

“Democrativity: Beyond Measurements of Democracy in Performance”

ABSTRACT

Is it then possible, or even meaningful, to imply estimates such as “more or less democratic” performance practices? I would say that it depends on the means and objective of the estimation. The purpose of this article is to, in light of the current crisis of liberal democracy, assess qualitative indications of democratic practices and, by means of a few examples of activist performances, inculcate the added values of performances that not only apply to precarious situations with deficient democratic regimes but also adapt to the performative practices that most appropriately serve an enhanced democratic situation. Towards the end of this article the combination of performativity and adaptability will be justified in terms of ‘democrativity’.

The twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *The Journal of Democracy* (issued in January 2015) was entitled “Is Democracy in Decline?” and addressed a gradual corrosion of electoral procedures, freedom of the press and the rule of law as well as a widespread doubt about democratic governance in various countries in the past decade.¹ The rationale behind the decade-long trend is primarily motivated in economic terms: the financial crises of advanced democracies and the seeming vitality of authoritarian countries is leading to a shift in geopolitical relations between the democracies and their rivals. So how is democratic decline appraised? It is commonly measured in reference to indexes based average responses to questions about various political and electoral functions and variables in specific countries. Studying quantitative indexes of national democracies almost makes one forget about the very issue at stake, namely the definition and significance of democracy, which is *governance by people*. This is seldom considered in qualitative terms by political institutes such as Freedom House or Polity, who mainly rely on quantified indications in categories such as electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of governments, political participation and political culture. Whilst political elections, liberties and functions are appraised as

instrumental policy implementations, political participation mainly implies voter turnout, whilst political culture signifies popular attitudes to existing political systems in particular countries. It is the latter factor, the soft attitudinal parameter as it were, that has shifted significantly in the past decade and is now characterized by a widespread doubt about democracy as a governing mode in various democracies.

Hence indexes quantify national rankings in terms of so-called full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes, but seldom take into account matters related to citizens' active participation in democratic practices. Quantitative measurements of democracy can sometimes be elucidating though. People who celebrate classical Athens as a democratic example are honoring a city-state where about 15% of the population was eligible to vote and where one third of the population were slaves. Athenian democracy is not exactly comparable with contemporary United Kingdom, but it is still worth considering the numbers from the recent general election (May 2015) when the Conservative party won an alleged landslide victory and went on to form a majority administration after getting 24.3% of the eligible electorate.

In recent years there has been an ideological reaction against the instrumental assessments of democracy, not least among progressive economists involved in the discourse on the global recession. Scholars such as Joseph Stiglitz and Thomas Picketty have made links between neoliberal trends in economic systems and the impact of economic policies on democratic conditions, such as inherited wealth, salary gaps, social mobility, financial speculation, occupational opportunity, and so forth.² These links have added an ethical dimension to the discourse on contemporary economy and steered the debate towards a democratic scenario, which ultimately brings performance into consideration with qualitative factors such as shared social practices, affective labour, performative ethics, and, in particular, political participation. No measurement of democracy is meaningful without a qualitative assessment of broad-based participation in society. In this article, the latter case for democracy will be exemplified by a few examples of applied theatre performances and

projects, but also be put in relief against the fact that variants such as participatory, direct and radical modes of democratization is not only ignored by most governments, but also regarded as a threat by all sorts of government with an authoritarian structure.³

In her book *Can Democracy be Saved?*, Donatella della Porta describes the normative definition which underlie the legitimizing role of citizens in a liberal democracy: “Democracy is power *from* the people, *of* the people and *for* the people; it derives from the people, belongs to the people, and must be used for the people”.⁴ [Lincoln’s definition: “Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Find and quote!] This definition certainly inculcates a focus toward egalitarian functions of democracy but in fact lacks one crucial formulation, namely that democracy should also be employed *by* the people. The definition can be compared to the way Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston define the transactions of applied theatre in their edited volume *Applied Theatre Reader*, namely as “theatre ‘for’ a community [...] theatre ‘with’ a community [and] theatre ‘by’ a community” – even though all of these functions are not ascribed to all sorts of applied theatre practice.⁵ The strategies for-with-and-by participants are certainly defining features for East African community-based theatre, which I will exemplify as a rather advanced democratic performance practice below.

