Towards Food Sovereignty

Reclaiming autonomous food systems

Michel Pimbert

Reclaiming

DIVERSITY &

CITIZENSHIP

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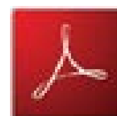

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Transformation for Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is perhaps best understood as a process that seeks to expand the realm of democracy and regenerate a diversity of locally autonomous food systems. It is a transformative process in which fundamental change is a central issue for the individuals and organisations involved. It involves a deep awareness of alternative worldviews and the possibility of doing things differently. As such, it is a shift in consciousness and represents a transformative kind of learning. A transformative learning process involves ‘seeing things differently’, ‘doing better things’ and re-thinking whole systems on a participative basis. This is in sharp contrast with more mainstream and/or reformist ways of dealing with food and agricultural crises (see box).

The food sovereignty paradigm is deeply transformative in its vision, policies and practice. For example, food sovereignty as well as individual and collective autonomy all imply a fundamentally new conception of citizenship: economic, political, social and cultural. This ‘participatory’ conception of active citizenship is well described by Fotopoulos (1997):

Box: Reform or revolution in food and agriculture

Change and learning are central issues for the individuals and organisations involved in designing sustainable food and agricultural systems. At its simplest level, learning is a process through which new knowledge, values and skills are acquired. At a deeper level, learning involves "a movement of the mind" (Senge, 1990). Different orders or levels of change and learning are involved here:

- First order change and learning. This takes place within accepted boundaries and involves adaptive learning that leaves basic values unexamined and unchanged. This single loop learning poses 'how' questions. How can we deal with the problem we face? How can we avoid the mistakes we are making? Much of the focus of first order change is on making adjustments to the existing system—doing more of the same, but doing it better (emphasis on efficiency) or by reorganising components, procedures and responsibilities (emphasis on effectiveness).

- Second order change and learning involves critically reflective learning, examining the assumptions that influence first order learning. This double loop learning focuses on 'why' questions. The organisational culture and facilitation continuously encourage the questioning of existing practices, rules, procedures and regulations. Such learning seeks to expand collective knowledge and understanding by understanding the assumptions and goals behind existing routines, practices, theories and policies. This is sometimes called 'learning about learning' or 'thinking about thinking'.

- Third order change and learning happens at a deeper level, when organisations and individuals see things differently. This is creative learning and involves a deep awareness of alternative worldviews and the possibility of doing things differently. This triple loop learning articulates the deeper 'underlying why' questions related to will and being. It focuses on underlying paradigms, norms and values that frame and legitimise the purpose of knowledge, policies, organisations, technologies and practice. It involves 'seeing things differently', 'doing better things' and re-thinking whole systems on a participative basis. As such, it is a shift in consciousness and is a transformative level of learning. This learning process will usually 'see' that individuals and organisations need to engage in fundamental change in order to facilitate deep change in the wider system, i.e. there is a need to transform in order to be transformative.

The individual and organisational learning responses to the social and ecological crisis of modern food systems thus span the following:

- No change: no learning. Denial, tokenism or ignorance

- Accommodation: first order learning. Adaptation and maintenance of the *status quo*.

- Reformation: second order learning. Critically reflective adaptation

- Transformation: third order learning. Creative re-visioning and fundamental re-design of whole system

Sources: Pimbert, in press; Sterling 2001.

> "…political citizenship *involves new political structures and the return to the classical conception of politics (direct democracy).* Economic citizenship *involves new economic structures of demotic ownership and control of economic resources (economic democracy).* Social citizenship *involves self-management structures at the workplace, democracy in the household and new welfare structures where all basic needs (to be democratically determined) are covered by community resources, whether they are satisfied in the household or at the community level. Finally,* cultural citizenship *involves new democratic structures of dissemination and control of information and culture (mass media, art, etc), which allow every member of the community to take part in the process and at the same time develop his/her intellectual and cultural potential."*

Indeed, a key goal of the more emancipatory federations and organisations mentioned above is to develop a public sphere that allows for maximum democracy in the literal sense of the term. In its present form, this new politics in the making increasingly affirms the values of 'citizenship', 'confederalism', 'dual power', 'social inclusion', 'community control of land and territories', 'transforming knowledge and ways of knowing' 'agro-ecological approaches and ecological literacy', and 'deepening democracy'. At the same time however, these guiding values and principles for transformation deeply challenge the nascent food sovereignty movement to transform *itself*.

In the next chapters of this book I critically reflect on the potential and challenges of these processes of transformation towards 'food sovereignty'.

Chapter 5. Reclaiming citizenship: empowering civil society in policy-making

> *Pursuing civilisation today would therefore mean allowing each potential citizen-subject within society to become real subjects, by offering them .... a genuine autonomy to exercise their ability to give themselves laws and construct rules with others.... More specifically, this implies giving to individuals the means to participate ... in the daily construction of the rules of living together, and to rethink political, social and economic relationships in order to civilise them at a deep level, through the permanent exercise of the freedom to participate (Méda, 2000[1]).*

One of the clearest demands of the food sovereignty movement is for citizens[2] to exercise their fundamental human right to decide their own food and agricultural policies. Four emerging trends provide a strong rationale for the direct participation of citizens in the formulation and implementation of policies throughout the world:

1. Increased citizens' demand for more direct forms of democracy. In many countries representative democracy has been heavily criticised for its inability to protect citizens' interests. Marginalised groups in both the North and the South often do not participate effectively in such representative democracy. The

1 My translation.

2 Today, the concept of citizen is at times understood to exclude indigenous peoples and minority ethnic groups who are not considered to be part of the nation state. Yet, the word citizen is originally derived from the latin *civis* and was in use before the emergence of the nation state. Citizen referred to individuals active in a public body and involved in the management of community affairs. In this volume the word citizen is used in this broad sense to include *all* people living and working in a given country.

Box 5.1 Defining 'civil society'

There are two broad ways in which 'civil society' can be understood. The first—and the one encountered most commonly—is civil society as made up of non-market organisations that exist between the household and the state. Civil society may thus comprise non-governmental organisations (such as those involved in natural resource management and agricultural development interventions), social movements (such as indigenous peoples and farmers' movements), membership organisations and trade unions (such as peasant unions) and customary, informal organisations (Farrington et al., 1993; www.viacampesina.org; Bebbington, 1996). This understanding is sometimes known as the 'associationalist' view of civil society.

A second interpretation understands civil society as the arena within which public debate occurs and in which dominant ideas about how society ought to be organised are discussed and formed by citizens. This might be referred to as a 'public sphere' or 'deliberative' view of civil society. At a national level, civil society would be, for instance, the social milieu that develops propositions about safeguarding the interests of small-scale resource users, farmers, food workers and food consumers. At a more local level it might comprise the people and groups that develop decisions about environmental care or public health through a participatory budgeting process. Within a community it may be the sphere in which ideas about women's role in local leadership are debated, reproduced or modified.

Both interpretations of 'civil society' are used in this volume.

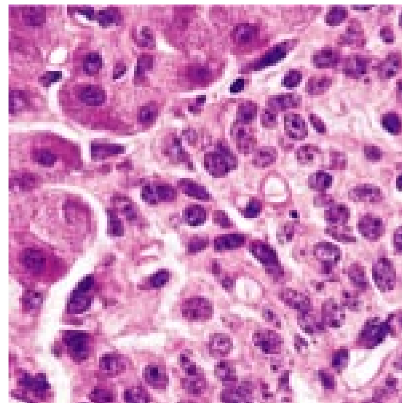
Adapted from Edwards, 2004; Howell and Pearce, 2001.

poor are often badly organised and ill-served by the organisations that mobilise their votes and claim to represent their interests. The crisis of legitimacy faced by institutions in the eyes of the poor, and a growing number of middle income citizens, is now widely documented. Drawing from participatory research in 23 countries, the recent *Consultations with the Poor* report, prepared for the *World Development Report 2001*, concludes:

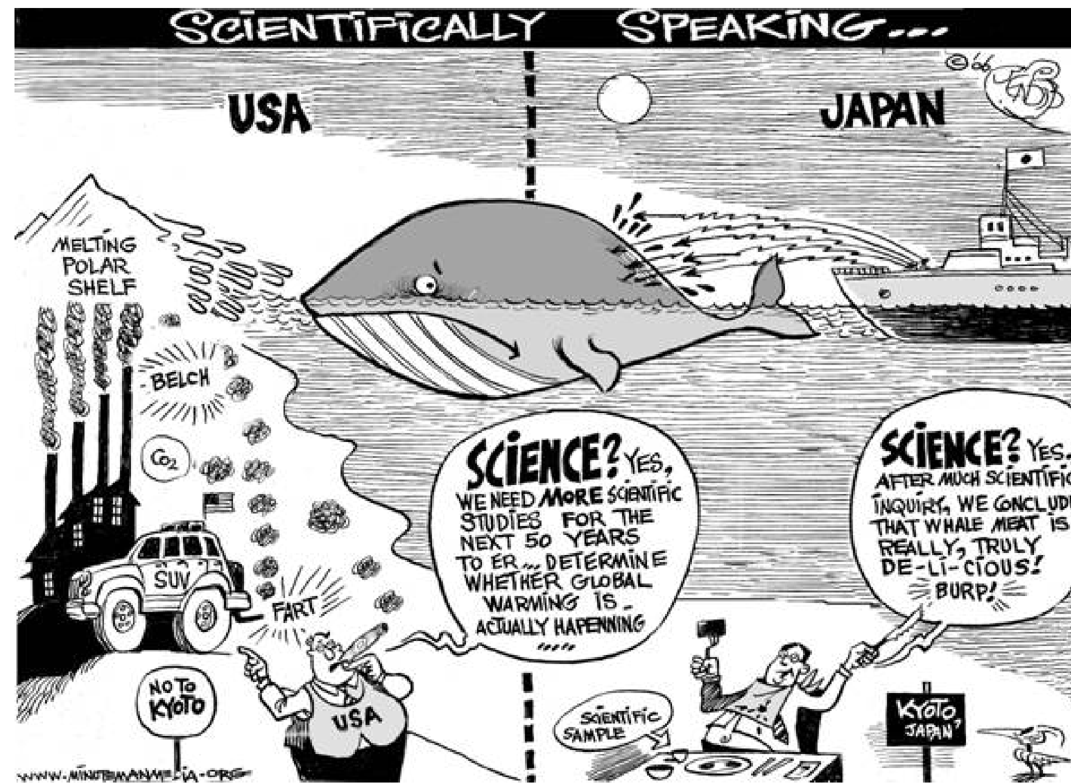
> *"From the perspectives of poor people world wide, there is a crisis in governance. While the range of institutions that play important roles in poor people's lives is vast, poor people are excluded from participation in governance. State institutions, whether represented by central ministries or local government are often neither responsive nor accountable to the poor; rather the report details the arrogance and disdain with which poor people are treated. Poor people see little recourse to injustice, criminality, abuse and corruption by institutions. Not surprisingly, poor men and women lack confidence in the state institutions even though they still express their willingness to partner with them under fairer rules." (Narayan et al., 2000, p. 172)*

In the North and the South, civil society as a whole (see Box 5.1) has also been demanding that citizens' voices be heard during the formulation of government policies to meet human needs in environmentally sustainable ways. Many civil society organisations argue that citizen deliberation and inclusion can improve the quality of decision-making and make the policy process more legitimate, effective and efficient (Calame, 2003).

2. Increased policy complexity and uncertainty of results. Policy-making processes involve a good deal of decisions based on imperfect knowledge of their consequences. As policy-related issues and socio-environmental systems become more complex and unstable, such uncertainties increase (IDS, 2003). Active management interventions and technological risks in food systems are particularly noteworthy in this connection. Climate change and the interactions between genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the environment are characterised by high levels of local uncertainty. The same is true for predicting the local impact of, let us say, releasing new types of industrial waste (e.g., nanoparticles) or endocrine disrupting chemicals into the environment. Conventional risk management approaches and cost benefit analysis are inadequate when we know neither the probabilities of possible outcomes, nor the phenomena that can affect those outcomes in



significant ways ('we do not know what we do not know'). Given such uncertainty in the face of complexity, perceptions of both problems and solutions are essentially value-laden. And 'experts' are no better equipped to decide on questions of values and interests than any other group of people (Irwin, 2001; Stirling, 2001). This is another powerful argument for more inclusive forms of citizen participation and deliberation in the policy process.

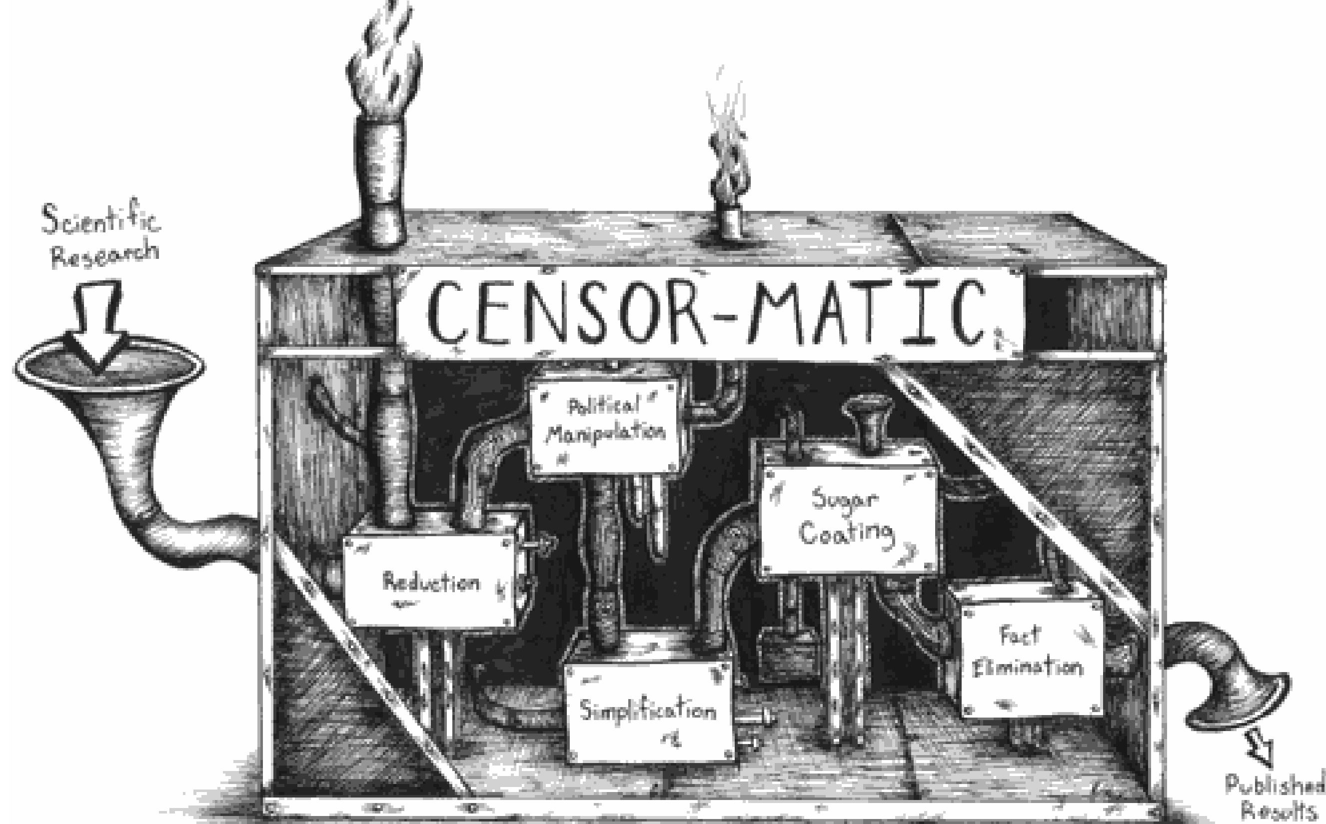


3. More critical perspectives on 'science' and professional expertise. 'Science' plays a central role in determining much of the content and practice of policies that shape food systems and people-environment interactions, as 'experts' (foresters, agronomists, rangeland specialists, economists….) decide about social, economic and environmental issues. With respect to democratic politics, these are much more opaque pathways, as the roots of decisions can supposedly be understood only by small elites of scientists and fellow experts. Increasingly, however, one can perceive mistrust and cynicism and a sense of declining legitimacy vis-à-vis professional and scientific expertise. This is particularly true in countries where poorly trusted government institutions are tightly associated with scientific expertise in policy-making. Some of the reasons for this eroded trust include:

- People are exposed to a wide range of opinions from experts and counter experts in major scientific controversies. This undermines the positivist view of knowledge with its claims that any group of experts faced with the same problem should arrive at the same conclusions. People in industrialised and post-industrialised countries no longer view science as representing knowledge that is certain and unique (Irwin, 1995; Irwin, 2001).

- At least a part of the public has also been informed by radical critiques that present science is an *embodiment of values* in theories, things, therapies, systems, software and institutions. As all these values are part of ideologies (world views), scientists appear immersed in the very same cultural and economic conflicts, contradictions and compromises as all other citizens (Levidov, 1986; Levidov and Young, 1981; Young, 1977).

- Citizens feel 'at risk' from science-based social and technological developments. For example, the recent crisis in European countries over bovine spongiform encephalopathy and GMOs has undermined public confidence in scientific expertise. This has been compounded by evidence of collusion between some key government experts and the commercial interests of industry. Citizens are increasingly sceptical of scientific solutions when the 'experts' who recommend the solutions have contributed to creating the relevant public health and environmental crises in the first place.



Again, in both the North and the South, more deliberative and inclusive policy-making processes seem to be an important pathway to overcome low confidence in government institutions and scientific expertise. In such processes, the value of formal science is recognised, but so are the citizens' perspectives (Mirenowicz, 2001; Satya Murty and Wakeford, 2001; Sclove, 2001). In fact, advocates argue that more deliberative and inclusive processes involving citizens and the 'lay public' generate a much better understanding of *all* science-policy questions (Stirling, 2001) and, in particular, of the uncertainties that surround them.

