cannot ignore that the Municipality had to reorganize itself in order to ensure the proper working of the process and, thus, framing the emergence of the citizen as participatory actor. This reveals that a participatory government is also constituted within the PB process. Thus, the Municipality created the GGOP (the PB Management Group), a collective actor created within this participatory process to directly articulate with the participatory citizen. GGOP is composed of city officials, whose function is to monitor the implementation of the winning projects, report on their progress and potential problems and to propose guidelines for the PB process. The outcome is the joint construction of a participatory citizen as well as a new political entity able to properly articulate with citizens.

Thus, some constitutive elements of a participatory government can be identified concerning the PB: a) openness to establish a regular commitment with citizen participation through the process; b) adaptation of representative politics to citizen's participatory process (GGOP is an example on this), c) integration of the participatory process into the regular local politics.

With respect to protests, we cannot report the emergence of a 'shaped' participatory citizen but, instead, the emergence of a collective actor. Thus, if with PB we can identify participatory citizens as individuals who vote, propose, and take shared responsibilities with the Municipal body in respect to urban planning decisions; in protests,

we witness the emergence of a collective, concerned participatory actor and an affected “we”. Accordingly, a participatory citizen is someone affected by a decision or a problem, who joins a cause by lending his voice to a collective movement of contestation. In this form of participation, the collective dimension is usually associated with protests which aim at changing decisions and, in certain cases, pushing for institutionalized forms of participation.

At protests there also emerged two distinct profiles of the participatory citizen, both collective, as earlier expressed: 1) the mobilized citizens integrating the affected collective, expressing themselves through different action repertoires; 2) the organized body of citizens that organize and put protest in motion, such as the civic movements created.

Representation in protest actions is very different from what we find in PB or in other forms of deliberation-oriented participatory procedures. Concerning protests, and in comparison to the PB, while COMFORÇA is a mediator organism purposely created in the deliberative process to provide a link to the universe of Belo Horizonte voters that participate in the first stages of the process, ensuring their representation after that; at protest civic movements represent a platform for the organization of the process itself. Moreover, they also function as the "spokesperson", allowed to represent and to voice citizens' concerns near the media (and near the opposition parts of a controversy, which did not happen).

2.3. Participation: Different formats, different outcomes

Starting from the aims drawn from each one of the citizen participatory forms analyzed, this section discusses and addresses the deliberative outcomes each one of them produces.

Participation is more than an opportunity "to be" in a given process or to become accountable concerning a decision-making process. It relies on dialogical skills shared by the range of actors involved, who expect to influence decision-making. Social and political actors have capacities for action which may differ widely according to the instruments they choose to use. PB appears as a participatory instrument in the sense of Lascoumes and Gales (2007), that is, an institution determining the way in which actors are going to behave, constraining the actors while offering them possibilities. This particular device is an example of citizens' participation and active engagement in policy-making, where citizens control the process through their binding power over collective decisions.

Protest is a form of collective action which does not guarantee successful outcomes regarding its influence on decision-making, but which may generate other outcomes, in terms of citizen organization, for instance, or endowing a problem with public visibility. Thus, the protests studied, despite failing to change the decision taken by the government, proved to have a considerable influence, in the longer run, on the course of health policy-making.

Both cases revealed some potential to influence decisions beyond the expected: the PB, though being a deliberative process focused on urban planning, revealed a capacity to influence other sectorial decisions by establishing a connection with other areas of the Municipality. Protests, although they did not reverse the measure (for various reasons, including the reason that protests happened when the measure was already implemented, not during the deliberative process), due to their strength, in some cases, they were able to influence other health decisions. Thus, many of the protest actions triggered in regions affected by the government decision boosted the achievement of secondary goals related to health care and pursued by local populations. By attracting media attention, by extending

the controversy for over two years with regular press coverage, by finding allies within the national government, and by putting pressure on government action, protests produced some relevant (and unexpected) outcomes within the health policy domain.¹²⁶ These results cannot be directly translated into “deliberative power”, but they certainly fuelled the capacity of citizens to collectively act and influence decisions.

Some concrete examples illustrate these points. The chronology of these protest movements allows the identification of the effects of their actions on government action regarding health, especially at the local level. After the protest actions, some regions were visited by officials of the health ministry, who guaranteed to citizens or their representatives new health facilities at those localities. These situations may be regarded as indirect compensation for stopping protests.

The reported outcomes produced by the protest point to a connected aspect concerning the expectations that both processes may produce: the question of control and monitoring of policy-making through citizen participation.

Besides the collective debate over citizens’ problems and corresponding solutions, participation seems intimately associated to the citizens’ need for surveillance practices and controlling exercises over governments at two levels: a) monitoring and control over certain decision-making processes; b) monitoring and control of democratic practices. Both experiences embody high intensity forms of social control,¹²⁷ by being, in different ways, projects of monitoring democracy. However, it must be noted that this is not exactly the

¹²⁶ In some regions affected by the decision, protests activated the resolution of pending health claims, such as the construction or opening of new health services, as well as the provision of technological equipments. This was the case in Amarante (requalification and improvement of the unit where the maternity ward used to function); Chaves (two new ambulances; a helicopter for emergency transportation; 7 million euros to purchase new health equipment and to restructure the hemodialysis unit); Lamego (contracting of construction of a new hospital); Oliveira de Azeméis (rehabilitation of the hospital and construction of a new service for psychiatrical care); Santo Tirso (requalification of the maternity ward).

¹²⁷ Social control is a process which has society as its main protagonist, the state and its action as its focus and the promotion of democracy as its aim (Nunes *et al.*, 2008: 61).

same as saying that they embody equivalent high intensity forms of democracy, an issue to be further discussed in detail.

In PB, control of the process is a shared task performed by citizens throughout each stage of the PB cycle, namely by the representative body of the citizens (COMFORÇA) within the local government system. Protest, in turn, gives a different shape to the exercise of monitoring and control over decision-making, by revealing citizens' awareness of the way public policies are being accepted or rejected. Thus, protests are a possible form of action for showing disagreement or dissent regarding policy decisions, with the aim eventually of seeking to control decision-making and demanding direct control of democratic practices.

While the PB presented and discussed in this work guarantees that participants will indeed have an influence on decisions, protests do not, although their effects may be more important and extensive than would be expected from their stated aims. The protests triggered all over the country led to the fall of the Health Minister, who had taken the controversial decision. As many other protests recorded in the history of Portuguese democracy, these particular forms of collective action also contributed to the replacement of that government in the subsequent election.

These protests appear as spaces for the monitoring of democracy, with a potential control and correction of some of the pathologies of democracy. Monitoring is therefore a legitimate dimension of participation and one of the consequences of its “intensive” exercise.

3. Can different forms of knowledge become reconciled under high intensity forms of democracy?

As discussed in chapter 3, the inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes potentially broadens the opportunity for dialogue between different areas of knowledge, which can be reflected in better and fairer decisions. In this section, and starting from the way cases addressed the relationship between different areas of knowledge, we try to figure out the possibilities for a co-production of knowledge.