David Held defines participatory democracy in terms of “direct participation of citizens in the regulation of the key institutions of society, including the spheres of work and the local community” (Held 1997: 379).⁶ This definition along with similar approaches to participatory and direct modes of democracy imply that existing institutions and voting systems can indeed contribute to a democratization of society but also be misused as an undemocratic force, not necessarily by being overthrown or rigged, but just by being used for purposes other than a people’s needs, will and active engagement. Democratic institutions and systems are founded on principles and rules, but those are not in and of themselves democratic but should be seen as conditions of (or scripts for) democratic governance (or democratic performance). With the acknowledgement of

such performative criteria, a whole range of supplemental and alternative conditions enter the discussion – and the more refined the quantitative criteria becomes, the more they entail qualitative conditions, yielding, in turn, justifications in the form of performative modes of democracy.⁷

Robert Dahl writes about “effective democracy” (1989) and accounts for a number of critiques against democracy, such as the fact that its outcomes can be unjust when a majority deprives minorities of their substantive rights and interests (ibid, 117).⁸ It is also a fact that a strictly principled reasoning is empirically limited in the case of democratic fairness; the egalitarian principle that there should be one vote for each citizen presupposes that each person holds an equal sway of power, which is of course not the case – hence one vote, as opposed to another, can be many times more *effective* if supporting an agenda for a privileged group of citizens. Dahl also accounts for a number of “influential terms” explicating varieties of power, which correspond quite pertinently to performative acts, such as rational persuasion, manipulative persuasion, inducement, power, coercion, and physical force.⁹

“Participation”, says della Porta, “is a school of democracy: capable of constructing good citizens through interaction and empowerment” (della Porta 2013: 7). This echoes John Dewey’s views on democracy and education, which in turn influenced the procedure and curriculum of Black Mountain College in North Carolina that hosted some of the key future artists in the New York performance art scene and Fluxus movement, besides having a direct impact on Allan Kaprow’s performance art. Della Porta’s and Dewey’s constructivist idea of democracy as a pedagogical experiment also resembles Noam Chomsky’s definition of anarchism. “[A]narchism”, says Chomsky, “is, in my view, basically a kind of tendency in human thought which shows up in different forms in different circumstances, and has some leading characteristics. Primarily it is a tendency that is suspicious and skeptical of domination, authority, and hierarchy. It seeks structures of hierarchy and domination in human life over the whole range, extending from, say, patriarchal families to, say, imperial systems, and it asks whether those systems are justified. It assumes that the burden of proof for anyone in a

position of power and authority lies on them. Their authority is not self-justifying. They have to give a reason for it, a justification. And if they can't justify that authority and power and control, which is the usual case, then the authority ought to be dismantled and replaced by something more free and just. And, as I understand it, anarchy is just that tendency. It takes different forms at different times."^{10 11}

It is the case-by-case trials of authority, power and control that make anarchism and democracy conflate with the legacy and practices of participatory performance practice.¹² Applied theatre, tactical media and prefigurative activism demonstrate heightened degrees of democracy in line with della Porta's and Chomsky's sense of the concept and, especially, the participatory and deliberative combinations of democratic performance.¹³ The most relevant and obvious example of such democratization is arguably found in African community-based theatre (African might here be deemed as a generalization, but the fact is that a number of highly significant pan-African projects, workshops and meetings since the mid 1970s have contributed to advanced modes of democratic performance practices that were once called Theatre for Development, but that are now more commonly and accurately labeled community theatre, theatre for social change or indeed applied theatre.¹⁴ The community theatre I studied a few years ago in East Africa was based on democratic principles that were mainly induced by egalitarian notions in newly independent African nations and the mentioned pan-African legacy of popular theatre but also by standards of international NGOs that support theatre groups, such as UNICEF.¹⁵ The democratic requirements include transparent organizations, inclusive recruitment of participants, gender balanced membership, reports on how the commitments are realized, an obligation to reach out with performance events to entire districts, and so forth.

With such organizations in place, the public performances in East Africa were always dissected by post-performance discussions with audiences. Besides the discourse in community theatre research and African Studies, there were constant discussions on the ground among practitioners and spectators as to whether the right people had been mobilized for the theatre projects (i.e., the most susceptible cohorts in the AIDS

epidemic in particular places), whether the groups depicted the right angles of approach to the epidemic, whether the shared ownership of the theatre groups between NGOs and local councils were sound, whether or not the groups actually enjoyed freedom of speech and liberty of assembly, and so forth. So there were uncertainties, doubts, hesitations, accusations about all sorts of things, but this is of course what it's all about – a radical democracy of the ground, beyond indexes for fair, equal and best practices.