4. Enhanced advocacy for human rights, social justice and local empowerment. New social movements and peoples' coalitions throughout the world are reaffirming the importance of human rights over economics and the rule of market forces (Amin and Houtard, 2002; *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2004; www.nyeleni2007.org). For these movements, human rights, justice and democratic accountability are enhanced when the formulation of policies and the design of technologies involve 'inclusive deliberation'. Inclusive deliberation, a process whose key features are described in Box 5.12, potentially allows men, women, the elderly and children to exercise their human right to participate, as citizens, in decisions about society, the environment and the organisation of economic life. In this sense, people are not mere users of policies or social entities subjected to them. They are, instead, active makers and shapers of the realities that affect their lives (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). Much of this argument draws its legitimacy from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and resonates with

political traditions in which direct citizen empowerment and action are the central objectives of a just and free society that celebrates diversity, empathy and solidarity (Woodcock, 1975).

The four trends just summarised provide a rationale for 'citizen inclusion' and 'democratic deliberation' in the policy process and thus suggest the following reforms:

- **Opening up policy processes to more diverse forms of knowledge.** The issue here is not to choose between popular knowledge and scientific expertise, but to recognise the legitimacy of a variety of systems of knowledge, and to give them all a place in the decision – and policy-making process. The intent is also to demystify scientific knowledge, bringing it closer to the lives and realities of people and making it more transparent and less threatening.

- **Recognising that knowledge is not separated from values.** The world views and ideologies of those who possess or produce knowledge are woven into it by virtue of the questions asked, the answers provided and the conditions under which the knowledge itself has been generated. In the decision-making process, knowledge must therefore be complemented and guided by the opinions, aspirations and values of the people and institutions concerned with these policies.

- **Embracing participatory decision-making approaches.** Methods and procedures exist that allow for the involvement of people and organisations in policy-making processes. This is particularly important for the people normally excluded from planning and decisions. Creativity and courage are required to use such methods and procedures, and to thereby combat exclusion, offering to all concerned people a fair chance to participate.

- **Understanding that policy-making is more than formulating policies.** In order to be meaningful and durable, policy processes ought to introduce monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanisms and place the responsibility of managing policies in the hands of those who are supposed to be served by them. At all stages of the policy process there is also a need to enhance transparency, accountability and credibility.

Inclusive and participatory processes of policy-making are likely to be more effective because of their potential to: (a) build ownership among participants; (b) encourage change and make implementation easier; (c) empower citizens through information-sharing, capacity – and confidence-building; and (d) create space and demand for new policies.

However, the politics of policy-making are complex and power-laden (see Box 5.2). Throughout the world, exclusionary and narrow policy processes seem to act to reinforce the values and

Box 5.2. The politics of policy

A policy is the result of numerous interactions among the social actors who, directly or indirectly, shape its content, interpretation and implementation. In general, thus, a 'policy-making process' reflects the power relations that exist in society. In other words, it is to be expected that the *dominant* policy reflects and reinforces the interests of the powerful—be they the political parties, individuals or aristocracies in control of government and/or influential corporations, financial giants and key market forces.

A few questions help to shed light on the policy-making process: Which actors are involved? Where is 'policy-making' actually taking place? Who has the final control and say? Whose knowledge is included and whose is excluded? Whose interests are served? Is someone held accountable? If so, to whom, and how? Asking these questions helps to shift attention from an analysis of policies *per se* (Are policies addressing the relevant issues? Are policies good or misguided?), to the analysis of the policy process (Whose perspectives, knowledge, values, and aspirations are embedded in policies, and whose are excluded? Through which avenues can policies be improved?).

Issues of power and knowledge are at the heart of negotiations and agreements on the governance of food systems. Social movements and citizens supporting food sovereignty have frequent encounters with issues of knowledge and power in policy-making. Broadly speaking, knowledge and values get established or embodied in policy through three main pathways (Keeley and Scoones, 1999), which may be used alone or in combination:

1. **As a reflection of structured political interests** (Hill, 1997), which happens when policy change results from open interactions and struggles among groups with differing political interests (examples include different classes, factions within the state, the state and society).

2. **As a by-product of the initiative of specific actors** (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989), which happens when some actors have discretion over the policy process and exercise their own interests, capacities and responsibilities.

3. **As part of the power-knowledge relations that frame practice** (Hajer, 1995; Grillo, 1997), which happens when, for instance, political issues and choices are recast in the 'neutral' language of science and hidden behind the symbols of scientific authority; in this sense, policies are part of a dominant 'discourse' that defines the world and, in the process, excludes alternative interpretations.

interests of the more powerful social actors and their networks. Nuanced scholarly studies of policy change also show how policy dynamics are influenced by powerful combinations of political interests, dominant policy discourses and narratives, and effective actor networks that span local, national and international levels (see for example Barraclough, 1991; Dryzek, 2006; Keeley and Scoones, 2003; Ghimire and Barraclough, 1997 and 2001; Mayers and Bass, 2004; Levy and Newell, 2005; Scott, 2009). What, then, are the realistic prospects for citizen engagement in decision-making processes? How and under what conditions can previously marginalised voices be included in the framing, interpretation and implementation of the policies that affect both people and their food systems?

There are no unique or full answers to these questions. But experience suggests that at least six complementary pathways can help empower citizens in policy processes and the governance of food systems: i) learning from history to re-imagine citizenship for the 21st century; ii) building local organisations; iii) strengthening civil society; iv) using specific methods and approaches to expand democratic deliberation and inclusion; v) enhancing information democracy through networks of citizen-controlled and community-based media; and vi) nurturing citizenship through education.

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1. Learning from history to re-imagine citizenship for the 21st century

2. Building local organisations

3. Strengthening civil socity

4. Using specific methods and approaches to expand democratic deliberation and inclusion

5. Enhancing information democracy

6. Nuturing citizenship through education

EMPOWER-O-METER

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

5.1. Learning from history to re-invent active forms of citizenship

Experiments in citizen deliberation and participatory decision-making have a long history. The distinction between Plato and Protagoras, between the perfect but simplified world of abstract ideas and theories and the imperfect, messy but concrete and extremely rich world of human experience,[3] can still be traced in contemporary policy-making processes. In some socio-cultural contexts, supposedly objective expert capacities, and the 'philosophers' delivering them, are of greatest value. In others, what truly counts is the direct experience and participation of citizens. In a way this already spells out the distinction between representative and participatory democracy, and direct democracy. Participatory democracy is distinct from representative democratic systems, such as elected members of parliaments or senates, in that it puts decision-making powers more directly in the hands of ordinary people (Pateman, 1970). In this connection, Asian, European and North American history offers several lessons that may be of relevance today. The following are just a few illustrative examples among many others that could be chosen from all around the world.

In *The Greek Polis and Creation of Democracy*, Castoriadis describes the process of widening democracy in ancient Greece (Castoriadis, 1983). The community of citizens–the demos–proclaimed its sovereignty through the self-institution of the *polis*:

> *"Participation materializes in the ekklesia, the Assembly of the people, which is the acting sovereign body. All citizens have the right to speak (isegoria), their votes carry the same weight (isopsephia), and they are under a moral obligation to speak their minds (parrhesia). Participation also materializes in the courts. There are no professional judges; virtually all courts are juries*

3 On this see also Feyerabend, 1999.

with jurors chosen by lot. The ekklesia, assisted by the boule (council), legislates and governs. This is direct democracy .....General participation in politics entails the creation for the first time in history of a public space.....The emergence of a public space means that a political domain is created which 'belongs to all' (ta koina). The 'public' ceases to be a 'private' affair – of the king, the priests, the bureaucracy, the politicians, and the experts. Decisions on common affairs have to be made by the community" (Castoriadis, 1983).

In the Athenian *polis*, direct democracy attained a remarkable degree of sophistication. Bookchin notes that the Athenian polis stabilised around *"a face to face democracy of the most radical kind"* and was a *"consciously amateur system of governance"* marked by *"the absence of any political professionalism or bureaucraticism"* (Bookchin, 1995). The institutions of ancient Athens—especially the almost weekly meetings of the citizens' assembly and the judicial system structured around huge juries—ensured that political participation was broad, general and ongoing. The community of citizens affirmed the political equality (equal sharing of activity and power) of all free men.

However, it is noteworthy that for the ancient Greeks, a 'citizen' was defined as an adult, free male. Ancient Greece excluded women, slaves and resident foreigners from their citizen-centred systems of self-governance. The *polis* of Athens and other cities of ancient Greece was poisoned by slavery, patriarchy and xenophobia (Biehl, 1998). By today's human rights standards, the exclusion of women, foreigners and slaves was an unacceptable limitation that was never lifted in practice in ancient Greece. But despite these serious limitations, *"the polis defined and concretised the political realm as an arena of direct democratic self management. It also opened up the possibility of political freedom–that is, the positive freedom of a community as a whole, with which individual liberties are tightly interwoven"* (Biehl, 1998). The value of the *ekklesia*—the assembly of the people—lies in what it innovated historically in the realm of

direct, deliberative democracy. This is an unfinished tradition that remains pregnant with possibilities today.

Not only is democratic deliberation theoretically possible; it is, and probably has always been, a constant feature of everyday human existence. Recent work by Amartya Sen shows that:

> *"…some of the contemporary cities in Asia, in Iran, Bactria, and India incorporated elements of democracy in municipal government in the centuries following the flowering of Athenian democracy. For example, for several centuries the city of Susa (or Shushan) in Southwest Iran had an elected council, a popular assembly, and magistrates who were proposed by the council and elected by the assembly" (Sen, 2006).*

Government by discussion, public deliberation and reasoning has also flourished in several other ancient civilisations. Some of the earliest open general meetings used to settle disputes took place in India in Buddhist councils (Sen, 2006). Middle Eastern history and the history of the Muslim people "also include a great many accounts of public discussion and dialogue" (Sen, 2006).

There is indeed abundant evidence of direct democratic deliberation in situations as disparate as the Athenian assembly of ancient Greece, tribal councils all over the world, revolutionary movements in the last century and modern experiences in popular direct democracy (Bookchin, 1991, 1996 and 1998).

> *"Direct democracy has been re-discovered or re-invented in modern history every time a political collectivity has entered a process of radical self-constitution and self activity: town meetings during the American revolution, the Paris Commune, the workers' councils, or the soviets in their original form…. In all these cases, the sovereign body is the totality of those concerned; whenever delegation is inevitable, delegates are not just elected but subject to permanent recall" (Castoriadis, 1983).*

The coming of democracy to ancient Athens
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Preventing abuses of power by unaccountable individuals has been a long-standing concern in most, if not all, societies. Once permanent 'representatives' of the people are present, political authority, activity and initiative are usually expropriated from the body of citizens. This notion of 'representation' is indeed unknown in classical political philosophy. And throughout history, the idea that representation is a principle alien to democracy has had enormous relevance for progressive political theorists and radical humanists. For example, as early as the 1790s in England, William Godwin proposed that government should be mainly reduced to a system of juries and citizen assemblies that would deliberate on and carry out all the functions that could be carried out voluntarily or enforced informally through public opinion and social pressure (Godwin, 1793).

Linked with the principle of direct democracy is the view that there are no experts on political affairs. Even when important technical or scientific issues are involved in particular decisions,

the community of citizens is absolutely sovereign—self-judging, self-legislating and self-governing. 'People' ultimately matter more than 'experts'. In practice, for example, this means that citizens will listen to technicians and expert opinions to inform their deliberations and guide their decisions. *"The proper judge of the expert is not another expert, but the user; the warrior and not the blacksmith for the sword, the horseman and not the saddler for the saddle. And evidently, for all public (common) affairs, the user, and thus the best judge, is the polis"* (Castoriadis, 1983).

This understanding of the role of 'experts' in direct, deliberative democracy has huge implications for societies based on modern science and technology. For example, Thompson's historical analysis illustrated how the Luddites of nineteenth century England sought to subject new technologies to a public trial, just as they had put food prices on trial in previous generations (Thompson, 1963). Far from opposing all new technology, recent studies have suggested that the Luddites were in favour of certain innovations as long as they did not threaten their quality of life (Sale, 1996). The Luddites did not oppose technology as such. They were among the first to recognise that technologies are not neutral, but value laden, and that society must have a say in the values embodied in them. As historian Steve Woolgar has put it,

> *"The conventional arguments that assert the Luddites to be irrational resisters to progress—because they mistakenly assumed either capitalism or machinery to be irrational—are based on essentialist notions of progress.... The Luddites failed not because they misrecognised the machine [as their enemy] but because the alliance of forces arrayed against them was too great for their interpretation to prevail" (Woolgar, 1997).*

Writing in the United States in 1909, Dewey pointed to the dangers that arise whenever experts become detached from the concerns of the public, or when the public is excluded from the process of long-term social planning (Dewey, 1909). Unless both sides are engaged in continuous and mutually educative dialogue, neither experts nor citizens are, he suggested, capable of using the full range of tools available to them. He also proposed that experts could never achieve monopoly control over knowledge required for adequate social planning because of the extent to which *"they become a specialised class; they are shut off from knowledge of the needs they are supposed to serve"*. When insulated and unaccountable, he argued, this "cadre of experts" becomes a public problem, rather than a public resource.

While accepting that citizens must often depend on experts for the gathering of facts and construction of policy scenarios, Dewey attacked those who dismissed the public's capability to participate in policy-making. He suggested that, given the prevailing culture of secrecy and propaganda, citizens had not been given a fair chance to fulfil their potential in this role. He found it impossible to guess the quality of contributions citizens would have made if balanced information had been available. In fact, both past and present experiences of trial by jury do indeed suggest that citizens are quite capable of engaging in deliberations and arbitrating complex issues (Box 5.3).

A growing number of people today see democracy without citizen participation and discussion as an empty and meaningless concept. This understanding of politics is often the starting point

Box 5.3. A history of trial by jury

It is unclear whether the European system of trial by jury originated in Ancient Greece, where various versions were widely practised, or in more ancient civilisations. What is certain is that systems of 'participatory justice' have been found in various societies throughout recorded history.

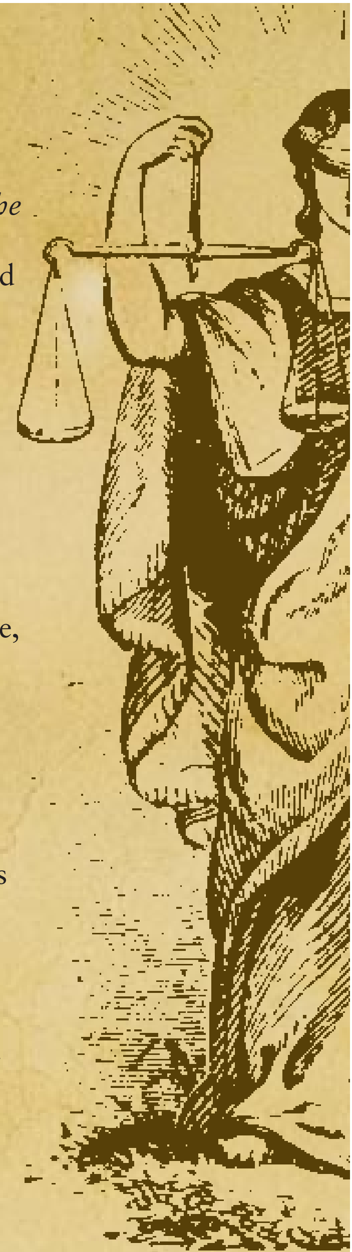
Whether or not it had existed there previously, the system of jury trial was brought to Britain with the Norman invaders in 1066. Firmly established by the time of the Magna Carta in 1215, the jury comprised ordinary people picked from a wide population. They were allowed to hear from witnesses, deliberate in secrecy and reach a decision by majority vote that would then be announced publicly. By the 15th century this had replaced non-rational methods of trial, such as trial by ordeal, and became established as the form of trial for both criminal and civil cases at common law. The perceived justice of the jury system led to it being taken up across Britain as a tool for achieving social justice. In towns around the country a people's court often set a 'fair' price for foodstuffs such as bread and grain.

Whilst elected governments make the laws, it is juries that are able to decide the innocence or guilt of anyone charged with breaking many of those laws, making it a key instrument of participatory democracy. Over the centuries they have achieved an importance to many democracies that has had to be fiercely defended. One senior judge, surveying the limiting of a government's power provided by the jury over the centuries, compared the jury to: *"a little parliament…. No tyrant could afford to leave a subject's freedom in the hands of twelve of his countrymen…. Trial by jury is more than an instrument of justice and more than one wheel of the constitution: it is the lamp that shows that freedom lives"* (Devlin, 1956). Today, jury trials are practised in the UK, US and many other democracies around the world, including Australia, Brazil, Russia and Spain. Perhaps no other institution of government rivals the jury in placing power so directly in the hands of citizens, or wagers more on the truth of democracy's core claim that the people make their own best governors (Abramson, 2000).

Contrary to what might be expected from surveys highlighting the apparent public ignorance of science, most studies of even the most highly technical court cases have shown that citizens are able to deal with technical issues at least as well as the judges. Even in cases where it is claimed that trial by jury is inappropriate because of the scientific nature of evidence, any potential problems can usually be overcome if the manner of presenting the evidence is given careful consideration.

Studies comparing the decisions reached by jurors with those reached by judicial experts found that the same verdicts were reached in 75-80% of cases. Crucially, this proportion was the same for both complex and simpler cases.

Source: Adapted from Wakeford, 2002; Wakeford and Pimbert, 2003; Peals, 2003



for a growing number of experiments and initiatives that create new spaces for citizens to directly influence decisions affecting their lives (see also Dryzek, 2004 and 2006).

