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Democracy:
Problems and challenges, opportunities and design

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The aim of this chapter is to provide a clear account of the existing evidence on public attitudes and forms of democratic engagement. Additionally, it aims to provide a contrast to recent of 'crisis', 'suicide', 'decline' and 'endism' associated with democracy. It looks beneath the data to explore some of the underlying drivers of disaffection and how they link to broader concerns regarding global governance. It presents an account of democratic decline and retrenchment towards a protectionist model of populist democracy that is often fuelled by concerns regarding the existence of increasingly globalised powers and pressures. That said, this chapter is less pessimistic and more provocative in arguing that, if the history of democracy demonstrates one core feature, it its capacity for adaptation and evolution. So, we hope to demonstrate not only challenges but also the opportunities for democracy in the future and the role of the social and political sciences within that process.

Keywords: democracy, public expectations, anti-politics, public participation

1. Introduction

The Acropolis of Athens overlooks the city traditionally known as the birthplace of western democracy. It is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site because of its architectural importance and its historical significance. Among other things, the Acropolis highlights the pinnacle of civilisation and progress during an age of ancient democracy. We draw attention to this impressive site and its buildings not only because it so aptly symbolises the enduring idea of democracy – but also because it symbolises its very fragility. The Acropolis is a site where ancient democracy was born, but it was also a site of military conquest, the demonstration of despotic power and where ancient democracy ended. In this sense, the Acropolis reminds us that democracy is in absolutely no way to be regarded as the 'natural' or 'inevitable' peak of an advanced political society. It is something that has to be continually fought for, practised and defended. And we would urge: now, more than ever.

Perusing any library's section on democracy appears to show us democracy in crisis: from *Why We Hate Politics* (2007) to *The End of Representative Politics* (2015) (and many more in between), all point towards worrying pictures of democratic decline (for a review of this literature, see Ercan and Gagnon, 2014). This chapter attempts to grapple with this literature and its consequences for democracy, across the globe and at different levels. The picture we paint is necessarily stark because the challenges that democracies face are significant. However, this chapter is also not one of pure pessimism. Rather, we want to argue that, while democracy may well face a number of problems or crises (all of which are fundamental to political life and increasingly interconnected), these fluid times give rise to a number of opportunities to reinvigorate democratic politics. In order for us to make this argument, this chapter proceeds in three sections: first, we identify the current trends in democratic politics; second, we summarise the causes and consequences of those trends in terms of the problems we face; and third, we carve out how those consequences might be met in the current political climate through our concluding discussion.

2. Wither democracy?

As the introduction has made clear, a range of scholars have argued that recent times demonstrate a decline in democracy across the globe. In this section of the chapter, we want to take a step back and argue how deep this problem goes. In other words, we want to ask the very simple question: to what extent is there a global problem with democracy? Unfortunately, the answer is resoundingly negative.

We can see the decline of democracy along a range of markers and indices in established democracies. The most obvious trend to highlight is turnout in general elections, which have been in decline across democracies. Peter Mair's analysis in *Ruling the Void* (2013, pp.17-44) comprehensively assesses the decline

in Europe since the 1990s: European citizens are voting less often; they have become more volatile in casting their vote; fewer are identifying with a political party; and, they are less willing to take on party membership and its associated duties and obligations. These shifts are not isolated to Europe. They are indicative of wider declines across the globe, where average voter turnout in elections fell to 70% in the 1990s and to 66% in the period 2011-15 (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2016, p.24). Looking at other indices, we can see that approval ratings of the US Congress has not risen above 21% since May 2011, and has not reached 50% since 2003 (at time of writing) (Gallup, 2017); the average trust in European national governments stands at 31% (European Commission, 2016); and, 39.9% of citizens in sub-Saharan Africa have little or no trust in their legislature (Lavallée *et. al.*, 2008, p.5). Worryingly, these problems are set to continue into the future given that young people are increasingly less likely to engage in any forms of political activities (Grasso, 2016).