Representative liberal democracies tend to protect decision-making from the intrusion of lay citizens, namely through a gesture of legitimation corresponding to the “double delegation model” (Callon *et al.*, 2001). That model divides politics/administration and science/expertise on one side and citizens on the other. Accordingly, citizens are regarded as being affected by a double deficit: of political skills, since representatives take decisions for them, and of knowledge, requiring a specific expertise to act on their behalf.

This approach is associated with a profiling of the citizen as someone who, although capable of having opinions, will only be fit to participate in decision-making after they have gone through appropriate “education”. These are the main reasons why most of the existing, formalized participatory procedures are subject to strict rules and seem so regulated, as a strategy for narrowing the participation of the citizens empowered through appropriate “education” on the topics under debate. This model still prevails over participatory practices which rely on the recognition of citizens as sharing common capabilities for debate and deliberation.

Both processes provide examples of how to combine different forms of knowledge within participatory processes. The case studies clearly allow the identification of the encounters of different forms of knowledge within decision-making processes. Citizens’ knowledge, based on their familiarity with aspects like the features of the

territory, of accessibilities and even of the weather, which may influence the safe transportation of pregnant women to the nearest health unit, and other allied forms of knowledge emerging during the controversy, like the capabilities of members of the fire brigades to attend to pregnant women during transportation and delivery, coexisted and sometimes competed with the knowledge-base invoked by the government to legitimize its decisions.

Decisions such as the one taken by the Portuguese Health Minister, using scientific and technical expertise to support policy-making, are frequent in Portugal (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2007: 14). At the same time, the contestation of such policies is also on the increase. This provides an interesting tension between the continuing prevalence of the double delegation model, on the one hand, and the episodes of resistance to or overt contestation of expert evaluations, as happened in the case of child and maternal health care policies. In this process, expert and citizen knowledge often appeared in conflict, contrary to the PB case, where the different forms of knowledge seem to have come together and aligned.

During the protests over the closure of maternity wards, the lay knowledge mobilized by local citizens and the forms of expertise demonstrated by health professional groups on the matter at stake were not engaged in sustained dialogue with the scientific assessment that the decision was based on, nor with policy makers. These protests represent a step forward in the identification of the need to implement innovative changes concerning the relationship between forms of knowledge within processes of decision-making.

The forms of knowledge dealt with in both cases include knowledge about urban planning, health problems, as well as the identification and recognition of forms of inequality.

PB in Brazil proved to be a distinctive practice demonstrating the possibilities of dialogue between different forms of knowledge. PB represents one example of institutional change, challenging the double delegation model. This experience offers us a picture of how urban planning may constitutively involve mobilization of technological knowledge in conjunction with other kinds of expertise, displaying a clear example of what has been called *empowered participatory governance* (Fung and Wright, 2001, 2003).

Both cases configure opportunities for citizen empowerment, namely on the understanding of how the political machine works. This is a kind of opening of the “political black box”. These empowering movements may appear as a goal to achieve, as is the case of PB, or as a contingent consequence of certain participatory practices, as the protest case suggests.

Despite their differences, both experiences represent spaces for debating the main problems generating dissatisfaction (on maternal and child health or urban planning), which turns them into privileged spaces of socialization of the population regarding their entitlement to basic rights. As for protests, they represent spaces of empowerment to intervene in public life, forming opinions, sharing and debating different points on controversial issues. As for PB, the understanding of how the local political process works and how to become an active part of it becomes a major area of citizen empowerment.

The PB process endorses a symmetric empowerment opportunity for all participants, in a kind of new double model of empowerment, both for citizens, and for politicians and the municipal administrative body. In the protest actions, empowerment

also happens, although in a different way. Due to the conflitual relations, citizens' empowerment happens as a "natural" consequence to those who search for involvement in politics, who feel motivated to learn the functioning of the political machine, as well as the issues under deliberation in order to argue and present solutions. In the both cases the account of the knowledge mobilized revealed that citizens aren't the only ones with much to learn.

Concerning knowledge relations, both cases give us accounts of possibilities of new knowledge configurations emerging from diverse forms of engagement with public decisions. Each case in its own way shows that lay people may contribute in a constructive way to the decisions directly affecting their lives.

PB provides a demonstration of the capacity to channel citizens' knowledge to the deliberation on matters of urban policy, in conjunction with technical expertise. Protests, although they endow with visibility the existence of relevant forms of knowledge emerging during the controversy, due to the conflitual relations established under this process and the authoritarian position of the Portuguese State concerning citizens participation, these forms of knowledge were not put into direct relation and as a consequence such knowledge was wasted in the scope of decision due to the supremacy of scientific assessment that politicians used to form the basis of the measure taken. Although in the PB case the risk of waste of knowledge could happen, it is being bridged through the connection of distinct social policies.¹²⁸ This is a strategic way to properly channel relevant knowledge of the identified problems beyond urban planning to the proper spaces of political action, avoiding not only a waste of knowledge, but also avoiding a waste of participation and experience. Both processes, in different ways and based on different relations with

¹²⁸ The PB of Belo Horizonte, besides the interaction with Housing PB, is based on a coordinated action between different social policies that tackle the various problems identified, as is the case of *BH Cidadania* (BH Citizen Program).

technical expertise, alert us to the fact that technical experts are not expert in the functioning of democracy.

Given such knowledge configurations, each one of the experiences entails distinct possibilities of cognitive justice. PB is one example of the co-production of new forms of knowledge given the registered connection between different forms of knowledge to a domain that was considered a “reserve of experts”. The emergence of new knowledge is here favored by the horizontal interactions between those who participate in the process, which entails a movement of double empowerment among the different actors, based on the challenging of the authority of both politics and experts. This case clearly endorses the idea that policy-making is more effective when different forms of knowledge cohabit in a given decision.

But protests also highlight the emergence of knowledge pluralism in decision-making. In cases like the one studied, this form of collective action not only revealed distrust in a political decision, as it questioned the justification of the measure through expert knowledge. The assessment of the situation of childbirth in Portugal made by the expert group was never accepted by the population as an unquestionable truth.

What underlies both cases is the constant need for a more “ecumenical” dialogue of knowledge in decision-making processes as well as the need to support decisions based on *hybrid constellations of actors* and their respective experience-based knowledge (Santos, 2003). However, what both practices confirm is that the dynamics of the process and its outcomes will be different depending on how different forms of knowledge relate. If we pay attention to the PB, what seems to happen is that in the process the supremacy of the technical knowledge over the lay knowledge of citizens still prevails. Thereby, expert knowledge under the analyzed PB can have veto power over the acceptance of some of the

proposals presented by citizens. Ultimately, it is the capacity of experts and of the expert knowledge that reasserts authority through a definition of a giving issue as “technical”, even within a procedure led by the aim of empowering “lay” citizens that determines the knowledge configuration under this process.

Such limits certainly have implications for the conception of democratization (or “deepening” democracy) as an open, unending process. In fact, every procedure rests upon constitutive exclusions, which at some point generate claims for inclusion by those who were not counted in. There is no end, in principle, to this process and that is why democracy, including HID, is not a product but an open concept, based on open practices, always being readapted.

