Two

Does participation always have a democratic spirit?

Michele Micheletti

Introduction

Let’s face it. We love it and think the more the better. Our ongoing passion for participation leads politicians and policy makers to cry out when it declines, and scholars of politics to track, trace and analyse the numerous ways in which individuals engage and disengage politically. Political scientists intensively debate where participation takes place – if it occurs only in parliamentary politics and government-oriented settings or also in other settings (van Deth, 2010; Stolle and Hooghe, 2006; McFarland, 2010; Scholzman, 2010; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). Some scholars devise innovative theories, methods and materials to study emerging venues for citizen engagement outside government and commonly find that fears of participation’s decay often are related to privileging certain forms of political activity over others. This insight helps to explain why politicians and policy makers in different countries target electoral participation among the youth, including suggesting compulsory first-time voting and lowering the legal voting age to 16 (for example, Swedish Save the Children Foundation’s Youth Movement, 2006; IPPR, 2013). More general agreement coheres over the importance of the who of participation, a topic involving worries of whether or not pockets of participatory inequality exist, how and why they come about, and how they might be remedied (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; Verba, 2003; Stolle and Micheletti, 2005; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012). Here scholars analyse the individual characteristics of participants and non-participants and ask whether gender, age, education, ethnicity, race, religion, income, social class and so on matter for who participates and who does not. The short answer is that they do. The general fear is that certain groups are better and others worse off at realising themselves in politics. Important concepts such as ‘mobilisation of bias’ (see below) and books like The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of
American Democracy (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012) reflect this concern.

Research on participation does not stop here. Scholars examine how participation takes place, that is, through which forms, tools and methods. Though somewhat related to the where question above, this one is more about bringing scholarship up to date with today’s political world. For instance, scholars might ask how politically concerned individuals target the ‘politics of products’ of transnational corporations since these entities have gained more political power through contemporary economic globalisation. They even explore how people participate to solve problems created by economic austerity, governmental shutdowns and global climate change, or study how the online activities of a global political character are used in participatory activities (Stolle and Hooghe, 2006; Dalton 2008a, 2008b; Micheletti and McFarland, 2010; Bennett and Segerberg, 2011). Moreover, researchers investigate the why of participation in order to understand better the motivations, incentives, resources and networks that mobilise or draw political actors into politics (Conway and Feigert, 1968; Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; Bäck, Teorell and Westholm, 2011). This focus is important because it helps us to understand the interests, values and norms underlying political behaviour as well as whether mobilisations of bias exist or not. Recently scholars have begun systematic studies of the so what of participation by evaluating whether and how effective different participatory activities are in bringing about societal change and well-being (Bosi and Uba, 2009; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013, chapter 7).

Participation scholarship greatly improves our understanding of political activity and assuages some worries about its decay. However, it also slights other important questions, particularly ones about how well it helps to grow democracy. The implicit assumption in scholarship has been that participation is good for democracy even when there is clear evidence to the contrary – from voting Hitler into office and boycotting Jewish merchants in the 1930s to contemporary protests of gay rights, public-dialogue forums that hinder free debate and special-interest mobilisation that thwarts global environmental problem solving. Hence the question: Does participation always have a democratic spirit?. This chapter contributes some thoughts and offers suggestions for how participation’s democratic spirit can fruitfully be studied. It begins with a short overview of an insightful study that brings democratic theory and participation research closer together, suggests how citizenship research can be used to study this important question, briefly discusses how this approach might be applied empirically and
then ends with a few final reflections on this question’s importance for science and society.

**Participation and democracy: some innovative insights**

By revealing how normative democratic theory values participation, Swedish political scientist Jan Teorell (2006) identified important ‘blind spots’ in past research. He discusses how liberal, participative and deliberative democratic theory justify the role of participation in democracy and, in so doing, fills a knowledge gap on why participation is assumed to be important for democracy. For liberal democratic theory, participation offers individuals political voice – the foremost mechanism for interest representation in parliamentary politics – thus explaining why political equality and inequality (the who question) are important societal matters. For participatory democracy, the main value is hands-on involvement in decision making. It welcomes participation opportunities outside the parliamentary system, for they offer additional opportunities for self-governing and problem solving. For deliberative democracy, its core value is learning about and understanding politics by talking through the issues.

These theories generally assume, therefore, that participation is good for democracy, and thereby even accept the ‘the more of it the better’ thesis. For liberal and deliberative democracy, more of it by more people strengthens political equality and knowledge. For participatory democracy, participation and more of it implies wider and perhaps deeper community engagement. More participants and more participation are, furthermore, generally deemed to be better for political systems. For liberal theorists, a plurality of participatory forms and more of their use tends to ‘make the system more responsive to citizens’ needs and preferences’, which promotes the equal protection of interests (Teorell, 2006, p 792) and enhances political equality. For participatory theorists, more participation fosters the individual's social and political capacities, which, it is assumed, also improves the quality of the citizens. The core value for deliberative theorists is accepting the political system’s legitimacy (its political rules and decision outcomes). Here participation is envisioned as teaching how to be a good and understanding democratic loser if one’s interests do not always prevail in decision making (so-called critical citizenship, see Norris, 1999). But as it is not always the case that participation in the real-life politics functions this way, should not scholarship recognise this?

