

## Varieties of Participatory Democracy and Democratic Theory

*Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age.* By Benjamin R. Barber. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

*A Preface to Economic Democracy.* By Robert A. Dahl. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

*Retrieving Democracy: In Search of Civic Equality.* By Philip Green. (Totowa, N.J.: Bowman and Allanheld, 1985).

Uncertainty about liberal democracy over the past fifteen years has reawakened political philosophy. Responding to a sense of malaise about liberal democracy in advanced industrial societies, political theorists *have* attempted to revitalize liberal theory and to construct a viable theory of participatory democracy. Each theorist attacks the practices of modern democracies, arguing that they are experiencing a genuine erosion of authority, performing ineffectively, and producing unjust social consequences. Yet each remains more or less locked within the premises of liberal doctrines of individualism and freedom.

The most ambitious attempts to push the liberal creed to its radical limits have been made by "theorists of participatory democracy. The three books under review are among the most important of *these* recent offerings. In response to *the* ills of contemporary democracy, each author claims to advance a viable solution, one that is more legitimate and equitable than current liberal democracies and capable of forestalling a collapse into authoritarianism. All presuppose that participatory democracy is now needed more than ever as a solution to the crisis of liberal democracy.

Like the classical proponents of 'a theory of' participatory democracy--Rousseau, J. & Mill, and G.D.H. Cole--the works under review argue that participation produces popular control of issue formation,

"I would like to express my gratitude to Gerard Braunthal, Richard Fdglesong, and David Resnick for detailed and constructive criticism of earlier versions of this *essay*;

final decision-making, and policy implementation. Also like their classical forebears, they place great emphasis on the educative function of participation. They agree with Carole Pateman, another modern theorist of participatory democracy, that "participation develops and fosters the very qualities necessary for it; the more individuals participate the better able they become to do so." This focus on participation, control, and education puts the present works firmly in the mainstream tradition of participatory democracy.

At the same time, these authors conceptualize different motives for participatory democracy and different models of the participatory process, including different leadership roles. This diversity raises anew serious questions about the meaning and consequences of participatory democracy, notably whether it is reformist or fundamentally transformative of liberal democratic practice. Thus, while each book fits within the classical tradition of participatory democracy, the differences among various theories pose basic issues for democratic theorists.

The purpose of this essay is to clarify the meaning of participatory democracy by examining the above works for their underlying theories of democratic practice. My thesis is that each book makes use of a particular version or type of democratic theory already current, if not necessarily dominant. As with Kuhn's revolutionary science, which finds a plethora of competing theories vying for the status of the new reigning paradigm, these theoretical proposals are reworkings and adaptations of older models to new circumstances.<sup>2</sup> By clarifying each book's underlying theory of democracy, then, progress can be made toward assessing the adequacy of these theories as models of participatory democracy.

To develop this argument, I will first establish a typology of democratic theories and utilize this system of classification to characterize and critically assess the contributions under review. In conclusion, I will elaborate the elements of an adequate theory of participatory democracy.

### **A Typology of Democratic Theory**

The recent proliferation of theories of democracy dramatizes the need for a comprehensive interpretative framework. The purpose of

1. Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 42-43.

2. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

such a scheme would be to provide the basis for comparison and clarification of various theorizations as well as to order empirical findings. The first goal would assist theoreticians in elaborating and modifying theories, and the second would aid empirical democratic theorists in building generalizations.

The need for a framework is highlighted by a lack of agreement about the meaning of basic concepts and by the changing character of democracy. As in the case of the books under review in this essay, similar terms and concepts are commonly being used to refer to substantially different practices. Further, major surveys of types of democratic theory emphasize the differences among theoretical traditions without considering their common underlying dimensions or focus on variations within a particular strand of democratic theory.<sup>3</sup> Equally significant, the increasing importance of nonelectoral associational representation, evidenced in recent discussions of pluralist stagnation and neocorporatist theory, has challenged the idea that democracy consists solely in constitutional forms of citizen representation.<sup>4</sup> As Robert Dahl conjectures, "We are witnessing a transformation in democracy as fundamental and lasting as the change from the institutions of popular government in the city-state to the institutions of polyarchy in the nation-state."<sup>5</sup> As a result, a comprehensive analysis of democracy must combine yet transcend both the majoritarian and neocorporatist models of contemporary empirical democratic theory.

One proposal for such a typology follows. Given the emergent institutional complexity of representative systems, the need is to escape from analyses that identify a power relation as fixed or that make power relations dependent on a particular institution or procedural process such as an election. A comprehensive approach to theory-building must start by recognizing that representation of interests depends on how relatively autonomous units (groups and individuals) exercise control and coordination of policy-making. In complex pluralist systems various patterns of coordination and control reflect

3. Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); J. Roland Pennock, *Democratic Political Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

4. Robert A. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); P.C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979); Suzanne Berger, ed., *Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

5. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy*, 80.

different power relations, not simply different institutional structures. Democracy from this viewpoint involves collective action on the part of groups and individuals through formally representative institutions—collective action designed to attain ends that resolve common problems. Democracy is thus a manifestation of collective policy-making, entailing a variety of power relations within and between relatively autonomous agents. While not denying the importance of formal procedures of representation, this conception suggests that institutional forms are conduits for power relations and recognizes that power relations may vary within any particular formal arrangement.

The proposition that a particular power relation in a pluralist system reflects the collective decisions of relatively autonomous constituent organizations rests on the argument that any system of effective power relations operates within an environment that shapes the elements of systems of power-values and modes of control. The reason that the environment plays an ultimately determinative role in shaping internal power relations is that the individuals who belong to organizations and whose decisions are guided by both organizational and personal interests are locked into a dynamic relationship with the environment. This means that the organization adapts to its environment and does so in a way that attempts to maintain the status quo or to permit growth. Moreover, just as the organization adapts to and strives to control its environment, the environment can prove resistant, resulting in internal crises and a restructuring of the organization. The environment's effect on internal power relations occurs most fundamentally thus when the organizational adaptability proves inadequate.

Recognizing that a dynamic relation between an organization and its environment can shape values and modes of control makes it possible to conceptualize types of democratic theory in terms of power relations. To analyze various patterns of control and coordination among relatively autonomous groups involves examining two issues: (1) the bases of group autonomy and inter-group cooperation, and (2) the distribution of effective control over policy.<sup>6</sup> The first can be referred to as the *bases of collective action*. This identifies the value-

6. Joel D. Wolfe, "Class Formation and Democracy: The Decline of Working-Class Power in Britain," *West European Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3 (July 1986). Also see, idem., *Workers, Participation, and Democracy: Internal Politics in the British Union Movement* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1985), and idem., "A Defense of Participatory Democracy," *The Review of Politics*, vol. 47, no. 3 (July 1985), 370-89.

orientation of actors involved in types of collective behavior and consists of two independent factors: the types and sources of values. Value types concern the moral obligation and responsibility that develop between group members and motivate action. In responding to common problems, group members can be guided by substantive or ultimate ends regarding justice and authority on the one hand or instrumental and utilitarian objectives on the other. Because of the focus on democratic theory, substantive values are limited to those entailing fair or egalitarian consequences, thus excluding from consideration ultimate values leading to authoritarian control and subjugation. And instrumental bases of collective action may involve either "plan rationality" or "market rationality."

Moreover, the subjective interests that motivate and direct behavior may originate from outside or from within the group as members respond to common concerns.<sup>7</sup> The distinction between the external and internal sources of values centers on the problem of who controls the agenda and involves an analysis of how latent interests are converted into overt demands. This requires examining how environmental imperatives affect the formation of group interests and the ability of elites to shape values. The investigation of the relationship between interest formation and agenda-setting is important because different sources of interests identify the extent to which the group members are autonomous.

The second issue is effective power or the *mode of control*. This involves decision-making mechanisms through which members and leaders affect policy-making. These fall into two analytic categories: (1) those that rely on representation in the sense that officeholders exercise authority that affords them a degree of decision-making independence, and (2) those that are policy-specific. A decision-making mechanism that is policy-specific consists of a contingent or exchange relationship between representatives and the represented that arises when the actions of officers are evaluated by (and assumed to reflect) the "substantive goal rationality" of the members. In contrast to legal-rational and charismatic authority, this notion develops the idea of a mechanism of control in which the mandates of delegates are specifically linked by the membership to the substantive results of officeholders' actions. In short, my argument is that the

7. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Essays in the Theory of Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).

8. I am grateful to David Resnick for emphasizing the need to give this distinction an independent conceptual status.

analysis of variation in these dimensions—in the bases of collective action and of modes of control—facilitates the characterization of different types of power relations in pluralist systems of interest representation.