The country I spent most time in, Tanzania, significantly progressed the democratic qualities of applied theatre by introducing what I called the third phase of community theatre in Africa: the first phase was characterized by travelling troupes after independence; the second phase was distinguished by transitory outreach projects organized by higher education institutions or non-governmental organizations, whilst the third phase instantiated long-term projects that were gradually handed over in their entirety to local groups after adopting an increasing degree of cultural practices and linguistically-specific performances in long-term outreach projects.¹⁶ One of the seminal facilitators and artistic researchers of this breakthrough was Penina Mlama at the University of Dar es Salaam. Mlama's book *Culture and Development* (1991) explicates the advancement of the third phase of African community theatre. Several other researchers and artists also deserve acclaim for the participatory turn of theatre in Africa, which may in fact qualify as the "most" democratic case of applied theatre to date as it revolutionized the concept of transferable ownership of progressive outreach theatre projects for target groups in various communities.

Contemporary applied theatre and democracy have in common a participatory turn that conflates in reference of their radical pedagogical legacies. A case in point is Chantal Mouffe's concept of radical democracy. Democracy, according to Mouffe and Laclau (1985), needs to be understood beyond liberal notions of freedom and deliberative aspirations for consensus and take into account difference, dissent, conflicts and so-called agonism, which is basically guided by an agreement to disagree in political discourse (unlike irredeemable forms of antagonism). Mouffe later (2000)

ties this reasoning in with a Wittgensteinian approach to concepts like form of life and language games, in which there are no impartial positions to originate from or aspire to when it comes to rational agreement (re Habermas) or moral judgment (re Rawls) in democratic discourse. Instead we have to rely on a plurality of practices that evolve and intensify under certain circumstances that are always hanging in the air – above “rough grounds”, to use yet another Wittgensteinian term – and which are more or less contentious in democratic contexts. That position of course makes Mouffe’s philosophy comparable to democratic experiments like applied theatre and one of its crucial philosophical sources, namely Paolo Freire’s radical pedagogy. However, Mouffe’s concept of agonism, as well as Amartya Sen’s democratic concept of public reasoning, is a too discursive for the purposes of this article, even if Mouffe has indeed written about artistic expressions in reference to democratic issues in public spaces (Mouffe 2008). After all, Freire’s publications preceded Mouffe’s with more than a decade and by the time Mouffe and Laclau’s seminal book was published in 1985, Freire’s pedagogy had been embodied, trialed and applied in various communities by Theatre for Development practitioners in Africa and by Augusto Boal in South America. Later these democratic experiments has been followed up by scholars such as James Thompson, who writes an excellent chapter in his book *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* (2003) called “Theatre Action Research: A Democracy of the Ground”, which is going back to the applicability of Freirian principles for potential performance practices prior to the formation of established theatre or democracy models.¹⁷ Theoreticians are not always the trailblazers; in progressive genres like performance art and applied theatre it is more likely that practitioners act as conceptual forerunners.

Given the multi-modal qualities of applied theatre, an assessment of its democratic potential could be conducted in relief against della Porta’s continuum of participatory and deliberative democracy and in conceptual reference to what Mouffe describes as a plurality of social movements. The first scholarly phase of applied theatre, much like practice/artistic research, has been characterized by academic justification and practice-based typology.¹⁸ The next phase needs to go beyond the defining justifications and smorgasbord typology and consider the implications and impacts of