Aside from this obvious additional blind spot, previous scholarship’s point of departure has generally been to theorise from the perspective
of the nation-state. This yesteryear’s political context is typically collectivist in orientation. Here a central characteristic is its elite orientation through representative democracy and strong political agents able to screen the flow of ideas in and out of politics. Two prominent screening forces (gatekeepers) have been the traditional media (broadcast-network television and radio, traditional newspapers) and large membership organisations (particularly encompassing trade unions and political parties) that could function as strong socialising agents for informing and steering citizens into politics. In short, this era’s participation was to large degree conducted in ‘pre-packaged’ involvement opportunities (compare Dalton, 2008b, p 93), offering strong suggestions about how to think and behave politically as well as about which political values to identify with. Elsewhere I have coined the concept of ‘collectivist collective action’ to characterise participation in this era and have identified it in pure ideal–typical terms as requiring that citizens accept the norms and rules of physical and territorially or nation-state-based structures whose numerical strength gave them the legitimacy to screen out undesirable (for them) political views and values. They could even convince prospective members to change their views and behaviours to fit better in the organisational mould and the identity politics expressed by its grand or semi-grand ideological narratives (Micheletti, 2010, pp 24–34). Table 2.1 provides details of this characterisation.

Today’s political era is different and typically identified as looser, more flexible, open and vulnerable to many diverse influences, targets and values. Participation in it resembles more the pure ideal type of ‘individualised collective action’ (Micheletti, 2010, pp 24–34), theorising political actors as not primarily seeking a pre-packaged established political home, as in yesteryear, or trusting traditional authorities (political parties, broadcasting networks, unions and so on) to tell them what to think politically and how to behave in politics. Rather, political actors create their own political identity and express and act it out in real life. Today’s political actors in many democracies also have much more freedom to create their own political identity and engagement in politics. They believe that their attempts to influence (liberal democracy’s justification for participation), their desire for hands-on and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) involvement (participatory democracy’s justification) and even their hunger to understand politics more fully (deliberative democracy’s justification) can be achieved outside yesteryear’s framework. Therefore, political activity can occur on a more individualised basis, for instance through less-organised and structured market-based activism (political consumerism) outside
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the parliamentary sphere or through social media. Self-development and self-governing can even imply life-style politics (Bennett, 1998) and life-style political consumerism (for example, veganism or simple living) (Micheletti, 2010, p 182–5; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). This self-governing form of participation, requiring the demand for more active choice and rights on the part of individuals, differs considerably from those forms theorised by participatory democracy in the past (for example, the workplace) (Pateman, 1970). Table 2.1 presents yesteryear’s and contemporary participation as pure ideal types. The terms ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘participation 2.0’, borrowed from the evolution of the World Wide Web from the more linear and static

Table 2.1: The ideal types of participation 1.0 and participation 2.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yesteryear’s collectivist collective action Participation 1.0</th>
<th>Today’s individualised collective action Participation 2.0</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political identity built from and with structures and social positions, unitary identity following life paths and role models</td>
<td>Political identity and social position not taken for granted, map out your own life path, be your own role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in established political homes (for example, membership-based interest groups and political parties)</td>
<td>Use of established political homes as point of departure to decide own preferences and priorities, creation and development of individualised political home (for example, via social media and life-style politics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in territorially based physical structures focusing on the government and political system</td>
<td>Involvement in various kinds of networks not based in any single physical territorial level or structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation that is channelled through grand or semi-grand ideological narratives (traditional political ideology)</td>
<td>Involvement based on self-authored individualised narratives (‘self-reflexivity’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in representative democratic structures Delegation of responsibility to leaders and officials</td>
<td>Self-assertive and direct involvement in concrete actions and settings Responsibility is not delegated to leaders and officials but taken personally and jointly Self-actualisation, individualised responsibility taking, responsibilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member interests and identity filtered, adapted, moulded to political preferences of these interest-articulating and aggregating institutions Loyalty to established structures, acceptance of organisational norms, values, standard operating procedures and so on</td>
<td>Dedication and commitment to urgent causes rather than loyalty to organisational norms, values, standard operating procedures and so on Individualised responsibility taking for urgent causes</td>
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Source: Adapted from Micheletti (2010, p 27)
Web.1 to the more socially interactive and flexible Web.2, are coined to reflect similar developments in participation, and also to underscore their significant ideal-theoretical differences. ‘Participation 1.0’ represents ‘old school’ yesteryear’s collectivist and elite-dominated participation culture; ‘participation 2.0’ is the term for the new generation of participation with looser, more plural, elite-challenging and individualised elements.