Logically combining the analytical categories used to define the bases of collective action and the modes of control produces eight types of democratic power relations. Each type identifies a different power relation because it depicts different patterns of collective coordination and control among the relatively autonomous groupings that compose large-scale pluralist systems of representation. At higher levels reliance on formal procedures, leadership, and social pluralism is inevitable. Yet, in themselves these attributes of hierarchical systems do not entail any particular type of power relation. Rather, representative methods like fixed terms for officeholders and periodic elections provide a context in which power relations can vary, depending on the relationship between the organization and its environment.

The typology indicated in Figure 1 links the underlying analytic concepts to the eight types of democratic power relations.

Significantly, these types are not merely artificial simplifications but correspond to distinctive theoretical traditions or historical practices. Developmental Democracy captures J.S. Mill's notion that the introduction (from above) of increased participation will be beneficial to individual citizens and the democratic polity alike<sup>9</sup>; Syndicalist Democracy, the Rousseauian social-contract theory of democracy and G.D.H. Cole's guild socialism; Commune Democracy, Marx's vision of democracy described in his account of the Paris Commune<sup>10</sup>; and Delegate Democracy, the policy-making practices of the World War I British union movement." Corporatist Democracy embraces the key elements of the post-World War II phenomenon of neocorporatism<sup>12</sup>; and Consensus Democracy, the closely related practices found in the social-contract agreements between the British Labour governments and the trade unions in the

9. The term "Developmental" follows Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, ch. 3.

10. For an excellent discussion of Marx's contradictory views of democracy, see R. Bruce Douglass, "Marx and Democracy: The Ambiguity Persists," unpublished ms., Department of Government, Georgetown University, 1985.

11. Wolfe, *Workers, Participation, and Democracy*, chs. 3-7.

12. Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Colin Crouch, *The Politics of Industrial Relations* (London: Fontana, 1979), ch. 8.

Figure 1

PATTERNS OF POWER IN DEMOCRATIC THEORY

Modes of Control

		<i>Representation</i>	<i>Policy-Specific Exchange</i>
		<i>Instrumental</i>	
<b>Bases of Collective Action</b>	<b>Substantive</b>	Developmental (1)	Syndicalist (2)
	<b>Internal Source</b>	Commune (3)	Delegate (4)
	<b>External Source</b>	Corporatist (5)	Consensus (6)
	<b>Internal Source</b>	Pluralist (7)	Individualist (8)

1970s as well as the elite-based agreements to govern societies divided by linguistic, ethnic, and religious fragmentation.<sup>13</sup> Pluralist Democracy apprehends the Madisonian and pluralist traditions of democratic thought, illustrated by the seminal characterizations of Schumpeter, Lipset, and Dahl"; and Individualist Democracy, the utilitarian and rational-choice traditions.

The characteristics of each type and the hypotheses of the scheme derive from the combination of analytic categories that define each type. Brief definitions of each follow. Developmental Democracy identifies a power relation in which ultimate ends like participation, personal self-realization, and equality shape collective action and patterns of representation. Institutions and the elites who dominate them are thus held together and guided by these ultimate ends. Overall, the promotion of ultimate interests presupposes a benevolent elitism and is unlikely to be able to resist the tendency of formal organization to foster oligarchy. Second, Syndicalist Democracy designates the imposition by agreement among participants of power relations aimed at achieving ultimate ends. Because ultimate aims matter most, authority is linked to their achievement.

Third, Commune Democracy describes a power relation that depends on the endogenous development of class consciousness with its commitment to egalitarianism and is associated with efforts to modify political institutions so that participation and citizen control can be enhanced. As the debate about parliamentary socialism has shown, the combination of formal representation with ultimate goals of social transformation appears incompatible, leading to co-optation and elitism. Fourth, Delegate Democracy combines an internally evolved commitment to equality and justice with a political process of policy-specific authority. Membership autonomy, derived from community solidarity formed in response to injustice, presup-

13. Claus Offe, "The Attribution of Public Status to Interest Groups: Observations on the West German Case," in Berger, *Organizing Interests*, 123-58; P.C. Schmitter, "Democratic Theory and Neocorporatist Practice," *Social Research* vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter 1983), 885-928.

14. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1950); S.M. Lipset, M. Trow, and J.S. Coleman, *Union Democracy: Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* (New York: Free Press, 1956); Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

poses the exercise of participatory control through which a leader's services in pursuit of moral ends are exchanged for support. Relying on mass participation, it promotes egalitarian ends.

Fifth, Corporatist Democracy refers to a political relationship between the state and specialized associations involving the defense of their interests in return for moderating demands and controlling their membership." Corporatism involves legal-rational systems of representation, the pursuit of instrumental ends, and elite regulation, while its consequences are system-stabilizing and inegalitarian. Sixth, Consensus Democracy differs from Corporatist Democracy because the institutional basis of policy-making is absent. Decisions are policy-specific because the corporate participants are fragmented and only cooperative and accommodative action by political elites maintains stability, although this to some extent also depends on the effectiveness of policy in rewarding various leader-groups. Elitist in source, its result is inegalitarian.

Seventh, Pluralist Democracy involves forms of representation based on legal-rational authority and procedures that facilitate individual or group pursuit of self-interest. Its main feature is the electoral process, involving competition for office among elites who strive to maximize their support by promising to advance group interests. A structure of competitive elites, this power relation is inegalitarian in consequence. This occurs because agents pyramid institutional and market resources into electoral advantages, thereby largely reflecting and reproducing the status quo. Finally, Individualist Democracy designates individuals acting to maximize their self-interests (utility) through decision-rules that aggregate preferences on issues. Participation is inclusive and agents are independent, rational individuals; the decision-rules yield the collective preference that constitutes policy. While involving widespread participation, Individualist Democracy can produce inegalitarian results, because individual calculations are aimed at maximizing personal benefits.

Having set out this analysis of types of democratic power relations, I will now test the scheme by utilizing it to characterize and evaluate the works under review. While the remainder of this essay does not make equal use of each type, this typology of democratic power relations is necessary to understanding the debate about participatory democracy.

### **Participatory Democracy as Individualist Democracy**

Can Individualist Democracy provide a workable form of participatory democracy? Benjamin Barber has relied on this model to develop a thought-provoking vision of a more participatory politics, which he labels strong democracy. Pointing to how liberalism has successfully contained democratic impulses, Barber argues that liberalism is to blame for the deficiencies of liberal democracy. By this he means that liberal political forms of privacy, individualism, rights, and representation undermine participation and citizenship, ultimately sapping the sources of energy and legitimacy that are required for effective governance. Central to this critique of liberal democracy is Barber's rejection, following Rousseau, of the possibility of representation. While perhaps accurate in his analysis of contemporary democracy as mere elective oligarchy, Barber has no interest in making representative democracy more responsive; rather, strong democracy is a form of government in which all of the people participate in decision-making and implementation. While recognizing that the complexity of modern society imposes limits on direct democracy, participation by all is imperative because it creates shared interests, a common will, and community action, all of which inevitably give legitimacy to politics. To understand why Barber adopts Individualist Democracy as his model, it is necessary to consider his criticism of liberal democracy.

Contemporary liberal democracy, or "thin" democracy, as Barber names it, fails because it alienates human beings from each other and, more important, because the epistemological basis on which liberalism stands is itself fundamentally flawed. The isolating, debilitating consequences of liberal democracy are surface manifestations of a more basic epistemological dilemma. Consequently, Barber argues that the reformulation of the epistemological basis of politics, by means of participation, is critical to the advancement of strong democracy. These themes are elaborated in part 1, which consists of a five-chapter assessment of the characteristics of "thin" democracy.

While recognizing its popular success and persistence, Barber insists that liberal democracy has nonetheless fallen prey to authoritarianism and immobilism. These faults derive from the theory of liberal democracy itself. Three dispositions—anarchist, realist, and minimalist—define liberal democracy. These dispositions are clusters of attitudes, inclinations, and values emphasized by one or another

political theory but usually combined in any actual political democracy. The anarchist disposition holds that, since independent free agents can satisfy their needs without politics in a conflict-free natural environment, political activity has only a protective function. The realist disposition acknowledges that human beings pursue their self-interest and so attempts to constrain disruptive impulses with instruments of power like fear, sanctions, and coercion, thereby making liberty the converse of power. The minimalist disposition attempts to reconcile inevitable conflict through tolerance and pluralism. Thus, liberty entails the protection and isolation of self-interested atoms which can only conditionally engage others, a segregation that Barber metaphorically refers to as zookeeping. Democracy is relegated merely to serving these liberal ends by checking and regulating political power, which is both liberty protecting and liberty destroying.