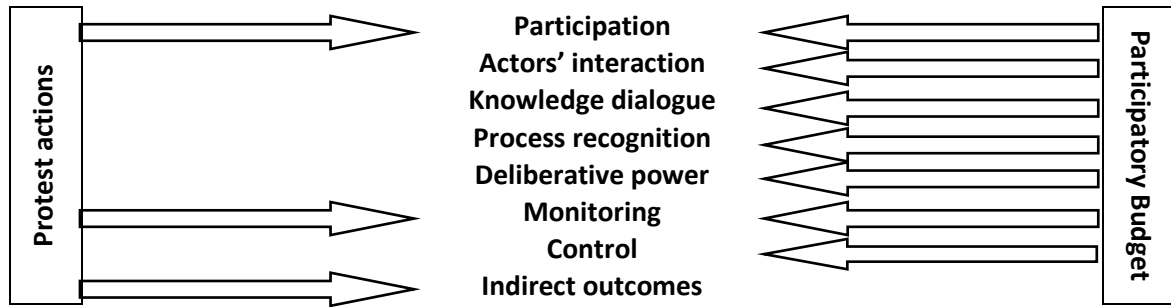
4. How to organize for intensity forms of democracy?

Both cases refer to engaged participatory actors with differences in their power to transform public politics. From the analysis carried out several dimensions emerged as central to the comprehension of participatory experiences in relation with HID.

The next diagram attempts to summarize the main dimensions used in the analysis, considered a support in structuring the participatory processes analysed in this work in its relation to HID. The arrows do not stand for degrees of any kind of intensity, but just for presence/absence (accomplishment of the given objective to be further described) of a certain situation within each the one of the processes analysed.

Figure 24

Dimensions of participatory experiences considered in the analysis



Framed under PB, participation means the opportunity to become an active participatory citizen through an institutional arrangement within municipal politics. Here citizens hold power to control part of the urban planning investments, given the binding power attached to their deliberations, by virtue of the very design of the arrangement. Protests, although representing a legitimate form of participation in decision-making processes, as defined in beginning of the section 2.1. of this chapter, had no success in the accomplishment of their in meeting its primary goal: to cancelling the closure plan of maternity wards at the sites affected.

Concerning the possibilities of dialogue between forms of knowledge, again, the two processes display some differences. On this topic, a high intensity form of democracy seems to empower citizens for decision-making and recognizes the usefulness of diverse forms of knowledge on a certain theme by producing decisions articulating the distinctive approaches to the problems and to their solution. Accordingly, PB provides a concrete opportunity for all participants to engage with different approaches on how to establish priorities in urban planning, encouraging decision-making production controlled by citizens in conjunction with technical expertise. Protest events also produce different forms of knowledge competing or converging on a given decision, but they are not moved by the

intention of articulating them in order to achieve a new knowledge configuration responding to the situation under debate.

Interaction, recognition and deliberative dimensions are intimately related in both processes, although with distinct outcomes. In protests, citizen interaction with policy makers did not happen due to the lack of recognition by the government of protests as a legitimate form of citizen participation, but just as a means of expressing discontent with government decisions. This affected the potential for turning an agonistic dynamics into an opportunity for deliberation of a contested decision. Within PB, the process is based from its onset on citizen participation, with guaranteed binding effects on the decisions of local government. The binding power held by local citizens under the PB of Belo Horizonte is one central element of this process that may be recognized as a high intensity democratic practice. Binding power provides citizens with the capacity to control not only urban planning, but the very process of democratic government. This is one possible expression of the exercise of power from below.

Like other protest movements, the events analysed here, when measured up to their participatory potential, offer no guaranteed results or outcomes. However, these forms of collective action are not empty spaces of possibilities concerning decisions influence. If protests had no influence in this decision, at least they had the capacity to make government review its relationship with citizens. Moreover, protests like these may be assumed as the equivalent of an extensive consultation of population, influencing future decisions. Protests really open deliberation to passion, diverting the excessive attention usually given to facts and data to values, emotions and to less technical considerations regarding a given subject.

Both participatory experiences are also illustrative of the monitoring and control citizens may exercise over decision-making and democracy. Protests emerged as a way of monitoring political decisions and its consequences, proving that citizens are not disinterested and apathetic concerning politics. Their presence, discontent and mobilization are part of their attempt to control politics through pressure, given the absence of other institutionalized forms to intervene in politics beyond elections. PB, again, due to its binding power over decisions and the capacity to control (at least partially) budgetary policies, seems to allow the exercise of some real power by citizens, even if that power is circumscribed to specific areas of local politics and subject to detailed and tight ruling.

Lastly, attention is given to the potential consequences behind processes. Although PB is a structured process to achieve specific goals (empowerment through participation, citizens' partial control over budgetary politics and the reduction of inequalities through a redistribution of fiscal resources), it limits citizens' political action to a rigid protocol of procedures. Protests, in contrast, present themselves as open spaces for action, much more volatile in terms of the outcomes they may produce.

High intensity forms of democracy are then inextricably linked to citizens' direct participation in public decision-making. Democratic intensity seems largely dependent on the way participation is enacted and its consequences. High intensity forms of participation are part of assemblages based on positive, mutually potentiating connections between participation and representation, in order to produce better decisions and further social justice. But beyond decision-making, participation also serves high intensity democracy in other ways, namely by providing more effective means of citizen control over the actions of the State.

Considering the potential carried by both experiences to make change happen, this may be represented through distinctive flows of high intensity democracy.

Table 7
Comparative analysis case studies

	Participatory Budget of Belo Horizonte	Protests on Portuguese Maternity Wards closure
Participation	PB as a structured participatory process closed in some of its phases.	Protests as an open participatory process.
Actors interaction	Dialogist connection between local citizens, local politicians and Municipal administrative board through specific rules determining interaction in search for consensual deliberation.	Confrontational relations between local citizens, political parties, civic movements, professional unions, and Health Minister based on indirect communication, namely through the media, given the refusal of decision-makers to engage in direct dialogue.
Policy-making based on knowledges dialogue	Dialogue opportunities between different forms of knowledge may function as a base of co-production of new knowledge concerning decisions.	Emergence of new knowledge with no dialogue between them within policy-making.
Recognition of the process	Participatory measure conceived to promote citizens engagement at urban planning investments, co-constructed with citizens.	Citizens pressure to be recognized as legitimately intervenient in decision-making.
Deliberative capacity	Citizens' binding power over urban planning, although the technical evaluation of the proposal may veto citizens' decisions. Process dynamics may also involve agonistic dynamics.	No deliberative power recognized.
Monitoring	Citizens' monitoring of all the process through their elected representatives: investments, costs, buildings execution, and participation.	Citizens' monitoring of policy-making conception.
Control	Part of municipal investments is potentially directly controlled by citizens' participation.	National politics indirectly controlled by citizens' participation at protest actions.
Correlated outcomes	No deliberative effect beyond the expected action, although PB allows the interaction with other measures under Municipality jurisdiction.	Protests as equivalent to a public consultation.

The considered experiences reveal that with different rhythms, supported by distinctive dynamics, based on conflict or oriented towards consensus, they both perform specific and distinctive practices with high intensity democratic potential.