Given its relative newness, much effort is devoted to explaining and even defending ‘participation 2.0’. Scholars argue that this conceptualisation of participation brings research up to date with current realities and assuages panic about participation’s decay. They identify globalisation, individualisation and privatisation as key processes spurring on 2.0 activities, venues and opportunities and find that its participatory formats are increasingly used (Dalton 2008a; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). ‘Participation 2.0’ is found to occur more spontaneously and can, for instance, surge as swarms (Segerberg, 2010) or carrotmobs (Hoffmann and Hutter, 2012), be triggered by various new authorities on politics, take place in ‘leader-less’ networks of ‘scattered individuals’ (McFarland, 2010, pp 23–4) and be performed more anonymously. ‘Participation 2.0’ generates theoretical debates on creative participation, new conceptions of how individuals participate in politics (individualised responsibility taking and responsibilisation), but it is noteworthy that its democratic quality is also slighted in scholarship, though researchers are probing the value portraits of its users (see more below).

Some scholars and experts express worries about citizens’ current ability to learn about politics and the value of participation in today’s more multifaceted political world (Crick and Lockyer, 2010; Wattenberg, 2012). Among other matters, the role of self-interest in triggering and shaping participation and its contribution to democracy is intensively debated; scholars differ in their analysis (Burtt, 1993; Innes and Booher, 2004; Micheletti, 2010). Here the central question is whether the more individualised collective-action setting is evolving participation from engagements for the common good toward the individual good. Is the ‘we intentions’ of politics fizzling away and being replaced by a focus on self, self-interest and self-promotion as a political project? Is, so to speak, participation becoming a ‘selfie’, just like photographing has to a great degree become a more individual and individualised activity? Obviously these questions pertain to ‘participation 2.0’, but also even to ‘1.0’ because traditional political agents increasingly appeal to self-interest to attract supporters, as when social citizenship is framed in terms of welfare pocketbook voting and
established environmental associations evoke emotions to advocate and mobilise for their cause (Boström and Klintman, 2011; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

Another worry is what here is identified as the eventuality of a value divide between ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ and what this might mean for growing democracy. This implies that the two participation cultures might have different value portraits separating them from each other and drawing in interests and individuals (that is, mobilisation of bias) in particular ways. An insightful ethnographic study of a civic group associated with British labour, for instance, reveals an internal tension between participation via social networking sites (‘participation 2.0’) and participation drawing on the group’s more collective political ethos (‘participation 1.0’). ‘2.0 participants’ were found to be more ego centred and focused primarily on self and forms of self-representation, thus leading the scholars Fenton and Barassi (2011, p 188) to conclude that the two participatory cultures do not ‘sit easily’ with each other. Other research reports similar findings indicating a value divide. A large survey of US citizen involvement in democracy shows, interestingly, that the individuals involved in certain ‘1.0’ forms (voting, working for and in a political party) tend to have a restrictive view of how one should engage in politics and are more oriented toward the duty norms of democracy (duty citizenship, see Table 2.2 for definitions). In contrast, those individuals who participated more in signing petitions, lawful demonstrations, political consumerism, web activity and other looser, contentious or extra-parliamentary activities veering more toward the ‘2.0’ ideal type tend to stress other citizenship norms, particularly solidarity and enlightened understanding (Table 2.2) (Dalton, 2008b, especially pp 72, 92). This research suggests the possibility that changing participatory norms lie behind the surge of the ‘participation 2.0’ culture. This might, therefore, imply that the changing norms determine in some way the where, how and who of political participation. Do these results reveal a worrisome mobilisation of bias that threatens the democratic quality of participation? A value divide between, say, voters and demonstrators might, for instance, have significant consequences for the future functioning and legitimacy of democratic society.

My review of research reveals additional blind spots in participation research and challenges scholars to find ways to assess participation’s democratic quality. It also prompts a democratic audit of old authorities (political parties, trade unions and so on) and new authorities (for example, pop-culture celebrities and bloggers) as sources for understanding and acting out politics. Additionally, it calls for new
ways of studying if and how participatory culture and different forms of participation socialise citizens into adopting certain democratic norms over others. For instance, does electoral politics, as suggested above, socialise into system loyalty and duty citizenship? Do other participation forms socialise more into elite-challenging norms and/or those associated with global and solidarity citizenship? Or might it be the other way around: that people holding certain democratic norms and societal values are drawn into particular forms of participation over others? Regardless of the direction of causation, the point here is that scholars should devote effort to assessing the democratic quality of ‘new ideas about authority and new practices’ (Dahl, 1990, p 1) that are emerging in many countries, and also even the democratic robustness of more-established authorities and practices.