Such innovations go under various labels, ranging from participatory democracy, to deliberative democracy, to *"empowered participatory governance"* (Fung and Wright, 2003). They also sometimes renew long-standing historical traditions of libertarian socialism, social anarchism and Utopian thought (Graham, 2005; Marshall, 1992; Woodcock, 1975; Ward, 2004). Whilst extremely diverse in style and context, these initiatives share several common features. These include:

- A concern with more *active and participatory forms of citizenship*. Such views go beyond the notions of citizens as clients or consumers, as articulated during the 1980s and 1990s, to citizens who engage in policies, in agenda-setting for research and in the delivery of services. They also profess to go beyond consultation to more empowered forms of involvement that renew or establish traditions of direct democracy.
- An emphasis on *inclusion*, especially of racial and ethnic minorities, women, youth, older people, and others seen as previously excluded or marginalised.
- A simultaneous emphasis on the involvement of *multiple actors* in new forms of partnership, which in turn enable wider 'ownership' of decisions, processes and projects.
- A strong emphasis on broader forms of *accountability*, which enable multiple partners to hold institutions, professionals and policy-makers to account through social, legal, fiscal and political means.
- The search for new political forms that realise the democratic ideal of government *of* and *by*, as well as *for*, the people.

Beyond elections

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> These political forms are participatory because they rely on the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned and conscious deliberation, and they are empowered because they try to link discussion with action.

Reclaiming such active forms of citizenship is a key challenge for the food sovereignty movement. Indeed, the reversals described in Table 3.1 put local communities, municipalities and citizens' assemblies at the heart of the governance of food systems. In this vision for transformation, collective and individual autonomy can only be achieved through a radical dispersion of power, with communities of citizens as the basic units of political, social, economic life and as key actors managing ecosystems and environmental processes. In this context, the regeneration of diverse local food systems partly depends on strengthening local organisations and nurturing active forms of citizenship.

5.2. Building local organisations

Many of the examples described in Chapter 4 of this book offer clear evidence that local organisations are of vital importance for the management and governance of food systems. But in many situations, local organisations have been either weakened or destroyed as a result of centralising state policies or market interventions. There is thus often a need to re-create or strengthen local organisations and their capacities. Experience gained from case studies highlighted in this volume—and lessons derived from the wider literature on community-based sustainable development[4]—suggest that much can be achieved through open-ended approaches that simultaneously do the following:

- *Build on local systems of knowledge and management*. Local management systems are generally tuned to the needs of local people and often enhance their capacity to adapt to dynamic social and ecological circumstances. Although many of these systems have been abandoned after long periods of success, there remains a great diversity of local systems of knowledge and management. Despite the pressures that increasingly undermine local systems of knowledge and management, plans to strengthen locally determined food systems should start with what people know and do well already, so as to secure their livelihoods and sustain the diversity of environments on which they depend.

- *Build on available local resources and appropriate technologies to meet fundamental human needs*. Cultural sensitivity and some measure of ecological literacy are essential in order to strengthen or re-build local organisations adapted to local circumstances. More specifically, it is important to recognise the difference between fundamental human needs and their satisfiers: the ways and means of satisfying these needs. Whilst fundamental human needs are universal, their satisfiers vary according to culture, ecologies, region and historical conditions (Max-Neef, 1989).[5]

  Preference should be given to local technologies by emphasising the opportunities for intensification in the use of available resources and skills. Sustainable and cheaper solutions can often be found for farming, food processing, storage and distribution when groups or communities are involved in identifying technology needs and then the design and testing of technologies, their adaptation to local conditions and, finally, their extension to others. The potential for intensification of internal resource use without reliance on external inputs is enormous at every point along the food chain. However, combinations of local and cutting edge modern technologies are possible too. This is particularly true with the development of miniaturisation, multipurpose machines, multimedia and computer assisted technology, knowledge in agro-ecology, and efficient renewable energy systems that can all enhance local autonomy and ecologies, minimise pollution, and expand the realms of freedom and culture by eliminating needless toil. But local organisations should decide which new innovations are needed, when, where and under what conditions along the food chain.

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4 This section draws on analyses of case studies on sustainable development at the community or neighbourhood level (PEC workshop, 1990; Conroy and Litvinoff, 1988; Farrington et al., 1993; Bebbington et al., 1993; Wellard and Copstake, 1993; Pretty and Sandbrook, 1991; Pretty, 1994; Ghai and Vivian, 1992; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2008). The concepts presented may provide useful pointers for citizens who need to re-build local organisations or strengthen their organisational capacities.

5 Max-Neef and his colleagues have identified nine fundamental human needs: *subsistence* (eg., health, food, shelter, clothing); *protection* (care, solidarity, work, etc.); *affection* (self-esteem, love, care, solidarity and so on); *understanding* (among others: study, learning, analysis); *participation* (responsibilities, sharing of rights and duties); *leisure/idleness* (curiosity, imagination, games, relaxation, fun); *creation* (including intuition, imagination, work, curiosity); *identity* (sense of belonging, differentiation, self-esteem and so on), *freedom* (autonomy, self-esteem, self-determination, equality).

- *Build on local institutions and social organisation*. Existing local institutions and forms of social organisation are expressions of cultural diversity and assets to be strengthened and developed, not ignored and suppressed. Available evidence from multilateral projects evaluated 5 to 10 years after completion shows that where institutional development has been an important part of the project, the flow of benefits has risen or remained constant (Cernea,1987). Past experience therefore suggests that if this type of institutional development is ignored in food and agricultural policies, economic rates of return and human well-being will decline markedly in different parts of the food system.

- *Engage in process-oriented flexible projects*. In supporting the development of locally-determined food systems, the initial focus is on what people articulate as most important to them. Error is treated as a source of information and flexibility permits continuous adaptation of procedures. Indicators developed from those aspects most important to local communities are seen as milestones rather than absolute and fixed targets. The regeneration of local food systems is only likely if this participatory, open-ended approach lasts long enough for real social development and environmental conservation to occur. Short duration efforts have a much greater chance of failure than long-term social action (lasting five to ten years or more). External support organisations (local government, NGOs, donors…), and members of local organisations themselves, must be prepared for low initial levels of disbursement and for changes in priorities.

- *Support local participation in planning, management and evaluation*. If activities associated with different parts of local food systems are to become adaptive and participatory, there will need to be significant changes in the way outside support is conceived and organised. This may also often be true for self-mobilised initiatives and local groups within communities. Support is needed for participatory learning approaches in which the main goals are qualitative shifts in the ways people and institutions interact and work together. This—and the process-oriented approach just described—implies significant shifts in the internal procedures, culture and professional practice of external support agencies (government, NGOs, civil society groups….) and local groups self-mobilising to rebuild or strengthen organisations. For example, processes aimed at institutionalising participation and people-centred approaches will need to emphasise transformation for organisational change, lateral learning and inclusive governance, rather than the more instrumentalist and limited forms of 'participation' that still prevail today (see Table 5.1).

- *Strengthen local rights, security and territory.* The negation of the prior rights of indigenous and other local communities to their lands and resources has been one of the most enduring sources of conflicts, violence, poverty and environmental degradation, both in the developing world and in advanced industrialised nations. Denying resource use to local people severely reduces their incentive to conserve resources and undermines local livelihood security. Efforts aimed at strengthening local organisations clearly need to reaffirm and protect local rights of ownership and use over land, territories and resources—for ethical as well as practical reasons. This theme is further discussed in Chapter 9 of this book.

Empirical evidence shows that all the above-mentioned practical and operational features can help re-build and strengthen local organisations. As such they are important avenues for action in the quest for more autonomous and resilient local food systems. However, they will often need to be complemented by efforts aimed at empowering civil society in policy processes.

Table 5.1. Institutionalising participation and people-centred approaches: the spectrum of current practice among government and civil society organisations

Institutionalisation as mere labelling	'Participation' used only as a label while continuing to use methods and the discourse in an extractive manner to make proposals and rhetoric attractive to donors and wider society
Institutionalisation as use of participatory methods and approaches for staff training	Participatory methods primarily used for one shot training of staff members. No commitment is demonstrated to use methods for field action and policy-making, no effective skills are available. Lack of commitment and resources prevent the continuation of the approach for programme management and organisational development.
Institutionalisation as the use of participatory methods and approaches for project management and policy consultations	Participatory methods are used at the appraisal stage and to develop more effective policies and programmes but are not linked with institution development aspects. The use of methods and participation discourses is sustained as long as funding is available but tapers off on withdrawal of resources in the absence of effective local organisations
Institutionalisation in which participatory approaches are used for local institutional and organisational development	Participatory approaches and methods are used effectively for policy processes, programme management and local institutional development, which shows short and long-term impact. The process, however, may not be accompanied by corresponding changes in policies and support organisations at larger scales (e.g. in policy reforms, learning environment, structures, funding and evaluation mechanisms).
Institutionalisation of participation as transformation for organisational change, lateral learning and inclusive governance	Participatory processes, approaches and methods used as part of a strategy of policy and organisational transformation as well as local institutional development. This dynamic of transformation involves deliberations, appraisal, planning, negotiation, bargaining and conflict resolution together with lateral expansion of local organisations from producer to producer, resource user to resource user, village to village, and municipality to municipality…. Safe citizen spaces and federated networks (national and international) are key for decentralising governance and for re-localising and democratising 'power'.

Adapted from Pimbert, 2004.

5.3. Strengthening civil society

There are several mechanisms from around the world for strengthening civil society and the engagement of citizens and governments (see Goetz and Gaventa, 2001 and references therein). Various approaches may be seen along a continuum, ranging from ways of strengthening ‘voice’ on the one hand, to ways of strengthening ‘receptivity’ by government institutions on the other. Goetz and Gaventa (2001) argue that the voice end of the spectrum must begin with creating the pre-conditions for voice, through awareness-raising and building the capacity to mobilise. As citizens who are outside governance processes begin to engage with government, there is a series of avenues through which their voices may be amplified, ranging from advocacy to lobbying for policy change and citizen monitoring of performance in various sectors. Similarly, the receptivity of states can be strengthened via several avenues, including government-mandated forms of citizen consultation, standards against which citizens may hold government accountable, incentives to encourage officials to be responsive to citizen voice, changes in organisational culture, and legal provisions for making participation in governance a legal right.

Broadly speaking, there are three main strategic approaches for the emergence of a strong civil society and the empowerment of ‘voices from below’:

1. Building upon synergies between government and society

2. Promoting collaboration between local and external civil society actors

3. Defining independent pathways from below.

Each of these is explored in the sections that follow.

5.3.1. Building upon synergies between government and society

Public sector workers and ‘champions of change’ within governments can help strengthen civil society and encourage more inclusive policy debates. In the Philippines, for example, lobbying by radical civil servants along with organisations of professionals led to the wide implementation of participatory irrigation management, a model which has subsequently spread to other countries (Korten, 1995). In Mexico, reformist officials have helped consolidate small farmer marketing organisations (Fox, 1996) and strengthen the role of community organisations in regional sustainable development policy (Blauert and Dietz, 2004).

Civil society is likely to have greater influence when civil servants and progressive government officials introduce legislation guaranteeing the right to participate. The *legal right* to

participate is potentially a more empowered form of engagement than participation by invitation of governments, donors, or higher authorities. One area in which the right to participate is being embodied in law is local governance.[6] A number of pathways have been used:

- *Joint approaches to planning*. Civil society actors and government bodies work together in planning service delivery and environmental care (see Box 5.4).
- *Changing forms of accountability.* Innovations have not only emphasised citizen involvement with local governments in planning, but also empowered citizen representatives to hold government to account for carrying out their functions properly (see Box 5.5).
- *Empowered forms of local direct participation in the governance of public affairs*. While many approaches seek new relationships between citizens and elected representatives, others are creating forms of direct citizen participation through legal changes. Representative forms of governance are thus complemented by more empowered, directly involved citizens at the local level. Among those, perhaps the most direct and effective is the sharing of authority about budget allocation. In Porto Alegre and other municipalities of Brazil, neighbourhood meetings are used to do exactly that in a process called 'participatory budgeting' (see Box 5.6).
- *Strengthened inclusive representation in locally-elected bodies.* A pathway adopted by several countries has been legal change that promoted the inclusion of traditionally excluded populations in local councils (see Box 5.7).

All these pathways are significant and positive innovations promoted by local and/or national governments. Through legislation, governments can create new and stronger roles for civil society in local governance. And yet, the extent to which the legislation

6 See www.ids.ac.uk/logolink.

Box 5.4. Mandatory joint planning

In the Phillippines, the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC) requires citizen participation at all levels of local government through the local development councils. Participation is mandated in the areas of development planning, education, health, bids and contracts, and policing. In theory, the LGC also provides for direct representation of civil society and voluntary organisations on local government bodies, though this has been uneven in its implementation. Legislation also mandates funds for training of citizen representatives in order for them to participate effectively.

In Brazil the new Constitution of 1988, called the 'Citizens Constitution' at the time, affirmed public participation in the delivery of local services as a democratic right. This has resulted in the creation across the country of municipal level councils which link elected officials, neighbourhood representatives and service providers in almost every sector, including health, education and youth.

(adapted from McGee et al., 2003)

Box 5.5. New forms of accountability

In Bolivia, the 1994 Law of Popular Participation mandated broad-based participation, starting at the neighbourhood level, as part of the process of local government decentralisation. It also recognised the importance of social organisations that already existed (including indigenous communities, with their own practices and customs). About 15,000 such 'territorial base organisations' are registered to participate in the planning process. However, a particular innovation of the Bolivian law was to create legal citizens' oversight or Vigilance Committees in each municipality, which are empowered to freeze municipal budgets if actual expenditures vary too far from the planning processes.

(adapted from The LogoLink Network www.ids.ac.uk/logolink)

Box 5.6. Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil

Porto Alegre is a Brazilian town with a population of about 1.2 million people, situated along the polluted Guaiba River in Southern Brazil. There are about 250 favelas (slums) in Porto Alegre, home to about 400,000 people. Since 1989, Porto Alegre has been governed by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, the workers party). This party was founded in 1980, when the military regime first allowed the creation of new parties. The PT emanated from a coalition of labour unions, urban and rural social movements, people from Christian base communities, and formerly revolutionary Marxist groups. The PT has no well-defined ideology, but follows two main tenets: the needs of the poor should get priority and the people should be directly involved in governance.

The original contribution of the PT was the insight that popular control of public spending was the key to real popular participation in governance. To achieve this, the PT introduced the practice of 'direct democratic budgeting' from 1989 onwards. This involves a number of phases, including assemblies where people can give their views on the way public spending is organised; neighbourhood meetings where investment priorities are drawn up; electing delegates for the Regional Budget Forum; holding more assemblies and, finally, production of a final budget by the Municipal Budget Council, synthesising the demands made in the various meetings.

The result has been increased efficiency in public spending. Before the introduction of the 'direct democratic budgeting', the longest sewer line constructed was 17 kilometres in 1987. From 1990 to

Box 5.6. Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil

1994, this figure increased to 46 kilometres annually. As a result, from 1989 to 1996, the portion of the population served by sewers rose from 46% to 95%. During the three years previous to the PT administration, four kilometres of street were paved each year; after 1990, 20 kilometres of road were paved annually, and the quality of this paving rose dramatically. Extended favelas, which once had only mud roads and tracks, became accessible to buses, garbage trucks, ambulances and police cars. It is estimated that over 100,000 people, representing some 10% of the population, have attended a participatory budgeting meeting at least once in the first 14 years of this initiative.

Other municipal governments elected in several Brazilian cities in the 1990s have also introduced participatory budgets. These governments invest in projects that communities have identified as a priority. Given a citizen's right to have information and make demands of the state, government agencies have to consider the feasibility of any request. If a citizen request is judged infeasible, the state agency has to demonstrate why this is so.

In several municipalities, popular participation in this initiative has exceeded the government's expectations and has increased annually. Participatory budgeting has changed public spending priorities, reducing inequalities in places. The improvement of the quality of life in some of the municipalities has been evident, as it is the first time that the local government has taken into account the needs of the poorest sectors of the population. Participatory budgeting has not only meant a much greater involvement of citizens and community organisations in determining priorities but also a more transparent and accountable form of government.

(adapted from Abers, 1997 and Baiocchi, 2003).

Beyond elections: Participatory Budgeting

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Box 5.7. Towards more inclusive representation in local government

India's 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments mandated that one-third of the seats in local councils should be reserved for women, as well as one-third of the offices of the chairperson. Similar reservations have been made for lower castes and tribes. While making local councils more inclusive, the Constitution also gave them a great deal more power for planning for economic development and social justice in 29 separate areas of local development, including forests, education and irrigation. While the implementation of these new representation processes has been uneven, and while the local councils are not always granted adequate financing from central government, the inclusion of new members in the political processes has been vast. About one million women and some 600,000 lower caste or tribal members have now been elected to local government office.

(adapted from McGee et al., 2003)

itself opens new spaces for participation and citizen voice varies enormously, both according to the characteristics of the legal frameworks themselves, and the broader context of which they are a part. The actual implementation of these laws also varies due to differences in understanding, power relations, citizens' awareness, etc. For instance, whilst there are several examples of good partnerships between local governments and low-income households and their community organisations, the persistence of anti-poor[7] attitudes, policies and practices often mean that many local governments directly or indirectly harm citizens and the environment (see Table 5.2). Moreover, state-society synergies are prone to the intermediation of party politics and, at times, corruption.

5.3.2. Promoting collaboration between local and external civil society actors

The most common pathway to strengthening civil society involves collaboration between local and external actors within civil society itself. Typically this involves local, community-based organisations and national NGOs, academics and researchers. In the Philippines, for example, scientists and non-governmental organisations have collaborated with marginalised farmers to develop a farmer-led network of people's organisations working towards the sustainable management of biodiversity and local control over food systems (see Box 5.8).