the performance practices. If the field of applied theatre is widened to cover, say, the performance practices' democratic effects, the existing definitions will necessarily have to be unhinged from their previous methodological and analytical confines. Rather than using the framework of generalized theatre theories practices, it may be more relevant to use democratic notions and practices as comparable benchmark criteria. "Democratization", says Charles Tilly, "is a dynamic process that always remains incomplete and perpetually runs the risk of reversal – of de-democratization" (Tilly 2007: xi). A similar fluctuation is a risk in applied theatre, which sometimes tends to instrumentalize certain models of practice, which are defined and packaged in powerful higher education institutions and subsequently parachuted into less powerful communities and thus "applied" one-way communicative ways. Given that democracy is a dynamic process that can decline rapidly, however, there is, conversely, also a chance to democratize situations more or less efficaciously. We almost always hear about this after negotiations between top politicians who agree on a peace treaty or perhaps a decision to hold elections. We almost never hear about it, however, from a grassroots level and yet democratic reform is virtually never given to people but has to be acquired and established through co-operative bottom-up actions. It is thus fair to assume that there is no meaningful let alone adequate qualitative measurement of democratization other than participatory ones.¹⁹ Liberal rights and deliberative agreements can be instituted and installed as statutes, acts, laws and amendments, but once such decrees of liberty and equality are in place they can only be justified in one or another form of action, participation, performance."²⁰

Take Northern Ireland, which has been relatively peaceful since the Belfast (or so-called Good Friday) Agreement in 1998 and yet it is clear that it takes much longer to establish a cultural, religious and demographic cohesion. The Peace and Reconciliation Group in Derry, which was initiated in 1976, states that their original aims forty years ago remain intact today, namely to get people to talk to each other by means of workshops, training programmes and community-based projects of various kinds.²¹ Dialogical forums are of course important and can involve a range of verbal as well as non-verbal registers to get messages through and bring about reforms, but in

situations where language have been used to manipulate negotiations as much as to facilitate a peace process, it is crucial to involve non-verbal practices in which participants can go beyond a given grammar and discourse of negotiation. In collaboration with the local organization Echo Echo, Rosemary Lee, a community dance artist (and a colleague of mine at ResCen research centre at Middlesex University) created *Without* in Derry in 2014 by engaging about 500 local participants to enact choreographic patterns across sectarian and demographic divisions of the city.²² This was later exhibited as a multiple screen video work with site-specific sound works by Graeme Miller in various cities in the UK. In Derry, Lee's civic choreography took place against a well-known background of agreements and political deliberations and so it navigated between concept and performance and between deliberation and participation. The participants' playful movements and white shirts brought the work to the brink of utopian performance, but the distinctive soundscape and close-up sequences of the performers' faces counterbalanced this tendency and instilled a wide range of attitudes that signaled a serious intent on an individual as well as a communal basis.

The work was not explicitly about democracy and yet it intensifies the democratic dynamics of the city by involving a large number of local volunteers who extended future escape-lines across historical fault-lines and thus engaged in a performative re-territorialization of the city. The performance defied democratic indexes by operating tacitly, playfully, collectively, affirmatively and autonomously at a point in time where embodied and civic action could be released from words and negotiations. Lee was of course well aware of the modern history of the city and worked through the personal anecdotes and political positions of the participants, but also picked up testimonies that indicated a post-conflictual state which pointed forward rather than backwards in time, or perhaps better put, which meandered across previous no-go zones and dead ends and transformed into a sort of affirmative choreography of the city. As Johan Galtung has pointed out in his peace and conflict studies, real reconciliation comes after a solution to belligerent issues, not the other way round.

Without, along with African community theatre and cognate progressive performance practices, belongs to a kind of performing art which reaches an apex of outreach efficacy where the next step demand more lasting formations of participatory action to take democratic effect. This is not a matter of a dramatic climax, crescendo or catharsis, nor a social or political epiphany or statement, but rather a moment of structural pause where the course of events can go in different directions and toward diverse destinations. The apex indicates what I would like to call a juncture of democrativity, implying an opportunity to catalyze, or even merge, the double impetus of performativity and adaptability, whereby a performance takes effect but also becomes applicable in further cultural and political circumstances, as, for instance, in the adaptive form of a social movement, an educational institution, or another kind of shared and progressive political formation and force.