Asking questions about what might be called the ‘downside’ of participation is crucial. Not only do they enhance and advance scholarship, they also can contribute to societal debates that help the general public to understand itself better, and to policy making and political investments in improving democratic society. Interestingly, similar questions arose from the flurry of concern over the decline of social capital in many countries around the world. Through scholarly pondering on whether or not social capital always makes democracy better (Adler and Kwon, 2000; Stolle and Hooghe, 2005; Warren, 2008) a more nuanced view of its democratic contribution emerged. Today scholars acknowledge two general forms of social capital and claim that they can have different potential effects on democracy. Bonding social capital is identified when people sharing similar characteristics (religion, ethnicity, age, gender, social class and so on) are brought together into networks. While the cosiness generated in such settings was applauded in the past for creating strong bonds of interpersonal trust, today scholars acknowledge the potential risks from the creation of exclusionary likeness networks that condemn otherness and difference, lead to ‘sinister ends’ and create ‘negative externalities’ (Putnam and Goss, 2002, p 11). Bridging social capital, the other form of social capital, draws together people with dissimilar characteristics and involves value-oriented mechanisms that can promote broad social solidarity, cross-cutting allegiances and toleration of difference. Yet bridging social capital can also have a democratic downside if its focus on creating allegiances and consensus translates into assimilation and consent, thus putting a damper on free debate, deliberation and the politics of difference. This chapter seeks to stimulate a similar discussion on the upside and downside of participation and the reasons
and implications of governmental, non-governmental organisation (NGO) and private efforts to promote certain of its forms over others.

**Assessing participation’s democratic ups and downs**

How well do ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ mirror and nurture the norms of democracy? How do attempts to influence politics, liberal democracy’s justification for participation, promote the spirit of a common good? Is there a risk that self-governing efforts, so favoured by the proponents of direct and participatory democracy, might have the same problematic tendency as bonding social capital? Does deliberative talking together to learn about politics, decide what to think and legitimise the political system always evoke democratic norms? Or can it just as easily function as a thought police and turn into a value ghetto or training ground for adopting certain accepted (politically correct?) stances (see Cornwell, 2007)? Can it, therefore, be that the forms, structures or venues for exercising ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ fall short in mirroring, nurturing and maximising key democratic norms? How do they, in other words, function as general socialising agents for democracy; do they draw in (and encourage) participants with different value bases or not? In sum, the general question is whether ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ promote a form of mobilisation of bias (Schattschneider, 1960; Bachrach and Baratz, 1962), a participation downside, that pushes out certain individuals while pulling in others, encourages some democratic norms while suppressing others and considers certain value profiles more appropriate and perhaps better than others.

Sound far fetched? Perhaps, but studies in other research fields reveal, for example, how values and interests mobilise, organise and consolidate into institutional structures, with the end result being that they support, constrain and empower biases in the policy making of administrative institutions. This means that they are, therefore, able to create structural barriers that construct meaning, homogenise habits and distribute goals and duties (Hendriks, 2000). Conceivably in similar fashion, participation forms are infused with certain values, reflect and cultivate certain identity shaping and promote certain relational characteristics that are biased toward particular democratic norms over others. After all, they too are opportunity structures that ‘constitute connections, channels and gates of entry, which influence the fate of problem definitions, policy options and concepts embraced by various actors and organizations in the public domain’ (Hendriks, 2000, p 290). Another pertinent query alluded to in previous research is whether or
not the participants and non-participants in the various forms differ on how they view the norms of democracy. Do they have different value profiles, and, if so, why?

To answer this list of key questions, investigations characterised by theoretical precision and empirical focus are necessary. Here an important literature that can contribute ideas is empirical citizenship study. This scholarship explicitly and systematically discusses a series of democratic norms about what it takes to be a good citizen. These norms or expectations, generated from democratic theory, focus on how political actors should behave and participate in politics if they want to practise good citizenship. Research based on this literature can, therefore, help to address the question about participation’s downside by focusing on the values that typically characterise political actors drawn into certain participation forms, and also indirectly address the question of a worrisome mobilisation of bias. However, unfortunately and similar to the democratic theories reviewed above, this research is presently rather weak on investigating new citizenship norms or expectations formulated in newer citizenship theory. This newer theorising explicitly addresses the significance of the on-going processes of globalisation, individualisation and privatisation in the contemporary political world.

Updating this research by formulating operational definitions of the new citizenship expectations is, therefore, an important research task. Empirical citizenship study must, in other words, also probe the changing status, role and function of citizenship in multi-levelled governance systems both within and beyond the nation-state. Fortunately, newer citizenship theory formulates norms about cosmopolitan citizenship (Delanty, 2000), ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2003) and sustainable citizenship (Bullen and Whitehead, 2005; Lister, 2007). These theories jointly argue for a reconfiguration of citizenship that broadens its territorial reach and includes other arenas than the parliamentary sphere. They also ponder the democratic effect of enhanced freedom of choice (for example, in educational, pension, health, consumer culture and so on) for how we conceptualise self-interest and the common good as well as for how we perform citizenship. For some scholars these developments signify that citizenship must be practised in ‘every waking minute of everyday’ (Bullen and Whitehead, 2005, p 513). Thus, citizenship does not only have a public face. It is present in the informal private, community and family sphere.

Citizenship theory is then clearly important for a robust assessment of the democratic merit of participation. In the past, scholars have used it to formulate precise operational measures of several democratic norms believed to be important for participation. Collectively these norms are
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said to represent ‘a shared set of expectations about the citizen’s role in politics’ and because they ‘tell citizens what is expected of them, and what they expect of themselves’ and ‘shape citizens’ political behavior’ (Dalton, 2008b, p 78). This chapter calls these norms ‘citizenship expectations’. Such expectations about participation can be found in public policies, international conventions and national constitutions. Even corporations apply them (see Micheletti and Stolle, 2012 for discussion of the Walt Disney Company’s Corporate Citizenship Report).

