DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:
ADVANCING DEMOCRATIZATION, ENDURING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT Social movements are agents of change; some of them are agents deeply engaged with democratization -of their social environment and their internal organization. The aggressive institutional developments and the substantive complications in decision-making that contemporary grassroots anti-austerity movements confront in the pursuit of democratization, are the subject of this paper. Reflecting on the advancement of democratization and the power of strategic prefiguration in the water movement of Thessaloniki and the housing movement of Barcelona, it is shown that the inventive character and the multiplication of actions are key concepts in grassroots activism. Neighborhood assemblies and residents’ committees constitute the field of reflection on the endurance of internal democratic practices. Strong ideological convictions and difficulties in transfiguring deliberation from a matter of principle to ‘a matter of fact’, are shown to be critical conditions for the development of speculative deliberation in grassroots activism.

KEY WORDS: Anti-austerity movements, democratization, strategic prefiguration, decision-making, deliberation

Introduction
A considerably large part of scholarly work has been concerned with democracy; in particular its definition, principles, values, modes of expression, and measurement. Contemporary empirical research suggests that there is a strong and global appeal to democracy, which corroborates the decades-standing premise that “democracy is ‘the only game in town’” (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 15; see also Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Dalton, 2004, Norris, 2011; Dahlberg et. al., 2013). Nevertheless, fluctuations in the support for democracy have often been recorded and scholars have often interpreted them as indication of cycles of disaffection and disengagement with democratic politics (see Dalton, 2004; Norris 2011; Dahlberg, et.al., 2013). The contemporary socio-political context of unceasing social unrest has special merit for such concerns. Yet, the principle concept of ‘disenchantment’ with democracy seems to fall short of a comprehensive reflection on social demands. In this direction, the recent transnational Real Democracy Movement (RDM) in 2011 drew attention to a profound deficiency growing beyond the appeal of democracy; a shortage of democracy in itself, aptly summarized in the slogan “They call it democracy, but it is not”.

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Responding to the politics of austerity, which have been accompanying the ongoing economic and financial crisis, a wave of unprecedentedly participated mobilizations took over the mostly affected European countries in the summer of 2011. The grievances expressed were targeting the flagrant degradation of the societal conditions and soon were amplified to adopt a more comprehensive rhetoric: questioning the consolidation of democracy and advancing demands for the actual democratization of the social and political life. The mobilizations of the RDM have been particularly salient for the countries of Greece and Spain. Although the specificities of the different socio-political contexts were fairly reflected in the advanced demands, the movement was characterized by wide diffusion of patterns of organization and repertoires of actions amongst the two countries (see Oikonomakis and Roos, 2013). In social movement studies, diffusion is addressed as a common feature relevant to movements’ spreading, by means of emphasizing on social relations and systems of values (see McAdam and Rucht, 1993). In the case of the RDM diffusion allowed the development of overarching demands for democratization supported by a set of socio-political commonalities, which transcended the national specificities. To this end the RDM contested the solvency of the political system, disputed its legitimacy, decried its servitude to the interests of economic elites, and ultimately questioned its accountability (see Sachs, 2012; Schiffrin and Kircher-Allen, 2012). These common premises of the Real Democracy Movement have been eloquently summarized in the famous slogan “Error 404: democracy not found” (see Velasco, 2011). The innovative character of the RDM was praised, as well as the repertoire of actions it employed -as a masterful combination of virtual and traditionally physical spaces of communication (see Gerbaudo, 2012). The massive participation and the profound heterogeneity of the movement, which dispelled the myth of the ‘usual suspects’, were also highlighted by mostly progressive scholars and intellectuals (see Graeber, 2013). Further, the political relevance of the movement was underlined and the legitimacy of its demands was celebrated (see Liakos, 2012; Vagianos, 2013). Overall, the RDM was addressed as a movement advancing unconventional proposals for the management of public affairs, being guided by the ideals of genuine participation and deliberation in political decision-making (see Maeckelbergh, 2012).

To be sure the RDM has not been the first instance of movement politics engaging with these goals. In the turn of the century the Global Justice Movement (GLM) was vigorously pursuing horizontality, inclusiveness, equality, ‘ideological contamination’, and good quality of communication (see della Porta, 2005a; 2012). To distinguish the GJM from the recent RDM, it is important to account for the particular cautiousness of the latter in treating the dimensions of democratic participation and deliberation beyond hierarchical structures of knowledge and ideology. This development allowed the RDM to establish itself as a step further on the road to democratization. In the most quoted words of Viejo Viñas, “the antiglobalization movement was the first step on the road. Back then our model was to attack the system like a pack of wolves. There was an alpha male, a wolf who led the pack, and those who followed behind. Now the model has evolved. Today we are one big swarm of people”. In this sense, the RDM may be properly accounted as a movement which managed to intervene in the
more ‘traditional’ conceptualizations of horizontal political participation and deliberation, and a movement which affected the perceptions about the grassroots organization of democracy (see Maeckelbergh, 2012; Dhaliwal, 2012). Nevertheless, the squares of 2011 were only to plant the seeds for the pursuit of democratization from below and the pursuit of genuinely democratic organization of the political decision-making. Already during the period of the squares’ occupations, many concerns for an updated and persistent struggle from below were tenaciously expressed (see Žižek, 2011). Manolis Glezos, a WWII resistance hero and current MEP of the left-wing party SYRIZA in Greece, had eloquently summarized these concerns: “the movement has gone beyond us”, but “it is a self-deception to think what they are doing there is direct democracy. It is a lesson in democracy [...] if this movement isn’t transferred to the places of work and the neighborhoods it will disappear” (Glezos, 2012). The fierce crackdown on the squares, which eventually dismantled the occupations by the end of the summer, had a double effect on the movement. On the one hand it updated these concerns and highlighted the necessity of spreading the struggle and consolidating grassroots activism as a means towards political democratization. On the other hand it revealed the ultimate originality of the movement: rather than a physically confined movement left ‘homeless’ in the aftermath of its crackdown, the RDM has been a physically anchored idea - a vibrant idea encompassing the values of democracy, which had been expressed in the democratic principles of genuine participation and deliberation. It has been this characteristic of the RDM, reflected in the slogan “You can’t evict an idea whose time has come”, which facilitated the spread of the democracy project in the form of multifaceted grassroots movement groups. The participants of these movement groups acknowledge this development as part of spreading the RDM’s lesson in democracy:

“It is a school. Like the squares, so are these initiatives. But a bit more coordinated. A bit more conscious” [5T13]

Transferring the message of democratization in the spaces of everyday political and social interaction, result has been the creation of a universe of grassroots politics, where the right of the ordinary citizen to partake the political life is celebrated as a path towards actual democratization. Touching upon a wide range of socio-political concerns, these developments signal out a puzzle with both theoretical and empirical ramifications: the puzzle of democratization - extending beyond a mere theory of democracy or a mere practice of democracy, but being more properly captured as a reflective relationship established between the two. This paper explores how this challenging puzzle is met by the contemporary grassroots movements of democratization and advances two arguments about its specificities. First, grassroots movements’ potency to advance the struggle of democratization from below - in a sense their potency to build a bridge connecting the theory and the practice of democracy - is influenced by the movements’ inventive capacities to actually realize strategic prefiguration. Second, grassroots movements’ potency to endure internal democratic practices - in a sense their potency to make the established connection between the theory and the practice of democracy functional - is influenced by the movements’ specific approach of deliberation as a principle or a
method of organization and the tendencies created by this within the model of deliberative participation.

The first argument is examined in the first part of this paper where two movement cases have been signaled out. These are the movement against the privatization of the water company in Thessaloniki and the housing movement in Barcelona. They have been examined through document analysis of the materials they produce and publicize in their websites, blogs and Facebook accounts and of the activities they get engaged to. The second argument is examined in the second part of the paper, where some of the specificities of organizing internal democracy in movement groups are examined. This part of the paper draws on preliminary fieldwork research conducted in 2013 in grassroots movement groups in the municipality of Thessaloniki, in Thessaloniki Greece and the district of Ciutat Vella, in Barcelona, Spain. Common characteristic of the movement groups examined is that they address primarily their community environment [the neighborhood], and they have been related [collectively or by way of individual participation of their members] with the Real Democracy Movement of 2011. They are neighborhood assemblies and residents’ committees, active towards two ends: to respond to austerity politics and the immediate results they produce, and to democratize the political organization. In total 6 such assembly groups have been identified in Thessaloniki and 4 in Ciutat Vella. These have been examined by means of semi-structured interviews with the participants, and participant observation in the processes of organization and decision-making.