For anyone familiar with the current higher education remit of the United Kingdom, this reasoning about efficacious repercussions of art in society may raise suspicions about the outreach quality of “impact” in line with the renewed national research assessment cycle called Research Excellence Framework (REF). Impact is a category of REF defined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) of how research outputs, including artistic outputs, attain an effect in society beyond the realm of higher education and is appraised according to the end-users’ degree of utilization and proliferation. However, democrativity differs from impact in so far as it provides an opportunity for participants (or end-users) to actualize advanced or auxiliary democratic actions, even if such deeds fail to apply or multiply. HEFCE’s notion of impact is to a high degree a teleological incentive motivated by achievement according to nationalized standards, whilst the concept of democrativity is a prefigurative opportunity motivated by progression according to social and political merits. A Yes Men action always comes to a halt and is even undone by being officially retracted – but its tactics is nevertheless effective and subject to widespread emulations for intensified democratic purposes in separate projects. An occupation can go on for a long time without an agenda-driven or other kind of principled advancement – to the point where the occupation as such assumes the form of an

enhanced democratic experience and regime, only to ultimately cease to exist. Activist arts such as Lee's *Without* can arrive at a similar apex of democratization as it engenders an affirmative ethics that conflates a demographic choreography and agency in a post-conflict zone. Augusto Boal's legislative theatre might be seen as a deliberative epitome of democrativity as it involves an interactive theatre forum followed by proposed new or amended laws penned by the participants of sessions with invited officials.

Efficacious and democratizing performances can disperse and mutate into an entirely different cultural practice than theatre. In Tanzania I saw theatre groups turn their activities into income generating ventures, say, commercial theatre companies or perhaps an agricultural organization. In Muleba town a theatre group transformed into a community centre for local cultural practices and with an internet café. In Ilemera one of the most well organized theatre groups I followed decided to quit theatre all together as they saw their mission completed with invited village audiences to performances and instead decided to conduct home-based visits to people who were subject to high risks in the AIDS epidemic. These theatre projects are not only open-ended but end up in different although distinct contexts that suit the democratic means and needs of participants and/or target audiences. Although unpredictable in outcome, or, put differently, democratically overdetermined, they combine a participatory and deliberative exploration whereby issues take performative and social effect.

A final example is taken from a Swedish production which the author of this article co-created with director Birte Niederhaus in Gothenburg in 2014. The production was called *Politico* and took place right before the Swedish general election in 2014 and had five different endings.²³ The situation in Sweden resembled many other European countries; after the election for the European parliament in the spring of 2014, a right-wing Euro-skeptical party (Sverigedemokraterna/The Sweden Democrats) had gained momentum and was about to make further advances in the national election. Thus the performance was announced as a "citizenship test" in light of the ongoing discourse on

xenophobia and nationalism. The audiences were taken in a bus from Gothenburg to a subterranean hangar that used to protect the Swedish air force from nuclear attacks during the cold war. Before arrival at the destination everyone was informed that they were going to be taken through a citizenship test, whilst it was actually a matter of a democracy test where a fascist agenda gradually lured spectators into a situation where they would become liable for an undemocratic outcome to a seemingly bona fide democratic procedure.

The first station of the promenade performance was a point of registration. Swedes put a lot of trust in their centralized security system and so nearly everyone gave us not only their birth date but also their individual security code. The second station was a test about Swedish history and customs. At this point the four infiltrated actors in the audience offered a couple of responses which signaled to the other spectators that they were indeed in a more diverse crowd than they might have expected (this was an attempt on our part to counteract one of the greatest dilemmas of political theatre, namely the ideological equilibrium between theatre makers and audiences). Then came a physical and quite playful test, followed by a much more critical test. The latter trial confronted the audience with ethical dilemmas to which there were no easy answers, but which served as provocations to anyone who relied on politically correct views (e.g.: what would you do as the headmistress of a daycare centre if your board along with all parents voted unanimously to fire a teacher who had decided to wear a muslim head scarf to work?). One of the infiltrating actors made the task even more difficult by blurting out a politically incorrect suggestion in response to one of the earlier dilemmas. The next point was a voting station where they had the option of remaining Swedish citizens or becoming world citizens. Another infiltrator stirs up trouble by refusing to vote, for which he is reprimanded by one of the team leaders. The audience is then lead to a seating area in front of a proper stage with a screen which shows what appears to be live footage of the voting procedure. The audience is told that the surveillance guarantees the fairness of the voting results. Shortly thereafter the voting result is announced and it turns out (in every performance) that