Having set liberalism against democracy by definition, Barber assesses the inertial frame, epistemological basis, and psychological view of human nature inherent in liberal theory. The inertial frame, or pre-theoretical image, presupposes a Newtonian world view. Materialism or physicality is its major premise, backed by notions of atomism, indivisibility, commensurability, mutual exclusivity, and a psychology of sensationalism. Given this world of independent objects, the anarchist prescribes minimal conflict among isolated humans of only moderate desires and aggression located in a self-contained world. The realist envisions a pluralist world of many moving atoms in a finite space that leads to internecine strife unless contained by power, force, or coercion. And the minimalist, like the realist, posits human atoms interacting intimately yet doing so with lower intensity, guided by norms of self-restraint and tolerance. According to Barber, this is not a convincing model for politics, since its epistemological foundation is inadequate.

Linked to Barber's rejection of the Newtonian inertial frame is his more sweeping rejection of the idea that there is a "knowable independent ground . . . from which the concepts, values, standards, and ends of political life can be derived by simple deduction." (46) Liberalism's Cartesian presuppositions entail that politics be built on a nonpolitical foundation, hence the social contract and state-of-nature tradition. The resultant empiricism and rationalism that underlie liberalism depoliticize politics, rendering it manageable and intelligible along lines of the Hobbesian model. In a more narrowly Cartesian sense, liberalism inspires a mode of thinking that is reduc-

tionist, genetic, dualistic, speculative, and solipsistic. In turn, application of liberalism's prepolitical grounds links anarchism with idealism to yield radical individualism based on individual reason; realism with empiricism to yield power through science; and minimalism with skepticism to give tolerance. The upshot is a moral ambivalence that debilitates participation in public forums, since the pursuit of private interests coincides with a denial of common needs and restraint in imposing private ends.

Next, Barber questions the liberal view of human nature, which portrays mankind as leading separated existences and motivated by hedonistic, aggressive, and acquisitive drives. This leads to the view that freedom is about power and that force makes right, notions that radically limit democratic possibilities for cooperation and sharing. The anarchistic disposition emphasizes man's independence and self-sufficiency while downplaying his greed, conformity, and distrustfulness. The realist finds man to be driven by hedonism and rationalism and so tries to repress these tendencies in the name of security and conservatism. And the minimalist simply takes a middle course. The isolated individual is denied his social essence and is thereby disempowered, contrary to liberal doctrine. Like Marx, Barber believes that only transcendence of alienation through the reintegration of social relations can produce persons free to choose their own fate.

Having judged the conceptual frames of liberalism incompatible with democratic ideals, Barber lastly defends his vision of mass participation against liberal criticism. He argues to the contrary that liberal democracy has itself been in part responsible for the rise of tyranny. Because it alienates, the anarchist version of liberalism in particular prepares citizens for despotism and, although it objects to public tyranny, overlooks its private manifestation. For the realist, only indivisible sovereignty can assure individual liberty, thus denying the autonomy of the individual. And the minimalist fosters inaction and passivity by encouraging indifference and moral ambiguity. By depriving citizens of power, liberalism tends to support oligarchy. The political and spiritual vacuum of radical individualism itself fosters a totalitarian temptation, a communitarian salve promising human fellowship and belongingness.

To overcome the alienating and oligarchical tendencies of thin democracy, Barber develops in part 2 of his book an alternative model of a direct democracy intended to realize the democratic potential of liberal democracy without abandoning its commitment to

individual rights and liberty. Strong democracy carries to a radical conclusion the idea that individual participation, reinforced by its "educative function," yields popular control. Politics becomes identified with individual participation in collective decision-making processes. Without denying conflict, pluralism, or the distinction between public and private concerns, strong democracy conceptualizes a version of Individualist Democracy, in which individual participation in inclusive institutions designed for talk, deliberation, and choice culminates in collective decisions and actions.

Yet, while rejecting the epistemological basis of liberal democracy and ostensibly denying the relevance of epistemology for politics, what underlies Barber's vision of strong democracy itself and fits it into my category of Individualist Democracy is the metatheoretical perspective of the essential contestability of politics. Strong democracy derives ultimately from Barber's definition of the political and how this enables him to distinguish other models of democratic practice from his own. Politics for Barber involves a necessity of common action based on citizens freely choosing after resolving their differences (reaching pragmatic truths) in the absence of external instrumental (rational, scientific) or substantive standards. Without independent grounds, the process of participation itself determines outcomes, since necessity compels individuals to work out solutions to their common dilemmas. All else is not politics, since it would mean that politics was not autonomous. Hence, politics is by definition untouched by social relations and values; rather politics purportedly stands above them, autonomous and determining.

This conception of "the political" specifies a pattern of power that enables Barber to elaborate strong democracy as distinctive and singularly advantageous. Among five ideal types of democracy, three are versions of representative democracy and correspond to the three dispositions of thin democracy set out in the first part of the book. Authoritative democracy corresponds to the realist disposition; juridical democracy to the anarchist; the pluralist democracy to the minimalist view. Two other forms are more directly democratic: unitary and strong democracy. As we have seen, while thin democracy is flawed because it relies on participation-denying representative forms and because it is guided by independent grounds like wisdom, natural right, and freedom, unitary democracy is no better since it is informed by the notion of a Burkean organic community which simply promotes conformism, collectivism, and coercion in the name of a general will. The only alternative that can guarantee individual

liberty and common participation is strong democracy, since it has no independent standard of justification except process itself.

As a power relation, strong democracy is the logical consequence of the defining attribute of politics, essential contestability. Without external values, the collective basis of action and the mode of control are politics itself. Politics as participatory processes determine shared values and eventuate in acts of political judgment. Protecting individuals' values, processes of participation shape "collective interests or truths." Barber writes: "It gives to each individual's convictions and beliefs an equal starting place and associates legitimacy with what happens to convictions and beliefs in the course of public talk and action rather than with their prior epistemological status." (136) Moreover, participation transforms persons from self-regarding, isolated individuals into other-regarding citizens sharing community responsibilities. Barber argues: "Community grows out of participation and at the same time makes participation possible; civic activity educates individuals how to think publicly as citizens even when citizenship informs civic activity with the required sense of publicness and justice." (152) The educative function of participation thus reinforces strong democracy. Participation facilitates, indeed compels, the reaching of agreements among individuals differing in their own conceptions of rights, interests, and values. The resulting civic education protects against the subjectivism and relativism that leads to tyranny and guards against political passivity.

Just as the participatory imperative is the basis of collective action and decision-making, so too does it transform individuals into community-serving citizens. Politics itself becomes the way of knowing (epistemology), thereby making participation the source of public standards. Because political knowledge is processual and conditional, it is inevitably open. This process of arriving at political judgments is neither subjective nor objective, since, as Barber writes, "it arises out of social interaction and out of the imaginative effort by individuals to see in common." (171) The political seeing entails the reformulation of language through the medium of talk, which functions to define the community through a shaping of common interests while protecting individual autonomy by testing individual convictions.

The upshot of this process of political judgment through common engagement is "public willing," a contingent mode of control or decision-making. The collective "we will" represents a mutual adjustment of individual interests to a common good and entails implementation through common action. Because common participation pro-

duces public control, it also fosters civic bonds and the skills that sustain and renew it. Participation is furthered in part by civic education and in part by leadership. Leaders are those who facilitate participation, help mutualism to flourish, or, like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, espouse moral visions that ignite participation and unite individuals.

Finally, in order to promote this kind of direct democracy, self-regulating institutions are required that avoid the limits of size, inequality, and market privatism. Participation in common deliberations can be enhanced through neighborhood assemblies, television town meetings based on civic communication cooperatives, equal access to information and education made available in part through videotex services and subsidized mailings, direct citizen involvement in town meetings, officeholding, and lay justice. Common decision-making could be improved by a national initiative and referendum process that enables the public to judge the effects of past action rather than their truth, electronic balloting, election by lot, and enhanced public choice via vouchers. Strong democracy could be promoted by a universal citizen service with increased training opportunities, workplace democracy, and neighborhood public space.

### *Critique*

Strong democracy exemplifies, I have argued, a more general type of democratic power relation, Individualistic Democracy. The basis of collective action is the instrumental and pragmatic motivations of individuals to participate out of necessity in processes of collective choice. As ends-in-themselves, these processes produce decisions or public control as a result of a conditional formation of a common consensus. Barber's model derives from his metatheoretical vision of essential contestability, though supported by the judicious use of the ideas of Rousseau and Mill. Yet, Barber's theory of how participation promotes popular control and is self-promoting, while characteristic of traditional theories of participatory democracy, is vulnerable to several weaknesses, highlighted by the typology, that limit its utility as a model of participatory democracy. Overall, the glossiness and sophistication of Barber's presentation fail to transcend a number of fundamental problems about representation and leadership, the basis of participation, and the types of ends sought that plague his model, as well as the concept of Individualistic Democracy more generally, as a defensible conceptualization for participatory democracy.