There are indeed very many documented and anecdotal cases of such collaboration. The combined efforts of local and external civil society actors help to project marginalised and excluded people's concerns into policy processes from which they would otherwise be absent. A review of 12 federations of rural organisations primarily concerned with agricultural development and natural resource management suggests that the strongest

7 For instance anti-indigenous peoples, anti-marginal farmers, anti-nomadic pastoralists, anti-hawkers, anti-squatters, anti-migrants…

Table 5.2. Examples of supportive and unsupportive local government organisations

Local organisations that are supportive	Local organisations that are unsupportive
Schools and learning centres (pre-school, primary and secondary):	
Schools or centres for learning that are accessible to all and where costs are kept low (eg. fees, school uniforms, text books…); special provisions may be needed to help low-income families keep their children at school and to ensure gender equality.	Education departments that make very inadequate or no provision for schools in many areas. Schools with high user charges (formal or through informal payments requested). Imposition of culturally inappropriate schooling and curricula.
Primary health care centres, hospitals and emergency services:	
Available and easily accessible to all with strong outreach programmes for poorer areas, special programmes for vulnerable and at-risk groups and provision to keep down costs for users. Special outreach for all those with AIDS/HIV to provide counselling and ensure they are guaranteed the supply of needed drugs while avoiding stigmatising them.	Very inadequate or no provision for health care in many areas. Where provision is made, high user fees and locations and opening hours which make them difficult to use, especially for working populations. Staff that are antagonistic and judgmental of poorer groups or particular groups (for instance adolescents or particular ethnic groups). Inappropriate or no services for those with AIDS/HIV.
Water, sanitation, drainage, household waste disposal and energy providers:	
Service providers with a focus on ensuring adequate provision for all, with differential service standards and support for community-partnerships to ensure the poorer groups are reached where resources are insufficient for universal provision through conventional systems.	Service providers who have little or no interest in reaching poorer groups within political systems and who do not ensure that they do so. Provision for water and sanitation and, where needed, waste collection, often only available to richer groups in particular cities (and often provided at below cost). Refusal to provide any services in illegal urban settlements and most rural settlements.

Local government's interaction with poorer groups over access to natural resources (land, forest products, water, fisheries….)	
Local governments who support and engage with organisations representing smallholders, pastoralists, fishing communities and other groups with limited asset bases and often unclear rights to resources in order to help protect and enhance their access to resources and their capacity to manage these sustainably.	Local governments who primarily represent and serve the more powerful vested interests within their jurisdiction. Such local government approaches are often among the primary causes of poverty. Land registration systems that benefit the richer, more powerful groups. Governments who undermine the successful natural resource management systems of local populations.
Local government's interaction with small-scale producers	
Local governments who support associations of small producers, co-operatives of food processors, traders and builders and work with them to increase options for their members. They help to reduce the active and passive discrimination that small enterprises usually face in, for instance, getting government contracts and finance.	Local governments who work only with the associations developed by powerful groups which often exclude small-scale entrepreneurs and capture resources and markets.
Local government's role in monitoring social and environmental impacts of business activities	
Local government with an active programme to monitor social and environmental impacts of business (for instance in relation to minimum wages, occupational health and safety, child labour, environmental pollution) and work with local groups to develop the most appropriate local responses.	Local governments who do not act to prevent pollution and abuses of health and safety at work.
Local government planning, housing and land use management bodies	
Local government who actively work to ensure land for housing and food production is available at prices and in locations that serve low-income households wishing to build their own homes and produce part or all of their food; also those who support provision of secure tenure for those living in informal settlements.	Local governments that do nothing—or actively seek to keep poorer groups out of official land markets—for instance by maintaining inappropriate standards for minimum lot sizes and infrastructure and by having slow, costly, inefficient official procedures that have to be met to develop land for farming and housing, in both rural and urban areas.

Public, private or NGO providers of safety nets:	
Official provision of safety nets to help those who cannot work or those with inadequate incomes; or official support for NGO or community-provision of safety nets (including emergency credit) and community-based systems for guaranteeing food security.	No safety nets or supporting community-managed safety nets provided.
Public, private or NGO finance agencies:	
Provision of micro-finance programmes for individuals and support for community-finance for poorer households provided in ways that recognise the need to minimise debt burdens for poor households.	No provision of or support for micro-finance or community-finance appropriate to local needs and capacities to repay.
The police, the legal system and local government bodies involved in upholding the law:	
Supportive approaches that uphold the rule of law (including police services) and protect poorer groups' civil and political rights. They also seek to support poorer groups' livelihoods, to lessen discrimination and work towards greater gender equality. Often the police develop partnerships with traditional authorities and community organisations.	Non-supportive services which do not serve poorer groups (for instance no police service provided) and which may oppress them. In many urban areas, it is common for poorer groups living in illegal settlements to be evicted and for informal enterprises (for instance hawkers and sellers in informal markets) to be harassed. In many rural areas, government bodies and regulations undermine effective community-based natural resource management systems.
The local government systems for voting and accountability to citizens:	
Supportive systems create the right to and the possibility of voting for local government; and political and bureaucratic systems allow poorer groups to access senior politicians and civil servants to ensure their rights are respected. This includes protection from forced eviction and appropriate support in an emergency. Local government support for citizen-initiated referendums is also key here.	Unelected local government, or little or no attempt to ensure all adults are on the voter register and able to vote. In urban areas, migrants from rural areas and those living in illegal or unregistered settlements are denied the vote (for instance because they lack an official address). Politicians and the bureaucracy unresponsive to demands of poorer groups and of possibilities of working in partnership with them.

Local government relationship with organisations formed by smallholders, landless groups, 'slum' dwellers:	
Local governments who recognise the validity of these organisations and seek ways to work with them and support them. Other supportive approaches include an active programme to change local government structures and regulations that impede development, as well as, in most places, support for community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.	Local governments who oppose or ignore these organisations; local politicians who refuse to respond to and work with them unless they are allied politically to their party; lack of action to support community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.
Local government's definition and measurement of poverty and how local organisations act on this:	
Local processes that involve poor groups in defining and measuring poverty so that local poverty reduction and food security strategies reach all poor groups. Processes that involve poor groups in monitoring and reducing poverty.	Poverty defined and measured by a national government agency, usually based only on consumption levels and with poverty lines making little allowance for the cost of non-food necessities. Poverty measurements based on representative national samples so they have little or no relevant data for local organisations, including local governments in both rural and urban areas.

Adapted from Satterthwaite (2005)

Box 5.8. The MASIPAG experience

The MASIPAG Programme was born out of the Filipino farmers' bittersweet experiences with the Green Revolution. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Philippine government heavily promoted the adoption of high yielding rice varieties (HYVs) and high input agricultural production systems. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) played a key role in researching and marketing the new rice varieties. By 1970, 78% of the country's rice-lands were planted with HYVs and the initial results were encouraging as crop production soared.

However, by the late 1970s many farmers were seriously disenchanted with the Green Revolution. The problems they faced included the rising cost of seed and fertilisers; the increasing concentrations of chemicals needed to keep production up; deterioration of the seed; increasing pest problems; pesticide-induced poisoning and deteriorating human health; and environmental degradation. Over the next five years, a farmers' strategy emerged from various formal and informal consultations. The strategy proposed, amongst other things, an initiative to develop a national agricultural programme independent of foreign support; an agrarian reform programme to address the problems posed by large plantations of bananas, coconut and sugar cane; a review of the government/IRRI programme with options for nationalising its management or stopping its operation; and building a truly Filipino institution for rice research.

When their proposals were ignored by government, the farmers and their allies in civil society took the initiatives forward themselves. A group of progressive scientists initiated consultations with farmers in different parts of the country (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). This culminated in a national convention in mid-1985 dubbed the BIGAS Conference or *Bahanggunian Hinggil sa Isyu ng Bigas*. A year after that landmark gathering, a farmer-NGO-scientist partnership was formed and its first project aimed at breaking the control held over the rice industry by fertiliser and pesticide companies, multi-lateral rice research institutes and distribution cartels. The Multi-Sectoral Forum (MSF), a group of professors, scientists and researchers in the University of Philippines Los Baños, took the lead role in composing the technical pool of what was initially known as the farmer-scientist partnership. By 25 June 1987, the Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Agricultural Development, Inc. was ready to embark on what is now known popularly as The MASIPAG Project—*Magsasaka at Siyentipiko Para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura*.

Box 5.8. The MASIPAG experience

For the last 17 years, MASIPAG has been at the forefront of development struggles in the Philippines, pursuing, among other things, a holistic approach to development, community empowerment, and people's control over agricultural biodiversity as a contribution to the over-all effort of improving the quality of life of small farmers. MASIPAG's approach to strengthening civil society emphasises social transformation and builds on the following:

- **Bottom-up approach:** Any development programme must prioritise the expressed needs, problems and aspirations of the people themselves. The enhancement of knowledge and skills likewise starts with the people's actual capabilities.

- **Farmer-scientist partnership:** A genuine partnership between farmers and their organisations and scientists/researchers from the social and natural sciences attempts to implement a bottom-up approach to conservation and development. This is apparent in programme implementation and in all activities undertaken by the partnership. This relationship is further strengthened by NGOs from the religious sector and other local organisations of concerned individuals and professionals.

- **Farmer-led research and training:** On-farm research and training in different agro-environments and socio-cultural settings starts from what the farmers need to learn and develop. Farmers are active participants in plant breeding and in developing technologies such as ecological pest management and biodiversity-rich farming systems. They do the research and facilitate training.

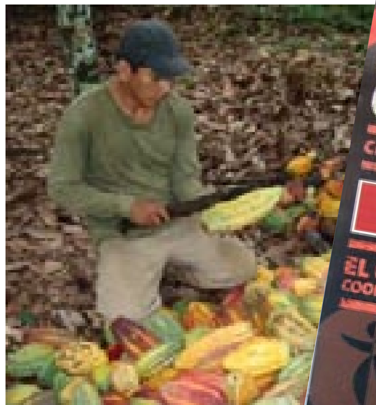
- **Farmer-to-farmer transfer:** Farmers are motivated by a sense of mission to reach out to other farmers. It is only through their united and concerted efforts that MASIPAG's vision will be realised. Co-operation, not competition, is a strong motivating force for farmers.

- **Advocacy towards genuine agrarian reform:** In the MASIPAG context, advocacy towards genuine agrarian reform seeks full ownership, management and control of the land by the farmers/peasants, and their access to basic support services necessary for sustainable agriculture and livelihoods.

Sources: adapted from Vicente, 1993; www.masipag.org; Bachmann *et al.*, 2009

organisations—those most able to project members' concerns in negotiations with government, donors and market actors—have each enjoyed an extended period of accompaniment from NGOs or religious leaders (Carroll and Bebbington, 2001). In most cases these external actors were involved in the creation and strengthening of these civil society organisations. Similarly, the emergence of vocal farmer movements in India has often involved non-farmer support or charismatic leadership from other parts of civil society (Brass, 1995).

All these studies show, however, that *how* such collaboration occurs is critical. The most fruitful collaborations are those that involve intensive, sensitive and respectful support in which external actors accompany, advise, suggest systems, etc., over a long period. External actors do not intervene in local decision-making, thus respecting and trusting local partners. For example, at the core of one of South America's most successful federation of co-operatives, El Ceibo, has been the longstanding provision of administrative and technical advice from certain volunteer services and donors (Bebbington, 1996). Likewise in Indonesia, the emancipatory values and enabling attitudes of external actors (trainers, NGO staff…) were key in facilitating citizen empowerment in Farmer Field Schools and in the wider peasant movement that now seeks to reclaim rights over land and other resources (see Box 5.9).



5.3.3. Independent pathways from below

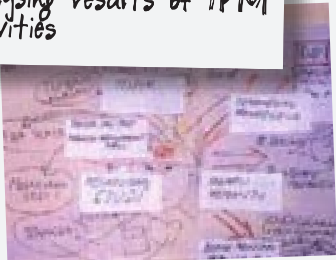
Strong and representative organisations can emerge from the bottom up. Local organisations with deep roots in traditional arrangements play various roles in local natural resource management and represent local voices to external agencies (Esman and Uphoff, 1984). In Sumatra, for instance, traditional adat (customary) village governance institutions which re-emerged after the New Order period have begun to deal with, among other things, tenure issues in the village and represent villager concerns to external actors. The long lasting traditional basis of many such organisations gives them indisputable legitimacy. Yet, these organisations are not always internally democratic and gender inclusive (see Box 4.23 and Chapter 6). They can be dominated by leaders in whom tradition or history vests authority, but such leaders may not espouse the equity gains recently brought about by historical processes and crystallised in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Old and new social movements provide a variety of examples of how civil society can get organised to reclaim power from below. These include attempts to transform governance structures through political participation, face-to-face discussions, and empowered federations that include people from various local places. Some of these movements have ties with religious beliefs (such as the liberation theology movements of Latin America or the Islamic Brotherhoods that acted as development agents in West Africa), ethnic, caste or kinship associations, and gender or age-based groups (Berhman, 1977; Levine, 1987; Ralston et al.,1983). Others are linked with co-operatives or even the management of natural resources, such as irrigation associations, fishers' associations and all sorts of other mutual aid groups. Most typically, these movements include unions, born to uplift the conditions of workers with

Farmers designing their local IPM programme

Mapping farm and village conditions

Analysing results of IPM activities


Farmers analysis of strengths and causes

Box 5.9. Community Integrated Pest Management in Indonesia

Integrated pest management (IPM) emerged in Indonesia in the late 1980s as a reaction to the environmental and social consequences of the Green Revolution model of agriculture. A co-operative programme between the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Indonesian Government had centred on Farmer Field Schools (FFS). These aim to make farmers experts in their own fields, enabling them to replace their reliance on external inputs, such as pesticides, with endogenous skills, knowledge and resources. Over one million rice paddy farmers and local resource users participated, and are still involved today, in this national programme.

Over time, the emphasis of the programme has shifted towards community organisation, community planning and integrated pest management (IPM), and has become known as community IPM (CIPM). Agro-ecosystem analysis and methods for group dynamics were initially used to enhance farmers' ecological literacy of plant-insect ecology. Farmer IPM trainers and researcher/scientists learned facilitation and presentation skills and how to make basic experimental designs to analyse and quantify ecological phenomena. Then, the principles of FFS slowly extended from rice to the management of natural resources; from IPM to plant breeding and participatory water management; and from technical domains to broader engagement with policy issues, advocacy, and local governance. The emancipatory values, empathy and social commitment of many of the external facilitators and trainers played a key role in this process of transformation and farmer empowerment.

The beneficial environmental impacts of the programme include significantly reduced pesticide use, increased biological and genetic diversity, and a more holistic approach by farmers to maintaining the complex ecological balance of rice agro-ecosystems. Learning to analyse policy, deal with high-level decision-makers in government and produce a newspaper with a print run of 10,000 have been key in enabling farmers and other natural resource users to become organisers, planners, advocates and policy activists. This deeply empowering dynamic led to a variety of campaign strategies, including a national IPM farmers' congress and the development of a charter for peasant rights. Such activities, together with the strengthened voice of farmers brought about by the community IPM process overall, created an upsurge of support for a national peasant movement in Indonesia.

Source: Fakih et al., 2003

common interests and concerns and, today, indigenous people's organisations active in national and international contexts.

For example, since 1994, the *Zapatista* Army of National Liberation (*Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional*, EZNL) has relied on forms of direct democracy to secure indigenous people's control over parts of the Chiapas, one of the poorest states of Mexico (see Box 5.10).

It is notable that the *Zapatistas* aspire to a new vision of a truly participatory politics: one that comes from the bottom up rather than the top down. The *Zapatistas* view Mexico's contemporary political system as inherently flawed due to what they claim is its purely representative nature and obvious disconnection from the people and their real needs. The EZLN, in contrast, reinforces the idea of participatory democracy by limiting public servants' terms to only two weeks each, having no visible organisation leaders and constantly consulting the people whom they are governing about major decisions, strategies and conceptual visions. As the *Zapatista* leader Marcos reiterates time and time again, *"my real commander is the people"*. In accordance with this principle, the *Zapatistas* are not a political party: they do

Box 5.10. Power from below in the Chiapas region of Mexico: the Zapatistas' indigenous people's movement

The *Zapatista* Army of National Liberation (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, EZLN) is an armed revolutionary group based in Chiapas, one of the poorest states of Mexico. Their social base is mostly indigenous, but they also have supporters in urban areas as well as an international web of support. The group takes its name from Emiliano Zapata, the most progressive proponent of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). The *Zapatistas* see themselves as his ideological heirs, and heirs to 500 years of indigenous resistance against imperialism.

The group was founded on November 17, 1983 by non-indigenous members of the FLN guerrilla group from Mexico's urban north and by indigenous inhabitants of the remote Las Cañadas/Selva Lacandona regions in eastern Chiapas. Over the years, the group slowly grew, building on social relations among the indigenous base and making use of an organisational infrastructure created by peasant organisations and the Catholic church.

Radio Zapatista 1min

Box 5.10 (contd)

The EZLN opposes corporate globalisation, or neoliberalism, arguing that it severely and negatively affects the peasant way of life of its indigenous support base. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an example of neoliberal policy. Apart from opening the Mexican market to cheap mass-produced US agricultural products it spells an end to Mexican crop subsidies and drastically reduces income and living standards of millions of Mexican farmers who cannot compete with the subsidised, artificially fertilised, mechanically harvested and genetically-modified imports from the United States. The signing of NAFTA also resulted in the removal of Article 27 Section VII in the Mexican Constitution, which previously had guaranteed land reparations to indigenous groups throughout Mexico.

Box 5.10. (contd)

The start of the 1994 *Zapatista* revolution happened to coincide with the coming into effect of NAFTA. Indigenous fighters wearing the black ski masks (*pasamontañas*) or red bandanas (*pallacates*) that have since become the group's trademark, some of them armed only with fake wooden rifles, took hold of five municipalities in Chiapas. There was token resistance in four municipalities and hundreds of casualties in and around the city of Ocosingo. The *Zapatistas* officially declared war against the Mexican government, and announced their plans to march towards Mexico City, the capital of Mexico, either defeating the Mexican army or allowing it to surrender and imposing a war tax on the cities that they conquered on the way. Short armed clashes in Chiapas ended on January 12 of 1994, with a ceasefire brokered by the Catholic diocese in San Cristóbal de las Casas under Bishop Samuel Ruiz. Government talks with the EZLN culminated in the signing of the San Andrés Accords (1996) that granted autonomy and special rights to the indigenous population. President Zedillo and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) however, ignored the agreements and instead increased military presence in the region. With the new government of President Fox in 2001, the *Zapatistas* marched on Mexico City to present their case to the Mexican Congress. Watered-down agreements were rejected by the rebels who proceeded to create 32 autonomous municipalities in Chiapas, thus partially implementing the agreements without government support but with some funding from international organisations.