the “Swedish Alliance” has won a landslide victory. Until that point the audience had not heard about a specific party behind the Swedish citizenship and now a victory speech is projected by its leader. It sounds just like a speech by the Sweden Democrats but is in fact a translated and slightly edited campaign speech by Hitler before he became Reich-chancellor in 1933. After that the final stage of the performance sets in by the rather unpleasant extradition of the ones who did not opt or qualify for Swedish citizenship. Three individuals (all planted actors) are called up to the stage to receive the motivations behind the decision: their criminal records are accounted for in detail (such accounts can be obtained by authorities in virtue of the security number that the spectators gave away at the initial registration). The audience gets a chance to save one of the three persons by a new vote and it starts with a blond woman. Quite a few spectators vote to save her. Then a woman and a man, both with foreign backgrounds, are up for votes as one of the team leaders points out that the spectators are only allowed to vote for one of the three expelled persons. This regulation saves the blond woman, despite that she has the worst criminal record of the three, and means that the two others are taken out. Before being dragged out of the stage area the ostracized man asks the audience if they think this is right. That was the cue which led to the moment of democrativity when the audience, without any prior agreement or instructions, took matters into their own hands and intervened into the performance. And so we got five very different endings to the performance. On the opening night the audience started shouting to the actors and the event dissolved into a quite boisterous discussion. More commonly, though, the moment of arrest and eviction triggered physical interventions from the audience. One audience member walked up and obstructed the persons from being escorted out of the hangar. Another smaller audience, who was recorded for documentary purposes (see link in footnote 23), walked out with the deportee, despite verbal warnings about the consequences from the actors on stage. Yet another audience were quite young and did not dare disrupt the performance but engaged in a lively discussion on the bus ride back to Gothenburg.

CONCLUSION

In recent studies on democratic governance, egalitarian progression and innovation beyond liberal definitions, quantifiable indexes, and instituted rights and decrees is generally motivated in terms of increased popular participation in geopolitically specific circumstances. This makes new modes of democracy accessible to progressive performance practices. Strategies of pluralism, dialogue and agonism have supplied the sources of progressive performance art and applied theatre through applications of Dewey's and, especially, Freire's pedagogical philosophies – long before Laclau and Mouffe published their work on radical democracy. Trials of justification regarding hierarchical power relations, as discussed in terms of anarchistic tenets, have informed the bottom-up approaches to cultural and political predicaments in devising processes. Moreover, legacies of applied theatre in various places around the world have specialized in distinct communal processes that combine what is discussed as deliberative and participatory democracy strategies in policy studies. (In many ways progressive performance can also be seen as a precursor to practice-based/artistic research and its oscillation between discursive and performative approaches.) A case in point is Rosemary Lee's community dance project *Without*, which foregrounds choreographic movements across sectarian divisions in Derry, Northern Ireland and against a modern history of belligerence that thus far has mainly been dealt with on discursive conditions.

Furthermore, applied theatre has advanced participatory models of shared and transferred project ownership with outreach communities, not least in Africa in the 1980s. The double transfer of knowledge, skills and project facilitation along with the agency of direct participation in publicly scrutinized performances makes up the conditions of what I call democrativity – a combination of performativity of enacted public affairs and adaptability of actions into more sustainable social and political movements. Such extensions into public life was exemplified in the democracy experiment *Politico*, where the audiences invaded the final part of the performance by taking it into different directions on a micro-political scale.

Democrativity is not possible to generalize in terms of definitions, reduce into measurable indices, limit within invariable decrees, nor assess in terms of proliferating impact criteria; it is an apex of a trajectory whose performative and adaptable qualities provide possibilities to renew or intensify a democratic order in a certain context. Theatre can offer unconventional routes and asymmetrical solutions to societal challenges. But to think that it can do it on its own is naïve; a conclusion in my study about community theatre and AIDS was that it is a relational agency in the greater scheme of HIV prevention. I have modified that assumption slightly; theatre is a fully viable alternative creation of public opinion and prefigurative way of leading a democratic life. It is a social practice with a performative efficacy that can modify the regimen of total situations. But in order to take long-term effect it will ultimately need to adapt its innovations and alterations to broader social movements.

¹ *Journal of Democracy*, 26, 1 (January 2015).

² Stiglitz (*The Price of Inequality* 2013) and Thomas Picketty (*Capital* 2014).