One obvious and serious point of weakness is his claim that representation is impossible. Like Rousseau, though not Mill, Barber argues that direct democracy is possible and desirable in modern societies, despite the dense web of complex organizations that comprise them. As a result, his model fails to address the powerful arguments of elite theorists such as Robert Michels, who argues that sociological, psychological, and technical imperatives of organization make oligarchy inevitable. Although even Barber acknowledges the reality of social pluralism and organizational hierarchy, he simply fails to answer satisfactorily critical questions about how complex organization could be made to conform to his form of direct democracy. At one level, this can be attributed to his lack of attention to the analysis of internal power relations. By avoiding this, he fails to distinguish individual participation from organizational processes. As a consequence, his model does not appreciate that oligarchical and bureaucratic tendencies are inherent within structures no matter how well designed to ensure their openness or inclusiveness. One result is a naive view of leadership that approves of those benevolent, facilitating agents of mass participation, like Martin Luther King, who through their charisma mobilize and dominate the mass in a fashion well depicted by elite theorists. At another level, an optimism about participation makes him unwilling to accept any limits on direct democracy, as Jane Mansbridge does in her *Beyond Adversary Democracy*<sup>16</sup> or to accept C.B. Macpherson's argument that participatory democracy entails "direct democracy at the base and delegate democracy at every level above that."<sup>17</sup> Quite simply, the concept of strong democracy fails to address the basic issues of organization and internal power that make its practicality and viability questionable.

A second, related weakness is Barber's uncritical adoption of the idea of the educative function of participation as the motivational basis for strong democracy. In his analysis of the development of oligarchy in democratic organizations, Michels cogently argues that organization transforms both social relations and psychological predispositions in ways that diminish and destroy participation and self-development. He contends that a lack of skill makes it rational for members to rely on leaders, that the reverence for and gratitude to leaders discourage mass participation, and that officeholders' advan-

16. (New York, Basic Books, 1980).

17. C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, 108.

tages in skill, status, informal coordination and other resources make widespread participation impractical. The organizational limitations on participation cannot be simply glossed over by references to a "participatory mode" that dissolves conflict and reinforces itself. Recent empirical studies confirm that it is not at all clear when, or even if, participation is self-sustaining.<sup>18</sup> As I have argued above, a defensible theory of participatory democracy requires a more systematic analysis of the sources and types of interests that motivate participation in collective action and of participatory control of officeholders. This, in turn, requires examining how the environment fosters values and how values shape different responses.

Third, the question of the sources of values and the motives for participation brings us to the problem of the type of values involved. This problem arises from Barber's adoption of the metatheoretical position of essential contestability—namely, that political concepts cannot be defined by external authority or abstract reasoning but only by the practice of politics itself. In taking up the concept of essential contestability, initially developed by W.B. Gallie and W.E. Connolly, Barber generalizes an analysis of the discourse of politics to the nature and mode of politics itself. Since politics, then, by definition involves participation, Barber's strong democracy is a logical derivative. But the premise of essential contestability is insufficient as an analysis of the types of values underlying collective action. First, essential contestability assumes a consensus on instrumental ends that narrows conflict and promotes tolerance. From this perspective, politics operates within the bounds of reconcilable and limited conflict since it involves the necessity for public action based on reasonable choice in the presence of conflict and in the absence of an independent ground. As Connolly states: "Politics involves the clash that emerges when appraisive concepts are shared widely but imperfectly, when mutual understanding and interpretation is possible but in a partial and limited way, when reasoned argument and coercive pressure commingle precariously in the endless process of defining and resolving issues."<sup>19</sup> To argue that politics is a mode of inevitably and

18. Edward S. Greenberg, "Industrial Self-Management and Political Attitudes," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 75 (March 1981), 29-42; John F. Witte, *Democracy, Authority, and Alienation in Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

19. William E. Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 40. Also see Connolly's response to his critics, 225-31.

invariably reaching decisions that are pragmatically necessary is to dismiss many of the most important and vital issues with which politics is concerned. After all, politics may well involve interests that are, in fact, irreconcilable, too well entrenched, or simply too numerous.<sup>20</sup>

Second, the premise of essential contestability does not explain how participation in itself shapes interests. Participation in a process does not on its own constitute a mode of interest formation, as Barber in part contends, or even an effective means of accommodating conflicting interests, as I have just argued. Rather, participation is the consequence of interests. To escape the limits of the educative function and its reliance on process requires an analysis that can appreciate subjective or motivating interests in relation to objective structures, as my initial analysis argues. Finally, by putting an emphasis on the resolution of differences (not their sources or effects), the notion of politics presumes a plurality of viewpoints that may or may not promote justice and equality. Ironically, in an analysis that attacks liberalism, the premise of essential contestability reaffirms liberalism's most basic assumptions about individual freedom. The defense of an individual right to differ inevitably accepts a plurality of values that not surprisingly has led to charges of radical relativism. But what is important from the point of view of my analysis is its consequences. For in accepting a commitment to a liberal and relativistic social order, essential contestability must abandon any claim to radical politics and participatory democracy. This is because the question of whether inclusive individual participation, given a moral vacuum, will have egalitarian or inegalitarian results becomes an open and contingent question that can only be answered by reference to specific historical instances.

### **Participatory Democracy as Pluralist Democracy**

If essential contestability is a theoretically inadequate premise on which to build a defensible conception of participatory democracy, can a conception built on the right of self-government prove more suitable? Taking the idea that individuals possess an inalienable right to self-government, Robert Dahl in *A Preface to Economic Democracy* argues for the extension of this right from the political to the economic sphere, hence economic democracy. Self-government for

20. Samuel H. Beer, *Britain Against Itself The Political Contradictions of Collectivism* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1982), 24-30.

Dahl means government in accordance with formal democratic procedures backed by the political, economic, and social equality that facilitates the full expression of instrumental interests. Economic democracy aims to correct the defects that were introduced into America's distinctive liberal constitutional democracy during the first half of the nineteenth century by the subsequent rise of corporate capitalism. His ideal constitutes a vision of agrarian-based populist democracy, articulated best in Tocqueville's classic *Democracy in America*. Having identified impediments to this historic ideal,<sup>21</sup> Dahl elsewhere elaborated his vision of "procedural democracy"<sup>22</sup> and the defects existing in contemporary Pluralist Democracy.<sup>23</sup> The latter include the maintenance of inequalities, the promotion of special group interests, the favoring of short-term interests, and the appropriation of public decision-making powers by private groups. What solutions to these problems does Dahl provide?

Since Dahl reduces political power to the distribution of social resources, his concern is to foster a distribution that would facilitate collective action by equal citizens expressing their self-interests. As a consequence, Dahl's bete noire is economic liberty, not political equality, as was the case with Tocqueville. In the agrarian order present at the American founding, the triad of political equality, political liberty, and economic liberty was mutually advantageous. Yet, today the achievement of equality is just as problematic as the achievement of liberty and, in fact, is more threatening to the democratic process. Dahl argues that Tocqueville only considered one aspect of the threat to democracy, ignoring how economic liberty destroys political equality. Tocqueville, however, feared that equality among citizens would eventuate in the destruction of liberty through majority tyranny. He believed that equality was historically inevitable and would lead to a concentration of unlimited power since the barriers of diverse resources and interests would dissolve. Conformity and centralized power would make it possible for the majority to rule tyrannically.

But, according to Dahl, Tocqueville's analysis rests on a concept of political rights that inhibits participation in collective action and

21. Robert A. Dahl, "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 92 (Spring 1977), 1-20.

22. Robert A. Dahl, "Procedural Democracy," in Peter Laslett and James Fishkin, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Fifth Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 97-133.

23. Robert A. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy*, ch. 3.

decision-making. The question of whether democracy may or may not ensure greater liberty than nondemocratic regimes (though Dahl argues that they do) and the question of whether a democracy may to some extent abrogate basic rights and liberties are flawed because they derive from the theory of "prior rights." This theory holds that there are fundamental rights anterior to democracy with a moral and ontological existence independent of democracy itself. Agreeing with Barber, Dahl argues that citizens therefore exert these rights against democracy itself; alternatively, they may find that democracy threatens to violate these basic liberties. Thus, liberty entails the protection of rights from citizens acting through democracy to destroy them. Like Barber, Dahl claims that by themselves rights guarantee liberty but destroy 'deriocracy.