Since December 1994, the *Zapatistas* had been gradually forming several autonomous municipalities, independent of the Mexican government. The *Zapatistas* claim that this silent period of their uprising has been an extremely rich effort, centred on creating their own 'Good Government' and autonomously organised lives. In particular they have established an autonomous education and healthcare system, with its own schools, hospitals and pharmacies, in places neglected by the Mexican government. By August 2003 these municipalities had evolved into local government juntas, implementing communitarian food-producing programs, health and school systems, supported in part by NGOs. Then several Good Government juntas formed by representatives of the autonomous municipalities and overseen by the EZLN were created as an upper level of government under the motto mandar obedeciendo (to command obeying). These renegade municipalities have been tolerated by the government despite being a state within the state. Although they do not tax the inhabitants, the Zapatistas decide, through assemblies, to work in community projects; when someone does not participate in these community efforts discussions are held and sometimes it is decided to reject the person

This sign reads, in Spanish: Top sign: "You are in *Zapatista* rebel territory. Here the people give the orders and the government obeys." Bottom sign: "North Zone. Council of Good Government. Trafficking in weapons, planting of drugs, drug use, intoxicating beverages, and illegal sales of wood are strictly prohibited. No to the destruction of nature." Federal Highway 307, Chiapas.

Box 5.10. (contd)

as a Zapatista. This implies, for example, that the person has to pay for medicine in Zapatista pharmacies (although not for medical care). Membership of the juntas rotates continuously, so that all members of the community have an opportunity to serve their community and also to prevent people become addicted or corrupted by power. There are currently 32 'rebel autonomous Zapatista municipalities' (independent Zapatista communities, or MAREZ, from their name in Spanish) in Chiapas.

The Zapatistas have survived because they were quick to adopt a new strategy and garner the support of Mexican and international civil society. They managed to achieve this by making use of the Internet to disseminate their communiqués and to enlist the support of NGOs and solidarity groups. As Gilbreth and Otero have remarked *"the EZNL established a cultural strategy that called into question the PRI's hegemony by reinterpreting national symbols and discourses in favour of an alternative transformative project….In Gramci's (1971) terms, the EZNL changed its strategy from a 'war of movements' challenging state power through the force of arms to a 'war of positions' contesting the moral and intellectual leadership of Mexico's ruling class"* (Gilbreth and Otero, 2001).

Outwardly, the *Zapatistas* portray themselves as part of the wider anti-globalisation, anti-neoliberalism social movement. However, for their indigenous base the *Zapatista* struggle is all about indigenous peoples' control over their own resources, particularly the land they live on; the right to govern themselves according to their own customs and institutions; and a dignified peace without government interference.

Sources: Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia http://wikipedia.org; Olesen, 2005.

not seek office throughout the state. They wish instead to re-conceptualise and deeply transform the entire Mexican political system rather than perpetuate it by attempting to gain power within its ranks. *"In the* Zapatista *idea, democracy is something that is constructed from below and with everyone, including with those who think differently than we do. Democracy is the exercise of power by the people all the time and in all places"* (EZNL Communiqué, 2000). Moreover, the EZNL's vision of radical democracy not only relates to politics in a narrow sense, but also to the economic realm:

> *"The Zapatistas' uprising contributed to an expansion of democracy in the domain of political society but also beyond it, into civil society and the cultural sphere. In addition, it has sought to expand democratisation to the economic realm in order to address the social costs of neo liberal market reforms….The exacerbation of socio-economic disparities following free market reforms provoked EZLN to question the relationship between economic marginalisation and political exclusion and the extent to which it hampers democracy" (Gilbreth and Otero, 2001:24-25).*

Similarly, in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, there is strong evidence that forms of direct democracy are emerging on a massive social scale. For example, in addition to the government-sponsored neighbourhood groups, many self-convoked 'citizen assemblies' have emerged in the poor *barrios* of Venezuela *"to talk about everything from neighborhood problems to national politics and to create local planning councils where municipal authorities will be required to share decision-making with community representatives"*. The popular aims of these assemblies were made clear by Carlos Carles, co-founder of Radio Perola, a community station that has become an axis of local activism in the *barrio* of Caricuao: *"We don't want a government, we want to govern. We want to decide what is done, when it's done and how it's done in our communities"* (Fotopoulos, 2009).

Independent pathways from below raise many challenges and risks, as demonstrated by moments in history when citizens have experimented with new forms of direct democracy and confederated power (Bookchin, 1996; Bookchin, 1998). For instance, the entire city of Paris was largely managed by and under the control of ordinary workers and citizens during the short-lived Paris Commune in France (Box 5.11). The communards not only declared Paris an autonomous city, they also sought to limit the power of the central state by recreating France as a federation of communes. Echoing the federalist ideas of Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1863), the Paris Commune's Manifesto to the French People of April 1871 called for:

> *The absolute autonomy of the Commune extended to all the localities of France, assuring to each its integral rights and to every Frenchman the full exercise of his aptitudes, as a man, a citizen, and a worker. The autonomy of the Commune will have for its limits only the equal autonomy of all other communities adhering to the contract; their association must assure the liberty of France.*[8]

Similarly, in Spain during the 1936-1939 civil war, the peasants of Andalusia and Aragon established communal systems of land tenure, in some cases abolishing the use of money for internal transactions, setting up free systems of production and distribution, and creating a decision-making procedure based on popular assemblies and direct, face-to-face democracy. In those parts of Spain not overrun by Franco's troops, about three million men, women and children were living in collectivised

8 It is noteworthy that although the Commune had an admired anarchist heroine, Louise Michel, its manifesto did not extend these rights to Frenchwomen.

…UBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

N° 10 LIBERTÉ - ÉGALITÉ - FRATERNITÉ N° 10

COMMUNE DE PARIS

Box 5.11. The Paris Commune in 19th century France

The Paris Commune was a short-lived experiment in working class rule. The French-Prussian war, which started in July 1870, rapidly ended with Paris under siege. The gap between rich and poor had widened. Food shortages and the continuous bombardments fuelled an already widespread discontent. In order to defend the city, many tens of thousands of Parisians became members of a militia known as the National Guard, which provided a fertile ground for the development of socialist ideas. On 18 March 1871, following the signature of a peace treaty with Bismarck, and worried about the radicalisation and increased authority of the Central Committee, the French government ordered regular troops to seize the cannons held by the National Guard. Many of the troops refused to obey orders and joined the National Guard in a fast spreading rebellion. The government fled to Versailles, leaving the Central Committee as the only effective government in Paris. The latter almost immediately abdicated its authority and called for a free election of a Communal Council to be held on 24th March.

The 92 elected members of the Council included skilled workers, several professionals (such as journalists, scientists and doctors), and a large number of political activists. All members were delegates rather than representatives of the people, recallable, and paid an equal wage. Whilst the majority were reformist Jacobins and Republicans, there was also a significant minority of socialist and anarchist followers of Proudhon. The Council proclaimed Paris autonomous and sought to recreate France as a federation of communes. Despite differences, the Communal Council agreed on policies for free education, and the right of employees to take over and run enterprises deserted by their owners. By May, 43 workplaces were managed by the workers themselves. In addition, many of the organisations set up to deal with the siege—most notably those providing food and nursing—continued to operate at the district level and constituted a large network of directly democratic neighbourhood assemblies.

Perhaps the most celebrated achievement of the Commune was the widespread co-operation of citizens and their demonstrated capacity to do without the central state. Ordinary citizens and workers managed all aspects of public life and assumed responsibilities normally reserved for state administrators, managers and professional specialists. Indeed, the Commune is regarded by many communists, socialists and anarchists as a model of a liberated society. Anarchists such as Bakunin (1871) and Kropotkin (1881) praised the spontaneous self organisation that led to its creation, even though they felt it did not go far enough in eliminating the state and encouraging workers and citizens' co-operatives.

But the Paris Commune and its achievements were short lived. On 21st May 1871, the government launched a counter-attack. After a week of vicious fighting and bloodshed, the last resistance fell and the government was restored. During this so called *semaine sanglante* (the bloody week) over 30,000 *communards* were killed, many more were shot in later reprisals, and 7,000 were exiled to New Caledonia.

Sources: Dittmar, 2006; Parker et al., 2006

communes over large areas. Observers at the time also reported on the collectivisation of factories in Catalonia and of the re-organisation of public services, transport, telephones, gas and electricity. A system of self-management for workers was set up in numerous cities, including Barcelona and Valencia. Factories, transport facilities, utilities, retail and wholesale enterprises were all taken over and administered by workers' committees and unions. In a remarkable social revolution, citizens learnt to deal with the organisation of complex industries and agriculture, including the co-ordination of economic exchanges, within a framework of free institutions and structures. Much can be learned from these experiments (Bookchin, 1994; Richards, 1995).

Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War

click here to view

alternative link to view in browser

5 mins

ANARCHISM IN ACTION DURING SPANISH CIVIL WAR

ON THE LAND 7 MILLION PEASANTS FORM COLLECTIVES

IN THE CITIES 3,000 WORKPLACES COLLECTIVISED

150,000 JOIN THE ANARCHIST MILITIAS TO FIGHT FASCISM

5.4. Methodologies for citizen participation in policy processes

In the 1990s, deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs, see Box 5.12) have been increasingly applied to the formulation of a wide range of policies in countries of both the North and the South (Pimbert and Wakeford, 2001). These approaches aim to allow greater deliberation of policy and practice through the inclusion of a variety of social actors in consultation, planning and decision-making.

Several procedures, techniques and methods can be used to engage diverse actors in deliberative processes, such as citizens' juries, scenario workshops, public hearings and visioning exercises and others illustrated in Box 5.13. These approaches and methods differ substantially in detail and have been applied to a wide range of issues and contexts. They all, however, seek to adopt to varying degrees the criteria of deliberation and inclusion listed in Box 5.12. When these methods and approaches are used well, they are part of a process in which professional knowledge, local knowledge, negotiation skills, research skills, and democratic values create new knowledge and promote social and ecological change.

There are several examples of the use of inclusive deliberative processes in the search for food sovereignty. A recent example from South India shows how citizens' juries and scenario workshop methods were combined in participatory assessments of policy futures for food, farming and environment (see Box 5.17; Pimbert and Wakeford, 2002). Similarly in January 2006, men and women farmers sat on a citizens' jury to decide whether or not GMOs should be introduced in the agriculture of Mali, in West Africa (Box 5.14).

But no matter how well they are used, participatory methods in and by themselves do not usually lead to policy changes. DIPs cannot be viewed as the magic bullet for enhancing public

taken from above). The experience of recent European public participation in the assessment of agricultural biotechnology illustrates the extent of this problem (Levidov, 2008).

As convenors, the organising agencies determine much of the style and content of the deliberative process through choice of objectives, methods and tools, the allocation of resources and the scale of operation, and the links to the wider policy processes. This is also true for DIPs that have been initiated by organisations outside government policy-making bodies. For example, there are several instances where deliberative and inclusive events such as consensus conferences, citizens' juries, and future search conferences ultimately functioned as a pathway of legitimisation for the very commercial or political interests that commissioned and informed the process in the first place (Glasner, 2001).

In the UK, government and private sector misuse of citizens' juries and similar processes has reached such heights that it has even prompted the leader of the Conservative Party to condemn *"the sham 'power to the people' of a one-day consultation or a citizens' jury…."* (Cameron, 2009). Real power in the hands of

Box 5.12. Some features of deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs)

Deliberation, which is defined as 'careful consideration' or 'the discussion of reasons for and against'. Deliberation is a common, if not inherent, component of all decision-making in democratic societies.

Inclusion, which is the action of involving others; an inclusive decision-making process is based on the active involvement of multiple social actors. It usually emphasises the participation of previously excluded citizens.

Social interaction. This normally incorporates face-to-face meetings between those involved.

There is a **dependence** on language through discussion and debate. This is usually in the form of verbal and visual constructions rather than written text.

A deliberative process assumes that, at least initially, there are different positions held by the participants and these views are all respected.

DIPs are designed to enable participants to **evaluate and re-evaluate** their positions in the light of different perspectives and new evidence.

The form of **negotiation** is often seen as containing value over and above the 'quality of the decisions' that emerge. Participants share a commitment to the resolution of problems through public reasoning and dialogue aimed at mutual understanding, even if consensus is not being achieved or even sought.

There is the recognition that, while the goal is usually to reach decisions, or at least positions upon which decisions can subsequently be taken, an **unhurried, reflective and reasonably open-ended discussion** is required for those decisions to be solidly grounded and 'owned'.

Adapted from Holmes and Scoones, 2000, and references therein

Box 5.13. A selection of methods for deliberative inclusive processes for policy-making

Citizens' juries

A citizens' jury is a group of citizens—chosen to be a fair representation of the local population—brought together to consider a particular issue set by the local authority. Citizens' juries receive evidence from expert witnesses and cross-questioning can occur. The process may last up to several days, at the end of which a report is drawn up setting out the views of the jury, including any differences in opinion. Juries' views are intended to inform government decision-making.

Consensus conferences

A panel of lay people who develop their understanding of technical or scientific issues in dialogue with experts. A panel of between 10-20 volunteers is recruited through advertisements. A steering committee is set up with members chosen by the sponsors. The panel's members attend two weekends where they are briefed on the subject and identify the questions they want to ask in the conference. The conference lasts for 3-4 days and gives the panel a chance to ask experts any outstanding questions. The conference is open to the public and the audience can also ask questions. The panel's members retire and independently of the steering committee prepare a report that sets out their views on the subject. Copies of the report are made available to the conference audience and panel members present key sections to the audience.

Visioning exercises and future search conferences

A range of methods (including focus groups) may be used within a visioning exercise, the purpose of which is to establish the kind of future participants would like to create. Visioning may be used to inform broad strategy for a locality, or may have a more specific focus (as in environmental consultations for Local Agenda 21).

Future search conferences usually involve a two – to four-day meeting where participants attempt to create a shared community vision of the future. They bring together those with the power to make decisions with those affected by decisions to try to agree on a plan of action. The process is managed by a steering group of local people representing key sections of the community. People who are recruited are asked to form several stakeholder groups within the conference, during which they move from reviewing the past to creating ideal future scenarios. Each of the stakeholder groups explains its vision and then a shared vision is explored. The conference ends with the development of action plans and policy recommendations. Self-selected action groups develop projects and commit themselves to action towards their vision.

Multi-criteria mapping

Multi-criteria mapping (MCM) attempts to combine the transparency of numerical approaches with the unconstrained framing of discursive deliberations. The technique involves a rather complex series of steps, including: deciding the subject area; defining the basic policy options; selecting the participants; conducting individual interviews (2-3 hour sessions where additional options are selected, evaluative criteria are defined, options are scored and relative weighting is given to criteria); having researchers carry out quantitative and qualitative analyses; providing feedback on preliminary results to the participants; developing deliberations among participants; and, after a final analysis, producing a report and policy recommendations.

Sources: For further information on DIPs see: Warner, 1997; Clarke, 1998; ESRC, 1998; Holland, 1998; Lowndes and Stoker, 1998; IPPR, 1999; Stirling and Maher, 1999; and del Valle, 1999.[1]

1 For a description of other methods that could be used for participatory policy-making see NEF, 1998.

Box 5.14. A citizens' space for democratic deliberation on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali

African countries are under increasing pressure from agribusiness to open their markets to genetically modified (GM) crops and industrialise their farming sector, but the continent remains divided in its response. South Africa and Burkina Faso have allowed the introduction of GMOs, but Benin has adopted a five year moratorium on introducing GMOs. In January 2006, the local government of Sikasso in Mali hosted the *Citizens' Space for Democratic Deliberation on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali.*

Organised in the second most economically important region of Mali, this ECID (l'*Espace Citoyen d'Interpellation Democratique*), or citizens' jury, was an unprecedented event in West Africa. The ECID was designed to allow ordinary farmers, both men and women, to make policy recommendations after considering expert evidence from different sources. Its main objective was to create a safe space for communication and action in which small, medium and large-scale farmers could:

- better understand GMOs, their risks and advantages
- confront different viewpoints and cross-examine expert witnesses, both in favour of and against GMOs and the industrialisation of agriculture
- formulate recommendations for policies on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali.

The citizens' jury on GMOs was organised by the government (the Regional Assembly) of Sikasso, with conceptual and methodological support from the *Réseau Interdisciplinaire Biosécurité* (RIBios) in Geneva and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London. A steering committee made up of representatives of 15 local, national and international institutions (government, civil society, research, farmer organisations, IIED…) was responsible for the design, organisation and facilitation of this deliberative process. The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) provided financial support for the overall process.

The citizens' jury focused on farmers/producers of the Sikasso region, which is home to about 1.6 million people. A region-wide selection process in seven districts of Sikasso identified 45 farmers as jurors. This selection was done with the support of local organisations and structures, on the basis of a pre-selection of 290 farmers from all districts. Clear and transparent criteria helped ensure a fair representation of the diverse types of farmers in the region (eg. small *versus* medium-sized farms, women *versus* men). The citizens' jury allowed the jurors to cross-examine 14

Box 5.14 (contd)

international witnesses representing a broad range of views on this controversial issue. These included biotech scientists, agencies such as the FAO and farmers from South Africa and India with first-hand experience of growing GM crops. In January 2006, the 45 farmers voted against introducing genetically-modified crops in Mali. The verdict included the following statements:

- As the number of small-scale producers in Mali represents 98% of the farming population and as crop genetic modification is only viable for large-scale producers—who represent only 2% of the farming population—this new technology should not be introduced.
- Research programmes must focus on improving and adding value to traditional crop varieties instead of working on transgenic crops.
- Considering that the technology of organic cotton cultivation is already used in Mali, and given that it is highly viable in terms of women's participation, availability of a market and minimum guaranteed price, the cultivation of Bt cotton should not be encouraged; instead it should be stopped.
- Women farmers should instead be given the technical training needed to produce organic sesame and cotton.
- Farmers should be directly involved in agricultural research. Research on GMOs should never be carried out in the name of Malian farmers without their prior informed consent.
- Strategies are needed to promote organic farming, which is based on local resources and local produce.