Despite the main differences identified, PB could correspond to a high intensity form of democracy that we may call '*substantive and consensus oriented*'. It gives us an

account of a process of citizens' engagement in local politics, strongly consolidated and institutionalized – social technology that has become a normal social/political practice. So, being a strongly consolidated participatory mechanism is the main dimension that ensures that “substantive” character of the process. However, the more substantive character of the PB as a participatory mechanism does not make this device of higher intensity than protests. The previous analysis gave us an account of a distinct intensity at certain dimensions considered. Thus, the PB as a mechanism often recognized as a point of reference by the HID proposal is not a model free of criticism. As discussed, PB presents some limitations in terms of participation; though often recognized as a deliberative process where citizens' control through the binding power they possess, PB is at its final stage controlled by the veto power technicians have over decisions; although promoted as consensus oriented, it also has space for occurrences of agonistic dynamics.

Protests gave us another version of how high intensity democracy can be pursued: a high intensity form of democracy performed through conflict, confrontation, and challenging of the political order. Given their potential, protests may then be treated as a '*prospective and confrontational*' form of high intensity democracy. The idea under this classification does not deprive protests of their undeniable democratic intensity, it just places them as a different high-intensity democratic model when set alongside other participatory forms as the PB. Although protests are recognized as HID practices, the deepening of democracy will depend on the capacity of institutional political actors to adapt the political system to reflect the emerging demands of the citizenry. Undoubtedly, the governance model that characterizes the Portuguese governments still does not allow citizen participation in the policy-making process.

Just because protests failed to reverse the measure implemented, it doesn't mean that these forms of citizen participation do not meet the definition of HID. The intensity of democratic protests goes beyond the spontaneous mobilization of the population against the government's decision and the power that such forms of collective action may have and may represent for democracy. Or as Shiv Visvanathan (2012) states, protests perform truly "democratic festivals". They happen due to the dispensability of conflict and protests that haunts democracy. In this sense protests represent democratic clashes that pave the way for keeping democratic potential on track. In fact, protest actions often were initiated and/or driven by the interests of local opposition and government parties. We cannot ignore, however, that parallel to this mobilization of a more partisan politics there also emerged civic movements fighting for the same cause, although the media have provided them with little or no attention, as is the case of the Civic Movement "Por Mirandela" (For Mirandela), that does not appear in the analyzed press and is overshadowed by the popularity of the local mayor. The media gave a decisive visibility to these protests, contributing significantly to social movements reaching their goals of mediation, but in this case the protagonist was always the local mayor. Moreover, citizens responded to the municipalities call for mobilization, but the collective mobilization under these protests, particularly in some cases, go beyond the institutional action of the municipalities.

All major opposition parties, and in some localities even the government party, were against the decision, raising a position concerning the measure that goes beyond partisan politics. Moreover, along with the partisan political mobilization, joint mobilizations with civic movements happened. So, we can also recognize the presence of HID in those joint events, revealing that protests are able to promote "connections"

between different political parties united for a cause at the local level, as well as political parties with civic movements.

Both cases clearly converge on the current need to create new public spaces where intensive democratic practices, based on new forms of interaction between citizens and political representatives, may flow. In this respect they are both examples of HID, though in radically different forms. As shown in this study, the Belo Horizonte PB and the protests over the closure of maternity wards in Portugal represent two distinct ways for citizens to participate, to respond to collective problems, to repair social inequalities and to contribute to the common good. PB represents an innovative institutional procedure while protests represent the fight for that kind of innovation. Thus, transgressive and creative ('new spaces') of participation are central to making HID happens.

To summarize, the joint examination of both cases allows the drafting of a tentative list of principles and features that are to be observed by those who wish to promote HID. Such a list should, we conclude on the basis of the present analysis, contain the following elements:

1. HID rests upon historically, culturally and politically embedded practices, not just on institutionalized political and administrative procedures. The 'participatory citizen' engaged with politics and policy-making emerges from these backgrounds through action, dialogue and interaction. Whether forms of participation are already formally institutionalized or not is a secondary matter;
2. Territorial boundaries are a relevant element in determining HID, since territory is the main ground for the confrontation between State and regional organized populations and systems of care and solidarity;

3. HID results from the merging of forms of citizen participation and conventional representative political practices into deliberative procedures;
4. HID's practices are made of listening, dialogue and negotiation between the diverse actors and groups involved in and affected by a particular domain of decision-making;
5. HID recognizes emotions and other forms of communication beneath and beyond speech abilities as important factors in public debate and resources for participants enacting HID. For that reason they cannot be dismissed as irrelevant or irrational on an a priori basis;
6. HID implies respect for a horizontal communication process where symmetry and parity between citizens and representatives provide building bricks for a dialogical democracy;
7. HID enhances the (re)distribution of power, authority and opportunities to voice one's concerns among the actors involved in decision-making;
8. HID imposes no a priori restrictions in terms of citizens' eligibility to engage in policy-making, as all citizens are potential participatory actors and should not undergo any procedure to select them on the basis of their alleged capacities for participation;
9. HID has intense trading zones between different forms of knowledge, where new pluralistic knowledge configurations emerge on which decisions will be based, allowing mutual empowerment of the various actors and discourses involved;
10. HID leads to the institutionalization of innovative arrangements deriving from conflict and agonistic relations with the State in order to guarantee future regular and lasting democratic practices of citizens participation;
11. HID corresponds to practices of control and monitoring of the state and of the political process.

Conclusions

- _ Mum, I really want you to finish your PhD thesis!
 - _ Why bring that up now?
 - _ Because I don't know what you're like without a thesis to finish.
 - _ Is that bad?
 - _ I don't know, but I need to experience it to see how it is.
- (Salvador, July 2012)

'Democracy', ever since it emerged in antiquity, has been contested, criticized and reinvented. In the past four decades the debates have focused on the crisis of what is labeled as the 'representative' or 'representational' model of democracy. "Representative democracy as it has been institutionalized in liberal democratic societies is not or is no longer functioning satisfactorily and adequately"; that's the central critique articulated in the debates. However widely varied the critique is, there is some convergence in diagnosing some problems with democracy, but there is disagreement and debate over how to respond to them. Some convergence can be observed regarding a common conception of the ills of representative democracy that combines elements such as the following: the contradiction between the mobilization and institutionalization of politics; the valuation of the political apathy and the considered citizens' inability to make decisions; the elitist solution in the democracy debate and the overvaluation of representative mechanisms.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness in the West of the conceptions of democracy that have emerged in other parts of the world that suggest new ways of responding to the crisis of representative democracy. One such alternative has been the High Intensity Democracy (HID) proposal developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 1998, 2007a; Santos and Avritzer, 2002). The HID approach is strongly influenced by (re)democratization processes of the global South, ignited by popular movements often supported by left-wing administrations, aiming to fight inequalities,

violence, exclusion and corruption, that for many years prevented the access to citizenship. The idea is that a more democratic system is only morally acceptable if it provides moments when citizens may directly participate in public decision-making. But participation in deliberation is happening through diverse experiments around the world, promoted by different political projects, in distinct institutional contexts and at a range of territorial scales.

In this thesis two case studies were used to explore what HID may amount to in different settings as a contribution to the discussion about HID and how to develop it in theory and practice. For expository purposes we have juxtaposed it with what is seen as the standard view of representational democracy or Low Intensity Democracy (LID). In this LID model the participation of the citizens is basically limited to periodic elections of representatives in parliaments and similar bodies that are supposed to control the executive and to produce legislation and regulation to deal with and protect the public good and the citizens.