What these trends reveal is that engagement with established political institutions across the globe is in decline, and affects both newer and older democratic systems. It raises the question as to whether democracy as a form of government will be promoted in future. Some political scientists believe that, once countries develop democratic institutions, a robust civil society and a certain level of wealth, democracies generally remain secure. This is known as 'democratic consolidation' (e.g. Linz and Stepan, 1996). Even if there is dissatisfaction or distrust in relation to specific institutions, politicians or political parties this does not affect deeper underlying social commitment to the principles and values of democracy. So, consolidated democratic states remain democratic. Indeed, and since 1945, it seemed that nation-states were inexorably moving towards democratic forms. This was reinforced by key periods that led to further democratisation: in 1974-75, military rule in Spain, Portugal and Greece came to an end; during the 1980s, Latin American countries democratised; and, following the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1989, many former communist countries transitioned to democracies. Francis Fukuyama (1989) famously asked if this was the 'end of history' and, a short number of years later, Juan J. Linz and Alred Stepan (1996, p.5) exclaimed that democracy was 'the only game in town'.

However, while approximately 60% of the world's nation-states had embraced democracy, Larry Diamond argues that 'celebrations of democracy's triumph are premature' because 'the democratic wave has been slowed by a powerful authoritarian undertow', meaning that the world has 'slipped into a democratic recession' (Diamond, 2008, p.36). More recently, Freedom House (2017) argues that 2017 marks the 11th consecutive year in which there have been more declines in political rights and civil liberties than there have been advances. There are a number of examples that demonstrate this: in Poland, the national-conservative government has enacted a range of policies to limit civil liberties, increase control over public media and reduce powers over the courts (with resulting investigations from the European Commission) (Krastev, 2016).; meanwhile, in Hungary, the independence of the judiciary has

been undermined and journalists fear to speak out (Marton, 2014). Both examples are part of a wider trend.

There is not only a decline in trust in democratic institutions, but also acquiescence in dismantling those institutions (think also of events in Turkey (Karaveli, 2016) and Venezuala (Corrales, 2015)). According to Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk (2016), long-established democracies (such as the USA, UK or Germany) are not immune to those trends. Their data shows *inter alia* a decline in citizens' express support for their political system, a decline in support for key institutions of liberal democracies, and an increasing openness to authoritarian alternatives to democratic rule. While Ronald F. Inglehart (2016) argues that the picture is far more subtle, when placed in the context of other global figures and trends since the 1970s, Foa and Mounk's research is distressing because it implies that citizens are increasingly not only dissatisfied with their democrats, but with democracy as a system.

Finally, these trends extend to global political institutions – the pertinent focus of this book. Trust in the European Union as a whole, for example, stands at 36%. Other international organisations face similar deficits, including the World Trade Organisation (Kaldor, 2000) or the International Monetary Fund, which has itself acknowledged that it faces an 'international crisis of legitimacy' (Seabrooke, 2007). This matters because these organisations play an increasing role in the governance of nation-states while concomitantly coming under increasing challenge to demonstrate their legitimate democratic credentials (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006; Archibugi and Held, 2011).

Why does it matter? It matters because it paints a picture of growing global disengagement with established and newer democratic institutions. But far more than that, it reveals increasing examples of where institutions are being dismantled that could pave the way for a more authoritarian turn in global politics. It also raises a number of further questions about the causes for this decline of confidence in democracy, to which we now turn.

3. Challenges to democracy

In offering a rather bleak account of contemporary democratic governance, the previous section raised a number of issues. The aim of this section is to explore a number of these challenges in more detail in order to dissect and unpick the underlying drivers, including the rise of individualism, the rise of populism and political literacy. This is clearly not an exhaustive review of the challenges to democracy and other scholars have set out their own thoughts on 'the problem with democracy' (e.g. Flinders, 2016). Rather, this section provides a balance of breadth and depth that facilitates a more focused discussion on

the global challenges to democracy and the global challenges to professional students of democracy (professors included) in the next and final section.