Overall, it is acknowledged that the examination is preliminary and the population of cases is significantly small in order to draw safe and generalizable conclusions for the advanced hypotheses. Nonetheless, the conducted research provides considerably interesting indications that: a) strategic prefiguration in grassroots movement activism influences positively the movements’ capacity to advance democratization from below. In particular, democratization is enacted as a change in the format of activism [substantiating the movements’ democratic determinations] and as multiplication, rather than division, of the movements’ actions; this further facilitates movements to withstand the ongoing hostile institutional developments; b) the movements’ capacity to endure internal democratic practices is significantly influenced by the fact that while they highly value deliberation as a principle, they advance only to a small extent the conditions of deliberation in the actual processes of decision-making. Within the model of deliberative participation this is crystallized through tendencies to assume a differential type of deliberation [speculative deliberation] in decision-making, which is far afield from the ideal of genuine deliberation.

I. Pursuing democratization from below

When it comes to the in-depth understanding of the organization of movement activism, movements’ intermittent position between external and internal considerations seems to be the cornerstone of inquiry. It is rather common in social movement studies to trace movements’ effectiveness, according to their declared goals, in measurable institutional changes inflicted by movement activism. Behind
this assertion a deep seated schism is revealed in the field of social movement studies; a split between structural analyses and cultural analyses, with special merit in as far as the history of the New Social Movement (NSM) theory is concerned, and which reflects a significant -seemingly insuperable- dissension between the external and the internal life of collective action. In effect, however, it is more of an analytical distinction between directions of scientific interest. In reality these concerns are “parallel, and sometimes intertwined, sets of explanation” (see Melucci, 1995: 42). In this sense, structural change [as measurable institutional change] and cultural change [as identity (trans)formation] inflicted by movements, are the two sides of the same coin. The inextricably intertwined relation between external and internal dynamics of movement activism constitutes a major challenge for both the academic inquiry and the organization of social movement activism: this is to “identify the circumstances in which different relations between interests and identity, strategy and identity, and politics and identity operate, circumstances that include cultural processes as well as structural ones” (Polletta and Jaspers, 2001: 285).

In practice, movements are embedded on a constant interplay between structural and cultural concerns. Hence to pay close attention to this interaction allows us to properly capture the fluid relation between normative constraints and cognitive potentials in movement activism (see della Porta, 2013b). The implication it has, is the advancement of a comprehensive understanding of social movements as entities relevant for democratization, but also a comprehensive understanding of the concept of democracy itself. To this direction social movement scholars have wisely pointed out that democracy in movement activism is and should be approached as a process in progress (see Blee, 2012). In the sense that social movements are not entities in the service of institutions, correcting their mistakes or paying lip-service to their democratic pretentions [in a way then reproducing them rather than profoundly reshaping them], the perception of democracy in social movements as an essentially procedural question allows to place social movements in-between two ends; ends, which in effect correspond to the two faces of movement activism: activism for democratization, and activism as democratization (see Blee, 2012). The inherent relation between these two aspects of activism becomes even more apparent when they are recast as a matter of strategy and identity. The distance between the two is covered by the concept of prefiguration.

Prefiguring democracy is devising democracy: new formats to substantiate new contents

It is commonly held among social movement scholars that prefiguration is a question running beyond concerns of strategy or better put that prefiguration represents a non-strategic [in instances even a counter-strategic] aspect of movement activism (see Epstein, 1991). In this direction Polletta argues that prefiguration exposes the problem of political efficacy in movement activism. Prefigurative politics according to her are disclosing dichotomies between community and hierarchy, freedom and discipline, self-expression and effectiveness, which the movement groups favoring participatory and
deliberative democratic models are not ready to resolve; the same way that the new left movements of the 1960s were not ready to resolved them. For them “their dilemma -and it was a dilemma, not a mistake- was that they wanted to effect political change without reproducing the structures that they opposed. To be “strategic” was to privilege organization over personhood and political reform over radical change, and this they would not do” (Polletta, 2002: 6). Critical in this argument is the prevalent assumption that strategic choices in movement activism are largely represented by emphasis on organizational concerns and a certain degree of institutional compliance. For that matter has special merit the fact that organizations have been often perceived to be instrumental concerns and to appear as opposite to cultural concerns (see also Clemens and Minkoff, 2004). Nevertheless, strategy and prefiguration, [as much as the structural developments and the cultural [trans]formation to which they are related], are not rivals; rather they constitute parts of the same political reality, and this is especially true when it comes to movements engaged with the ‘politics of social identity’. For these types of movements prefiguration is part of their strategy to theorize and practice their alternatives for democratization and indeed “the best strategy because it is based in practice, in doing” (see Maeckelbergh, 2011: 13; original emphasis).

Conceptualizing prefiguration then, it is important to acknowledge that the power of prefigurative politics is embedded in their non-predetermination. Prefiguration is inventive, in the sense that it entails a certain degree of freedom, imagination and commitment to challenge conventional wisdom on the means-ends nexus. This inventive process is in practice a process of learning and shaping a new language of communication (see Holloway, 2010). In this sense the call to prefigure democracy is a call to devise democracy, to be “inventive enough to change it and build a new world” (Marcos, 2000). More than decrying state power, prefiguration necessitates to expose state power and to delegitimize it (see Graeber, 2002); and its innate strategic character is realized in establishing the principles of democracy as the means towards democracy. In other words, if the dissension between prefiguration and strategy may be recasted as a dissension between the pure contents of struggle and their tactical forms, then strategic prefiguration in the pursuit of democratization is a call for movements to devise formats of the struggle which substantiate the contents of the struggle.

> A new format, another priority: lessons from the water movement in Thessaloniki

In the beginning of 2012, after the second memorandum was voted in Greece, a series of procedures, which had been voted already in June 2011, as part of the mid-term agreement on fiscal strategies, were accelerated.¹ Part of this agreement were a series of planned privatizations of public assets. For that matter the fund TAIPED was founded in July 2011 with the purpose to coordinate, on behalf of the state, the estimation of the public assets’ values, to call for procurement, to evaluate the investment

¹ For a succinct overview of the political developments in Greece since the country’s submission to the Troika of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) see Dinas, E., Rori, L. (2013), “The 2012 Greek Parliamentary Elections: Fear and Loathing in the Polls”, in *West European Politics*, 36(1): 270-82.
proposals of private investors and ultimate to bestow exploitation of public assets to private investors.\(^2\)

In effect, TAIPED has been serving as the vehicle through which a wave of privatizations have been already channeled (organized, coordinated, and executed) -while others are under way- in Greece; among these is the privatization of the Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Thessaloniki [EYATH]. Immediately after the first discussions about the privatization of EYATH widely reached the public, the workers of EYATH raised their objections on the overall plan. Participating in the Real Democracy Movement of 2011, throughout discussions they held with citizens and collectives of the city they decided to take up action:

\[ \text{"The employees of the Company EYATH S.A., collectives of the city and ordinary citizens, we decided under the weight of the developments and taking into account the global experience, that we are not willing to let anybody play with the water that we drink and our families. That we will not let, no interests, domestic or foreign, to profit from our water and to play with the public health and the environment of our region. The ownership of EYATH is from now onwards a matter of action of the citizens of Thessaloniki" (Kinisi 136, 2011).} \]

Following this decision, the employees, the collectives and the citizens who had been engaged, initiated a series of debate rounds with the purpose to devise a strategic reaction to the imminent privatization of EYATH. In the days to come, the discussion circle, which was consolidated in the squares of 2011, got enlarged to include more people concerned with the consequences this privatization would entail. By that time, the water movement was properly defined as a loose network of concerned citizens, who commonly shared their desire to inhibit the privatization of the water company. Enlarging the scope of the daily deliberations about the problem of privatization, obtaining information about the struggles against the privatization of the water around the world, and putting their opposition in perspective, this loose network progressively arrived to the formulation of a proposal for the management of the water company. In the deliberations participated individuals with distinct political and social references\(^3\), yet the advanced proposal has been developed collectively by engaging all interested parts and targeting the puzzle of collective management, as opposite to either private investment or state management. Inspired by the demands of the RDM, this network of people attempted to put forward the ideal of directness in political participation by way of not simply resisting against the politics of austerity, but also by way of bypassing more conventional approaches to such resistance. In principle, the water movement rejected democratization as a goal pursued through unidirectional and exclusive political solutions. In practice, it avoided to recast the problem of democratization as a project of democratizing the process of privatization of the water company; as a

\(^2\) TAIPED (Hellenic Republic Asset and Development Fund -HRADF), is a 'societe anonyme' with the Hellenic Republic as its single shareholder. It has been established with the aim “to restrict governmental intervention in the privatization process, and its further development within a fully professional context”. More information accessible online at the official website of TAIPED at http://www.hradf.com/en.

\(^3\) Overall the participants have been mostly affiliated to the broader left, including the parliamentary and the non-parliamentary left. However, there have been participating citizens from a wide political range, including social-democrats, anarchists, antiauthoritarians and citizens with right-wing political positions.
project running only within institutional provisions and hence the state management of the company; as a project pursued exclusively in absolute disengagement from the liberal institutional settings which the movement opposed. By contrast to all these, the movement went as far as its internal disagreements allowed and accepted as a common denominator the idea that the citizens should take control of the current situation but also of the future management of EYATH. This way the water movement created space for the different political reflections on democracy and the water company problem to be expressed, it allowed them to be fermented, and ultimately it managed to advance a concrete policy proposal based on the idea of collective, cooperative management.