Typically, citizen surveys ask about how important the respondents believe various expectations are for good citizenship. Therefore, these surveys seek information on subjective views of good citizenship, with questions about: duty-based expectations of the main political body (the nation-state); exercising civic, political and social rights in a responsible fashion that promotes political equality (social solidarity); and enlightened, reflective or critical citizenship that address general concerns from deliberative democratic theory. At times the surveys include expectations more directly reflective of newer citizenship theories, for example, when they ask about the importance of freely acting on one’s own initiative rather than expecting government to solve problems for you (a ‘participation 2.0’ trait and individualised responsibility taking) or the importance of choosing environmentally friendly, ethically produced products even if they are not the best and/or cheapest solutions for you personally (ecological and sustainable citizenship) (Petersson et al, 1989, 1998; van Deth et al, 2007; Dalton, 2008a, 2008b).

Table 2.2 presents in the first column the list of citizenship expectations as they appear in most surveys; the question formulation is included at the bottom of the table. Some expectations reflect the political culture of one particular country and are therefore not applicable in others. Table 2.2 also shows how citizenship expectations that tap newer theorising on cosmopolitan, ecological and sustainable citizenship can be formulated. The last four expectations in the table are operational measures of the more-encompassing sustainable citizenship theory. ‘Always try to treat people who are different than yourself in an equal way’ adds other elements of identity and difference into the citizenship equation, thus broadening the focus beyond merely not discriminating against immigrants by not treating them ‘worse than native’ countrymen and women. ‘Actively seek information on how corporations behave in [country name] and the rest of the world’ focuses on the broader spatial perspective of citizenship beyond nation-state-oriented parliamentary politics. ‘Be prepared to consume less to fight
climate change’ brings in consumer choice and behaviour as part of good citizenship and also blurs the conceptual boundary between the public (‘politics’) and private sphere (‘non-politics’). ‘Think about how your practices can affect the well-being of future generations’ adds responsibility for future lives into the good-citizenship equation. These four citizenship expectations were measured in Swedish, and for the first time in the winter of 2012–13 and then again in 2014.

Table 2.2: Operational definition of citizenship expectations found in citizenship surveys/General categorisation as citizenship norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship expectations</th>
<th>Categorisations as citizenship norm</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote in general elections</td>
<td>Duty citizenship, participative citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never try to avoid paying tax</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop your own opinions independently from other people’s</td>
<td>Engaged citizenship, enlightened/reflexive citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always obey laws and regulations</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve in the military when the country is at war</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report a crime that you may have witnessed</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve on a jury if called</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay well-informed about what is happening in society</td>
<td>Participative citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be actively involved in clubs and societies</td>
<td>Participative citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show solidarity with people in [country] who are worse off than yourself</td>
<td>Participative citizenship, solidarity citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show solidarity with people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself</td>
<td>Solidarity citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be prepared to break the law when your conscience requires it</td>
<td>Participative citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never commit benefit fraud</td>
<td>Duty citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t expect the state to solve problems; instead, act on your own initiative</td>
<td>Enlightened/reflexive citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put others’ interests before your own</td>
<td>Solidarity citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To subject your own opinions to critical examination</td>
<td>Enlightened/reflexive citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to actively influence societal issues</td>
<td>Engaged citizenship, solidarity citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not treat immigrants worse than native [country; for example, Swedes]</td>
<td>Solidarity citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose environmentally friendly, ethically produced products even if they are not the best and/or cheapest solutions for you personally</th>
<th>Solidarity citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always try to treat people who are different than yourself in an equal way</td>
<td>Sustainable citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively seek information on how corporations behave in Sweden and the rest of the world</td>
<td>Sustainable citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be prepared to consume less to fight climate change</td>
<td>Sustainable citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about how your practices can affect the well-being of future generations</td>
<td>Sustainable citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The survey question is: ‘There are different views on what it takes to be a good citizen. In your personal opinion, how important is it to …?’ The respondents are given a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 representing not very important, 2 rather unimportant, 3 neither important nor unimportant, 4 rather important, 5 very important, and the opportunity to choose the answer ‘unsure/don’t know’. Not all surveys use these exact formulations.