Birama Kone, a small farmer on the jury, said: *"GM crops are associated with the kind of farming that marginalises the mutual help and co-operation among farmers and our social and cultural life."*

This unique event for West Africa demonstrated that citizens' juries can provide a safe space for farmers to reach an informed, evidence-based view on complicated and often controversial issues, which can then be amplified to policy-makers. In this instance, seven local radio stations ensured that the entire deliberative process—cross-examination of expert evidence, deliberations, the jurors' verdict and recommendations—was

Box 5.14 (contd)

broadcast live throughout the seven districts that make up the Sikasso region. L'ECID very clearly demonstrated the ability of citizens to contribute to policy-making processes and, with the help of radio and media, it also helped deepen the debate on technological choices, risks and the future of food and farming throughout Malian society.

This citizens' jury on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali has had several immediate and longer term impacts:

- Delaying the approval of national legislation needed for the introduction of GM crops in Mali. This is a direct result of this citizens' jury's recommendations. Similarly, a key political debate in June 2006 on GMOs and the future of Malian agriculture was held in the National Assembly and is widely seen as a direct outcome of the citizens' jury process.

- Opening up a safe space for communication and action, which allowed a cross-fertilisation of ideas to take place, and for hitherto marginalised knowledge systems to be recognised, respected and used. It succeeded in firstly increasing the awareness of the issue amongst the public; secondly, in strengthening social movements engaged in the struggle against the march of the biotech industry; and thirdly in improving the political capabilities of the farmers involved in the process.

- Cultural impact and enhanced social awareness of GMO-related issues *and* the value of democratic deliberation in safe spaces for policy-making. These cultural gains and shifts have been greatly facilitated through a film on the process and outcomes of this citizens' jury shown on some national television channels in African countries (Burkina Faso, Mali…) and in international civil society networks. The film *Paroles de Paysans* is now being shown throughout the world in several languages: Bambara, French, Spanish and English. And, at the time of writing, Arabic and German translations of this film are being prepared.

Though the jurors' decision is not binding, it is expected to influence the future direction of agricultural policy in Mali and across the region where most people rely on subsistence farming.

Box 5.14 (contd)

Such initiatives are about making the agriculture agenda more directly responsive to people's priorities and choices. The fact that Mali has a strong farmers' movement operating in a partly decentralised system of governance, a relatively free media, and a recent history of political mobilisation, suggests that the opportunities for an open debate on the use of GM crops was more likely in Mali than in many other countries in West Africa. In this regard the decentralisation process is important in nurturing a culture of localised decision-making and in strengthening the belief that decisions of significant importance to regional economic stability are not solely the preserve of the National Assembly.

Overall, l'ECID has succeeded in politicising an issue of global importance and has allowed marginalised voices to question the dominant discourse in favour of GM crops and the industrialisation of agriculture. However, the powerful nature of some of the global actors involved (eg. USAID, the World Bank, Monsanto and Syngenta) means that such actors are increasingly looking for new ways to avoid the constraints of national legislation, for example by supporting high level meetings and encouraging country governments to harmonise biosafety policies and intellectual property right laws for the entire West Afican region.

Source: http://www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/food-and-agriculture/deliberative-democracy-citizens-juries ; La Revue Durable, 2006; http://www.biosafetyafrica.net; *Paroles de Paysans* by Idriss Diabate, co-produced by IIED-BEDE and Dja Comm, 2007; Pimbert et al., 2009.

local people depends on them being able to initiate popular votes on specific issues. For example, by *"giving people the power to instigate referendums on local issues – including council tax rises. If there's a local consensus that a tax increase is unnecessary, people will be able to club together and vote it down"* (Cameron, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2009).

These comments are a reminder that a radical power shift depends on putting more political responsibility into the hands of citizens and local communities. They also highlight the need to combine methods for citizen deliberation and inclusion with other forms of direct democracy such as referenda. A referendum is a direct vote in which an entire electorate or body of citizens is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal. This may result in the adoption of a new policy, law or constitution. A referendum is usually initiated either by a legislature or by citizens themselves by means of a petition. The process of initiating a referendum by petition is known as the popular or citizen's initiative.[9]

In policy spaces created from below, the debate about wider questions of ethics, morality and values and their links with matters of justice and rights, is a striking feature. These DIPs organised by civil society organisations, NGOs and 'radicalised professionals' (Cunningham-Burley, 2001; Pimbert and Gujja, 1997; Sclove, 2001; Satya Murty and Wakeford, 2001) extend the frame of decision-making, although they often have relatively weak links with the formal policy process. In contrast with invited spaces from above, citizen or popular spaces are created by people who come together to create arenas over which they have more control, for example indigenous peoples' platforms for negotiation and collective action, or do-it-yourself citizens'

9 For a comprehensive reference guide to more than 200 years of experience with the initiative and referendum process in Europe, see Kaufmann and Waters (2004).

juries that frame alternative policies. While there are notable exceptions, popular spaces are usually arenas within which, and from which, ordinary citizens can gain the confidence to use their voice, analyse, deliberate, frame alternatives and action, mobilise, build alliances and act.

Although different from popular or citizen spaces, there are some examples of spaces for participation opened up by government that have been genuinely empowering for citizens. These 'invited spaces from above' have usually been created by local governments in response to citizens' expressed needs or popular demand. The citizens' jury on GMOs and the future of farming which was organised in Mali by the local government of Sikasso, l'Assemblee Regionale, is particularly noteworthy in this context (Box 5.14).

In all cases, creating a space for more inclusive deliberation, either from above or from below, is an avenue towards potentially more effective, equitable and informed decision-making. As such, these methodologies and processes for inclusive deliberation merit greater attention from social movements and citizens working for food sovereignty and democratic governance. However, attempts to link DIPs with the broader policy process are more successful when due attention is given to issues of quality of information, as well as to process validity, social inclusion, face-to-face deliberation, credibility and trustworthiness. In this regard the art of politics by, with and for citizens needs to be cultivated far more than is the case today.

5.5 Nurturing citizenship

Politics are too important to be left to professionals: they must become the domain of amateurs—of ordinary citizens. Food sovereignty implies greater citizen participation and more direct forms of democracy in the governance of food systems. It assumes that every citizen is competent and reasonable enough to participate in democratic politics. This calls for the development of a different kind of character from that of passive taxpayers and voters. With training and experience citizens can learn to deliberate, make decisions, and implement their choices responsibly. However, like any form of civilised behaviour, these practices and virtues do not arise spontaneously; they have to be consciously nurtured and are the result of careful political education, which includes character formation. The Athenians called this education paideia: the sustained and intentional cultivation of the civic and ethical qualities necessary for citizenship.

> *Only the education (*paideia*) of the citizens as citizens can give valuable, substantive content to the 'public space'. This* paideia *is not primarily a matter of books and academic credits. First and foremost, it involves becoming conscious that the* polis *is also oneself and that its fate also depends upon one's mind, behaviour, and decisions; in other words, it is participation in political life (Castoriadis, 1991).*

The Athenians thus saw citizenship as a process *"involving the social and self formation of people into active participants in the management of their communities"* (Bookchin, 1995). In this civic process, politics were *"not only concerned with administering the affairs of the polis but with also educating the citizen as a public being who developed the competence to act in the public interest"* (Bookchin, 1995).

This careful nurturing of active citizenship needs to be at the heart of the project of food sovereignty. It is also the bedrock of a truly autonomous society: *"a society that not only knows explicitly that it has created its own laws but has instituted itself so as to free its radical imaginary and enable itself to alter its institutions through collective, self-reflective, and deliberate activity."* (Castoriadis, 1997). And the project of an autonomous society becomes meaningless if it is not, at the same time, the project of bringing forth autonomous individuals, and *vice versa* (Castoriadis, 1997).

In his discussion of the institutional preconditions of a democratic education, Fotopoulos (2003) argues that *paideia* involves the specific aims of civic schooling as well as personal training (see Box 5.15).

> "Paideia *as* civic schooling *involves the development of citizens' self-activity by using their very self-activity as a means of internalising the democratic institutions and the values consistent with them. The aim therefore is to create responsible individuals that have internalized both the necessity of laws and the possibility of putting the laws into question, i.e. individuals capable of interrogation, reflectiveness, and deliberation. This process should start from an early age through the creation of educational public spaces that will have nothing to do with present schools……..* Paideia *as* personal training *involves the development of the capacity to learn rather than to teach particular things, so that individuals become autonomous, that is, capable of self-reflective activity and deliberation. A process of conveying knowledge is of course also involved but this assumes more the form of involvement in actual life and the multitude of human activities related to it, as well as a guided tour to scientific, industrial and practical knowledge rather than teaching, as it is simply a step in the process of developing the child's capacities for learning, discovering, and inventing" (Fotopoulos, 2003, my emphasis).*

4 mins

Chomsky: what makes things change

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Paideia is thus an all-round civic education that involves a life-long process of character development and a participatory kind of active citizenship—a citizenship in which political activity is not seen as a means to an end but an end in itself.

Local organisations (see chapter 4) play a key role here, –

> *"particularly those forms of association where people meet face to face, identify their common problems, and solve them through mutual aid and volunteer community service….Community gardens, block clubs, land trusts, housing cooperatives, parent run day-care centres, barter networks, alternative schools, consumer and producer cooperatives, community theatres, study groups, neighbourhood newspapers, public access televisions – all these meet immediate and usually neglected community needs. But they also serve, to greater or lesser degrees, as*

Box 5.15. Learning and living democracy in education

Paideia in a democratic society should play the double role of civic schooling and personal training. These two fundamental roles of paideia have some definite practical implications for the form and content of the education process:

- *Public spaces in education. The education process should create new public spaces in which students can experience and live democracy by running the educational process, as far as it affects them. This will involve educational assemblies for each area of study (general knowledge and specific areas of study/training), under the general guidance of citizens' assemblies. Students in these assemblies will decide collectively, on an equal basis with their educators, the curriculum, the place and form of education, training and so on.*
- *Free generalised and integral education for life. The education process for all children should start at an early age and continue for life. The process should not distinguish in principle between intellectual and manual work; both should enjoy equal social status. But this should not prevent an individual citizen from concentrating his/her training in a particular area of intellectual or manual work at some stage in his/her life. However, all citizens should be able to do both types of work, so that they can effectively participate in the collective effort to meet the basic needs of the community.*
- *Individual and social autonomy. The education methods used and the content of education itself should aim to promote freedom in the sense of individual and social autonomy, both in the everyday educational practice, as well as in the knowledge transmitted to students. The former should involve non-hierarchical relations in education, whereas the latter should involve a systematic effort to create free self-reflective minds which reject dogma and closed systems of thought.*
- *Non-hierarchical relations. Paideia is a two-way process: students learn from educators and vice versa. Educators do not enjoy any hierarchical status from their position and therefore their 'authority' over students is based on temporary differences in knowledge. The authority of a person in his/her activity is confirmed by his/her knowledge and experience rather than by grades and diplomas.*
- *Balance between science and aesthetic sensibility. Students should be encouraged to appreciate all forms of art and to be actively involved in practising creative art in all areas of study. The development of balanced personalities depends on achieving a meaningful balance between scientific and practical knowledge on the one hand, and aesthetic sensibility and creativity on the other.*

Source: Fotopolos, 2003.

schools for democratic citizenship. Through participation in such efforts we can become more socially responsible and more skilled at democratically discussing and deciding important social questions" (Bookchin, 1991).

The implementation of food sovereignty depends on such an ongoing process of political education and careful cultivation of civic qualities and attitudes. Within this civic education, the areas highlighted below require particular emphasis.

5.5.1. Learning to engage in high quality processes of deliberation and inclusion

Deliberative skills need to be carefully cultivated among food providers and other citizens. Learning *how* to interrogate evidence, deliberate with others, critically reflect, and make decisions all need be encouraged as part of a living direct democracy. In this regard, deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs) offer many practical insights into how citizens might better engage in democratic debate and decision-making (see Box 5.12).

5.5.2. Ensuring safeguards for quality and validity

A central challenge for the food sovereignty movement is to ensure the quality and validity of the knowledge and actions generated by citizen deliberations.[10] In this light, it may be more realistic and honest to recognise from the outset that the subjectivity and worldview of convenors of DIPs and key actors can always influence actions as well as interpretations of events and outcomes. For this reason, it is important to build safeguards into the deliberative process to ensure it is broadly credible, trustworthy, fair and not captured by any interest group or perspective. Several criteria and indicators of public acceptance and effectiveness of process can be useful in this regard and are listed in Box 5.16.

10 This section draws extensively on Pimbert and Wakeford (2003).

Criteria of validity and quality will obviously differ depending on the context, the methods used (see for instance Box 5.13) and approach chosen to link DIPs with policy processes.

When assessing the quality of a deliberative process, however, the emphasis should be on methodological rigour rather than aiming to satisfy naïve notions of 'objective truth'. A prime concern should be on meeting safeguards and quality criteria. Some of these safeguard and quality criteria that are likely to be appropriate in many situations include:

- Diverse oversight and transparency
- Representation and inclusion
- Open framing and facilitation
- Creation of a safe communicative space
- Emergence of a wide community of inquiry and empowerment

These are each discussed in turn below.

Diverse oversight and transparency

Many of the guidelines for DIPs, such as those laid down by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR, 1994; Lowndes and Stoker, 1998), include provision for the process to be overseen by a panel of independent observers. The inclusion of social actors with a diverse range of interests on this panel can be an important means of ensuring the methodology is not captured by a group with a particular perspective or vested interest. However, for this purpose, in most DIPs it is crucially important to widen the concept of social actor to include those marginalised by prevailing socio-economic forces. Only if the oversight body strikes a balance between those whose human rights are at risk

Box 5.16. Criteria and safeguards for public acceptance and effectiveness of a deliberative and inclusive process

Criteria fostering the acceptance of a DIP and/or decision by citizens and the wider public

- ***Representativeness:*** representative sample of the affected population
- ***Independence:*** process conducted in an independent, unbiased way
- ***Early involvement:*** increases sense of ownership and role at the stage when value judgements are important
- ***Transparency:*** the public able to see progress and how decisions are made
- ***Influence:*** visible impact on policy

Criteria for effective process (effective design and implementation of a DIP process)

- ***Resource accessibility:*** access to appropriate resources (information, time, experts, materials) enables participants to engage and carry out their roles effectively
- ***Clear and well-defined methodological design:*** the scope of the exercise, its procedures and the expected outcomes are defined at the outset
- ***Structured decision-making:*** debate is enabled over the underlying assumptions, how the decisions are made and the extent to which they are publicly supported
- ***Cost-effectiveness:*** the investment (time and money) in the process is appropriate given the scale and importance of the decisions.

(adapted from Rowe and Frewer, 2000)

and those with power, will it be likely to produce a process that is both fair, and perceived to be fair.

The transparency of participatory forms of policy-making can be further enhanced by involving social actors who are able to guarantee credibility and trustworthiness. For example, in the citizens' jury/scenario workshop described in Box 4.19, the organisers built several layers of diverse oversight and transparency into their methodological design (see Box 5.17).

It is noteworthy that when the media is invited to observe and document the process there is usually greater scope for linking local voices into national and international policy processes.

Related to issues of balanced oversight, the safeguard of diverse controls can also be further ensured by relying on several sources of funding. Funding sources with vested interests in conflicting visions and policy choices should be involved in DIPs for the sake of pluralism.

Box 5.17. Diverse oversight and transparency in the participatory assessments of food policy futures for Andhra Pradesh, India

The State Government of Andhra Pradesh visualises a radical transformation in the way food is produced, distributed and marketed 20 years from now. As a result, all the proposals for the future of food, farming, rural development and environment made in the government's Vision 2020 are controversial, particularly the promotion of genetically modified (GM) crops and the displacement of around 20 million rural people. Two counter-visions were explored in a citizens' jury/scenario workshop known as *Prajateerpu* (see Box 4.19). These visions also also contained controversial elements. It was therefore critical that this deliberative process was transparent and under the control of representatives of organisations with different vested interests and social aims.

Four primary safeguard mechanisms were built into the Prajateerpu process:

The Oversight Panel. The panel had an explicit mandate to assess the fairness, pluralism and credibility of *Prajateerpu*. The Oversight Panel's composition was sufficiently diverse to represent a broad spectrum of interests. Chaired by a retired Chief Justice from the Supreme Court of India, the panel critically oversaw the entire process, checking for possible bias and inconsistencies. It included representatives of the international donor community, civil society organisations and indigenous peoples. The members of the Oversight Panel shared their observations with the co-ordinating team at the end of each day of the jury's deliberations, ensuring that all parts of the process were agreed by individuals with a diverse range of perspectives. The panel also made an overall evaluation of *Prajateerpu* after the formal closure of the event.

13 mins

Prajateerpu

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Box 5.17. Diverse oversight and transparency in the participatory assessments of food policy futures for Andhra Pradesh, India

The media observers and reporters. Members of the press (audio-visual and written) were invited to document the hearings and outcomes of *Prajateerpu*. The following national newspapers sent their correspondents to observe and report on different moments of the deliberative process: *The Indian Express*, *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and *The Deccan Chronicle*. A variety of state newspapers written in Telegu also sent their correspondents. Reporters and camera crews from two Indian television news channels (Star News and Doordashan) were present, with Doordashan returning three times to film and interview participants at the beginning, middle and end of the event. The semi-continuous presence of the press ensured another level of control and vetting of the jury process. The wide reporting of the event in the national media highlighted the credibility and impartiality of the deliberations that led to the jury's verdict. Interestingly, a small minority of journalists was eager to demonstrate that jurors had been briefed and tutored into stating pre-formed positions. In interviews with these journalists, however, jurors strongly dismissed these doubts and implicit accusations. In the words of one juror, "These are life and death matters to us. We will not let anyone tell us what we should say."

The silent observers. Several other observers were invited to witness the jury process on the understanding that they should remain silent during the specialist presentations and the deliberations of the jury. These observers included other farmers from Andhra Pradesh, NGO representatives, agricultural researchers and planners, trade union representatives and corporate sector representatives. These observers were from both India and Europe. Most of them stayed only two to three days but some witnessed the whole event. All formed opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the process and were able to communicate their views to members of the Oversight Panel, the co-ordinating team and the press. The presence of the silent observers further enhanced the transparency of *Prajateerpu*.