“If one divides the estimated value of EYATH with the number of the water meters, that is the number of users, the result is the symbolic number of 136 euros.

“We decided to unite our strengths in a common struggle with the name “Kinisi 136”, which aims at: purchasing the 51% and the management of EYATH by the citizens; the social control of the city’s water; the democratic function of the company; the non-profit character of the company, combined with exercise of social policies and the protection of the environment” (Kinisi 136, 2011).

In this sense, it may be said that already from its very beginning the water movement in Thessaloniki managed to embed the ideal of participation [genuine direct participation] as a condition of its struggle.

Second particularly interesting element of the water movement’s struggle is the fact that besides the advocacy of a participatory management of EYATH, the movement opted also for a participatory plan to achieve it. Rather than advancing the idea of collective management as an internal or exclusive concern of the initial circle of people involved, the movement went against vanguard positions and advanced a genuinely participatory plan, whereby all citizens of the city are involved. Indeed, not merely being allowed to get involved, but being required to get involved for the collective management to actually get into effect.

“The proposal of Kinisi 136 suggests the establishment of local cooperatives with members all the citizens of the city. These cooperatives will unify in a company, which will claim the purchase of EYATH in the name of the citizens, in order to secure the democratic and non-profit management of this common good”

“This purchase will become reality with the creation of cooperatives in all the urban area, per regional unit and municipality where the water is supplied by EYATH. The local cooperatives then will get unified through the “Citizens’ Union for Water” in a company (Social EYATH), which claims the purchase of EYATH in the name of the citizens” (Kinisi 136, 2011).

The proposition advanced by the water movement is a frame consistent with the ideal of democratization from below, whereby grassroots management, as democratic management, is pursued. To the attainment of this goal Kinisi 136 employed a diverse set of actions, including: dealing with the

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4 All information is accessible online at the website of Kinisi 136 at http://www.136.gr/ and its version in English http://www.136.gr/article/citizens-bid-control-thessalonikis-water
legal proceedings to form the citizens’ cooperatives, the Citizens’ Union for Water [CUW], the Social EYATH, and draft the proposal for acquiring the 51% of EYATH through the procurement of TAIPED; launching protests and rallies against the privatization of the company throughout the city, by means of which making the problem know and the project visible; disseminating information about the consequences of the imminent privatization, by means of organizing conferences and open discussions on the topic of social solidarity; connecting its experience with the experience of other past and ongoing struggles for the ‘right to water’ and the commons; connecting to similar European campaigns for the collective management of the water, by way of joining the national platform against the privatization of the Greek water companies ‘Save Greek Water’. While vigorously trying to enlarge its field of actions Kinisi 136, instead of monopolizing the struggle in its name, it managed to ‘socialize’ it. It cautiously left room for further initiatives to develop, with distinct socio-political references, yet decidedly posing on the same side of the struggle -rejecting the privatization of EYATH. This allowed the generation of more grassroots groups, which undertake parallel activities with different peaks towards democratizing the water management.

In March 2013 the labor union of EYATH workers [SEEYATH] called for an open popular assembly through which the coordination committee ‘SOSte to Nero’ [SOSTN- Save the Water] was formed. It is an extended committee with an executive board of around 50 people, which managed to bring together the citizens with members of the town-hall councils of the regional unit, who support the aim of the water movement. SOSTN, develops its actions to further raise awareness amongst the citizens about the consequences of the imminent privatization, to make open calls to the citizens to join the project of collective management, and to bring the discussion about the collective management of the water in the town-hall councils of the regional unit. Working on this directions the SOSTN managed to gain the support of more collectives of the city and the community level and in April 2013 it launched a campaign to hold a local referendum against the privatization of the water company. Parallel to the SOSTN yet another grassroots group was formed and joined the struggle for the cooperative management of the water company in September 2013. The ‘Water Warriors’ being primarily populated by a younger generation of activists, while supporting the actions taken by the Kinisi 136 and the SOSTN, employ a more diversified repertoire of actions with higher resonance amongst younger generations. Next to the production of politicized graffiti art supporting the collective management of EYATH, and the organization of festivals in support of the referendum against the privatization, the Water Warriors have also organized bike-demonstrations, as an advantageous means for small-scale peaceful actions. Overall, the Water Warriors managed to raise significantly the visibility of the water movement and work out the idea of collective management amongst the younger population of the

5 Such campaigns are the Portuguese ‘Água e de todos-não a privatização’, the Spanish ‘Plataforma contra la privatización del Canal de Isable II’, the Italian ‘2 Sì per l’Acqua Bene Comune’, the German ‘Berliner Wassertisch’ and the ‘Alternative World Water Forum’ (AWWF).
city, including school students, university students, young unemployed people and young precarious workers.

By embedding the ideal of democratic participation as a condition of its struggle, the water movement managed in the last two years to progress without compromising its efficacy. Indeed, the movement arrived to a proposition for the management of EYATH with high resonance amongst the citizens; it spread the idea of collective management as a popular and favored idea of political organization amongst the general population of the region; it encouraged the proliferation of grassroots groups, which joined the water struggle, and hence it promoted the active engagement of the citizens; it significantly raised visibility of the issue on all levels [the civil society and the institutional adversaries]; it supported intense mobilization on multiple levels [legal issues, mobilization of administrative resources, creation of networks of information and collaboration etc]; it managed to get out of a labyrinthine legal procedure and to make progress with the creation of the local cooperatives, the CUW, and the Social EYATH; is exposed mechanisms of plasmatic procurements on public assets which were run through the public fund TAIPED; it mobilized the legal apparatus to prosecute TAIPED; it won a tribunal by the Supreme Court against the non-justified exclusion of the CUW from the public procurement for EYATH; it managed to hold the local referendum against the privatization of the water company with the full support of the Regional Association of Municipalities [PED], which resulted to a deafening 98% opposition to the privatization of the water company.

To understand the significance of these developments, it is helpful to see how the rejection of the political liberalism project and the new contents that the movement progressively assigns to the democratic political system, have been institutionally met. Responding to these developments the state apparatus embarked on a repressive maneuvering by means of a Ministerial Order, issued only the day before the referendum was to be held, which declared the referendum illegal and ordered the police forces to intervene and arrest the participants with the process of flagrant offense. As came to be, this move was only to be met by outraged citizens, who massively went to the polls voting against the privatization of EYATH, and to receive the immediate response of the institutional allies of the movement. For that matter, the PED of Central Macedonia responded through its president:

The intervention of the Minister of Interior, which was made in order to generate obstacles and problems in conducting the referendum, was immediately dealt with. Since morning we are in the court and we have come to agreement with those responsible as well as with the inspectors of the elections for Thessaloniki in order to transfer the ballot boxes. Let them understand it. The referendum will take place and they should stop putting in discomfort both us and the judicial officers (President of the PED, S. Daniilidis).

In the same spirit the mayor of the largest municipality of the region declared the ministerial decree ‘despicable and extremely offensive’, stating:

6 See http://www.efsyn.gr/?p=198690
7 See http://www.agelioforos.gr/default.asp?pid=7&ct=1&artid=206545
We are an institutional body. We have the right, according to the Law 3852 to conduct the referendum.

The municipalities are not just ‘some’. He (the Minister of Interior) could have made a move of good will and allow the ballot boxes in the voting stations. By contrast, he makes things difficult. Why? Is he afraid to listen to what people believe about EYATH? (Mayor of Thessaloniki, G. Boytaris)

The referendum was indeed conducted as originally planned on the first round of the local elections on 18th May 2014, with only minor incidents of police harassment. Participant observation in the process revealed high levels of frustration among the citizens with the last minute repressive decree. The informal blockage of the referendum process from the private and public media [newspapers, television and radio stations] was actually lifted by this governmental attempt to inhibit the process, since the decree was forcefully publicized by both the alternative media [which have been anyway engaged with giving visibility to the referendum] and the mainstream media, which up to that moment have been informally ‘denying’ publicity to this grassroots endeavor. Result has been the notification of a part of the local population, which has not been earlier informed and which went to the polls voting against the privatization of the water company. Following around 1500 voters of the referendum in a central neighborhood of the second largest municipal community of Thessaloniki, as they were engaging in discussions with the ad hoc referendum committees, around 40% of them expressed the position that voting against the privatization of EYATH is:

“not only a matter of opposing a deafening ‘injustice’ against the people of this city but also a matter of finally supporting the grassroots management of what concerns us”.

The referendum resulted to a deafening 98% against the privatization of the water company, recording the blatant rejection, on behalf of the civil society, of the type of liberal political management which favors private interests over the public interests. Overall, the water movement comes as a shining example of the slow transformation of political attitudes and the significantly increasing levels of support for a direct-democratic political system, which is being strategically prefigured in a systematic fashion.