3.1. Voting alone

The nature of engagement between citizens and political institutions has changed. And, arguably, democratic institutions have not adequately adapted to those changes. A number of commentators have pointed out that civic culture has changed in a way that has given rise to 'critical citizens', or the emergence of new forms of direct, assertive and issue-specific political engagement (Inglehart, 1977; see also Stoker and Evans, 2014). This changed engagement with political institutions is part of broader shifts in society where once solid social reference points that allowed people to make sense of their world and their place within it have been eroded in important ways. In particular, we echo the work of Bauman (2000, 2003) in arguing that traditional social anchorage points have been lost and societal relations have become more transient. This creates challenges for democracy: how to engage citizens in traditional political institutions that are underpinned by a collective social ethos and on whose legitimacy democratic political systems relies, when individuals are increasingly turning away from those collective-orientated social institutions towards individualised, issue-focused and often non-institutionalised forms of activity and engagement. This is the democratic gap that has emerged between the governors and the governed.

This problem intensifies when we link changes in public engagement to other trends, such as political elites' pursuit of market-focused policy programmes. Specifically, the practices of governance, the social system of production, dominant notions of 'value' and collective understandings of citizenship have been altered in such a way that each of these spheres is construed in market terms (Sandel, 2012). This focus on the market since the 1960s has eviscerated traditional liberal democracies, undermined civic culture, and exacerbated inequalities (Streeck, 2013; Piketty, 2013). Crucially, market dominance has also changed political culture into a more individualised system of market democracy. In this sense, individuals view their interactions with parties and political candidates as they would a retail relationship in which goods and services are bought. The citizen-consumer makes their choice, spends their vote and then waits for the goods to be delivered – almost as if they were a CD or book purchased on Amazon. Democratic politics was never intended to satisfy a world of individualised wants and, when compared to simplistic market assumptions, it will generally fail because democracy is geared to collective outputs. As Gerry Stoker (2006, p.68) argues, 'many citizens fail to fully appreciate that politics in the end involves the collective imposition of decisions', and that, 'this problem has been compounded by the spread of market-based consumerism and … *individualism*'. It suggests that democracy is no longer something done for the community or for the common good, but has descended to the level of autonomous individuals (Gairdner, 2003). What this highlights is the emergence of a rather 'thin' model of democracy in which

the public behave (and are treated) as customers rather than citizens (for a discussion, see Scammell, 2014).

This challenge has taken a uniquely global angle in many respects. Not only in the sense that civic culture is changing across the globe, as the previous section has shown, but also in the sense that market-inspired reforms are taking a global picture. So, for example, the International Monetary Fund has become a global institution that comments across many aspects of *national* economic policies and sets medium- to long-term objectives and goals, offers a range of training services to civil servants, and has, especially in recent years, attempted to restore stability to pre-existing financial markets. This has led one scholar to conclude that, 'its voice carries far in global markets, in national economic policies, and eventually in local and household budgets' (Scholte, 2000). The World Bank and WTO are two other organisations with similar far-reaching effects. Taken together, their agenda includes the introduction of commercial criteria for success, the dismantling of nationalised industries and monopolies, the reduction of government in industrial or business relations, and so on (Pauly, 1999). Reforms instituted by the IMF, the World Bank or the WTO entrench many trends in economic globalisation and, in doing so, further promote marketisation across political institutions under the auspices of 'good governance'. This matters because it encourages new relationships between the public and politics, namely through market mechanisms that we mentioned before. This global dimension enhances the challenge for democrats everywhere because significant questions remain around how to reconcile the predominance and imposition of market-based policies in national economies with a decline in trust and participation in traditional political and democratic institutions. This is especially problematic because international organisations are ostensibly taking away power from democratic bodies (Vibert, 2007) – we only need to think of the way in which economic reforms and austerity policies were imposed on a number of European governments since 2007 (Blyth, 2013). This has, unsurprisingly, led to dramatic declines in satisfaction with democracy (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014).