The HID approach's most central aim is to generate new citizen participatory practices targeting decision-making processes and mobilizing citizens. In this respect the HID approach goes beyond strictly proceduralist proposals that limit themselves to providing formal rules of engagement that should be observed in public debates to allow for inclusiveness and rational exchange. In between the HID approach and the standard minimal form of representational democracy LID we find a wide variety of more or less participatory programs and models. HID can be seen as a close relative to 'Strong Democracy' as advocated by Benjamin Barber (Barber, 1984; Font, 1998). But there is a much broader variety of attempts around the world to articulate critique and to suggest improvements to the LID model, often in response to problems that preoccupy activists as

well. In so far as they are based on critique of the representationalist conceptions and seek to promote more participation of citizens in political decision-making, they may jointly be labeled as participatory models. But there are also all sorts of differences and in Chapter 1 of this book the various approaches in the debates about democracy and broader public participation that have raged over the last four decades were reviewed. As we saw, a major and rather basic dimension has to do with the question of whether adherents of participatory democracy conceive of democracy primarily in structural terms (democracy as a model of governance) or in processual terms (democracy as a never ending process).

Another dimension is whether one conceives politics as being about conflict or in terms of consensus-building. Participation through conflict, as reviewed in Chapter 2, opened the discussion over protests as forms of participation in decision-making, namely through contributions from social movement theory. Conflict thus came to be framed as a normal part of democratic processes and collective actions based on contested relations, and protest events were included in the repertoire of legitimate forms of participation with a potential to promote HID. Protests contributed to the redefinition of the meaning of participation, based upon their potential influence on shaping public policies and controlling public actions related with common interests, despite their fragilities in transforming and consolidating themselves within permanent institutions of the State, or recognized by the State.

Another dimension has to do with whether one focuses on institutionalization and regulation of more inclusive forms of citizen consultation and participation or whether one sees initiatives to challenge existing states of affairs and forms of representation as the true core on democratic renewal.

A separate issue is the extent to which various models deal with issues of expertise and specialist and often new evidence and knowledge in relation to issues of public engagement and participation, to which Chapter 3 dedicated particular attention. The assumption of a comprehensive citizen inclusion in policy-making under the HID proposal also opened the discussion about the possibility of a more horizontal relationship between different forms of knowledge which come into contact through the plurality of actors involved in decision-making processes. HID encourages citizens to think for themselves based on their experiences, valuing that form of knowledge in decision-making in conjunction with other forms of expertise. Technology and associated forms of knowledge and expertise are everywhere and so is the knowledge and expertise of organizing and adjusting social order to deal with opportunities and challenges.

On these various dimensions our empirical and theoretical explorations show that HID is oriented towards the ‘processual view’. It is in so far as it focuses on practices of participatory budgeting especially interested in processes of institutionalizing and adjusting the formal systems to integrate such forms of engagement. Yet it has a sharp awareness of the importance of how issues are defined with interventions and appeal to expert knowledge and the role of power differentials as the effect on the outcomes and institutional designs that are promoted. In this respect it hangs more towards the conflict view than towards consensus models. It was argued that a focus on the highly interesting examples of HID as they are institutionalized in systems of participatory budgeting should not close our eyes to that other side of HID, the more challenging, transgressive aspects of popular protests and new movements and other forms of mobilization. If one cuts that aspect out of the analysis, even a progressive system like PB runs the risk of becoming yet another tool by which the elite may manage populations to comply with and accept

political and economic agendas defined somewhere else. One of the important things therefore was to deal with practices of HID and to analyze how they contribute to renewal and the creative opening up of new spaces for engagement, new ways of articulating democratic values and forms of expression, and allowing room for voices so far excluded. Both the PB case in Chapter 6 and the Portuguese protest case studied in Chapter 5 document such aspects and the ongoing and renewed struggles and debates. While these are part of an attempt to redefine participatory budgeting in Belo Horizonte, no such an attempt at institutionalization of HID can be seen in Portugal, at least not in circles of government and bureaucracy. And yet, as argued, these protests are very much instances of HID and of reproducing and renewing the capabilities that are essential for the continued struggle to develop and redefine democracy. The question is, what lessons are there to be learnt from these experiences?

Confronting these cases raised important questions about how a participatory process, a participatory citizen and pro-participatory government become constituted and evolve and which understandings about science, politics and expertise inform such processes. The analysis allowed a sharper understanding of how various forms of knowledge come to flow together according to different forms of participation and what that implies for actors' identities and institutional framings and mechanisms in operation. Moreover, confrontation of cases, with such distinctive features, gave a relevant input of what the participatory mechanisms implied meant for understandings about citizenship and democracy.

The PB of Belo Horizonte has for a long time been taken as the harbinger of a new democracy, representing a concrete opportunity of political innovation based on solid participatory foundations. Especially in its early versions, like the one analyzed,

participation represents a concrete opportunity to collectively determine the course of public decisions. For this reason, this PB has become a reference not only for allowing the direct involvement of citizens with urban planning decision-making, for giving them deliberative power based on a coordinated action between State and civil society, but mainly for being oriented by a redistributive principle, both of municipal resources and of political power. Such features make this process one of the most powerful tools in reorienting public investments towards the poorest regions and in favoring the poorest social groups. Moreover, participation under PB does not only allow citizens' deliberation over urban planning issues, since citizen participation may influence other intervention areas, since direct interaction and dialogue with citizens within the process is channeled to the amount of public policies function at the municipality, as in the case of Belo Horizonte.

The Belo Horizonte Participatory budgeting is by far one of the most acclaimed participatory innovations the world over, and it stands as an exemplar of how to instantiate the principles advocated by the HID model. One must not ignore the current existence of about 2000 PB processes running in the world, most of them in large cities. Although with variable aims and consequent implications for deliberation, and noticing that many of these processes are actually associated with low intensity democratic practices, PB appears as a procedure able to mobilize millions of people in the world, and it certainly represents a positive incentive to the consolidation of citizen participation as a practice which is often internalized in everyday, local political routines, creating durable institutional innovations based on consensual forms of democratic deliberation, controlled by citizens' interests, stimulating the emergence of new opportunities of high-intensity expression between participation and political representation.

But if we pay close attention to the history of democracy, we realize that it is mostly made up of struggles, rather than of consensual participatory, deliberative processes. Over time, the architecture of citizen participation in politics has not been confined to procedures designed to make participation flow into decision-making processes. Alongside these formalized frameworks for citizen participation, innovation may also flourish from initiatives arising from democratic civil society. Thus, when no other possibilities for participatory articulation between State and Civil Society emerge, civil society itself can draw its path towards a stronger democracy through other participatory practices, including those based on conflict. Thus, social movements and their collective forms of action often appear as instances of the emergence of a participatory democracy.

