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Critical trust : Social movements and democracy in times of crisis

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Abstract

The recent financial crisis and, especially, anti-austerity policies, reflects and, at the same time, contribute to a crisis of representative democracy. Indignados' movements in Spain and Greece as well as the Occupying Wall Street protest in the US are just the most visible reaction of a widespread dissatisfaction with the declining quality of democratic regimes. They testify for the declining legitimacy of traditional conceptions of democracy, as well as for the declining trust in representative institutions. At the same time, however, these movements conceptualize and practice different democratic models that emphasize participation over delegation and deliberation over majority voting. In doing this, they present a potential for reconstructing social and political trust from below.

Biography

Donatella della Porta is professor of sociology in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute and professor of political science at the Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane (on leave of absence). At the EUI, she has launched COSMOS (Consortium on Social Movement Studies). She is now starting a major ERC project Mobilizing for Democracy, on civil society participation in democratization processes in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. She is co-editor of the European Political Science Reviews (ECPR-Cambridge University Press. In 2011, she was the recipient of the Mattei Dogan Prize for distinguished achievements in the field of political sociology. directed the Demos project, devoted to the analysis of conceptions and practices of democracy in social movements in six European countries Her main fields of research are social movements, the policing of public order, participatory democracy and political corruption. Among her very recent publications are: Mobilizing on the Extreme Right (with M. Caiani and C. Wagemann), Oxford University Press, 2012; Meeting Democracy (ed. With D. Rucht), Cambridge University Press, 2012; The Hidden Order of Corruption (with A. Vannucci), Ashgate 2012; Los movimientos sociales (with M. Diani), Madrid, CIS, 2011; Democrazie, Il Mulino, 2011; L’intervista qualitativa, Laterza 2011; (with M. Caiani), Social Movements and Europeanization, Oxford University Press, 2009; (ed.) Another Europe, Routledge, 2009; (ed.) Democracy in Social Movements, Palgrave, 2009; Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences (with M. Keating), Cambridge University Press; (with Gianni Piazza), Voices from the Valley: Voices from the Streat Berghan, 2008; The Global Justice Movement, Paradigm, 2007; (with M. Andretta, L. Mosca and H. Reiter), Globalization from Below, The University of Minnesota Press; (with A. Peterson and H. Reiter), The policing transnational protest, Ashgate 2006; (with M. Diani), Social Movements: an introduction, 2nd edition, Blackwell, 2006; (with S. Tarrow), Transnational Protest and Global Activism, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.