More conducive to popular and inclusive collective action is the idea that basic political rights comprise all the rights necessary to the democratic process, of which the right to self-government through democracy is the most fundamental. In this View, a threat to the right of self-government is also a violation of a basic inalienable right, one that entails all other important rights. Moreover, Dahl argues cogently, though contrary to Tocqueville,<sup>1</sup> that equality has never in actuality fostered any kind of mass-based despotism. The theory of the mass society has little empirical support, since the cases that are commonly referred to involve instances where democracy was alien, where it was only partial, where elites were unsupported, or where breakdown into authoritarianism occurred due to fragmentation and inequality rather than authoritarian pressures and equality. Finally, Tocqueville's identification of factors conducive to maintaining liberty semi valid, yet one-sided, to Dahl. A diffusion of prosperity, a decentralization of power among interest groups within a constitutional regime, and a supportive political culture do inhibit egalitarian pressures from limiting liberty. Yet, the problem today involves a dimension overlooked by Tocqueville: the adverse impact of economic liberty and inequality on democracy and political equality.

The reason for Dahl's concern with inequality is that it disrupts the effective operation of an ideal democracy that exemplifies the power relation that have called Pluralist Democracy. Dahl's procedural democracy entails, like Pluralist Democracy, decision-making structured by legal-rational rights and collective action driven by 'the instrumental preferences of individual citizens. Since Dahl's basic assumption is that people have an inalienable right to govern themselves, any Association needing to make binding decisions (agenda-

setting and final decision-making) ought to involve all those affected by the decisions. Each person is the final judge of his or her own interests, though constrained by one of two principles of equality: either that the good of each person is entitled to equitable consideration (his weak version) or that all citizens, being equally qualified, will decide which issues to resolve themselves and which issues and on what terms they are to be delegated (his strong version). Self-government also implies fairness in allocation, that is, equal shares of or equal chances to obtain the commodity allocated. Given these assumptions, Dahl specifies five criteria of the democratic process: (1) equal votes as the means of expressing preferences in final decision-making; (2) equal chances to express preferences; (3) equal opportunities to become informed and arrive at a preference; (4) citizens to decide what matters are or are not to be decided; and (5) all adult members to be included. To rephrase this in terms of my analysis, the mode of control comprises voting outcomes in accordance with formally constituted decision-rules, and the basis of collective decision-making is the expression of individual preferences by citizens secure in their liberty and political equality.

Given this ideal democracy, Dahl's primary task is to explain how to prevent corporate capitalism from deforming the egalitarian social basis that makes his particular model of Pluralist Democracy operable. He does this by advancing three arguments designed to justify an egalitarian distribution of political resources as the basis of collective action: that corporate capitalism is the main factor distorting the democratic process, that an economic order based on self-governing enterprises could rectify the defects in Pluralist Democracy, and that democracy should be extended to firms as a right. First, in denying that citizens have a moral right to private property similar to or superior to their inalienable right to self-government, Dahl makes use of a protective argument for participation. The early nineteenth-century "republic of farmers" was the American solution to twin dilemmas: that democracy endangered property and, conversely, that property through inequality itself threatened democracy. Yet historically this solution disappeared with the rise of corporate capitalism, which nonetheless benefited from the appropriation of agrarian republicanism's ideological justification for private property. The resulting inegalitarian distribution of resources is, on the contrary, unjustifiable, since it destroys the individual's ability to defend his or her own interests effectively. Ownership and control of corporate capital create significant differences in the resources and opportunities that

citizens have for participation as political equals in governing; moreover, the undemocratic internal governance of corporations denies participation and the expression of interests altogether. Finally, Dahl rejects a host of arguments defending the right of private property as superior to the right of self-government.

Second, to overcome the asymmetrical resource distribution resulting from corporate capitalism, Dahl advocates the establishment of an economic order based on self-governing enterprises. Attentive to the goals that an economic order that promotes procedural democracy would be required to strive for—democracy, economic fairness, efficiency, moral development, and economic freedom or liberty—Dahl pictures the ideal economic order as consisting of decentralized, autonomous firms operating within a system of markets and democratically determined laws. This type of egalitarian order would be promoted by a change in the type of authority pattern within firms. Hence, his proposal is for a "system of economic enterprises collectively owned and democratically governed by all the people who work in them." (91).

Since economic democracy would be justified primarily by the contribution it makes to justice and democracy, Dahl argues that, while the current evidence is rather mixed as to whether greater participation is self-reinforcing and therefore likely to foster effective citizens, positive changes would probably occur over many years. More concretely, self-government, serving protective and educative functions, would increase workers' appreciation of the consequences of and responsibility for their actions. This would diminish the antagonism between employers and employees common in corporate capitalism and make it likely that workers would include the concerns of consumers and citizens since they too would feel the impact of their decision. Further, self-governing enterprise would, when disciplined by external markets and legislation, contribute to democracy because it would, like the agrarian order of the past, constitute a "self-regulating egalitarian order." (104). While inequality within and between firms would develop, Dahl contents that there would be a leveling of wage differentials and a greater sharing of profits, making for less inequality than in corporate capitalism. Thus, with the aid of an initial redistribution and subsequent regulation by the larger democracy, self-governing firms would foster a more egalitarian economic order that would reduce interest conflicts, give each citizen reasons for supporting political equality and democracy in the state, and lead to common agreement on standards of fairness.

Third, Dahl justifies an economic order based on self-governing enterprises by an appeal to rights, particularly the fundamental right of self-government. If democracy in governing the state is justified, then, it must also be justified in governing economic enterprises, for to give property rights precedence over the right of self-government is to forsake democratic commitments. The firm exercises authoritative decision-making power over its employees in much the same way that the state rules over its citizens, since leaving a firm can be as costly as leaving a country. A firm is like a political system since management makes binding decisions that impact on their employee-subjects, a situation that unions are unable to modify. Further, a process of democracy in firms is feasible once it is recognized that, though citizens are not equally competent, they are qualified enough to decide the questions on which they can themselves decide and on which they will delegate responsibility. In this sense, employees are as qualified as stockholders and most likely even managers.

With regard to the ends of savings, investment, growth, and employment levels, workers are likely to be as ambitious as managers since they would be directly affected by the consequences of a decline in the firm's fortunes. Because workers would be motivated to select managers who demonstrated competence and to develop managerial skills themselves, there is every reason to expect that self-governing firms would be as efficient as capitalist corporations. Significantly, Dahl thinks that for this reason self-governing firms might better match the Japanese challenge than corporate capitalism. In achieving internal democracy, moreover, self-governing enterprises should fare as well as state structures. Like J.S. Mill, Dahl accepts the need for delegation and believes that citizen-workers could retain ultimate control. For this reason, self-governing firms would be smaller, better managed, more sensitive to the interests of the employees, as well as more innovative and self-reliant. Responsible leadership and more equitable distribution of income and wealth would be best realized through a form of cooperative ownership like the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain. In the end, the United States' best interest would be served by developing the right of self-government rather than the right of unrestrained accumulation.

### *Critique*

Economic democracy, for Dahl, is both an end and a means. As an end, it is the realization of procedural democracy itself; as a means, it

promotes the realization of procedural democracy in the state. Participation contributes to procedural democracy through its protective function, although it is sustained by its educative function, since it is a means to equalize the distribution of resources with which each participant advances his or her interests. A theory more weighted toward the protective arguments of Bentham and the elder Mill than the classical theorists of participatory democracy, it idealizes the agrarian democratic republicanism present at the time of the American Founding. Economic democracy, simply put, exemplifies Pluralist Democracy with its populist basis of collective action and formalized mode of control. Judged by the categories comprising the typology of democratic theories, its shortcomings as a model of participatory democracy derive from its reliance on formal decision-making and representation, its assumption that individuals know their real interests, and its limited conception of the values motivating participation.

First, Dahl's model of economic democracy relies on formalized decision-rules that reveal an attenuated concept of power and participation. While participation is justified for a membership inclusive of all those affected by public or corporate decisions, participation itself is limited to the act of voting. Votes decide the outcome of the democratic processes in which citizens pursue their overt interests. However, to suggest that votes in themselves represent power relations is to assume a naive conception of power. Dahl's view of power, cogently criticized by Lukes as one-dimensional,<sup>24</sup> reappears implicitly in this model of economic democracy. Collective decision-making, according to Dahl, is the aggregation of individuals' rational interests according to prescribed electoral rules, the summation of which creates effective power. Democracy consequently becomes an occasional and rather limited event. Not surprisingly, Dahl's instrumental notion of participation leads him to dismiss any serious discussion of the problems of leadership and popular control.