8 Reference is made to the Ministerial Decree, which among other, stated: “Our services received complaints, according to which on Sunday 18 May, date of the local elections for the local and regional authorities, in some municipalities of the countries, some intend to set up illegal ballot boxes within the school complexes, in which the elections will be conducted, in order for the electorate to vote for issues irrelevant with the official and legally planned electoral process”. The relevant decree is available online at http://www.alterthess.gr/content/i-kyvernisi-apagoreyei-dimopsifisma-gia-nero-entoli-gia-syllipsi-opoioy-stisei-kalpideite-ta

9 See http://www.efsyn.gr/?p=198690

10 Amounting to approximately 2% of the total population of the specific municipal community.

11 Information retrieved from the report on population distribution of the Law 3852/2010, updated on 24/03/2014. Accessible online on the official website of the Kallikratis Project for Local Government and Decentralized Administration at http://www.kallikratis.eu/analogiki-katanomi-lipou-plithismou-stis-dimotikes-kinotites/

12 The result of the referendum is available online on the jointed platform VoteForWater at http://www.vote4water.gr/voteForWater/elections.asp?nom=nath
Servants of two worlds: divisions and multiplications

For movements engaged with the ‘politics of social identity’, adherence to prefigurative processes is essential to the attainment of their objectives. In effect, the prefigurative processes they engage with are their objective, in the sense that means and ends are inextricably intertwined; “the objective of the movements’ practices is embodied in the process itself” (Kitschelt, 1993: 27). Their decisions, however, being intimately related to interdependent and permanent collective decision problems, are taken in view of significantly complex questions and imply substantive complications for the movements. Indeed, democratization from below is a difficult question perennially asked by social movements, rather than an answer easily assumed through instrumental choices that are perceived as separate from cultural transformation. This becomes an even more compelling reality for the contemporary anti-austerity movements, which advance their struggle for democratization amid aggressive institutional developments urging the immediacy and efficiency of the movements’ responses. Considering the daily puzzles these movements face there seems to be a certain trade-off between prefiguration and efficiency in their activism. Polletta captures this tension as a problem of sustaining democratic organization, when actually “sustaining a decentralized, nonhierarchical, and consensus-based organization seems to mean sacrificing the quick decisions and clear lines of command necessary to winning concessions in a hostile political climate” (2002: 1). For the contemporary anti-austerity movements, which are inevitably confronted with the urgent consequences of austerity politics -such as the dramatically increased, and increasing, unemployment and homelessness rates, and the exclusion of large parts of the population from social benefits and entitlements to public health- transcending the limitation of inefficiency is an imperative. Nevertheless, to do so by way of abandoning decentralization, horizontality, equality, inclusiveness and consensus is not an option for them. For collective action, which seeks to not simply respond to institutional constraints but to go beyond them, overcoming this complexity is a bewildering puzzle.

The theory of collective action frames provides some significant explanations about the movements’ ways of relating to their socio-political environment and their ways of intervening in it. The frames of collective action, in effect, bridge movement groups with the wider society and constitute channels of communication between them and their social environment [both the civil society and the institutional settings]. Further, the ways in which social and political reality is framed by movement activists, affects the ways in which they engage with it and intervene in it (see Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow 2004). Indeed, frame construction captures the cognitive workings of social movements in their endeavor to identify those accountable for a given problem, to make attributions, develop alternatives, set plans of actions and ultimately mobilize to invoke social change. Getting active for democratization then, necessitates identification of a certain democratic deficiency. Such identification is advanced through the articulation of diagnostic frames of action, which signal out the problem and attribute responsibility for it. On the other end stands the critical process of prognostic framing. Prognostic frames are advanced through the articulation of positive propositions directed to
influence the identified problem and to inflict social change (see Snow et.al, 1986; Snow and Corrigall-Brown, 2005). When struggling in between two imperatives -the today and the tomorrow- movements often find it hard to advance their struggle towards both ends -i.e. the development of both diagnostic and prognostic frames. This seems to be puzzling movement participants more often than not, as shows this characteristic incident during an assembly deliberation over taxation, privatization, and urban planning:

“This person to resolve the issue he suggested -at the same time that we had with us a widow with three little children, a young girl who had come for the first time and told us ‘I don't know how to get by’, while there were widespread electricity cuts, invoices were coming, the unemployment...people were losing their jobs every day, panic, our buts were on fire...and the proposal after two hours and three quarters was...in a grove which they [the municipality] want to privatize and build to a great extent...to go and plant trees! And I was pulling my hair off...these are the mistakes that we did” [I8T13]

When immediate responses to institutional developments are urgent, planning the future often seems to be more than what the movement groups can afford. Argument of this paper, however, is that advancing democratization from below, by way of articulating prognostic frames of collection action to prefigure the movements’ objectives, without compromising direct and efficient actions towards urgent situations -and vice versa- is not unattainable. As the experience of the housing movement in Spain shows, it is a goal best served by the multiplication of actions, instead of the adherence to the logic of separate, even conflicting, concerns and hence the division of action between exclusive choices. That is, instead of choices made between two levels of struggle -for now and for the future- grassroots movement activism is positively affected when short-term actions and long-term plans are pursued parallel to one another, thus enhancing the movements’ capacity to withstand the hostile institutional developments of today and prefigure democracy.

>A struggle multiplied: lessons from the housing movement in Barcelona

Since the beginning of the current crisis a large majority of the population in Spain has rapidly shifted from employment to unemployment; indeed in very short periods of time. According to the Spanish National Institute of Statistics INE, during the fourth quarter of 2009 the unemployment rate reached the 18.83% of the workforce, being the most significant increase of the last 20 years since a peak in the mid-1990s (INE, 2010). Effect of this climax of unemployment has been the increase of defaulted loans. In 2008 8.4% of the population were paying rent on the market price, and 31.9% of the Spanish households were under mortgages and had outstanding loans for the purchase of their main house, paying a monthly average of 605 euros. In the same period the delayed payments were reaching 5.3% in households were all members were active and employed, 12.5% in households were active members were both employed and unemployed, and 16.4% in households were all active members were

13 The report is accessible online at: http://www.ine.es/daco/daco42/daco4211/epa0409.pdf
unemployed (INE, 2009).\textsuperscript{14} Consequence of these developments has been a significant rise in the number of evictions and the rate of homelessness.

In 2009 a group of people in Barcelona acknowledging that the power correlations of the crisis are increasingly setting people prey to legal pretentions that favor banks’ interests, decided to take up action. Guided by the principle that ‘housing is a basic right’ and being evicted is an insufferable condition, they set up the Platform for the Affected by Mortgage [Plataforma por los Afectados de la Hipoteca - PAH].\textsuperscript{13}

“...an association totally free of charge (like all the resources it provides) bringing together people with difficulties to pay mortgages or already in the process of foreclosure, and people in solidarity with these problems”.

Commencing from a decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which concluded the illegality of foreclosure,\textsuperscript{16} the PAH embarked on a series of campaigns with the aim to reinforce its struggle against foreclosures, to prefigure models of organization in regards to the housing problem, and to provide an immediate response to the increasing homelessness rate. To this directions the PAH functions through 6 different, yet interrelated, national campaigns: Dacion en Pago; Stop Desahucios; Mociones Ayuntamientos; Obra Social la PAH; ILP; Escrache. This way the PAH is multiplying its actions, rather than dividing them between actions for ‘the now and the tomorrow’ as if they were exclusive concerns.

The ‘Dacion en Pago’ was launched in March 2010 with the purpose to regulate payment as a solution to foreclosure. The drafted proposal for regulation was filled in the Congress, and parallel to this a series of protests were organized, informative materials were produced and circulated, and pressure tactics [such as e-mail bombing of deputies] were undertaken. Ultimately the Dacion en Pago managed to bring the regulation proposal in the Congress of Deputies to be approved for further examination. It is particularly significant that the PAH, amid the difficulties it faced throughout this process and in view of the persistent rejection of the proposal by the right-wing party PP and the social-democratic PSOE, did not stop celebrating its ‘great small victories’ –such as debt reductions and stop of house auctions- by announcing new rounds of mobilizations. In such an instance and with the purpose to provide direct responses to the urgent problem of evictions, the campaign Stop Desahucios was born. Mobilizing against imminent evictions, by means of protests and rallies in front of the eviction spots and the city halls, the Stop Desahucios proved particularly effective in stopping evictions and in eliciting public commitments of the city-hall representatives to reconsider and resolve each individual case. In 5 years of struggle the Stop Desahucios has managed to stop more than 1135

\textsuperscript{14} The report is accessible online at: http://www.ine.es/buscar/searchResults.do?searchString=endeudamiento+de+hogares+2009&Menu_botonBuscador=Search&searchType=DEF_SEARCH&startat=0&L=0

\textsuperscript{15} All information is accessible online at http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/

\textsuperscript{16} The statement of the Court of Justice is accessible online at http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Sentencia-tribunal-luxemburgo.pdf
evictions. Not all individual cases of the struggle, however, were successful. In view of this, the PAH rather than dividing its struggle between two causes, decided to multiply its actions by launching the ‘Obra Social la PAH’.