The video archives. The entire citizens' jury/scenario workshop, along with interviews of various participants, was recorded on digital video by a team from the Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts, Fine Arts and Communication of the University of Hyderabad. These comprehensive video archives were compiled to:

- provide a clear and accurate record of the event, including the location, the jury setting, the participants, the nature and quality of the debates, the process and its outcomes; and
- allow any party or external agency to learn from this experience or check for shortfalls in balance, fairness or failings in the deliberative process.

Two duplicate sets of 26 videotapes were prepared along with a detailed index of the video archives and English/Telegu transcripts for *Prajateerpu*. The first set of duplicate tapes was left in the custody of the International Institute for Environment and Development, London (UK) and the second with The University of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh (India).

Diverse control and transparency were thus embedded in the very design of *Prajateerpu*. Moreover, control and scrutiny over the dynamics of *Prajateerpu* took place in real time and *in situ*, allowing many different participants to validate their own knowledge, and contest the validity of that of others in an

Box 5.17. Diverse oversight and transparency in the participatory assessments of food policy futures for Andhra Pradesh, India

open deliberative arena. For example, the panel of independent observers acted as an extended peer community that was able to directly witness the dynamics of knowledge production, action and empowerment. The Oversight Panel, which included representatives of marginalised communities and more powerful institutions, had absolute power to decide which methods and processes (representativeness of jury, video scenarios, balance of witnesses, quality of facilitation) were appropriate and what constituted valid knowledge in that context. Through this innovation the organisers sought to decentralise and democratise the knowledge validation process as well as ensure that the Prajateerpu's outputs were as legitimate and representative as possible.

Source: adapted from Pimbert and Wakeford, 2002; Pimbert and Wakeford, 2003. www.prajateerpu.org

Representation and inclusion

Who is allowed to take part and other issues of representation are crucial for the credibility of a deliberative process. DIPs should engage a representative sample of the population affected by a particular policy. However, in many cases true representation may require giving more importance to groups of social actors with particular life experiences or characteristics such as gender, race, age, wealth and type of livelihood-resource base. Positive discrimination (affirmative action) may be needed to include marginalised groups who have been historically excluded from policy-making and the control of regulative institutions. Where policies have wider social impacts it is usually necessary to include representatives from key sectors (industry, government, civil society organisations, farmer trade unions, academic institutions…) so that they can feed their views into the process.

Convenors and facilitators will always need to exercise their best judgement in the act of including some parties in the processes of consideration, decision and implementation (inclusion). Inclusion goes beyond the question of 'who is allowed to participate' to issues of recognising knowledge and different ways of knowing. This is particularly important in deliberations involving both citizens and experts with scientific or other specialist knowledge. For example, several consensus conferences and citizens' juries on the risks of new technologies have demonstrated the competence with which citizens can discuss highly technical issues to which they had no previous exposure. They achieved this by carefully eliciting from each specialist witness the information relevant to their livelihoods. This usually meant that the questions of ordinary citizens, farmers and other food providers had a more holistic quality than the arguments presented by some subject matter specialists. Different ways of knowing were included in

the process as jurors asked questions framed from their own life experience and livelihood contexts.

The extent to which citizens are allowed to interrogate their sources of information, rather than being merely the passive recipients of written briefings and specialist testimonies, is a good indicator of how inclusive a process is in recognising the validity of different knowledge systems.

Open framing and facilitation

The way discussions are framed by information, witnesses or questions can have an important influence on the extent to which citizens have the opportunity to develop their own policy scenarios and visions for the future. The extent to which assumptions behind issues can be challenged and new questions asked in DIPs is highly dependent on the choice of subject area or/and the particular way a problem is defined. The initial choice of problems and definition of criteria drive the end results. For example it is noteworthy that assessments of GMOs in the UK were strongly influenced by each participant's early framing of the debate in multiple criteria mapping exercises (Stirling, 2001). Many criteria chosen by the participants lay outside the scope of official risk assessments and the whole range of these criteria was not explicitly included in the formal evaluation process of GMOs in the UK. The sensitivity of the early framing of issues and questions in DIPs emphasises the importance of ensuring that the entire spectrum of values and interests are represented. The extent to which convenors and organising agencies allow for flexible and open-ended framing and definition of boundaries may ultimately prove a good indicator of their commitment to democratic values. It is good practice for the framing of discussions and scope of recommendations to be set by citizens engaged in DIPs rather than be constrained by a question dictated to them by a particular social actor or interest group. The degree to which convenors let go of their power over framing the terms of debate may actually determine whether ordinary people will be able to bring about change or whether DIPs will be merely used to legitimise established power structures and their favoured policy.

Creation of a safe communicative space

A wide range of different experiences with DIPs have demonstrated the importance of safe communicative spaces. These are carefully thought-out environments of mutual support and empathy in which people who might otherwise feel threatened by sharing their knowledge and experience with others, can feel free to express themselves. Safe communicative spaces are needed for the confrontation of perspectives from the social and natural sciences as well as the knowledge of local resource users, for social actors to negotiate and develop policy futures. The notion of safe communicative spaces recognises that there are differently situated forms of knowledge about livelihoods and the environment, and each is partial and incomplete. Participatory learning, inclusion, dialogue and careful deliberation are needed to bring these multiple and separate realities together, combining the strengths of outsiders' and local peoples' knowledge. Convenors of DIPs that explicitly seek to link local voices with policy change will need to provide safe spaces at a number of different levels.

Thus there will often be a need to move beyond the uncritical support for assembly-style spaces, where populist attitudes hide power differences and the hidden agendas of the powerful. This is important because the possibility that hierarchy and self censorship might constrain deliberation and inclusion is always present in any space where people come together. Deliberation is, after all, not only governed by rational assessment and dialogue about technical or political options. Feelings like anger, powerlessness, shyness, admiration, fear—all the emotional side of human beings—are equally important. Like power, emotions

The Raita Teerpu. A citizens’ jury on the governance of agricultural research December 2009, Fireflies Ashram, Karnataka, India

Photo credits: Peter Reason. For more information see: www.raitateerpu.com

The Raita Teerpu. A citizens' jury on the governance of agricultural research December 2009, Fireflies Ashram, Karnataka, India

Photo credits: Peter Reason. For more information see: www.raitateerpu.com

are essentially relational phenomena. Personal and collective emotions, the self confidence of individual actors and the level of trust between actors, all matter in spaces set up for deliberations on policy change. At a fundamental level, trust and emotions that underlie the self deeply influence the forms and outcomes of deliberations. Communicative spaces for participation, therefore, need to provide a sense of stability and security so that social actors can open up and engage in new struggles for self respect and self esteem (Hoggett, 2000). Otherwise learning, understanding and acting for policy change will probably not take place.

Emergence of a wide community of inquiry and empowerment

The quality of a process is apparent when there is strong evidence that it has catalysed and informed a broad community of inquiry, with possibly enduring consequences for several of the actors involved. This outcome is often dependent on a methodological design that explicitly links citizens involved in the DIPs to wider policy networks and the dynamics of policy changes.

Whilst there are no universally valid recipes for this, experience suggests that reversing dominant trends in policy processes can help engage a wider community of actors for change. Particularly successful reversals from normal roles and locations for empowerment include: a) putting the perceptions, priorities and judgement of resource users and other marginalised citizens centre stage and using appropriate methodologies for DIPs; b) holding the process in a rural or appropriate local urban setting that is familiar to those citizens and resource users more directly affected by the policies; c) getting government bureaucrats, scientists and other specialist witnesses to travel to resource users, farmers and other citizens in order to present evidence on the pros and cons of different choices, technologies, policies; d) using television and video technology to ensure transparency and free circulation of information on the process and the outcomes, both nationally and internationally, and e) going beyond the idea of advocating on behalf of the marginalised to the practice of enabling the marginalised to speak for themselves (Pimbert et al., 2003; Wakeford and Pimbert, 2004; Pettit and Musyoki, 2004).

As a general rule, once people involved in DIPs reach their conclusions it is essential that appropriate intermediary individuals and channels link them with those with the power to create change (e.g., farmer federations, indigenous people's organisations, advocacy NGOs…). Immediate outcomes of DIPs can be more effective in policy change when they are actively used by civil society actors to influence advisory committees, technical bodies and civil servants connected to policy-making. One option is for groups of actors to use DIPs, when appropriate, as part of a larger set of activities aimed at

influencing policy from below: campaigns, hidden resistance or direct civil action. Another option is to combine formal bodies of representative democracy with the more bottom-up deliberative and inclusive methods and processes. This approach may be particularly effective at the level of local and municipal governments, where citizen participation and government accountability can be mutually reinforcing and supportive.

All of these criteria and safeguards can help ensure the credibility, efficacy and fairness of DIPs used for policy-making. However, ethics, values and intentionality will always remain fundamental to issues of quality and validity. Simply put, participatory methods for policy change, such as DIPs, can be used either for instrumental ends or for genuine citizen empowerment. Implicit or explicit intentions and underlying values always inform participation, the framing of issues, the form of any initiative and its operating dynamics. For example, a commitment to democratic values is likely to be expressed by the adoption of design principles similar to those listed in Box 5.18.

5.6. Learning to expand information democracy and autonomous media

If, as in the words of Thomas Jefferson, *"information is the currency of democracy"*, democracy is indeed still in its infancy. Unequal relations built into information and communication systems pose a fundamental problem for democracy. This problem was highlighted by UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems in its 1980 report, *Many Voices, One World*:

> *"One barrier (to the democratisation of communication) that exists almost everywhere is the structure of vertical communication, where the flow runs from top to bottom, where the few talk to the many about the needs and*

Box 5.18. Broad principles for deliberative and inclusive processes related to policy development

✓ Participants, not those organising the process, frame and set terms of reference for the whole exercise.

✓ The group organising, or in overall control of, the process is broad based, including social actors with different interests on the subject being discussed.

✓ There are safe spaces for participants (usually non-specialist) to engage in a mutually educative manner with specialists.

✓ There is full transparency about the activities carried out within the process to those outside it.

✓ A diversity of information sources is available to participants.

✓ Those without a voice in policy-making can use the process as a tool for positive change.

✓ The process contains safeguards to prevent policy-makers from using it to legitimise existing assumptions or policies.

✓ All groups involved in the process should have sufficient room for learning, development and change.

✓ There is an audit trail that can explain whether policies were changed as a result of the process, what was taken into account, what criteria were applied when weighing up the evidence from the process and therefore how the views of those involved in the participatory process made a difference to the decision.

(adapted from Peals, 2003; Wakeford and Pimbert, 2003)

problems of the many from the standpoint of the few…" (UNESCO, 1980).

In the three decades that have followed the publication of this UNESCO report, the political economy of communication and information has been marked by more concentration, commodification and homogenisation (Achbar and Wintonick, 2009; Chomsky, 2000; Ramonet, 2001 and 2002). The commercial world has increasingly replaced the public realm and the citizen has been redefined as a consumer. New media entrepreneurs and conglomerates now have a type of power of which politicians can only dream. And the media industry plays a key role in reinforcing the hegemony of powerful states and transnational corporations (Chomsky, 2002 and 2009). As the news coverage of the Palestine-Israel conflict clearly shows, the global reach of mainstream media can effectively silence alternative accounts of history, including people's evidence for Israel's war crimes against children and women, as well as proof of the deliberate destruction of food producing ecosystems in Gaza and the West Bank (Box 5.19).

5 mins

The myth of the liberal media

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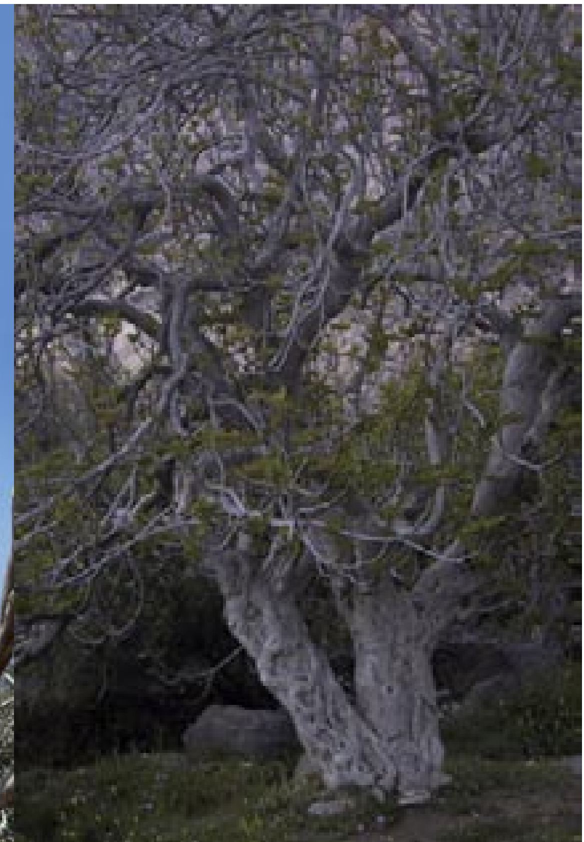
Box 5.19. Voices of the silenced majority in Palestine: a case study in media bias and disinformation

Mainstream media has been largely silent or one-sided in its reporting of the human tragedies that have unfolded over the last 60 years in Palestine as a result of Israel's military and settler occupation. The depth and extent of the systematic bias and half truths in news reporting on the fate of people and the land in war-torn Palestine have been truly staggering. Independent broadcasting of the voices of the silenced majority in Palestine is a salutary reminder of how important it is to expand information democracy today.

The olive branch is a universal symbol of peace, but that hasn't stopped it becoming a victim of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli Army has uprooted nearly half a million trees, some of them dating back to Roman times. The bulldozing and removal of olive trees is part of a larger process of land grabbing by Israeli settlers. This large-scale ecological destruction and land grabbing have had dire consequences for the food security and livelihoods of Palestinian people. Yet all these tragic events have been largely under-reported worldwide. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjX0HZPTZUs.

Box 5.19. Voices of the silenced majority in Palestine: a case study in media bias and disinformation

The recent 2008-2009 massacres in Gaza constitute a crime under international law and a violation of the Geneva Convention. The Internet has offered critical information and videos on the Gaza-Israel conflict well beyond the more mainstream TV and newspaper sources in the USA and many European countries. See, for example, evidence of war crimes against children, women and the elderly (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59zbDWaixjQ) as well as the comments of the UN's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P69O8EsshiM)



and environmental justice. Enormous work still needs to be done before the majority of people can engage in critical thinking and well-informed decision-making. Such work should start with profound reforms of formal education curricula, where pluralist perspectives should take the place of monolithic interpretations of history and uncritical perspectives of 'science'. Media literacy education is needed to equip citizens and their communities with the basic tools necessary to use media and understand its effects on their everyday lives. Strategies for democratic communication also include appropriate regulation of the media business, safeguarding citizens against power agglomerations, enforcing strict codes of conduct with regard to the implicit or explicit diffusion of false information, establishing appropriate procedures to disentangle electoral politics from the grip of economic power and encouraging investigative journalism.

Similarly, only full access to information, and liberation from active brainwashing by various means of economic, political and cultural advertisements and the diffusion of sheer lies, will enable people to develop more critical consciousness. It is not possible to have message-free media and purely objective information services. But it is possible for the media to respect different views and encourage decentralised citizen control over the production and dissemination of information.

Expanding information democracy in the 21st century will depend on citizens engaging in two sets of complementary activities:

1. Support for critical, progressive initiatives coming from *within* the dominant media institutions. New citizen alliances with unions and organisations of the more creative media professionals can help change broadcasting policies and practice. Such alliances could ensure that there is also a permanent and ongoing critical analysis of the processes, products and institutions of mass communication—knowing and understanding *who owns what, who says what to whom and why, and how it is received* are key for reclaiming democratic control over mass communication.

2. Creation of and support for autonomous media. This is media that emanates from and is controlled by the communities concerned. It includes community radio, peoples' video, citizens' journalism, and—increasingly—Internet-based autonomous media that can create global networks.

Both sets of complementary activities for change are highly relevant for the food sovereignty movement and its allies. As Marc Raboy says "*…there can be no political, economic or social democracy without cultural and communicational democracy…. As in any sphere of progressive political activity, intervention in the field of communication will require a flexible, multi-faceted, pragmatic and increasingly internationalist approach in order to be effective and attain its objectives*" (Raboy, 1991).

With the advent of the digital age it is likely that autonomous media will play an increasingly important role in this multi-faceted strategy for democratic communication.

5.6.1. Autonomous media

The case for designing a more participatory media system in the digital age has been well made by the Center for Digital Democracy:

"As the United States enters a critical period of transition from old media to new, we must foster the growth of innovative, robust forms of public media. Especially with the emergence of new distribution platforms—digital television and radio, expanded cable and satellite services, and various forms of broadband media—now is the time to build a new, more participatory media system, first by assessing and then taking advantage of these technological advances. Clearly defined and sustainable public spaces must be part of the foundation of the new media landscape, not merely tacked on as an afterthought, as has been the history of public media in our country. Our communications landscape, in short, requires a media system that offers opportunities for democratic expression and public service applications, restricted neither by government constraints nor by private interests."[11]

There is today an emerging alternative media scene within the wider context of the globalisation of mass communication. Amid the global trend towards mergers, acquisitions, and concentration of ownership in fewer and fewer corporate hands, civil society organisations all over the world are promoting alternative, community-owned media. Recent advances in digital technology and their more user friendly nature make it possible for citizens to learn new communication skills to enhance democratic participation in the production of information on food, agriculture and human well-being. Given their relatively small size and energy needs, digital film and radio systems can also be easily decentralised at the village level to enhance citizen voices in policy-making. Experience from rural South India clearly demonstrates that it is indeed possible to develop more autonomous forms of community media (radio, TV and video....) placed under the control of citizen groups and wider federations

11 From the web site of the Center for Digital Democracy on 22 May 2007, see http://www.democraticmedia.org/

working for food sovereignty (Box 5.20; see also Satheesh and Pimbert, 2007; Pavarala and Kanchan, 2008).