These citizenship expectations also formulate a robust operational definition of what can be meant by the value portrait of ‘good’ participation and therefore can be explicitly and systematically used to assess participation’s democratic quality. Aside from their obvious use in surveys to assess the citizenship expectations (or values) lying behind different forms of participation, they can be included in ethnographic studies observing and following the values involved in individual engagements in various causes and, using different participatory forms, in face-to-face interviews, in focus groups and to study how organisations and institutions understand and promote the role of participation in developing democracy (see Micheletti and Stolle, 2012 for examples of an institutional study). Such studies can complement and expand the general questions of the who, where, how, why and so what of participation by offering a fuller value portrait of participants and institutional efforts. They can be employed to study official documents from, say, education, youth or immigrant policy to reveal arguments (that is, the citizenship expectations) for supporting (certain forms of) participation, thus contributing to knowledge about whether some expectations are emphasised more than others and casting more light on the mobilisation of bias issue. The expectations can even be used to examine how political agents (NGOs, political parties, public agencies and so on) motivate the need for participation and if they use the expectations differently depending on whom they target (for example, youth, ethnic groups and so on) and the problem
at hand. Such studies can map the value profile of different authorities as socialising and mobilising agents and contribute to knowledge about whether or not they emphasise certain expectations over others, how broadly they perceive the importance of participation in society today and how it should be performed.

Table 2.2 also lists how previous survey research has analytically categorised the expectations into different, more general citizenship profiles. Dalton (2008a, table 3, p 87) formulates two general sets of citizenship expectations – duty and engaged citizenship – in his study of good citizenship in the United States, while pioneering Swedish research that analysed survey results in more detail lists four sets (duty, reflexive, solidarity and participative citizenship) (Petersson et al, 1998; see also Petersson et al, 1989). The cross-national European comparative study Citizenship, Involvement, and Democracy (CID) identifies three general citizen types (critical and deliberative, law abiding and solidarity citizenship) (Denters, Gabriel and Torcal, 2007, p 100). Generally the surveys find widespread acceptance of the expectations about good (democratic) citizenship, but also that they are not completely or equally embraced by all groups of individuals and not equally across countries. Swedish surveys have administered this question on a number of occasions, thus also offering scholars the opportunity to conduct time-series analysis.

An additional benefit of citizen surveys is that they often include questions on actual political participation, thus opening up opportunities for directly analysing the relationship between citizenship expectations (the ‘oughtness’ of citizenship) and real-life participation (the ‘doing’ of citizenship). The participation question might include items about: voting; political party involvement (passive and active member); donating money to political causes (political parties, NGOs and so on); participating in a NGO (for example, union, activist or local group); participating in a strike, demonstration or protest; taking part in an illegal protest action; displaying campaign material (for example, a campaign button); contacting a politician, an organisation, civil servant, judicial body, media actor and so on; expressing opinions in the press, radio or TV; using the internet for political purposes (visiting a website, forwarding a political e-mail and so on); contacting or trying to influence a company; boycotting products for political, ethical or environmental reasons; deliberately choosing (‘buycotting’) to buy certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons; trying to influence the range of products in a store for political, ethical or environmental reasons (for lists see Petersson et al, 1998; van Deth et
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Although empirical research on the implications of democratic norms (the citizenship expectations) for political participation is still in its infancy, some survey findings offer a few clues that help to answer this chapter’s main questions. For example, Russell Dalton found that duty citizenship is significantly related to electoral activity (voting, working for a candidate, displaying campaign material, that is, ‘participation 1.0’) but not to contacting a political figure, donating money or working with a group (more ‘participation 2.0’). It is noteworthy that his analysis shows a significant negative relationship between high duty citizenship and protest activities (signing a petition, legally protesting, boycotting, buycotting) and internet activism (visiting a website, forwarding a political e-mail and so on) that represent ‘participation 2.0’ culture. The expectations about engaged citizenship were found to correlate more closely with forming one’s own opinion independently of others, supporting people who are worse off, being active in politics and in voluntary organisations. Thus it would appear that involvement in ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ reflects a value divide, and perhaps they contribute differently to developing and furthering democracy. This study also reveals that younger respondents show a stronger commitment to engaged citizenship than to duty citizenship and that older generations are more dutiful (Dalton, 2008a, especially pp 81, 146). Similar results are generated from other studies. A survey of Western Canadians found, interestingly, that a strong belief in ‘community duty’ had a negative effect on voter participation, a positive one on non-traditional activities (the more ‘2.0’ form) and that a strong belief in ‘duty to vote’ was not related to non-traditional participation (Raney and Berdahl, 2009). Finally, a study of Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish adolescents concluded that the changes in commitment to citizenship expectations noted in research most likely have an effect on how individuals participate in politics and, therefore, should be studied, as in the case of social capital, in terms of their consequences for making democracy work (Oser and Hooghe, 2013, p 341). In sum, there appears, therefore, to be a clustering or relationship of attraction between certain citizenship expectations and certain participatory forms. This general finding further strengthens this chapter’s claim about the need to study the eventuality of a value divide in participation and the role that participatory forms play in mobilising bias.