“Neither the fines nor the administrative sanctions, or the attempt to criminalize the movement, or the open dates issued by some judges with the objective to prevent the concentrations, or the police actions, which in betrayal occur hours before (being officially) established by a judge, in order to enforce the eviction will manage to stop the movement or silence out voices”.

The ‘Obra Social la PAH’ [PAH Social Work], was born with the aim to accommodate the cases where the Stop Desahucios was failing. It emphasized on the reappropriation of buildings left empty after successful bank-driven evictions, and has managed to rehouse 1180 people until today. Rather than functioning as a separate campaign from the Dacion en Pago or the Stop Desahucioson, the Obra Social was launched to prioritize rehousing, yet parallel to this promote all the declared objectives of the PAH struggle. To this direction its rationale has been triple:

“First, recover the social function of an empty dwelling in order to guarantee that the family is not left on the street. Second, enhance the pressure on financial institutions in order to accept the dacion en pago. Third, force the public administration to adopt once and for all the necessary measures to guarantee the right to housing”.

Engaging in direct actions the PAH has been particularly visible to the authorities. To further enhance its presence vis-à-vis them, in the beginning of 2011 it initiated the campaign ‘Mociones Ayuntamientos’. Providing all the relevant information on the motion model of the PAH, the Mociones Ayuntamientos is an invitation to the municipal authorities to adopt it, introduce it in town hall meetings, propagate it and ultimately vote it. It is one of the most interesting actions of the PAH, manifesting a significant innovation to old repertoires of action establishing links with institutional adversaries. In practice, the Mociones Ayuntamientos challenges the established configurations of power relations and shifts the locus of negotiation power by transforming the movement to a potent agent of the political debate and by transfiguring the institutional interlocutors to peripheral units of an ongoing struggle. Through this shift, institutional adversaries are implicitly remodeled to potential institutional alliances and solidaires, since in practice they are allowed to move only within a limited set of options: they may choose between outright opposing a solution to an aggravated problem of their immediate concern on the local level (a choice accompanied by considerable political costs) or to ultimately support the struggle, to which the movement has taken the lead; that is a struggle which is fought on the movement’s terms.

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17 The number of stopped evictions is daily rising. To follow-up see http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2014/02/21/la-pah-ya-haganado-cinco-anos-de-pah/
18 The number of people rehoused is daily rising. To follow up see http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2014/02/21/la-pah-ya-haganado-cinco-anos-de-pah/
Taking into account the difficulties that each of the campaigns has been facing, the PAH has been initiating further campaigns to facilitate the limitations it was confronting. For such reasons, in 2012 the Popular Legislative Initiative [ILP] was born in order to modify the current Mortgage Act and enable the enactment of the Dacio en Pago. The significant institutional obstacles put for the ILP and its outright rejection by the right-wing PP, rather than intimidating the PAH to deescalate its actions, made it grow stronger by getting “convinced that all this effort has not been in vain”. This led to the initiation of the PAH’s latest campaign; the Escrache.

“We fear that some parties will express their determination to vote against and continue to defend the interests of financial institutions. We are convinced that this decision does not correspond to the will of the deputies who compose these Parties and for this reason we initiate a campaign with the objective to break the discipline of vote, appealing to their ethical and moral values, appealing to democracy; it is a public demand [...] We respect the freedom of vote of the deputies, but we consider that as citizens we have the right to inform them about the dramatic consequences their decision will bring because we suffer daily from them”.

Inspired by the Argentinian movements of the 1990s, the ‘Escrache’ was born with the purpose to “point out the first and last names of those responsible for the financial genocide”, and to virtually and physically persecute the deputies who deny their support to the PAH and its objectives. Further, the Escrache is to make clear that “the impunity of those who permit the continued violations of human rights in our country, is over”. Overall consequence of these successively launched campaigns is the growth of the PAH to a potent claimant of the right to housing. The individual campaigns accommodating one another and providing support to one another, in practice grow interrelated to one another. Nevertheless, they grow all together as an organic assembly of initiatives; as interrelated parts of a comprehensive project, which up to an extent withstands the hostile institutional advancements of today -manifest in foreclosures, evictions and homelessness- and strategically prefigures democratization as the consolidation of the right to housing.

II. Enacting democracy in internal organization

Democracy is a concept of particular interest for social movement studies. Indeed, it is a concept placed at the center of social movement struggles and one that largely defines the character of social movement activism. To this direction, social movements are often approached as per se democratizing agents. Nevertheless, movement activism is not a question of innate democratic values becoming manifest. This is especially relevant for an often made assumption about the inherent democratic predisposition of social movements, which has as a consequence an overwhelming and rather widespread understanding: that, almost by default, movements are an ‘ancillary to democracy’, and civic engagement is an ipso facto defense of it (see Blee, 2012). Conducive to this perception is the disregard of a highly significant area of reflection between social movement studies and social theory, which is crystallized in the idea of social change as progressive historical automatism. The Manichean
spirit of this idea, in effect, conceals the relation between popular agency and regressive mechanisms, which make the people “active participants in the perpetuation of inequality, including their own” (see Fominaya and Cox, 2013: 12). Such regressive mechanisms concern not only a macro-level analysis of social determinations, but also micro-level concerns of movement activism. Dispelling the myth of social movements as per se democratic forces is a challenge encompassing two virtues. On the one hand it facilitates the fruitful reflection on the dark side of movement activism. Kathleen Blee capture properly its implications: “grassroots activism can move towards decidedly undemocratic goals, such as efforts to restrict the political rights of immigrants or prisoners. It can promote nostalgic ideas of the past or fuel fears of racial, national, or gender groups, as did massive movements for white supremacy in the early twentieth century” (see Blee, 2012: 4). This challenge is far afield from the interests of this paper. Nonetheless, close inspection of the democratic capacities of movement activism as potentials, rather than certainties, encompasses another virtue. It is the condition in order to acknowledge the great challenges entailed in maintaining a certain degree of consistency between the democratic declared goals of the movement and the employed practices to serve these goals.

Concentrating on the internal practices of democracy, this section explores how these challenges are met by contemporary grassroots movements, sharing the RDM’s demands for genuine participation and deliberation. A series of comprehensive scholarly works on the questions of democracy as a concern of internal organization have been undertaken; especially in regards to the momentous GJM (see della Porta and Rucht, 2013; della Porta, 2005a; 2009a; 2013a). Nonetheless, the question of power and power relations within social movements remains compelling for the contemporary grassroots movements as well (see della Porta, 2014). The parallel universe of grassroots politics, generated as a response to the politics of austerity, urges for a close inspection of the challenges of democratic organization. This is especially true for those grassroots movements engaged with the ‘politics of social identity’, whereby democracy is both their ends and their means, and whereby means and ends cannot be clearly differentiated (see Kitschelt, 1993).

The model of deliberative participation

In studies of democracy in the field of political theory, the concept of democracy is mainly analyzed in the basic dimensions of participation and deliberation. These two principles of democracy are considered to be a pair of interrelated concepts, for which representation and majoritarian vote pose as counterweights (see Sartori, 1962, 1987; Bobbio, 1987; Dahl, 1998; Rosanvallon, 2008). In social movement studies the concept of democracy is similarly analyzed through these fashionable concepts. Nevertheless, the interest of social movement studies on the question of participation is mostly concentrated on the theme of participation in collective action. To this direction, dimensions such as structures of participation (see Michels, 1962 on the ‘iron law of oligarchy’; Freeman, 1972 on the ‘tyranny of structurelessness’; Polletta, 2002 on the dimension of friendship as a compromise to extended participation), networks of participation (see Diani and McAdam, 2003; Diani, 2000; 2013;
Participation in collective action, however, is only half the puzzle of organizing a political action. Participation in decision-making is another salient feature of collective action. For that matter, research in social movement studies theorizes participation in mainly two types: direct participation [often simply referred to as participation], and indirect/mediated participation [often referred to as delegation] (see della Porta, 2009b; 2009d; 2013a; della Porta and Rucht, 2013). Comprehensive approaches to the specificities of collective action, are also emphasizing on the modes of decision-making. These are largely referred to as deliberation and majority vote (see della Porta, 2013a). The combination of these component features of decision-making, provides us with a typology of four models of democracy in collective action (see Table 1). These models reflect four distinct types of democratic organization within movement activism, noted as associational model, assembleary model, model of deliberative representation, and model of deliberative participation.