In considering participation as a central topic for the present discussion, this work makes a contribution to the awareness of the shaping and determination of participation by a range of values, beliefs and strategies implemented by actors involved in politics in pursuit of an aim, in this case the reorientation of policy-making towards peoples' needs. Protests may thus be regarded as legitimate democratic practices of participation. The case included in this work clearly demonstrated that protest was the only way left for local populations to relate to the controversial decision of closing maternity wards. Protests were used as a strategy to influence that decision through the making of counter arguments, not just demonstrating dissatisfaction. However, this form of collective action, although legally considered as a legitimate form of participation in public life and in politics, was presented by the government as a form of illegitimate invasion by ordinary citizens of a decision-making sphere "belonging" to elected officials and to the State.

Given the absence of alternatives, namely in the form of other institutionalized forms of participation, protests functioned here as precious channels to put pressure on the State for dialogue and interaction with Civil Society. Moreover, protests proved to be privileged spaces where valuable information about birth conditions and related issues relevant to the decision circulated, was shared and publicly displayed. These actions configured privileged spaces for the demonstration of citizens' ability to monitor and to control democracy and representative democratic practices. The protests triggered major political changes in Portugal, including the sacking of the Minister of Health, a way of negatively sanctioning the performance of the institutions of representative democracy. However, if protests displayed their power in channeling pressure on decision-making, their limitations in influencing advances towards new institutionalized forms of participation were also apparent.

The lens of HID helped to identify common features as well as significant differences in the cases analyzed, in relation to the promotion or inhibiting of the strengthening of democracy through a broadening of citizen participation.

In PB all citizens are called to participate; the only requirement is that they be registered voters in Belo Horizonte. In protest actions participation was driven by personal motivation related to the controversy, and collective mobilization is driven by sympathy towards a cause. But while in PB participation happens within rules which define spaces and timelines – even if citizens have the power to discuss and vote these rules –, participation in protests is characterized by plasticity, going through adaptations in response to the course of events. Thus, with regard to participation, while PB defines the existence of a new, publicly recognized participatory space, bound by explicit rules and sanctioned by formal political institutions, the action of the protests is not formally

recognized as participation, and its success depends on an ongoing and creative adaptation to changing events and circumstances, requiring a sense of timing and a capacity for setting aims at different moments. The grounds for the legitimation of the protests as public or civic action and the capacity to actually influence decision-making or to overturn past decisions thus depend on this ongoing capacity to set credible targets for the protests and to maintain a minimal level of commitment and mobilization.

The Belo Horizonte PB revealed some limitations closely associated to its condition as a participatory engine, namely the low levels of participation registered and the consequent strategies implemented to encourage participation. Such a dimension highlighted this fragility of PB as a democratic device considered as a HID example.

HID is made of strong interactions and dialogue between the plurality of actors involved in the decision process. Thus, another major conclusion reached is that, on the one hand, institutionalized participation mechanisms, rule-bound procedures like PB, indeed ensures the stability, durability and normalized procedures for the improvement of interaction between the actors involved but, on the other hand, it may also constrain the way interactions flow as well as the rules, settings and proper timing of participation. PB displays considerable potential for horizontal, symmetric and parity relations between citizens, elected officials and municipal staff, protests underline the key role of emotions and other forms of mutual engagement and expression beyond speech in HID, and they cannot be dismissed a priori as irrelevant and irrational. High-intensity democracy also thrives on unpredictability and the possibility of disagreement or dissent by a collective of actors who move on to fight what they regard as the redress of injustice as the protests dealt with in the case study have shown.

Both cases are illustrative of the relevance of the recognition and approval by government formal political institutions of what counts as an appropriate or legitimate form of citizen participation. Protest actions, however, as mentioned above, failed to be recognized by the Portuguese national government as legitimate forms of involvement with policy-making. Even if that recognition is granted, the consequences may differ widely regarding the capacity to influence and/or control decision-making, namely concerning the deliberative potential of each participatory form. This, however, does not mean that unrecognized or devalued participatory mechanisms have less democratic potential. On the contrary, if we bear in mind that democracy should be organized on the principle of popular sovereignty, and that protest is a democratic right established by the democratic rule of law, the limited capacity to “push” governance beyond low intensity democracy arises from the non-recognition by formal political power of these forms of action as legitimate participation.

Participation seems to rely heavily on the State, which defines processes such as PB as a substantive, relevant or ‘authentic’ participatory experience in comparison to protests. The latter, despite their association with constitutional rights, were, however, ignored or dismissed, labeled as emotional, unfounded, irrelevant and disturbing actions performed by citizens outside their legitimate space for political participation – i.e., the space of voting in elections or referenda. This leads us to conclude that HID practices are not only those recognized by the State as serving claims for participation– i.e., those defined by people – with guaranteed deliberative effects, but also those that once framed as democratic rights show some capacity to redirect decisions towards citizens’ claims. In different ways, cases revealed the potential for apprenticeship of citizen participation, but also for learning how the state works and how it relates to citizens.

Another major issue dealt with in this work was the way different forms of knowledge could be expressed under deliberation as well as the relevance of this topic for HID. Both cases show evidence of the presence and the relevance of a hierarchical relation between different forms, technical and experienced-based. Expert/technical knowledge still has a hold on final decisions, thus constraining the power recognized to citizens to deliberate, and set *de facto* limits to the binding power of that deliberation. Protests, in turn, may be read as responses to the perceived inadequacies of the double delegation model (Callon *et al.*, 2001) to address controversial issues and to provide adequate forms of decision-making for those situations where the effects of decisions are felt as undesirable or damaging by those who are affected by them. Protests allowed alternative forms of framing the problem to emerge, drawing on knowledge based on the experience of those affected, but ignored by decision-makers. The situation provided, in fact, a neat example of a decision-making process ruled by scientific/technical expertise and discarding other contributions to informed decision-making, a situation all too familiar to Portuguese citizens.

The two cases showed different ways of organizing for HID, each one with specific features, deriving from different forms of citizen engagement. Both experiences made us realize how different democratic contexts may constrain or enhance diverse forms of organization for HID. The PB case may be said to stand for a HID model designed in this research as *substantive and consensus oriented*: it originates in a process designed to strengthen democracy through specific participatory practices based on a structured model of interactions, promoting horizontal forms of communication and an institutionalized engagement in local politics. This process is associated with deliberation with binding power, and even though decision-making is conceived as a sharing of responsibility among

the diverse political actors engaged in process, the latter is ultimately based on the purpose of empowering local citizens to control urban planning decisions.

Protests configured an alternative model of HID emerging in a context of absence of institutionalized forms for regular citizen participation in deliberation. Through protest, citizens opposed specific decisions and, in the process, they challenged the practices of low intensity democracy leading to those decisions. They demanded recognition of their presence and voice, in what amounted to a *de facto* monitoring of decision-making under representative democracy. Even though direct influence on decision-making through deliberation was not on the agenda, participation through protests was taken in this research as an example of a *prospective and confrontational* practice of HID, which, under favorable circumstances, may open up a path towards an institutionalization of more regular participation in deliberation.

Although protests may push forward some features of high-intensity democracy, ultimately their capacity to evolve into more robust and durable forms of citizen participation requires a more robust, durable and organized engagement with the State, eventually resulting in institutionalized forms of deliberation.