Second, Dahl's view of power is inadequate because it fails to provide a theory of interest formation that can explain incentives for individuals to participate in collective action. Since Dahl's "citizens" have no structured interaction on which to build collective interests and no common interests other than the mutual protection of material well-being, there is no collective solidarity or community (moral) bonds to define common interests or goals and to motivate collective action. For this reason, it is difficult to see how Dahl's

24. Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

analysis can prescribe motivations for social change that might eventuate in economic democracy. To accept subjective interests as real interests cannot explain why citizens should forsake private, material concerns in favor of their "objective" interest in self-government. And even if implemented, it is not clear how economic democracy could be sustained on the basis of subjective and instrumental interests consistent with a market society. In such circumstances, participation would erode, since to those pursuing private ends it becomes costly, inefficient, and meaningless.

A third problem with this vision of populist democracy, grounded on a right to self-government, is that it narrows or depoliticizes the political "substantially, making subjective self-interest the essential motive for collective action. Admittedly, Dahl shifts the locus of politics to the economic sphere by arguing that firms authoritatively allocate resources much as the state does. Yet for Dahl, politics is still a game, as in his seminal work *Who governs?*, in which rules matter more than particular results. Dahl advocates extending the rules of procedural democracy from the state to firms because he is convinced that corporate capitalism asymmetrically concentrates resources in the hands of a few and so makes the rules of democracy meaningless. Hence, politics is equated with decision-making procedures through which individuals play out their self-interest. Moreover, there is another sense in which Dahl's analysis denigrates politics to the pursuit of self-interest. Unlike Barber, for whom "the political" is central, Dahl's model is reductionist, making politics dependent on a balance of material resources with which each player enters the game. Economic democracy is a strategy to redistribute resources so that the balance of resources no longer prevents the equitable diffusion of power to citizens. If politics is about rules of decision-making, then rule-following depends on resources.

A final problem with Dahl's vision of economic democracy as a defensible theory of participatory democracy is its conservative bias. As a means to disperse concentrated wealth and power, economic democracy aims to make instrumentally motivated associational and capitalist society work more equitably and efficiently. This makes economic democracy a reformist strategy. With the dispersing and leveling of corporate power, Dahl's idealization of polyarchy-procedural democracy would triumph. Even so, these goals are far from the much more noble and morally transformative aims of the

classical theorists of participatory democracy. In Dahl's prescription, citizens would still live in capitalist society, alienated from one another; they would accept the values of the liberal market order; and they would be governed by representatives enforcing decision-rules designed to measure their preferences. Such citizens could not be materially or morally autonomous from dominant institutional forces and cultural norms. Economic democracy would further elective and competitive elitism, since it does not transcend citizens' alienation and collective impotence (which result from the imperatives of a free enterprise society) and since it does not confront the political problem of how to stop formally democratic procedures from being transformed into de facto oligarchy. Ultimately, economic democracy exemplifies Pluralist Democracy's capacity to accommodate democracy to capitalism.

### **Participatory Democracy as Developmental Democracy**

Like Dahl, Philip Green identifies democracy with political equality, makes political equality dependent on social equality, and attacks the power of corporate capitalism because it inhibits democratic practice. Yet Green is clearly unsympathetic to Dahl's particular vision of liberal democracy and to Pluralist Democracy in general. Instead, he presents a vision of egalitarian democracy that would realize the socialist aspirations of workers for equality, the traditional liberal aspirations of women and minorities for fuller rights, and the radical liberal demands for fuller participation. The achievement of these goals depends on transcending the irreparable class divisions of capitalism, which concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a minority. His inspiration is Marxism, as evidenced by his concern for the problems of class inequality and alienation and his references to Marx's vision of communism or "true democracy". Yet what most distinguishes Green's vision is the claim that collective organization and action ought to be guided by a commitment to the production of equal citizens. This commitment to political equality as an ultimate end organizes and regulates the social basis of action and the pattern of authority, exemplifying the category of democratic power relations that I have called Developmental Democracy.

Green's critique of representative government and corporate capitalism, which he calls pseudodemocracy, reveals an analysis in which ideology motivates individual actors and organizes the distribution of social and political opportunities. Political equality-"that

everybody is to count for one and nobody to count for more than one" (5)-is for Green the real essence of democracy, where "counting for one" includes not mere voting, as for Dahl, but a whole array of resources like time, skills, money, and property which give political influence. Political equality thus depends on social equality. Contemporary liberal democracies are not really democratic because capitalism rests on a social class structure and a "caste" system of race, ethnicity, and gender that reinforces class division. Control of the means of production confers on the capitalist class disproportionate resources and actual political influence. For the wage-laborers, conversely, capitalism imposes substantial and real deprivations or costs, not just the absence of political resources. The legal and social rootlessness of capital, the division of legal status and authority between owners (and their representatives) and workers, and the technical division of labor in production result in exploitation as in Appalachia, external diseconomies that are suffered by non-capitalists, and the misallocation of resources into unproductive activities. Overall, rising unemployment as well as psychic, material, and political costs have eroded capitalism's legitimacy. Yet, the capitalist class has immeasurable political advantages, though it does not completely control the responses of the semi-autonomous governing elite. Because no political reforms can untie the capitalist class's hold over political authorities, only the socialization of property will make it possible for all citizens to make decisions about investment, production, and work. From his analysis of capitalist impediments to democracy, then, it becomes apparent that Green's model is a version of a type of democratic power relation I have termed Developmental Democracy, since it stipulates that democracy depends on a commitment to the ultimate end of equality, prescribes a social order organized by this commitment, and proposes to restructure representative institutions so that individual resources and opportunities can be realized.

The key element in Green's model is the absolute end of equal citizenship that informs and regulates collective organization and action. The substantive end of equality replaces the profit-seeking rationality of capitalism as the principle of social organization and guarantees an egalitarian order. Since politics depends on social structure, the establishment of an egalitarian order is fundamental. But this social order nonetheless has a distinctively Weberian or liberal character. Since the advanced industrial division of labor cannot be abolished and social relationships cannot be made fully

transparent, Green pictures an egalitarian world based on a negation of, to use Giddens's term, class structuration, thereby making mobility or life chances open to individual choices rather than dependent on market capacities. In this way, individuals can overcome the constraints of market capacities and their consequences for the distribution of political resources without tampering with the complex division of labor in modern societies. To achieve this social order, Green proposes three mechanisms—constrained inequality, the democratic division of labor, and the socialization of the means of production.

Class, in Green's view, stymies equal participation in social and political structures because it results in income differentials and because different kinds of work entail different lifestyles, which define different kinds of social being. Since a capitalist society asymmetrically structures social capacities, the principle of constrained inequality would organize a social distribution in which any inequalities that did exist could not be translated into politically significant ones. A democratic society would give priority to human needs rather than to economic rationality in order to ensure that each citizen would have equal political influence. The constrained-inequality principle attempts to realize this objective by stipulating that "whatever work people do should receive roughly the same socially standard reward at similar phases of their life-cycles." (57) This would promote a relative equality, a more realistic goal than Marx's classless society. Ultimately, the empowerment of individuals would mean a floor above which everyone has adequate resources, provided they performed "socially approved tasks," to fulfill their roles as citizens. Distribution by need would replace distribution by market capacity for the goods necessary to people's well-being, training, and education, as well as their access to the information, time, and skills required to participate in politics. And the moral imperatives of need, cooperation, and mutuality would regulate the operation of market mechanisms of distribution, according to a "constitutionally embedded prior restraint on [the] inequality of reward." (69)

A second and more important mechanism for neutralizing capitalism without eliminating the market is what Green terms the democratic division of labor (DDL). Constrained inequality is necessary but not sufficient, since a democratic society needs citizens with not only material resources but also with fully developed capacities to participate in civic life. In an egalitarian society committed to the production of citizens, the DDL is a strategy for personal self-realization and autonomy through the integration of work, education, and family. In this way, the problems of alienation and sub-

jugation that derive from capitalist class relations are resolved in the context of an advanced industrial economy. DDL is a way to create "social persons" who are roughly equal by promising socially valued activity for all. The more privileged career opportunities are not to be destroyed but rather opened up to all aspirants. Green writes: "We probably cannot abolish the distinction between mental and material labor; however, we can attempt to turn it into a structure of opportunity for all rather than a straitjacket for the vast majority." (86) To create this opportunity, Green proposes a way around the capitalist division of labor with its separation of education from work and "the tracking of one into the other, together with the total separation of 'home'." (86)

Concretely, the DDL would foster equality of opportunity to engage in "socially useful" work or to have the opportunity to develop the skills required. This would entail democratizing education and providing normalized opportunities for participation in civic life. Redefining work to include self-development and self-governing activities and socializing all into these new practices would make it possible to "engage in a life of work flexibility, skill development, and active citizenship." (90) As Green writes, "A person's growth through the life and work cycle ought to be mediated by his or her desires and capabilities, and by the community's overall resources, but not by the restrictions of a tracking system into which the individual has fallen, or been recruited." (113) Significantly, the diffusion of education would make it possible to control experts and to facilitate workplace democracy, since it equalizes knowledge and control relations while workplace participation would itself encourage further education. Furthermore, the DDL, extended to the division of labor in reproduction, would equalize opportunities along gender lines. To the obvious objection that the DDL might lead to a misallocation in the mix between people and jobs, Green argues, not altogether convincingly, that the objection is based on the faulty assumptions that there are limits on human talents and that people all want the same careers. If people refused to do "dirty work," then all would have to join in, and the transient character of staffing that would result would be more humanly rewarding, even if less efficient from the capitalist perspective. In short, the DDL assumes that the level of individual aspiration, talent, and mobility typical of the already well-educated middle classes in contemporary capitalist societies can be extended to all citizens, and it empowers each with the opportunity to realize his or her dreams of self-fulfillment.