Some of this work has already begun. Dutch political scientist Jan W. van Deth (2010, p 165) deserves credit for asking ‘Do people using
specific modes of participation support specific normative positions?’ He gave an answer through an analysis of CID survey responses on five forms of participation representing both participation ‘1.0’ (party contactors, party activists, voters) and ‘2.0’ (protesters, political consumers). He found that European party activists stand out on almost all expectations; protesters somewhat less on accepting certain duty citizenship expectations (especially the one about always obeying laws and regulations); and political consumers (a typical ‘participation 2.0’ form) lower on commitment to being active in organisations (van Deth, 2010, table 9.6, p 169). This study offers a glimpse into what seems to be a value divide between the ‘1.0’ and ‘2.0’ participatory cultures that reflects the overarching shift from collectivist to individualised collective action. In particular it signals what might be called a rebuffing of yesteryear’s authorities (membership organisations, obeying the state) by individuals more contextualised in ‘participation 2.0’ settings. However, what this development implies for democracy is still an open question. Though insightful and pioneering, this research cannot really offer a satisfactory answer about a worrisome mobilisation of bias or the structural downside of participation. Luckily, some studies comparing participants with non-participants offer a bit of help here. A Swedish study contributes some interesting differences between political consumers (that is, those who boycotted or buycotted) and ‘non-political consumers’ (those not having participated in boycotts or buycotts). In this analysis political consumers rank the importance of all three general expectations of duty, solidarity and information-seeking citizenship (roughly, enlightened or critical citizenship) higher. What particularly stands out is their commitment to solidarity citizenship (see measures in Table 2.2). Political consumer participants were found to be more committed and non-political consumers less committed to these expectations of good citizenship (Micheletti, Stolle and Berlin, 2012, table 3, p 156). However, there might even be value differences between those who only boycott and those who only buycott (Copeland, 2014). Obviously, more research effort should be put into deeply penetrating the data discussed in this section as well as generating new data so that we can improve our understanding of the value portraits that characterise ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ and to help us learn more about the dynamics of their mobilisation of bias. Yet they do demonstrate that the chapter’s questions are germane and deserve more study.
Democratic deficits in political participation?

This chapter is provocative in tone and challenging in character. Its main argument is that society needs to consider the democratic quality of participation by asking why we should promote participation. The discussions above cast light on some blind spots in participation research by showing how scholars have tended to assume or simply just want to believe that participation reflects core democratic norms (see Thomassen, 2007). It offers brief telling examples from real life both then and now that show that participation neither always nor necessarily promotes democracy. The chapter also emphasises that we must consider how the shifts from more collectivist to more individualised political cultures affect the character and workings of participation. To stress this point I coin the term ‘participation 1.0’ to represent the more collectivist and pre-packaged participatory repertoire of yesteryear and the term ‘participation 2.0’ for the looser and more individualised one more characteristic of today’s political world. The chapter reports research revealing value-profile differences between the two participatory cultures, which fuels the claim about the importance of democratically auditing them.

The discussion continues by suggesting ways to remedy the identified blind spots in participation research. Importantly, it discusses how insights from newer citizenship theories and empirical citizenship study can be employed to democratically audit participation. Together these approaches contribute to new citizenship expectations and necessary empirical rigour. For participation scholars, this especially means addressing the on-going processes of globalisation, individualisation and privatisation in their studies. The chapter discusses, therefore, how measures of good citizenship must also incorporate norms about citizenship responsibility in the broader spatial, temporal and material societal relationships now characterising the political world. It formulates four new expectations for empirical study. As discussed above, these additional expectations involve norms about the equality of difference (recognition and acceptance of various identities); the political role of corporations and private consumption; and the relationship between self-interest, private life and intergenerational justice. The newer citizenship expectations acknowledge the significance of spheres and institutions outside the parliamentary arena – most prominently the private sphere of personal life and the globalised economic sphere of transnational corporations – for good citizenship. It is, therefore, important that they are included in assessments of participation’s democratic quality. The new expectations incorporate contemporary
theoretical ideas (norms) about societal responsibilities within and across these spheres as central for growing democracy. For instance, the expectations of individual responsibility for contributing to a solution to climate change and for future well-being (intergenerational justice) reflect theorisation on ecological and sustainable citizenship, thus also offering a different take to the general worry about the role of the self and self-interest in politics today.

The chapter also reveals some worries deserving more systematic scholarly attention, particularly signs of a value gap between ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘participation 2.0’ cultures of political involvement. Its review of previous research reveals a value gap between highly committed duty citizens, on the one hand, and engaged citizens, on the other; citizens more committed to ‘1.0’ forms (particularly party activity and organisational membership) were found to be associated strongly with duty citizenship and not so much with forms veering toward ‘participation 2.0’. Does this matter for democracy? Most likely, yes, and for different reasons.