### Table 1: Models of democracy within social movements

Analytically, the associational model reflects the combination of indirect participation in decision-making with majority voting, while the model of deliberative representation reflects the indirect participation in decision-making, however performed by means of deliberation over the issues at stake. On the other side of the participation-delegation divide, there are the assembleary model and the model of deliberative participation. These are the most common models of democracy in movement activism, in as far as the universe of grassroots movements pursuing democratization is concerned. Hence, they are the most relevant models of democracy within social movements, in as far as the interest of this paper is concerned. However, while in the assembleary model direct participation is
realized through majority voting, in the model of deliberative participation direct participation in decision-making is channeled through deliberation of the movement participants on the issues at stake.

The RDM, which up to a certain extend serves as a point of reference in regards to the principles of democratic organization for the grassroots movements examined in this paper, has asserted the exceptional value of deliberative processes in direct participation in decision-making. Indeed it managed masterfully coordinated assemblies of a largely heterogeneous population, where decisions were taken through deliberation of the participants. In the same direction, the contemporary grassroots movements examined here emphasize on deliberative processes, rather than voting, as a means to realize direct participation in the overall process of decision-making: that is apart from ultimately deciding upon a specific issue or a specific course of action, to also examine the specificities of the issue at stake, to exchange information, and to engage in argumentation. The assemblage model of democracy, in this sense, fails to capture comprehensively the modes of internal organization in contemporary grassroots activism. For that matter, the model of deliberative participation is the most relevant, and indeed the most challenging one in analytical terms. Participation in the model of deliberative participation refers primarily to conditions of equality, inclusiveness, and horizontality. Participation here, as opposed to delegation, reflects the absence of leaders and/or other actors mediating participants’ will. Further it encompasses the idea of all participants as equals and hence all participants included in the process of decision-making, which is managed through deliberation. Notwithstanding these invaluable reflections, it is a major analytical necessity to capture the modes of differential participation in the process of deliberation itself; that is to account for the performance of deliberation within participatory models of democracy (see Giugni and Nai, 2013; Haug et.al., 2013). Put in other words, to account for the different shades deliberation for decision-making assumes, once participation in the deliberative process is guaranteed.

Systematizing differential participation in decision-making is of the utmost importance when it comes to the in-depth understanding of democratic decision-making in social movements. To the extent that a multiplicity of grassroots movement groups opt for equal, inclusive and horizontal participation in decision-making, it is significant to advance systematic models of differential participation, which can guide us in exploring the characteristics this participation assumes. For that matter, the concept of deliberation constitutes the cornerstone of inquiry. Deliberation is precisely the dimension which reveals the type of relations developed amongst the movement groups’ participants, and ultimate determines the character that participation in decision-making assumes (see della Porta, 2013a). The discursive specificities of decision-making in social movements have been a particular interest of the research on the GJM (see della Porta 2005a; 2009a; 2009c). Different scholars have emphasized on different aspects of deliberation, with conflict management being the most prominent amongst them. Indeed controversies in decision-making are considered to be precisely the “central incidents in which power is acted out” (see Haug, et.al., 2013: 24). Nonetheless, the overall process of decision-making encompasses many different tasks, with which movement groups are almost daily
confronted, such as problem analysis, political discussions, planning of campaigns, planning courses of action, and making claims. Common denominator of all these tasks is argumentation. In the scholarly literature the development of arguments is examined against three critical dimensions: a) power, referring to “the nature of the ‘arguments’ that produce consensus on a given group”, b) preferences, denoting opinions and positions on issues, and c) values, denoting beliefs central in individuals’ belief systems\(^\text{19}\) (see Andretta, 2013: 98). The significance of argumentation is also highly estimated in works about deliberative democracy. Deliberation, indeed places at the center of all discussions the communicative aspects of interactions, where reasoning is the key to guarantee “conditions of plurality of values” (see della Porta, 2009a: 2). In the words of Rosenberg, “political discussion can be considered deliberative only if it involves the reasoned consideration of participants’ beliefs and preferences” (2007: 130). Models of democracy centered on deliberation -and here models of differential participation in decision-making, which are explained through deliberation- signal out the salience of argumentation.

Guided by this premise, the argument advanced here is that deliberation is intimately related to the problem of power relations within social movements; relations which have significant consequences for the endurance of internal democratic practices. In particular, different combinations of the traits of two critical aspects of deliberation disclose four different models of deliberation. These models are advanced here as *ideal* types of deliberation. Yet it is argued that they largely set out the field over which power and power relations in movement activism manifest themselves [to a greater or to a lesser extent] and may function as indicators of the movement groups’ capacity to endure internal democratic practices.

Differential participation in decision-making: the challenge of deliberation

In the field of deliberative theory, two distinct and in effect rival explanations of deliberation are advanced: deliberation as a principle, and deliberation as a method. These reflect two distinct types of democratic organization: deliberative democracy and democratic deliberation, respectively (see Mansbridge, 2007). Conceptualization of deliberation as a *method* is the most commonly held. Within this context, deliberation refers to the method of decision-making and it is briefly explained as reasoned justification of decisions (see Steiner, 2012). Furthermore, it is understood as a method of decision-making, which resists the relative arbitrariness of majoritarian voting [whereby power relations remain concealed behind the ballot cabin or the showing of hands]. In such models of *democratic deliberation* power relations are indeed openly addressed, with the expectation that arbitrary use of power may be exposed and controlled (see Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). Nonetheless, models of democratic deliberation are not protected against tacitly prevalent power monopolies. They invest a certain degree of legitimacy in decision-making, yet they do so by means of

\(^{19}\) Andretta draws on Elster’s distinction between ‘fundamental preferences’ and ‘derived preferences’. While he faithfully adheres to the content of the original distinction, he simplifies the scheme by referring to ‘values’ and ‘preferences’, respectively. This paper adopts Andretta’s terms for reasons of parsimony and clarity.
emphasizing on the *plurality* of legitimation sources. In effect, this means that deliberation is merely yet another means of legitimation, such as competitive elections and aggregative votes are (see Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). In defense of the model of democratic deliberation, its proponents assert that this is mostly a problem of finding “the right mix among all these elements” (see Steiner, 2012:1). The conceptualization of deliberation as a *principle*, on the other hand, is significantly more challenging and indeed rarely reckoned. However, *deliberative democracy* is the principle type of genuine democratic organization and one particularly relevant for the organization of grassroots movement activism pursuing democratization. Within this context, instead of a mere articulation of preferences which are detached from the ends that the ultimate decision serves, deliberation is briefly explained as actual, real communication [including expression, justification, confrontation, and cross-examination of opinions] in view of the common good (see Mansbridge, 2007).

Summarizing the differences between the models of democratic deliberation and deliberative democracy, it is proper to say that although democratic deliberation exposes power relations in decision-making, it fails to definitively uproot them. Since deliberation primarily reflects power relations, and only on a second level of analysis (re)produces them, deliberation as only a method of democratization, in effect equals shooting in a mirror; only an image disappears, not the problem. Models of deliberative democracy, on the other hand, are comprehensive models of democratization. They constitute models of genuine deliberation, where both the means [actual communication] and the ends [common good] of deliberation are seriously taken into account.

As rival to this type of deliberation stand models of strategic bargaining in decision-making. Within this context, actors enter the process of decision-making with fixed preferences and make use of a combination of promises and threats. The optimal outcome of decision-making here is the achievement of a win-win equilibrium (see Steiner, 2012). Deliberation in models of strategic bargaining adheres to a decidedly different organizational logic; the logic of the market-place. Conflations between this organizational logic and the organizational logic of genuine deliberation [which pertains more to the organizational logic of the state] are particularly often and they result to an obscure mix of radically different mindsets. They are properly explained as a “failure to differentiate one’s responsibilities as a citizen from one’s stance as a consumer”, and they manifest a profound incompetence to apprehend that deliberation in movement activism is not a “private act of consumption, but a collective act of power” (see Ackerman and Fishkin, 2002: 143). The divide between the ‘private act’ and the ‘collective act’ is disclosed in the distinction between private interests [primarily served by strategic bargaining] and the common good [primarily served by genuine deliberation]. Two notes are important to be made in regards to this distinction. First that the private interest is not commensurable to the self-interest. Indeed, self-interest “suitably constrained, ought to be part of the deliberation that eventuates in a democratic decision” (see Mansbridge, et.a., 2010: 64). Where interest is not conceptualized as an objective state of affairs, rather it includes “one’s self and one’s identity”, collectively defined, (see Mansbridge, et.al., 2010: 68), the self-interest is not
foreign to the pursuit of the common good as it is often perceived (see Ackerman and Fishkin, 2002). To the extent that the common good holds the capacity to reflect the self-interests of many different actors, the self-interest forms integral part of its definition. Second it is important to establish a solid understanding of the specificities of the common good as opposed to the public good. Further then to clarify that although they are not commensurable interests themselves, there are certain characteristics they share in common, which link them together as being rivals to the private interest. Organizational theory points out that distinctions between different organizations, such a state, a corporate business, a political party or a grassroots movement group, are primarily depended on the different stakes of these organizations; being the common good or the public good (see Arrow, 1974). In practice, while the public good has a manifest non-relational character and is governed by jointness of supply, the common good is principally relational in character, though it is also governed by jointness of supply (see Arrow, 1974). The non-relational character of the public good is briefly explained by the axiom if it is available to anyone it must be available to everyone. In practice, the public good transcends vertical and horizontal divisions within the organization, and its availability is a benefit for all stakeholders. The relational character of the common good, on the other hand, violates the axiom of availability for anyone and succumbs to divisions; often combinations of horizontal and vertical divisions. In practice, the common good reveals latent conflicting interests among seemingly homogeneous groups. The second important aspect, the jointness of supply, is a characteristic commonly shared by the public and the common good, and it is briefly explained by the axiom that additional consumption by one does not diminish the amount available to others (see Arrow, 1974). Overall it may be said that a useful note in order to draw the distinction between public and common goods is the distinction between ascription of values and ascription of prices to the good. The often conflation between the public good and the common good, in practice is an implicit conflation of value and price ascription, which effectively supports the infamous myth of the ‘tragedy of the commons’ (see Hardin, 1968).