3.2. Anti-politics and the resurgence of populism

In 1997, Alan Blinder, economist and academic, asked 'is government too political?' in an article for *Foreign Affairs*. He was not alone in asking this question. Over the past 20 or so years, we have seen a range of politicians and commentators explain that there is too much politics in decision-making. These thoughts were part of a wider belief originating in the work from Anthony Downs (1957) and Kenneth Arrow (1951) among others, that actors – and especially politicians and administrators – are self-interested, utility-maximising agents. In internalising these assumptions, all officials are assumed to seek public office for self-interested motives, which has had debilitating consequences for political trust. For example, Colin Hay (2007, p.58) suggests that, 'in a context in which even politicians concede that 'politics' is something we need rather less of', it is unsurprising that 'public political disaffection and

disengagement is rife'. This brings us back to the notion of a 'democratic gap' in the sense that a global and rather paradoxical shift towards the 'depoliticisation' of politics – often veiled in the language of New Public Management – has significantly restricted the sphere of competencies for which elected politicians can be held directly accountable. The existence of major social and political challenges – immigration, employment, climate change, economic insecurity, etc. – stimulate questions from the public as to what steps politicians are taking to mitigate such risks but the answer rarely comes in the form of a developed policy response. Instead, direct and clear questions about what is being done, by whom and why are often met with blame games and blame avoidance strategies that simply fuel public frustration and undermine confidence in the capacity of democracy to respond (Hood, 2010).

What has received less attention is the link between blame games and globalisation. This is a critical point. Even the most cursory analysis of the major socio-political challenges facing most countries will immediately reveal the global roots of those issues. Even if the issue is not global in terms of the geographic extent of the challenge then the mechanisms through which an effective response can be orchestrated will very often involve international coordination and cooperation. In many ways, the creation of supra-national governing units that involve the pooling of resources (and to some extent sovereignty) is an explicit recognition of the limited 'reach' or capacity of nation-states. However, the flipside is that the 'reach' of democracy does not seem to have expanded accordingly. It therefore become relatively easy to place a whole range of social evils at the door of 'faceless' or 'unaccountable bureaucrats' while at the same time decrying the 'weakness' of national politicians for either delegating powers or refusing to repatriate them in the face of what is interpreted as policy-failure. The location of public services and regulatory powers beyond the sphere of (direct) democratic politics has therefore facilitated the emergence of a relatively simple but incredibly powerful populist narrative that is based upon a rejection of globalisation. To some extent it is even forged upon a protectionist model of nationalist populism as a reaction against what is perceived or framed to be the technocratic, globalised, distant, unaccountable, elitist model of contemporary politics.

Although these populist or 'anti-political' parties profess to be intensely democratic and located against the depoliticised modes of governance that have emerge in recent decades, it is possible to suggest that they are just as anti-democratic or democratically problematic as the technocratically-inspired and multi-levelled networks of actors they seek to dismantle. Populists are impatient of procedures and unwilling to accept the simple fact that democratic politics tends to be slow, messy and cumbersome – as well as prone to producing sub-optimal decisions – because politics is about (as pointed out above) the ability to squeeze collective decisions out of multiple and competing interests and opinions (Stoker, 2006, p.196).

The emergence of populist parties and candidates across liberal democracies (and their successes, such as Donald Trump's presidential election victory in the USA or the inroads made by the National Front in

France) highlights at least three central challenges for democracy. First, populism's grip on the public's imagination reminds us of low levels of political literacy and political processes. Perhaps populism would not be so compelling if the public more clearly understood the need for compromise in a globalised world. This has arguably been exacerbated in recent times in a changing media and political information landscape to which we return in the next sub-section. Second, populism is arguably tied to a belief that it is possible to take the politics out democracy, thereby sweeping away the need for the compromises and constraints of politics. Populists often offer simplistic interpretations of problems and simplistic solutions to those problems, and make a virtue out of their simplicity: immigration control is 'the answer' to changing societies; economic protectionism is 'the answer' to changing patterns of economic organisation. Mainstream political parties have found it difficult to respond to this because many acknowledge (and indeed have to work through) the complexity of political problems in an age of global interdependence.

A third facet, which returns us to the opening of this sub-section, is the belief that politics is no longer seen as the art of the possible. Established politicians themselves have abdicated responsibility for politics in a number of significant ways, which means that their perceived abilities to change and impact current challenges has been diminished. Populist parties have capitalised on this, as Peter Mair (2013, p.4) notes:

> a simple populist strategy – employing the rhetoric of 'the people' as a means of underlining the radical break with past styles of government … gelled perfectly well with the tenets of what were then seen as newly emerging school of governance and the idea that … any attempts on the part of government to intervene will be ineffective.