Here, a word of caution is in order: HID does not correspond exactly to institutionalized participatory practices; it covers also democratic practices intended to broaden interaction, dialogue, communication, shared responsibility and mutual learning between the plurality of actors involved in deliberation. Thus, although HID is oriented to deliberation, its focus is also on the quality of participation; although oriented to the institutionalization of participatory processes, it does not neglect mundane practices of participation, such as the agonistic forms of relationship with the State, as protests.

This work draws on the recognition of conflict as standing in a positive relation to democracy and to deliberation, given its potential to direct decisions according to peoples' interests; to enact democratic practices from below; to bring to the surface new forms of argumentation and expression, even if mediated by the media, in deliberative settings. Conflict is not only part of democracy, but a rich field of possibilities for strengthening democracy as well, through deliberation processes tailored to the needs and the interests of specific populations.

Thus, the focus of HID is not on the procedural dimension of decision-making, but on the democratic interactions performed, their intensity through practices established between participants for the definition of the common good. Accordingly, policy-making under HID is not based (or not only based) on an idealized process of citizen participation with predetermined outcomes, but on daily life and the contingencies it carries.

Although this work provided useful clues regarding how to strengthen democracy through practices associated with HID as a regulative ideal, the strong conviction remains that, particularly when democracy is at stake, there are no general, definitive and absolute models or conclusions to be drawn on what "real" democracy is or should be. No democracy model is a finished framework, not even the available models for high intensity democracy.

This study opened the way for an understanding of how different societies, through specific participatory mechanisms or practices organize themselves to fulfill the needs expressed by citizens through democratic means, beyond the current "double delegation" model associated with representative or low intensity democracy. Thus, this work is not an end point: it is a point of entry into further work and into the scrutiny of ongoing and coming experiments in democracy. Indeed, much more work is needed to

clarify what HID or LID stand for, through an appraisal of very specific experiences happening in particular democratic contexts.

Concerning the knowledge question and the possibilities of co-producing innovative knowledge configurations, this work highlighted the need to reinforce the study of the relevance of the relationship between forms of knowledge under decision-making processes. We are not claiming this to be an understudied area, but we suggest that the study of how forms of knowledge meet and interact within the controversies associated with democratic debate and deliberation may be a promising path towards a more robust approach to public participation. Decision-making processes dealing with matters involving various forms of expertise seem to be particularly promising as sites for the study of public debate and decision-making involving the identification and management of risks.

Further attention should also be given to the analysis of more “spontaneous” forms of political participation, especially those involving an agonistic relation to the State, particularly in order to explore their potential to directly and indirectly influence deliberation.

Finally, high-intensity democracy may not necessarily correspond to a participatory democracy, but to a form of democracy recognized by citizens as just and viable. But we learned from the history of democracy that it has overcome its dysfunctions in a constant process of reinvention, which is still ongoing.

Over the last decades, participation has prevailed as the optimistic note concerning a renewed future of democracy. This has often been associated with the idea that states should be more hospitable to citizen initiatives and to grassroots movements as triggers of democratic innovation. As another contribution to this ongoing effort to rethink

and reinvent democracy, and looking specifically at the relation between participation and high intensity democracy, we may conclude that: Over the last decades, participation has prevailed as the optimistic note concerning a renewed future of democracy. This has often been associated with the idea that states should be more hospitable to citizen initiatives and to grassroots movements as triggers of democratic innovation. As a further contribution to this ongoing effort to rethink and reinvent democracy, and looking specifically at the relation between participation and high intensity democracy, we may conclude that:

1) Participation in political decision-making processes is, ideally, open to all those who want to be involved. Citizen participation is a matter that affects democracy, but it also affects each single citizen in particular. It is important, then, not to overlook the fact that even though opportunities to participate may be open, participation is not always feasible for all at all stages of a given participatory process. Participation is not limited to citizens' ability to influence decisions, but rather to the opportunity for citizens to express their opinions, to be heard, to discuss and interact with elected representatives in regulated, institutionalized spaces designed for this purpose.

2) These participatory spaces should bring citizens' interests closer by meeting their expressed needs. In this sense, only by bringing citizens closer to the policy-making process, in a sustained way, may these needs be formulated and action taken to respond to them through democratic procedures.

3) The focus of participation focus should be on the quality and effectiveness of decisions to be taken; but, in order for this to be achieved; policy makers are expected to engage with citizens, to acknowledge their voices and to be accountable to them for their decisions.

4) Participation should not only strengthen democracy but also citizenship. Citizen participation in decision-making processes should contribute to citizens' political empowerment through the promotion of active citizenship. Protests appear as privileged settings for citizens to learn how to engage the State and how to develop critical thinking. Moreover, protests may empower citizens to create new forms of participation, which may take the form of social and civic movements

The path to high-intensity democracy seems currently rooted in that innovative capacity of democracy, which means the possibility of articulation and cooperation between 'new' participatory practices and 'traditional' representative procedures. The path towards a more democratic democracy seems to pass as well through the reinforcement of several dimensions in the relation between citizen participation and political representation, namely:

a) Different forms of participation – HID is based on citizen participation procedures organized around processes of intense dialogue, communication, transparency, and interaction between the different actors involved in decision-making. These procedures can emerge both from conflict and from consensus, since these forms of participation have the potential to trigger intensive democratic relations. No legitimate form of citizen action in the public space should be neglected or dismissed as participation, since they contribute, in different forms, to democratic outcomes.

b) Engaged actors – HID is based on a plurality of actors involved in decision-making. High intensity democracy requires the control by citizens and civil society organizations of the State and of public policies. The renewal of the currently dominant, low intensity model of democracy into a strong, high intensity model depends on how citizens engage the problems affecting them and struggle for outcomes which allow them

to address and overcome these problems. Affected citizens are privileged actors in a high intensity model of democracy due to the relevance of their participation in decision-making, namely by informing, discussing and defining policy priorities.

c) Forms of knowledge - HID processes of decision-making rest on the articulation of different forms of knowledge. Accordingly, they are based on a co-production model of policy-making, which implies the co-responsibility of State and civil society in the making of public policies. Decisions under this model are based on mutually intelligible knowledge networks which improve the quality of decisions. A plural platform of participation is then required as indispensable to achieve a genuine dialogue of forms of knowledge during decision-making processes.

d) Representativeness - a high-intensity democracy is based on the construction of more institutionalized spaces for citizen participation, able to promote dialogue and interaction between citizens and elected representatives on the existing problems and needs. A high-intensity democracy is certainly an outcome of grassroots initiatives, but it is also the result of the work of new representative spaces which mediate citizen interaction with political representatives during participatory processes.