³ As Chomsky and later on Rancière have pointed out, a report called “Crisis in Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission” (New York University Press, 1975) assessed and made recommendations for the then current state of democracies in Western Europe, North America and Japan. In that report there are explicit warnings issued against the increased democratic participation from intellectuals, students, scholars and media, whose “adversary culture” are deemed as serious a threat to authorities as aristocratic cliques, fascist movements and communist parties (ibid: 6-7). This report might seem old today but is still worth keeping in mind as it was written by very influential policy makers and liberal (not conservative) scholars, but also, more importantly, considering how few incentives we get as students, workers and citizens when it comes to enhancing the governance of our countries in virtue of participatory democratic practices.³ Despite the widespread official neglect and discouragement, there are indications that fewer people are participating in traditional forms of politics such as party membership, whilst increasing numbers of people are participating in new forms such as creation of public opinion through the Internet and, to a considerably lesser extent, political activism in public or institutional environments.

⁴ Della Porta, D., *Can Democracy be Saved?* (Polity Press, 2013), p. 4.

⁵ Prentki and Preston 2009: 10.

⁶ I would also add domestic households as a significant site of democracy.

⁷ “The duty must be performed”, as Ambedkar put it.

⁸ Ref book 1989. Also cite Ricoeur: Ricoeur on democracy: used to give a majority a chance to influence the governance in countries; nowadays it is used to exclude minorities.

⁹ Ref. Dahl’s terms of power.

¹⁰ Chomsky: <http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/noam-chomsky-kind-anarchism-i-believe-and-whats-wrong-libertarians>

¹¹ At 18.00 minutes Chomsky compares Dewey's views on democracy and education with anarchistic principles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB9rp_SAp2U

¹² At last year's IFTR conference in Warwick I spoke about activist interventions and instantiations as topical examples of increasingly self-reliant modes of political performance. The interventions of the Yes Men appropriate the identity of authoritarian agencies and provoke responses in mediatized trials over the control of narratives, whilst occupiers keep an open-ended distance to authorities and power centers for the sake of self-directed manifestations of alternative regimes.

¹³ There might even be a risk of democratic over-determination in these cases, simply by epitomizing micro-democratic experiments whose degree of transparent, free and just action and counteraction is beyond the democratic degree in the routines of the mainstream media and civic life. So whilst the performative potential to change narratives and correct identities max out quite quickly in the case of tactical media interventions and quite slowly among occupations, tent embassies and cognate instantiations, the adaptability to an eventual social or political impact in is not necessarily as given.

¹⁴ Find ref. in book. Zakia article.

¹⁵ Ref. to Mabala/UNICEF document.

¹⁶ Johansson 2011, chap. 1

¹⁷ It should be said that Freire himself recommends an application of explorative drama in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* when he writes of different techniques of sharing news and reflections between intellectuals and ordinary people: "Some themes or nuclei may be presented by means of brief dramatizations, containing the theme only – no 'solutions'! The dramatization acts as a codification, as a problem-posing situation to be discussed." (122) Freire goes on to foreshadow Boal's newspaper exercise: "Another didactic resource – as long as it is carried out within a problem-posing rather than a banking approach to education – is the reading and discussion of magazine articles, newspapers, and book chapters (beginning with passages). As in the case of the recorded interviews, the author is introduced before the group begins, and the contents are discussed afterwards." (ibid.) One can see this as a incipient stage of a devising process which can very well lead to a fully fledged applied theatre project.

¹⁸ (ref. to anthologies, including the new Bloomsbury one)

¹⁹ Noam Chomsky says that "democracy is a threat to any power system" (31.50 into <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2dw7OZD-mg>). (cf. gay marriage in the US)

²⁰ To resume Mouffe's Wittgensteinian reasoning, it is worth reconsidering the philosopher's remark on justification of facts and principles: "Justifying the evidence comes to an end; - but the end is not certain propositions' striking us as immediately true; i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game" (Wittgenstein 1969: #204).

²¹ (<http://www.peaceprg.co.uk/about.html>)

²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qcZmeeOgGA>

²³ A fifteen minute online video of the Swedish performance is available here: https://vimeo.com/111840058?utm_source=email&utm_medium=clip-transcode_complete-finished-20120100&utm_campaign=7701&email_id=Y2xpcF90cmFuc2NvZGVkfDIhYTc4YzFiYjAwNWYwMm1lODExZTE5YjBhZDAzYTU5MTY4fDI1MDYzMjg1fDE0MTU5NzQyMDR8NzcwMQ%3D%3D