The empowerment of citizens through the DDL and constrained

inequality is, as Green has made clear from the outset, impossible under capitalist relations of production—hence the imperative to socialize the means of production. This requires a publicly owned system of production, based on a socially standard reward, that is dominant for the whole of society. Yet Green rejects the traditional socialist demand for a command economy, favoring instead a highly decentralized community-based control of productive resources, since communities will be the basic units for the formation of citizens. Because the aim is democratic control by equals, the system would involve some type of socialization of ownership, together with cooperative self-management and community control of the external effects of industries. Moreover, something like the state would be necessary to regulate questions of "foreign policy" between relatively independent communes, though this supracommunal coordinating agency would be minimal and subject to democratic control. Yet the abolition of corporate forms of capitalism would not be extended to the petty bourgeoisie. Green is willing to let small-scale enterprises flourish, regardless of their internal paternalism, as harmless expressions of privatism and autonomy. After all, in a democratic economy, the public sphere would dominate since it is the foundation of political equality.

The public sphere, moreover, would have the responsibility of planning for future prosperity. Since such decisions are inevitable, Green argues that democratic planning is workable and can be more effective than capitalist decision-making or Keynesian liberalism. Changes in comparative advantage would stimulate democratically determined rational responses in which the moral commitment to egalitarianism would allocate sacrifices on the basis of a norm of reciprocity. In allocating sacrifices necessary to assure prosperity, the criterion must be the moral aim of preserving an egalitarian society rather than the logic of economic efficiency. Ultimate ends, then, need to triumph over material consumption. The ideological imperative of reciprocity and egalitarianism would motivate people to work hard to maintain a decent and democratic life.

Having thus advanced an argument for attenuating inegalitarian consequences of class, gender, and racial divisions in capitalist society, Green turns to the problem of how to forestall the political division of labor from generating an elite-dominated mode of control. As with the social structure, a division of labor inevitably concentrates resources and control in the hands of a privileged few. His goal is to overcome the alienating relations of liberal democracy by establish-

ing political equality, that is, a "condition of individuals and voluntary associations in which they are (roughly) equally able to express their preferences coherently; together with the condition of society in which individual and communal preferences are equally capable of being realized." (170) Political equality defines an unalienated political life that depends on an egalitarian social order and on institutional methods for the effective control of elites. Significantly, representation, which Green agrees is inevitable, gives rise to a contradiction independent of, though parallel to, class distinctions since both arise from the division of labor. The problem is to develop institutions that are themselves classless and genderless.

Preventing the political elite from becoming an "opposed class" means equalizing the distribution of officeholders. The size and complexity of our pseudodemocracies foster elite domination because, unlike town-meeting democracy, they empower representatives to do "anything" rather than "something." Because large-scale democracy cannot replicate town-meeting democracy, pseudodemocracy fosters a governing elite that is a separate and privileged class. To overturn this privileged class of governors, the choice of leaders in a society of equals must involve wider participation. The delegate would be a member of a small-sized group to which he or she would be accountable. Through decentralization to communes, bargaining between representatives and constituents over interests and authorization would involve meaningful and important issues, backed at higher levels by constitutional checks and balances. But the best way to maintain control over representatives is rotation in office, thereby inhibiting the emergence of a separate class with a separate way of life and separate career lines available to it. Rotation in office might entail simply limiting terms of officeholding and making them non-renewable, though its success also depends on a proper socialization into the norms of service, attainable by requiring candidates to perform service activities and to live in the community itself. Experts would then become communal resources, using their professional training to advance public needs. They would carry out special functions on behalf of the citizenry or help individuals attain their just ends. Of course, representation and the use of experts would involve social equals who, because of the DDL, would themselves have considerable skill with which to judge their delegates' activities and, since they know their own interests best (Green cites Aristotle's assertion that the user of a house will judge it better than the builder), could exercise scrutiny.

If decision-making institutions can be designed to equalize power-holding and so forestall the development of a ruling elite, then basic democratic rights can guarantee the absence of a permanent minority. Providing a protective function, traditional liberal rights-freedoms of speech, association, and participation-ensure political equality. The defense of minority rights against majority rule completes democratic equality. The creation of social equals makes political rights and thus democracy realizable, justified by the right of minority interests to override majority wants. The inability of democratic norms and community practices to guarantee minority rights means that judicial review should be instituted as the best method for defending minority rights. More positively, the right to free speech needs to be enforced through a free press and the social ownership of the media, though in order to protect pluralism private communication systems should not be eradicated. Finally, Green agrees with Marx's argument in the *Communist Manifesto* that ownership of personal property is acceptable in an egalitarian society. In order to prevent the injustices of the public wrongfully taking private property or of individuals using private property to subjugate fellow citizens, Green proposes the following principle: "In an egalitarian regime, private, noncorporate productive property ought to belong to those who have created it themselves and worked on it themselves ... and to stop belonging to them when they stop working on it." (230) In short, citizens deserve by right earned property, but not that which is "ill-gotten".

Green's vision of democracy, then, involves equal participation in effective decision-making through institutional safeguards against oligarchy and majority tyranny. To help achieve this ideal, Green finishes with a program designed to coalesce professionals, blue-collar unionists, white-collar service workers, and women and minorities into a broad coalition for radical democracy. Democratic planning and social cost-accounting would promote equal citizens and attribute value to the social significance of work without upsetting the free market context; work would be guaranteed to all; and incomes policies would promote equality. Cooperative public ownership would entail representation and social planning for a socialized economy. The DDL would reintegrate education and work and so eradicate the class consequences of capitalism. These social bases of equality would establish equal social persons, the essential conditions for political equality. What remains is to break the capacity of commodity power to transform representative institutions into elective

oligarchies. This would be achieved in part by the egalitarian social order but would also require a more participatory political culture and more participatory institutional forums.

### *Critique*

Green's model of participatory democracy marks an important advance in the current debate because it argues cogently that capitalism and participatory democracy are incompatible. For this reason, Green's work is the most radical and significant of the three reviewed in this essay. His concept of constrained inequality and his call for the socialization of the means of production are important but are far less innovative than his notion of the DDL. This concept attempts to revitalize Marx's insight that "true democracy" entails the abolition of the division of labor by making the idea of freely chosen life chances workable in the circumstances of late capitalist development. The reintegration of work, education, and family life is an important theorization that gives concrete form to the overarching moral imperative of social and political equality. This moral ideal organizes Green's radical democracy and fits it into my category of Developmental Democracy. This distinguishes it from those, like the models of Barber and Dahl, that presuppose instrumental-value orientations manifest in the subjective preferences of individual actors as the basis of collective organization and decision-making. Green's version of Developmental Democracy highlights that participatory democracy must be a radical vision that constitutes a viable alternative to the accepted practices of liberal democracy and corporate capitalism. Even so, the hypotheses generated by the typology of democratic theories suggest that there are several problems with Green's model—problems that generally reveal the inadequacy of Developmental Democracy as a defensible account of participatory democracy.

The first problem involves the origination of the commitment to equality. Implicit in the work is a ruling-class model of politics, reminiscent of Marx's famous statement in *the Communist Manifesto* that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"<sup>26</sup> and of the more recent refinements of Ralph Miliband.<sup>27</sup> In this perspective, the nil-

26. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York; W.W. Norton and Co., 1978) 475.

27. Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977),

ing class is an elite minority in society divided between those controlling the means of production and those excluded from it, though their rule is mediated through a "governing elite" who have a degree of real autonomy. Political power thus parallels the balance of class forces, a reductionist argument. Barber imaginatively tries to break with this reductionism but ironically raises another set of problems by postulating that politics is wholly autonomous. For Green, the reductionist turn entails the necessity to impose externally upon democratic politics a structure of distribution and redistribution of resources in accordance with the principle of equality. By conceptualizing equality as an extrinsic value that must be imposed on capitalist society, Green's model one-sidedly reduces the political to the social. Yet, as Marx pointed out in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*,<sup>28</sup> the state can and often does act autonomously under various conditions, implying that there is a dynamic relation between state and society. To make power relations dependent on an externally imposed and ideologically determined distribution of resources ignores that political life, like all social life, depends on relatively autonomous human agents collaborating in collective practices. The reductionist approach therefore minimizes the importance of purely political processes in inhibiting or fostering participatory democracy. Green's model is thus static and utopian.