One last note concerns the terminology often used in this work. Throughout this work we often read and used concepts such as “democratic intensity”, “democratic deficit”, “high or low intensity forms of democracy”, among others, all suggestive of a quantitative dimension carried by democracy. HID, however, is inextricable from peoples’ lives, from peoples’ emotions, from mundane practices, all of them qualitative elements. Thus, HID is above all a model oriented towards a progressive transgression of the existing order in favor of the dream of a better and more democratic polity.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Local repertoires of collective action – Maternity wards protest case study

Amarante	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens’ concentration and rally in front of the Hospital S. Gonçalo de Amarante; • Local community mobilized by SMS, an initiative of JSD (Social Democratic Youth).
Barcelos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest of about 10 000 people in front of of the official residence of the Prime Minister, on Mother's Day, wearing white T-shirts with a picture of a newborn. At the end a document was delivered to the representative of the Prime Minister with the demands of the Local Maternity Ward practitioners; • Preliminary injunction; • The maternity ward was covered with black rags; • Protest of 20 pregnant women wearing T-Shirts in the Parliament to attend the suffrage vote presented by CDS-PP against the closure of the Barcelos maternity ward; • Flags at half-mast until the end of the year; • A motion was approved in the Municipal Assembly reporting that the health minister was persona non grata in Barcelos, not being invited to any public act; • Night vigil at the door of the maternity ward on the closing day, including: humorous satire ambulances with sirens ringing insistently; local club riders to pass noisily through the crowd; an old white van with “INEM” inscription making fun of the transportation facilities that would transport pregnant women to Braga; funeral procession with matching music and people dressed in black carrying a coffin inscribed "Here lies the Barcelos motherhood”; • Postcards sent to the Health Minister saying "we want to be born in Barcelos".
Chaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary injunction; • Citizens’ protests at the door of maternity ward door.
Elvas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary injunction; • Vigil at the door of the maternity ward; • Popular rally on Mother’s Day; • A protest march from Elvas to Spain.
Figueira da Foz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary injunction; • Night vigil at the city; • Poster at the A14 road linking Figueira da Foz to Coimbra alerting passers-by to the number of births outside the hospital trying to reach Coimbra’s maternity wards; • Vigil for maternity ward reopening on the Children's Day; • 5000 stickers with the phrase "Born in Figueira" were

	<p>distributed for people use on their clothes and cars;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk on Mother's Day, in the downtown, for the reopening of the local maternity ward; • Participation in a protest event in Coimbra defending public services; • The local civic movement sent a letter to Health Minister demanding the "reopening" of the maternity wards jointly with a petition; • Participation in a protest against the closure of many others public services in the county.
Lamego	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest rally on Mother's Day.
Mirandela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary injunction; • Go-slow by local drivers; • Vigil on the evening of Mother's Day; • City's public buildings, bridges, roundabouts covered with black rags; • Some citizens also covered their balconies with black rags; • Flags on public buildings at half-mast; • A giant banner was placed on highway IP4 listing the closed services as hospital units, police stations, court, agriculture regional departments; • 10 000 postcards were sent to the health minister, saying that people had the right to be born in their own region; • Invasion of hospital by local citizens after a protest on the door of maternity ward immediately after its closure; • Local mayor ordered the firefighters sirens to be sounded several times in protest (a sign used to alert population of a danger); • Maternity wards employees put black bags on the windows of the local health unit after the closure.
Oliveira de Azeméis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communist Party distributed 4186 postcards to local citizens, to be sent to the health minister, with messages appealing for the maintaining the maternity ward.
Santo Tirso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary injunction; • Drivers' go-slow on the A3 national road; • Vigil at the door of the maternity ward; • A petition signed by 10 000 people delivered to the national government, protesting against the lack of investment in the local hospital. The petition called for the maintaining of the maternity ward and the construction of new hospital facilities; • Postcards addressed to Prime Minister were distributed, protesting against this closure.

ANNEX 2

Interview Guide

Portuguese maternity wards closure case (local citizens/civic movement leaders)

I. The closure plan and its consequent impact

1. Review how citizens were made aware of the decision and its consequent impacts;
2. Assess the criteria that the decision was based on;
3. Evaluation of the alternatives proposed by the Government measure;
4. Ask to identify the actors involved in the controversy, the main arguments they raise and how they articulate them;
5. Identify possible allies and opponents of the controversy.

II: Protests

6. How citizens were mobilized for protest;
7. Who was involved;
8. Protest movement organization (who/individual participants or institutional representatives/decision on the protest actions to be triggered/ways to mobilize more population/relation with other local protest);
9. Contextual description of the eventual creation of a civic movement;
10. The relationship with the opponents;
11. Perception of the results achieved;
12. Perception/evaluation of such a form of collective action.

III: Protest actions impact

13. The influence of citizen participation through protests on the decision taken;
14. Current situation of the civic movement (active/How/Actions developed/actions planned);
15. Is the measure considered irreversible?;
16. Evaluation of the maternal and child health situation after the closure;
17. Shaping future scenarios (according to a new plan of closure/possible new protests);
18. General evaluation of protest in relation to decision-making processes/ democracy.

Interview Guide
Portuguese maternity wards closure case
(Health professionals/Persons responsible for transportation services)

I. The closure plan and its consequent impact

1. Review if and how professionals were involved in the decision-making process and its consequent impacts;
2. Assess the criteria that founded the decision;
3. Evaluation of the alternatives proposed by the Government measure;
4. Ask to identify the actors involved in the controversy, the main arguments they raise and how they articulate them;
5. Identify the possible allies and opponents of the controversy.
6. How the measure impacted health services.

II: Protests

7. The relationship with protest movements/actions;
8. Reasons for possible involvement;
9. Articulation with protest movement;
10. The relationship with the opponents;
11. Perception of the results achieved;
12. Perception/evaluation of such a form of collective action.

III: Protest actions impact

13. The influence of protests on the decision taken;
16. Evaluation of the maternal and child health situation after the closure;
17. Shaping future scenarios (according to a new plan of closure/possible involvement in new protests);
18. General evaluation of protest in relation to decision-making processes/ democracy.

Interview Guide

Portuguese maternity wards closure case

(Members of the NCMNH)

1. Were the risk to, and security of, mothers and newborns the only factors under analysis or were there other factors under analysis?
2. Why 1500 births per year?
3. What do you think people are protesting for?
4. Can the measures taken create more inequalities between social groups/regions?
5. How did the distances issue equate?
6. Evaluation of the way the decision was taken in relation to the assessment of maternal and child health made as well as the suggestions reported;
7. How do you deal with the increasing number of births in ambulances?
8. Perceptions concerning the protests triggered by local populations and their effects on the decision?
9. Do you agree with the way the decision was taken?
10. Who do you think should have participated in the decision-making?
11. What and whose knowledge could be considered of interest in the decision-making?
12. What would you change in the political measure?
13. To consider the impact of more deliveries in other health units and how this is compatible with the idea of freedom of choice for women;
14. Considering the constant decrease of the birth rate in Portugal, amongst other factors, may a new closure plan happen?

ANNEX 3

<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Guide Participatory Budgeting case PB technicians</p>

1. What changes with PB in Belo Horizonte?
2. Evaluation of citizen participation rates since PB implementation/reasons.
3. Articulation of PB with other sectorial measures;
4. Which factors justify Belo Horizonte PB as a lasting participatory measure functioning for 16 years in conjunction with the Municipality?
5. Identify the most positive/less positive aspects related with the functioning of the measure.
6. Are the decisions always taken in a consensual way or does conflictual relationships sometimes emerge? How and who manages that potential conflict?
7. Do you consider this measure totally controlled by citizens? Justify.
8. How do you think different areas of knowledge relate under PB?
9. How do you evaluate the creation of the digital PB?
10. Evaluation of the 16 years of PB.
11. What could be improved in this local PB?