Traditional ‘1.0’ participation has helped to develop and maintain the democratic system’s stability and legitimacy, albeit differently across countries. It has, importantly, mobilised generations of citizens into participatory opportunities and given them solid advice about taking political stands through its strong ideological narratives. Its pre-packaged conceptions of good citizenship created the welfare state in many countries. Its ability to function as a screening filter for democratic thought by authorising certain viewpoints and involvements and dismissing others also helped to frame the parameters of political responsibility. Today many forms of ‘participation 1.0’ lack enthusiastic support and innovative creativeness: perhaps due to its strong soldiering of support for old authorities in the current era, which calls for more freedom of thought and more space for varying political action and which is characterised by the presence of new authorities with different ideas about decision making on complex problems at home and abroad. Another possible explanation concerns the widening gap between the formal institutions of parliamentary politics and the location of power in society. The Occupy and degrowth movements, whose main goal is to change the political-economic relations in society and to bring large corporations and financial systems under democratic control (Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012; Demaria et al, 2013), are good examples here. Therefore, ‘participation 2.0’ appears, in contrast, as more open, exciting, vibrant and future oriented, thus attracting individuals who view enhanced activated personal responsibility and strong solidarity with others unlike oneself both in and beyond the confines of the
nation-state as important expectations for good citizenship. Of course, as ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ are pure ideal types and thus not expected to manifest themselves completely in real life, many individuals might be both ‘1.0’ and ‘2.0’ participants, though they might show varying enthusiasm and dedication for these two basic forms and engage in them for different reasons. Some citizens might show leanings to one or the other. But some might not, which is a challenge for the democratic or inclusionary role of participation in democratic society. Thus, the value gap between ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’ also might possibly also be a divide on the who, where, how and why questions of participation.

The so what question is a different story. Scholars and societal actors are pressed to explain whether and how ‘participation 1.0’ can come to the aid of global climate change and the equal treatment of all across the world, mainly due to its nation-state format. Similarly, what role can the engaged and solidarity citizenship characteristic of ‘participation 2.0’ play in creating and maintaining long-term, legitimate, authoritative, collective solutions for complex problems (with climate change again as a key example)? Changing voluntarily one’s meat-eating life-style to a vegetarian or vegan one most likely will not suffice. Or, as some environmentalists (green authoritarians) argue, does participation really support strong, resolute, green decision making (for a discussion see Doherty and de Geus, 1996)?

Finally, what mechanisms and actions are needed to avoid the potentiality of a developing steep value divide between ‘participation 1.0’ and ‘2.0’? This question appears crucial because the inklings of a value gap in survey results also tend to coincide with a divide among groups of citizens, which can threaten democratic growth if the divide implies exclusion and inequality. While older citizens are more active in ‘participation 1.0’ forms and more supportive of duty citizenship, younger ones are more enticed by ‘participation 2.0’ and committed to engaged and solidarity citizenship. Whether this divide reflects life-cycle effects (the influence of physical age on participation and citizenship norms) and can, therefore, change over time (as one gets older), or instead points to a generational shift that will not change over time, is a question worth pursuing further. Other similar value divides might even exist and separate ethnic, religious and gender groups into different participatory camps and cultures. Can it be that different assessments of good citizenship are involved in the gender gap in participation, with men generally participating more and in more ways than women? Perhaps underlying citizenship expectations might even figure into political-ideological leanings (Right, Left, Green, Libertarian, Authoritarian, Nationalist and so on), how the leanings
are manifested in participation forms and, as suggested in a recent US study, used as cues for how we assess others in positive or negative ways (Iyengar and Westwood, 2014).

The basic point is that it is important for democratic society’s future that groups of individuals with certain value profiles do not get put off from voting, that habitual voters do not automatically rebuff more ‘participation 2.0’ and that we believe that we can trust each other in general terms, irrespective of partisan stance or preferred participatory repertoire. Otherwise a dangerous divide might develop that not only leads to worrisome mobilisations of bias but that also threatens the legitimacy of representative democracy as a form of governance and, therefore, the democratic underpinnings of society. Social science has, indeed, a role to play in identifying and evaluating these mechanisms for politicians, policy makers and civil society actors so that they can deal with them in a responsible and unbiased fashion.

Notes

1. Creative participation refers to situations in which (1) a large number of scattered individuals (2) share some common notion of the need for public action to attain or preserve some common good including a common perception of justice but (3) find that established political institutions do not provide a means for such public action. In this situation, individuals desiring such public action and participation must create their own means of participation (Micheletti, 2010; see also McFarland, 2010).

2. Responsibilisation refers to current tendencies to economise public domains and methods of government. For individual actors it signifies that they as employees, welfare recipients, managers, civil servants, citizens, consumers and so on must more actively undertake and assume self-governing tasks, thus implying indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without being responsible for them. Instead of assuming that their rights will be respected, individuals must have good knowledge of their rights and demand that they are realised. Individualised responsibility taking is defined as reasonable individual choice involving considerations about the societal effects of one’s actions. It includes two components. The first refers to a series of structural prerequisites that enable citizens to make reasonable choices that they believe are best for themselves and society. The second set of prerequisites is personal background characteristics that give individuals the capability and interest to make such reasonable choices in everyday life (see Stolle and Micheletti, 2013, chapter 1).

3. For example, the question on military service and jury duty has been asked in the US but not in Europe, and the question on benefit fraud has, as far as is known, been asked only in the Nordic context.
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4 The typical question is ‘Citizens can do various things to try to bring about improvements or prevent deterioration in society. In the last 12 months have you done any of the following?’ and then follows a battery of different forms of participation, as those discussed above.

5 The entry ‘working for a political candidate’ is asked in the United States and the ones about political parties asked in Europe, thus reflecting the differences in the two political systems.

Reference list


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