In addition to the problem of agenda-setting, Green's version of Developmental Democracy neglects the question of interest formation, which links the motivation for collective action to social change. Justifiably, Green ignores economic-determinist arguments about the inevitable transcendence of capitalism by a revolutionary proletariat like those found in the works of Karl Kautsky and other intellectuals of the Second International. Yet Green neglects the role of class consciousness as the critical factor in the establishment of a radical democratic socialism, a theme emphasized by Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukacs, and the early Frankfurt School. Rather, Green's emphasis—the egalitarian distribution of life chances—is similar to the concern of Andre Gorz, who denies that the working class can act as a revolutionary agent and instead advocates a dual society that aims to expand freedom for self-realization by reducing dependence on necessary work.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Green's version of Developmental Democracy raises questions about what will motivate aspirations for radical

28. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 594-617.

29. Andre Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

democracy, what collective agency would be appropriate to its achievement, and what will hold it in place. His postulation of the ultimate end of political equality as the organizing principle of his vision is at the center of this problem. For Green, the goal of equality necessarily guides individual and collective action. Even more, his model ultimately presupposes a framework of equality within which such individual choices take place, and a civil religion of equality that maintains that framework. But what Green's analysis does not offer is an explanation of how citizens' subjective interests (collective or individual) are to become identical to their purportedly real or objective interests in equality. Empirically, political and social equality results from collective action motivated by conscious responses to injustice. In short, Green's model lacks an explanation of how collective interests in radical ends arise and shape collective organization and action.

The failure to consider class consciousness and its relation to collective power relations leads to a third problem: a neglect to deal adequately with the bureaucratic and oligarchical processes that threaten popular control. Green proposes to deconcentrate political power by means of the same strategy that he uses for the abolition of class-divided society: the equitable distribution of participation in political roles. But the distribution of role incumbents through rotation systems and the diffusion of education is inadequate to limit the organizational tendencies—psychological, sociological, and technical—toward oligarchy. One reason is that the distribution of roles and persons ignores how citizens can actually exercise control over what their delegates do, that is, how those at the bottom of a complex hierarchy of representation can control policy. Institutional arrangements are not equivalent to the exercise of real power relations. Since representation based on roles or persons is too general, the analysis must focus on member-designated issue-tasks if leaders or officeholders are to be accountable. Moreover, experts-bureaucratic as well as technical-gain power because they are cost-efficient for citizens, not only because they exercise control over specialized knowledge and become sociologically and psychologically differentiated from the citizenry. While a diffusion of education and methods of equalizing the distribution of authority would provide a protective function for citizens, it is not clear that these means would empower citizens to exercise power over experts as such. As a consequence, the control of experts requires a kind of citizen-generated "moral regulation" to counteract the pressures that arise and to ensure that members' substantive interests prevail. Lastly, the equitable distribu-

lion of offices and duties does not address the problem of who controls the agenda. If citizens are to exercise effective power over their delegates, they need the ability to develop autonomously their own subjective interests in relation to their real needs and then to control the organizational agenda.

### **Conclusion**

The proliferation of models of participatory democracy reflects a real concern among theorists to advance the cause of democracy. Yet the campaign suffers because democratic theory has no autonomous, unifying metatheory. What results are theories of participatory democracy that derive from quite diverse traditions of political thought and that entail diverse political consequences. To give some order to the recent plethora of theories of participatory democracy, this essay has presented an analysis of types of democratic power relations in large-scale pluralist systems. It recognizes the necessity to go beyond formal institutions, rights, and procedures and to examine how the bases of collective action interact with modes of control to produce various power relations within organizational primary units, and, in turn, within higher level representative systems.

Significantly, the typology shows that the Individualist, Pluralist, and Developmental models of democratic power relations fail to satisfy the aspiration for a tenable theory of participatory democracy and posits that Delegate Democracy is the type that best realizes the ideals of participation, moral development, and popular control. The models of Green and Barber, for different reasons and to different degrees, are closer to a genuine form of participatory democracy than Dahl's. By thus showing that very different models of democracy underlie these authors' vision of participatory democracy, this essay contributes to clarifying the distinctiveness of the concept of participatory democracy. With this in mind, I will conclude by delineating the elements of Delegate Democracy, a power relation that constitutes a genuinely adequate model of participatory democracy.

First, Delegate Democracy, going beyond a formal structure of equal representation and political rights, is a power relation shaped by commitments to ultimate values of equality, reciprocity, and autonomy. Formal mechanisms apply to hierarchical representative systems and provide a conduit for different types of democratic power relations, while preventing antidemocratic actions. At the same time, formal procedures do not guarantee any particular demo-

cratic power relation. Since democratic power relations depend on values that underlie collective action, democracy is not a purely procedural phenomenon but depends on the value-rationality and value-autonomy of the actors and on the mechanisms of control in effective decision-making. Thus, as a more satisfactory version of participatory democracy, Delegate Democracy rejects the limits of a formal, procedural definition and strives for a substantive conception of democracy.

Second, Delegate Democracy conceptualizes the community autonomy of the participants in terms not only of the substance but the sources of interest formation. The analysis of the source and type of values is central to a comprehensive analysis of power relations though, as I have shown, the theorists considered in this essay are unattentive to it. For participatory democracy, the importance of the analysis of interest formation lies in the theoretical and empirical inadequacy of the so-called educative function of participation. The notion that participation begets participation must be replaced by a systematic analysis that locates the sources of collective action and control of representatives in the agents' conscious responses to a confluence of environmental factors. This concern for how consciousness (value orientation) arises and motivates collective organization and action necessitates an analysis of how the relation between consciousness and environment affects the ability of members to formulate and act on their own interests. This conceptualizes man as a creative and active agent struggling to master his natural and social environment.

Third, Delegate Democracy identifies a mode of participatory control that recognizes the reality of large-scale organization and the need for representation and accountability. The exercise of participatory control must take place in a hierarchical structure with direct democracy at the base and delegate councils at higher levels. To deny the possibility of representation, as Barber does, is to beg a fundamental question. Yet neither Green nor Dahl provides an adequate answer, because they conceptualize political power as control through social resources. What is needed is a political analysis of citizen control that is able to meet the challenge to democratic theory set out by elite theorists such as Mosca and Michels. Delegate Democracy attempts to do just this. Political power cannot and should not be conceptually reduced to sociological factors; it manifests an autonomy and logic of its own. Just as formal institutions can provide rights that realize a defensive function in democratic prac-

lice, they are open to subversion by the various sources of oligarchy. To counteract these tendencies, Delegate Democracy identifies how citizen-members are able to utilize the instrumentalities of formal representation to advance their autonomously formed interests in large-member representative systems. The theory of Delegate Democracy does this by focusing on a mode of participatory control that involves an exchange between delegateses and delegates in which leaders act on their members' self-determined interests in return for grants of support. As a result, members are positioned to scrutinize and control their delegates' actions.

Finally, the theory and practice of Delegate Democracy is conscious of its own political intention as a radical alternative to liberal democracy. As I have argued, the models exemplified in the works reviewed vary in their consequences for conflict and accommodation with liberal democracy and corporate capitalism. The question is whether participatory democracy is to be a radical alternative, regardless of how workable in the present political context, or a practice that reinforces the hegemonic order. The typology developed in this paper implies that an adequate theory transcends the instrumental value-orientations underlying capitalist and more generally liberal social relations, while relying on formal rights and procedures to guarantee liberties. To be true to the aspirations of the classical proponents of participatory democracy like Rousseau and G.D.H. Cole, participatory democracy must entail a transcendence of an alienating individualistic social order through one based on moral commitments to egalitarian community bonds. To challenge liberal norms in this way is neither to advocate a Burkean organic community nor a mass totalitarian society. Since isolated individuals can be easily subordinated, participatory democracy must derive from community autonomy, one that entails pluralism among primary as well as higher-level groupings. While protecting the individual and the primary group, in order to ensure that power flows from the bottom upwards, the ultimate bonds of collective solidarity would take precedence over instrumental rationality on issues of major importance. The empowerment of primary groups organized by and consolidated in their commitment to egalitarianism and justice thus constitutes a defensible form of participatory democracy, producing a truly revolutionary break with the practices of liberal democracy and providing the basis for a more just social order.