To return to the preceding discussion, the aspects of deliberation in decision-making, which have been signaled out are analytically distinguished between means and ends. On the one hand, the means of deliberation refer to the modes in which decision-making advances. They reflect a fundamental choice between two different approaches of deliberation: the approach of deliberation as a principle, whereby the means of deliberation is the non-dogmatic argumentation governed by reason, and the approach of deliberation as a method, whereby the means of deliberation are multiple [e.g. deliberation, majoritarian voting etc] and may allow deliberation to unfold also through opinionated and tactical argumentation similar to strategic bargaining. On the other hand, the ends of deliberation refer to the goals that decision-making serves. They reflect a fundamental distinction between two different mindsets of interest: as private interest, which guides more introvert, self-referential and individualistic decisions, and as self-interest in the common/public good, which guides more extrovert, social and collectivist decisions. Combining these aspects of deliberation in decision-making, four types
of deliberation are disclosed (see Table 2). These are deliberative models or types of deliberation, which this paper argues they capture differential participation in decision-making in democratic models of deliberative participation.

**ENDS OF DELIBERATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANS OF DELIBERATION</th>
<th>PRIVATE INTEREST</th>
<th>PUBLIC/COMMON GOOD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIXED PREFERENCES</td>
<td>Strategic Bargaining</td>
<td>Speculative Deliberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN PREFERENCES</td>
<td>Strategic Deliberation</td>
<td>Genuine Deliberation</td>
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**Table 2: Deliberative types explaining differential participation in decision-making in democratic models of deliberative participation**

The topical character of these concerns for contemporary grassroots movements, which pursue democratization, is indeed given. Their ongoing struggle is channeled through a multiplicity of decisions they make in respect to the issues they address and the ways in which they do it. They adopt models of deliberative participation, and they opt for equal, inclusive, and horizontal participation in decision-making, which is enacted through deliberation. However, within these models of organization, movements face a series of difficulties in order to achieve genuine deliberation. In most cases their ultimate goal is to serve the public or the common good, rather than some private interest of individual participants, and in some cases there are indications that they do so by means of taking decisions through rational non-dogmatic argumentation where they enter with open preferences. These are the interesting cases; cases where the organization of movement activism is paradigmatic in regards to internal considerations and manifestly capable to endure internal democratic practices.  

Genuine deliberation, however, is an ideal type of deliberation “to which, all else equal, a practice should be judged as approaching more or less closely” (see Mansbridge, et.al., 2010: 67). Hence, grassroots movements, more often than not, are found to oscillate between the different types of deliberation presented above. Amongst all four types, strategic bargaining is the least relevant for these movements. Although individual participants may be found to perform guided by its particular characteristics [i.e. trying to serve their private interest while engaging in dogmatic argumentation, unprepared to yield to a competing argument], the overall experience of these movements is far afield

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from this deliberative type. In effect, this type of deliberation is not relevant for movement activism; rather it is a deliberative type explaining performance in the market-place. In a similar way the type of strategic deliberation is the least met in movement activism, precisely because of the character of movement activism, which restrains from allegiance to the private interest as an outright goal. The same is not true, however, for the type of speculative deliberation. By contrast, this is a commonly encountered deliberative type in movement activism and the main rival to genuine deliberation. Argument of this paper is that compromises in the capacity of grassroots movement activism to endure internal democratic practices arise from the existence of forceful tendencies towards the type of speculative deliberation. Fieldwork research shows that indeed such tendencies are a part of movements’ reality and that the factors mostly accountable for these tendencies are: a) a relative inflexibility in deliberative argumentation generated by strong ideological convictions, and b) a relative lack of solid prognostic frames in movement activism, which in effect transform decision-making processes to a battlefield of political speculation.

>Valuing deliberation and practicing deliberation: grassroots movements between consensus and the majority rule

Critical trait of deliberation when juxtaposed with majoritarian voting is the development of argumentation in view of often radically different courses of rationality. Social movements as deliberative spaces are embedded on this thesis, struggling for consensus building in decentralized, horizontal, and participatory organizational structures (see Dryzek, 2000; della Porta, 2005b). Although progressing significantly against the representative elements of majoritarian voting, movements adopting consensual models of decision-making are confronted with serious difficulties. Involvement in activism is accompanied by influential estimations of the costs of engagement. Such calculations highlight the aspects of time, mental fatigue and social implications that participation entails (see McAdam, 1986). The same is true for participation in decision-making processes. Long standing decisional processes are often a disincentive for engagement, and social movement activists attest that time consuming processes are a daily reality of movement activism:

“You prepare a manifesto, let’s say for the water. The point is not to get stuck with the ‘and’ and the ‘full stop’ and the ‘comma’. Namely, to take care of things to progress. This is the problem with the residents’ committees; that they can get stuck in formalities and lose lots of time to prepare a manifesto for example” [I1T13]

Time consuming decisional-processes, however, in most cases are not considered a tolerable normality. Frustration with the large amounts of time spend on decision-making is something that all of the movement groups examined have reported. Nonetheless, deliberation -even if extended- aiming at consensus is highly valued, as it is perceived to realize the collective and democratic character of decision-making. Overall, however, it is confronted as a puzzle to be solved and a question to which answers come with great difficulties:
“There is the well know issue that there is with all collectivities of this type -self-managed, which go with direct democracy and which have chosen to decide with consensus- sometimes a minor disagreement can trouble enough the group. On the one hand this is useful, on the one hand it is presumably supporting what we call democracy. On the other hand, in practice, it is very difficult, because it holds you back, it is very tiring, very painful, and ultimately makes us also wonder if this is democracy. So, in which way do you decide in a collectivity of this type? With consensus? With majority? It is something that almost no collectivity has resolved it in an absolute way” [I3T13]

Deeply affected by such concerns movement activists often account for extended discussions and argumentation as a means to ultimately find a line of compromise between different viewpoints, rather than a means to co-formulate preferences and reach agreement on political positions. While they yield to the power of deliberation as a principle, they often seem to succumb to the use of deliberation as a method alternative to voting, yet with only little substantial difference.

“There through argumentation. Ok... When there is a discussion going on, and in the assembly there are different opinions. Some have suggested that we vote. We haven’t done it. Because when we are 20-30 people you can see the direction everybody is going to... I think voting would simply record in a more formal way something that is anyway recorded” [I2T13]

>Towards speculative deliberation: The inflexibility of ideological convictions in grassroots activism

Understanding deliberation as an ‘informal’ expression of aggregate viewpoints reveals a series of difficulties in communication. These difficulties are recorded to be centered mostly upon strong political convictions, which guide deliberation through monolithic and forceful arguments. To the extent that deliberation is used as a mere method, rather than the principle of decision-making, the process of deliberating progressively degenerates to an exercise in rhetoric, which aims to convince rather than to develop collective ideas:

“All winter we had this story going on. Someone was taking the floor -we had a list with topics- and would start analyzing the whole political situation... 20-25 minutes of speaking and we were here until 12, 12:30 in the night and we didn’t discuss anything. Practically the committee is an arena for someone to get inside and display themselves, and the worse is that everybody says the same things. And we were obliged to sit here, not were, we are obliged to sit here and listen to the same things from everyone without reacting. And this is tedious. Not tedious...it drives people away. No doubt” [I7T13]

Coupled with strong political convictions, deliberation for consensus discloses as a practically elusive goal. In respect to this, the movement groups show indications of being progressively transformed to spaces of political speculation, with detrimental consequences for the deliberative processes:

“There came a case, when we were 400 people in the amphitheater in the square and there comes a parasite of the extraparliamentary left and a parasite of anarchy, and disregarding totally the procedures, they stood up and started speaking for half an hour and forty minutes each. As a result the whole [process] was stigmatized, and in less than a quarter of time the people started to draw away, to leave. [...] It caused great loses this thing, and this is why I’m convinced that it’s enough with the groups or the monsters of the left and of the anarchy of the first, second, third, and fourth
international, who believe they know [what’s] right and they must give me the whole package like that. To come and guide me, to manipulate me. Enough! It’s harmful!” [I10T13]

Compromises in the general climate of communication in deliberative processes, due to strong ideological convictions, have been reported by both the movement groups examined in Thessaloniki and Ciutat Vella. Nevertheless, despite their common interpretations of these developments as problematic, they engaged in different explanations of the phenomenon. The Spanish grassroots groups explained this intricacy mostly as a problem of militancy, which further aggravates the compromised condition of the population they try to address, and which primarily affects enlargement of participation in collective action:

“Life has toughen very much. The people...everyday life is getting increasingly difficult for them. It occupies more of their time. And they lose their spirit as well. It is very bad and in this neighborhood...the people are affected also mentally...everyday are getting in here21 people that are ‘wrong in their minds’. Then, the militants, we are...an assembly only with militants is the most boring, because they are always fighting... and we are like that! If you go in an assembly and they are fighting, they talk too much, always the same... For the smallest thing they fight... you say “pff...I don’t want [to participate]”. This has happened. In this neighborhood there is a group of people that never comes in the assembly, they don’t want to come anymore” [I3B13]

The Greek grassroots groups, however, perceive this phenomenon mostly as a problem of political party affiliations, which primarily compromises the movement groups’ capacity to endure internal democratic practices, and further influence negatively the relations developed between the participants:

“You want it or not, there come in and some people with party affiliations... There are ongoing attempts to maintain some balance and indeed there were concessions in some issues. But there were [problems] since the first moment. It plays a role all this thing and maybe they've learned, these people, to orate and they like this thing. We have quarrels in here, even to dissolve the assembly, to this point we've arrived...Some things have been deeply influenced. We are not all as we were in the beginning. We have been divided into groups. In the beginning we were one group and we would discuss and we would also agree on most matters and would even go outside together. Now there are [separate] groups in here that you can distinguish their positions and also we are not together outside [of the assembly]. We are divided.” [I7T13]

Compromised enlargement of participation in collective action has been also identified as a problem by the Greek groups; yet it has been identified as a problem related to the grassroots groups being politically stigmatized and hence being perceived by the bystanders and the potential allies in the community as a cause not worthy to support and/or get involved with:

“There followed a gossip by the rivals -those who say no to assemblies, this is what I mean, there are people who say no to this stuff, viva god, the king, the president, the prime minister- and they [the people of the neighborhood] started to say ‘you saw the assembly is of the leftists’. The leftists again, the communists, the anarchists, the SYRIZA people. As a result we saw that it spread in a way that people said ‘no, let it be, I’m not going’” [I10T13]

21 Reference made to a local bookstore, which functions as a point of reference for the assembly.
In this mode, the movement participants reported that they themselves are often consumed by similar feelings of frustration. They often reported that the progress of their activism is particularly slow due to ideological inflexibilities with no substance, and that the meaningfulness of the processes they engage to is doubtful:

“You know what, they don’t have big differences the left parties. The extra-parliamentary I mean. I can’t find any differences between them. So most of the things you hear in here…It’s not... actually they have the same ideas and you hear the same, they can’t be distinguished. But it’s just this, that our relations have ‘frozen’ and we keep contact in here minimum... What kept me and I stayed, because many people have come and gone -most of the people have gone actually- is that we are a company, we are friends let’s say, we knew each other and this kept me... The truth is that I feel we don’t do anything. I don’t have the impression that we do something significant in here. It’s more as if I say I don’t do anything, I come here and occupy myself with something” [I7T13]

Participants often reflected on this development as a daily routine which eventually re-enforces stereotypes of movement activism amongst the general population, and for which they themselves are to be held responsible:

“People pass by and they see us here and they think “ha! It’s these weirdoes there, hanging around together, doing nothing but smoking and drinking beers”...and we say they are conservatives and idiots because they are indifferent with what is going on...but in the end, what are we doing here? for the real problems...Of course, if they see us like that why should they come?” [Off-the record comment]

Overall, in the grassroots movement groups of both Greece and Spain, participants have explained strong adherence to inflexible ideological positions as a prominent problem in the progress of collective action. The Spanish grassroots groups’ participants explain this as mostly a problem of militancy and as a problem primarily affecting participation in action. For their Greek counterparts, however, political party affiliations seem to have a special merit and are perceived as primarily affecting the deliberative processes followed, and the relations developed between the participants. Yet parallel to this they also acknowledge that it is accountable for the compromised enlargement of the groups.

Inflexibility generated by strong ideological convictions is indeed particularly often in deliberative processes, as participant observation revealed. Dogmatic approaches to the issues at stake are particularly common and often lead to tactical maneuvering and exercise of power. Characteristic example for that matter, is the case of an instantaneous coalition between participants with minoritarian representation in the assembly of the political parties they favor, with the purpose to take control of the assembly in fear of other participants ‘hijacking’ it in favor of their political party:

“It’s good to participate in this stuff...you know...to monitor, see the dynamics, influence the situation towards wherever we want...to take control of the process from them” [PO1T]

Ideological inflexibility in movement activism generated by dogmatic, fixed preferences, is disclosed as a critical factor which drives movement groups away from achieving genuine deliberation -for that
matter militancy has been identified by the movement participants as a significant factor. By contrast it guides them towards speculative tactics, mostly informed by political party affiliations as the participants themselves reported, with significantly negative effects on enduring internal democratization.

Discussion

Transferring the message of democratization in the spaces of everyday political and social interaction, is a bewildering puzzle for grassroots anti-austerity movements, which come to confront democratization as a question going beyond either a mere theory or a mere practice of democracy; rather, being a reflective relationship established between the two.

In the first part of the paper it has been argued that advancing democratization from below is a matter closely related to the development of actual strategic prefiguration in movement activism, whereby movements’ are guided by their inventive character in order to develop new formats of struggle substantiating the objectives of their struggle. This challenge consists in the identification of instances whereby structural change [as measurable institutional change] and cultural change [as identity (trans)formation] entail parts of one and the same process. The water movement of Thessaloniki is an example of recasting the democratization challenge, as a matter of both the external and the internal life of collective action, hence advancing formats of struggle consistent with the objective of democratizing the management of the water company. In this direction the movement manages to advance democratic frames of action, by means of which it disturbs the structural settings, perturbs the institutional advancements and wins concessions, but it also affects cultural frames and conceptions of collective action and the collective management of public goods.

Advancement of democratization from below has been also examined as a problem of grassroots activism amid hostile political environments. Critical factor, which seems to be compromising the capacities of the movements in their endeavor for democratization, are the consequences of the implemented austerity politics, which urge the immediacy and efficiency of the movements’ responses. In these cases, prefiguring democracy is a problem closely related to the movements’ capacities to withstand the aggressive institutional developments. Argument of the paper has been that this goal is not unattainable, rather dependent on the multiplication of actions; instead of detrimental divisions between exclusive choices. Guided by the logic of an intimate relation between the struggles ‘for now and for the future’, the housing movement in Barcelona consists an example to the direction of overcoming such limitations. By way of pursuing short-term action and long-term plans parallel to one another, it manages to advance them as organic parts of a comprehensive project, which withstands the hostile developments of today, but also goes beyond them to prefigure democratization as the consolidation of the right to housing.

In the second part of the paper it has been argued that the movements’ specific approach of deliberation as a principle or a method of organization functions as an indicator of the movements’
capacity to endure internal democratic practices. Put differently, in respect to advancing and sustaining internal democracy movements’ are significantly influenced by their capacity to transfigure the problem of internal democratization from a matter of principle to a matter of fact. In this direction the model of participatory deliberation has been discussed and further a typology of four types of differential participation in decision-making has been advanced. These types have been shaped around the axes set by the ends [common/public good; private interest] and the means [open preferences; fixed preferences] of deliberation. As most relevant for grassroots movements have been signaled out the ideal model of genuine deliberation and the more pragmatic model of speculative deliberation. While emphasizing on the common or the public good (instead of private interests), grassroots movements more often than not find themselves confronting some problematic choices in regards to the means of deliberation; oscillating between practicing deliberation as bargaining and as advancement of collective decisions and co-formulation of political preferences. Examining these complexities in neighborhood assemblies and residents’ committees in Thessaloniki and Barcelona, it has been shown that critical factors forcing movements to confront this as a dilemma difficult to overcome, is mostly the inflexibility of ideological convictions of the participants (identified as either a problem of militancy or political party affiliation). Result has been shown to be a certain degree of compliance with the idea of deliberation towards consensus as commensurable to the aggregation of different fixed preferences; a conflation which profoundly distorts the meaning of consensus and which indicates a move in a radically different direction than the ideal of political co-formulation.

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