Autonomous media is particularly useful to counter exclusion from mainstream media or to serve social movements working for food sovereignty. For example, community controlled alternative video communication:

> *"…is ultimately capable of fulfilling all the roles of dominant commercial video models…It can educate and inform, it can instruct and enlighten, it can analyse and criticise, and it can entertain and promote or advertise…. Promotion and advertising of alternative or non commercial products and issues—such as natural medicines, innovative or organic farming techniques, adaptations of old and new technology for developmental purposes, environmentally safe products and practices, rationale for disarmament—are among many areas that have yet to be fully explored by people's video" (Hall, 1991).*

Similarly, a true community radio can make a vital contribution to democracy and cultural diversity:

Box 5.20. Autonomous film and radio: the Community Media Trust's experience in South India

The Community Media Trust (CMT) of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) was created in October 2001 to work with women's sanghams (voluntary village associations of the poor) in the Medak District of Andhra Pradesh. The CMT was set up in direct response to the demands of thousands of very poor, low caste women who wanted their unrecognised voices to be heard and acknowledged by the world outside. This was done in a context where the official media was seen to be dominated by commercial and political actors whose interests were in conflict with those of rural communities and their environments.

The CMT is mandated with metaphorically handing over the microphones and cameras to marginalised rural women so that they can broadcast their own images and authentic voices. Moreover, it strives to take images and voices of rural women to the wider world and create an alternative media that can be accessed and controlled by local communities, especially those that suffer continued exclusion. Involved in about 80 villages, the CMT consists of about 20 women, 17 of whom work with video and 3 with radio (see below).

Box 5.20. Autonomous film and radio: the Community Media Trust's experience in South India

The video group

The video group operates digital video cameras, portable editing recorders, and computer-based editing facilities to make their films. The women film-makers of the CMT have together made more than 100 short films on various issues of concern to them and their communities. They have brought fresh perspectives into film-making. Whilst the primary engagement of the CMT is with their own communities, their members have also produced dozens of films for other groups and agencies on issues of environment and development. These include films about the future of food and farming; the bitter harvest of genetically engineered agriculture; water; lives and livelihoods; women's control over media; and environment and agricultural biodiversity. Several of these films have been broadcast as news items on national television channels. They have also been shown in international farmer exchanges for mutual learning and film festivals.

Participatory video has also been used as an integral part of action research into the regeneration of diverse food systems and decentralised forms of governance. The CMT has documented this action research process—the negotiation of its objectives, the ways of working and methodologies used and some of its outcomes—through the eyes and perceptions of marginalised women farmers and other small farmers. Participatory video is thus used in this context to produce:

- Video that transforms the lives of the people involved. But also video that transforms the research process in which both university-trained professionals and non-literate, marginalised people are co-inquirers, producing new knowledge that challenges the dominance of western science and ways of knowing.

Box 5.20. Autonomous film and radio: the Community Media Trust's experience in South India

- Video that empowers marginalised people—women in particular—and facilitates social and ecological change.
- Video that travels across borders and boundaries to inspire a younger generation of scholars and practitioners to find better ways of doing research with, by and for people, and not just on people.

The radio group

The community radio is run and managed by three rural Dalit[1] women who were trained to operate the radio station located in Machnoor village in Medak District. Since receiving government permission to broadcast, this community radio has involved more Dalit women, who bring their own form and content to it, making this local radio a remarkable tool for local communication. The programming content of the station seeks to serve the information, education and cultural needs of the region. It closely reflects the life of the people and the dynamics of the land. As Narsamma – a member of the CMT – explains:

"Generally, we think what topic is important to all the people this month. If it is time to start sowing seeds, we will record programmes about seed sowing, when to sow, how to sow? After the sowing of seeds we will make the programme about weeding, how to weed different types of crops, we will prepare songs on that, the songs which people have forgotten. During rainy season, we will record programmes about the precautions to be taken for different crops in the absence of rains or if there is excess rain" (personal communication, General Narsamma, 2007)

Through their films, community radio and ways of working, the women of the Community Media Trust have engaged with their own communities and other actors in debates over food and seed sovereignty, control over natural resources, gender justice, markets and media. Through participatory communication processes, they have facilitated and recorded critical evaluations of state policies and programmes. They have also established relationships of solidarity with local communities in South Asia and other regions of the world.

Sources: www.ddsindia.com; www.diversefoodsystems.org, and Satheesh and Pimbert 2008.

1 A group of people traditionally regarded as untouchables (outcastes) or of low caste.

Dalit women start Sangham Radio

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5 mins

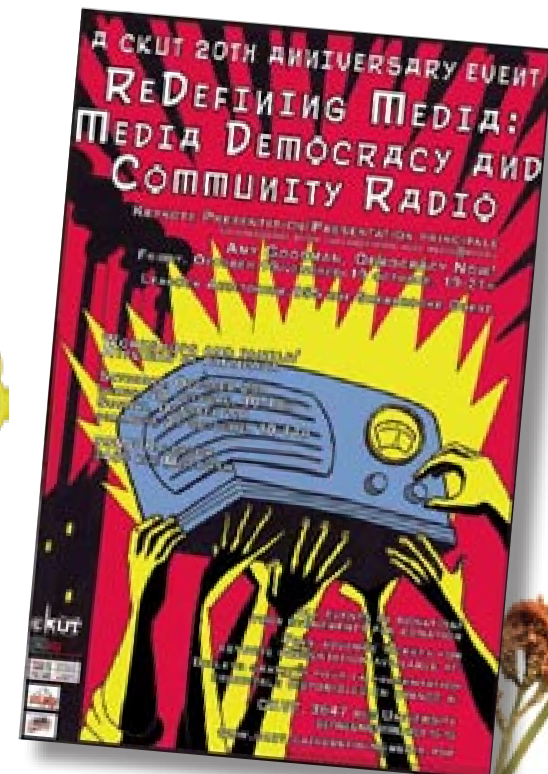
"When radio fosters the participation of citizens and defends their interests; when it reflects the tastes of the majority; when it truly informs; when it helps resolve the thousand and one problems of daily life; when all ideas are debated in the programmes and all opinions are respected; when cultural diversity is stimulated over commercial homogeneity; when women are main players and not simply a pretty voice; when no type of dictatorship is tolerated, when everyone's words fly without discrimination or censorship; that is community radio (Lopez, 1997).

The main advantages and benefits of such community-controlled media have been further described by Hall (1991) and Satheesh (2000):

- It has the capacity to be highly participatory—the groups whose interests the medium represents can design and control the content of their video films and radio programmes by selecting subjects and topics, as well as by deciding on the structure, presentation and distribution of the product.

- It is relatively non-hierarchical: it follows horizontal routes across structures of authority and thus plays a role in democratising the flow of information.

- It is managed and owned by the community members. Communities or their representatives have a voice in the financing of video and radio programmes.



- It uses a technology appropriate to the economic capability of the people rather than leading to dependence on external sources.
- It tries to genuinely represent the interests of those people whom it sets out to serve and is therefore non-dominating. Being predominantly democratic, it also has greater potential for being non-exploitative.
- It can overcome problems of illiteracy (reading, writing) by affirming the value of the more universally shared visual literacy, for example.
- It provides a right of access to minority and marginalised groups, promoting and protecting cultural and linguistic diversity.
- It has a genuine role to play in educational and instructional use, allowing bi-lateral or bi-directional flows of ideas and information.
- It avoids (once it is successfully established) problems of state censorship, business censorship or media censorship.
- It can reach a local audience as well as national and international audiences. National and international outreach can potentially be achieved by securing time on major broadcasting systems which agree for community video producers to broadcast their own materials. Or this can be achieved when peoples' organisations fully or partly control a broadcast system themselves, taking advantage of local and satellite transmitting systems as well as the new possibilities offered by Internet and web-based technologies.

On this last point, broadcasting community media via the Internet does indeed open up new exciting opportunities for

the food sovereignty movement—not least because it can more effectively link the local with the global to bring about positive change. For example, the Transmission Project[12] has carried out seminal work that is very relevant for the food sovereignty movement. Transmission *"is a network of citizen journalists, video makers, artists, researchers, programmers and web producers who are developing online video distribution tools for social justice and media democracy. [The] objective is to make independent online video distribution possible (using Free Software) by building the necessary tools, standards, documentation and social networks"* (http://transmission.cc)

One of Transmission's network participants—IFIWatch.TV—describes its work as follows:

> *"Independent video shines light on the problems and practices of development finance institutions worldwide. Critical documentary, protest reports, animations, meetings, interviews and more: this is video that*

12 http://transmission.cc/

governments and corporations would often rather was not shared.... IFIWatch.TV is for educators, activists, journalists, film-makers, students, officials and anyone else interested in what multilateral bodies are doing with our money, our neighbours, and our planet." (From http://ifiwatch.tv/).

5.6.2. Web-based knowledge networks

The digital revolution also makes it possible to design new knowledge base portals (KBP) that combine text, video, audio and images. Such multimedia tools can be used to digitally document, categorise and circulate people's observations and analysis of social and environmental phenomena. Moreover, KBP simultaneously function as communication and networking tools for the participating groups and individuals. For example, the Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Assessment initiative (IPCCA) is now developing a KBP as part of a broader struggle for food sovereignty and environmental justice (Box 5.21).

The technological and legal architecture of such knowledge networks can be consciously designed to reflect and reinforce values of solidarity, equity and democracy. The following software possibilities and licensing options are particularly relevant in this regard:

- *Use of free software*. Free software refers to the software created by a global social movement and community of hackers, and licensed under a copyleft license (more on licensing below). Free software grants the user four particular freedoms, namely the freedoms to (1) run, (2) study and change, (3) copy and distribute, and (4) improve the software.[13] Free software is not only an ethically and is widely regarded as technically safer, more stable, and a more easily adaptable option. This is because free software is developed through a network of widely distributed communities of computer programmers and users who provide vital feedback.

13 Access to the source code of the software is a technically determined pre-requisite for several of these freedoms; hence the source code of free software always has to be openly available. This is often why free software is mistakenly equated with open source software. Both free software and open source software are fundamentally different from non free software (such as Microsoft), the source code of which is not accessible and usually only available under expensive licenses. However, open source software does not recognise the four freedoms that characterise free software.

Box 5.21. The Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Assessment initiative's "knowledge base portal"

The Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Assessment initiative (IPCCA) aims to empower indigenous peoples to develop and use their own frameworks, ie. their own world views, knowledge and methodologies, to understand, negotiate and manage the effects of climate change on their communities and the ecosystems they inhabit. The goal is to support indigenous peoples in collaboratively developing and implementing strategies for building resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of climate change. This multi-regional initiative focuses on ways of adapting to and mitigating the impacts of the climatic changes—while enhancing bio-cultural diversity and food sovereignty.

As part of this process, IPCCA is developing a knowledge base portal (KBP) to digitally document, categorise and circulate indigenous people's observations and interpretations of climate change phenomena. This knowledge is in the form of photos, audio recordings, video films, and text. This KBP would simultaneously function as a communication and networking tool for the participating groups and individuals.

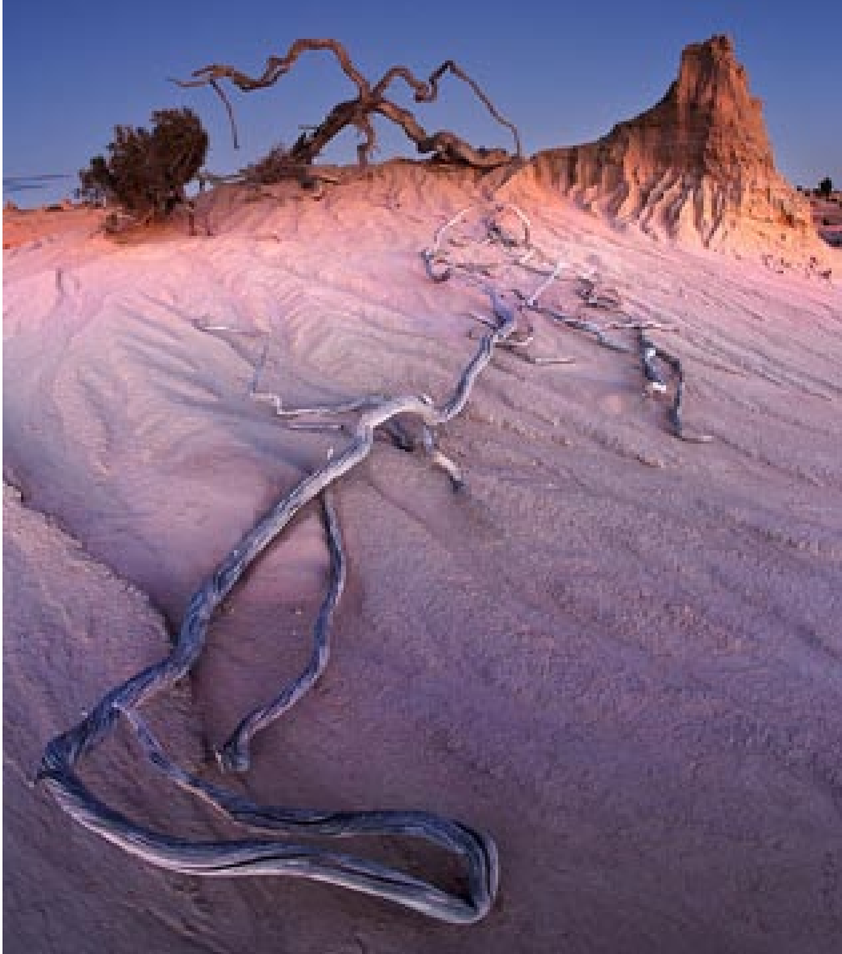
One of the challenges for the KBP is to negotiate the tensions between local specificity and global transferability, between the preservation of identity and radical openness to change, between the creation of a (knowledge) commons and the constant threat of enclosure in the name of private ownership. The technological and legal infrastructure underpinning the KBP seeks to reflect this and enable project participants to work with these tensions in creative ways.

The design process stresses the vital importance of solidarity and exchange of knowledge and experience between social movements, in particular in the context of climate change as a predicament facing all of humanity. For this reason, the IPCCA's Steering Group and its external advisors stress the importance of copyleft licensing (see below), as well as of the compatibility between different licensing schemes in order to simultaneously:

1. optimise the circulation and distribution of, and the access to informational flows and knowledge, and

2. prevent misappropriation by profit oriented third parties who do not share the social and environmental vision and values of the KBP.

Source: http://www.ipcca.net/; Moeller and Pedersen, 2009



Baka People: Facing changes in African forests

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- *Copyleft as a licensing option*. The contents of knowledge base portals and similar knowledge networks all fall into the realm of copyright law. Video, audio, images, text and other forms of documented knowledge can all be subject to intellectual property law. Mainstream copyright law allows an author to prohibit others from reproducing, adapting, or distributing copies of his or her work. But for the food sovereignty movement, 'knowledge' to combat hunger and poverty should not be circumscribed by exclusive, private property rights. There is thus a need for licensing agreements that facilitate the distribution and circulation of people's local knowledge (on seeds, medicinal plants, technological innovations....). Copyleft is one such licensing option. An author may, through a copyleft licensing scheme, give every person who receives a copy of a work permission to reproduce, adapt or distribute the work as long as any resulting copies, seeds or adaptations are also bound by the same copyleft licensing scheme.[14]

5.7. Concluding remarks

The food sovereignty paradigm affirms the fundamental right of peoples to define their food and agricultural policies. This implies that food providers and consumers are *directly* involved in framing policies for food, agriculture, livelihoods and the environment. In this chapter I have argued that existing decision-making and policy processes that are based on models of representative democracy are inadequate for transformation towards food sovereignty. A more discursive and direct democracy is now needed for citizens to exercise their right to food in the context of local, regional and national food sovereignty.

Much of the spirit and intent of this chapter are rooted in a vision of democracy described by Castoriadis: "The community

14 A widely used and originating copyleft license is the GNU General Public License. Similar licenses are available through Creative Commons called Share-alike (Wikipedia, accessed February 2009).

8 mins

Beyond elections: democratising democracy

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of citizens—the *demos*—proclaims that it is absolutely sovereign (*autonomos*, *autodikos*, *autoteles*, self-legislating, self-judging, self-governing…)" (Castoriadis, 1983). Processes that can help reclaim active forms of citizenship have been explored in this chapter—including learning from the rich history of face-to-face democracy and from knowledge on how to strengthen local organisations of food providers and consumers. Examples highlighted here also show how new methodological innovations in deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs) can significantly enhance citizen voice and agency in decision-making today. Similarly, new developments in community and citizen controlled media (digital video, radio, press…) and Internet communication make it technically possible for food providers and consumers to express their reality and aspirations. I also emphasise the need to learn how to nurture citizenship—through character development and education, personal and social training, and civic schooling—to produce citizens with the competence to act in the public interest.

Indeed, learning to "participate by participating" (Held, 1987) is central to the process of reclaiming and nurturing citizenship, with each form of micro-participation allowing people to learn and adopt more democratic and civic attitudes. Engaging in some of the processes and methods described in this chapter can contribute to meaningful change and citizen empowerment for food sovereignty. For example, according to Chilukapalli Anasuyamma—a 30-year old, non literate, *Dalit*, single woman dryland farmer in Pasthapur (Medak District, Andhra Pradesh, India)—community radio helps transform inequitable gender relations:

> *"In our* sanghams *(village associations of* Dalit *women), we are carrying out a number of tasks that used to be done by men. Our men are doing a number of tasks which were only being preserved for women. This way we have been able to erase the boundaries between man's work and woman's work. The mainstream radio is still steeped in the traditional gender roles. If we depend on it, we have to go back in time. All that we have done in our* sanghams *will come to a nought. If we have our own radio it can help us continue this progress we have made on gender issues" (Interview and personal communication by P.V. Satheesh, 2008).*

I discuss gender relations further in the next chapter, with a particular focus on the issue of gender inclusion in local organisations and the wider food sovereignty movement. In this next chapter, I also critically examine the roles which federations and horizontal networks of local organisations can play in reclaiming citizenship and building countervailing power for food sovereignty.

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