The danger that populism represents can be seen in the decline of democratic institutions in some states, such as the examples cited in the previous section of Poland and Hungary. These authoritarian turns have become difficult to counter in recent times because of their incremental nature. So, a significant challenge or theme that democrats face is how to combat populist rhetoric and behaviour. This is especially important given that the overtures made by many far-right populists is to the detriment of global institutions – and, indeed, to globalisation itself. Donald Trump (2016), for example, has commented that 'globalisation has made the financial elite who donate to politicians very, very wealthy … but it has left millions of our workers with nothing but poverty and heartache'. Elsewhere, Marine Le Pen, leader of France's National Front, has called for an end to the tyranny of globalisation and, in the event of a future election victory, promises to take France out of the Eurozone (Front National, 2017). In the UK, we have seen the direct consequences of this with the withdrawal of the country from a 27 member-state union. These trends are suggesting that, increasingly, populists are utilising globalisation and global governance institutions and actors as a lightning rod for disengaged publics to divide people, indicating the uniquely *global* challenges to democracy.

3.3. Staying informed

Distrust in institutions extends beyond political and democratic ones. Accusations are now also brought against journalists and the media for supposedly distorting truths, exaggerating claims made by established elites, and downplaying the views that run counter to elite-attitudes. This represents a huge challenge for democrats because the growth in distrust to 'mainstream media' or MSM outlets are the single-most important channel by which political ideas travel. It is often in such environments where populist groups are able to flourish and maintain support. *The Atlantic* (Frum, 2017) cites one such example: on 27 November 2016, Donald Trump tweeted that he had in fact 'won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally'. If true, this would arguably be the biggest instance of electoral fraud in US history. And while Trump has left his comments unsubstantiated, it was also perceived as factual. For example, a YouGov survey found that, by 01 December 2016, 43% of Republicans accepted the claim that millions of people had voted illegally. The phenomenon, described variously as 'fake news' or 'alternative facts' is becoming an increasing problem for the accurate dissemination of democracy because it disrupts the traditional ways by which the public receive, digest and engage with politics.

This is compounded in no small way by the continued rise and prevalence of the internet. It is not difficult to see why the internet was lauded as a way to build global democracy because it could allow for instant communication across the planet. However, and at the same time, the internet and wider technological changes have thrown up fundamental challenges. For example, there is a danger of creating echo chambers on a range of digital platforms including Facebook or Twitter. Social media platforms allow individuals to choose with whom they engage, and so almost all information – including political information and news – comes from friends, colleagues and family on Facebook or the people that users follow on Twitter. There are debates over the extent to which this limits the exposure of different forms of news and knowledge that the public relies on to engage with politics (e.g. Colleoni *et. al.*, 2014), but, regardless of the extent of this effect, it throws up a crucial challenge to democrats to ensure their messages are received (and undistorted, at that).

The internet has wider effects that challenge democracy today, and it is important to note the influence of global companies at this point. Organisations such as Google and Facebook have become very important political actors in that they mediate news as well as provide information on politics. Google, for example, now regularly attempts to predict phrases in search engines, and makes suggestions based on other users' behaviour. While the extent to which Google plays a role in democracies is far from clear, some research (e.g. Epstein and Robertson, 2015) suggests that there is something called a 'search engine manipulation effect' (SEME). Findings suggest that search-rank results could affect voting patterns. These trends are significant, yet policy-makers have not yet begun to think about their consequences despite growing calls and questions about regulatory frameworks or algorithmic transparency. Ultimately, this challenge cuts

across national boundaries given the multi-national nature of these technological companies, raising yet further questions about the impact on global democratic trends.

This discussion implies that technological changes have not led to an enlightened citizenry but one that is exposed to huge swathes of information while, simultaneously, being increasingly targeted and more niche about the information it receives. The final added problem is that the growth of tweets, status updates, ability to sign petitions, etc., brings with it an increased expectation of being listened to. However, as Andrew Dobson (2014, p.2) points out: 'Although much prized in daily conversation, good listening has been almost completely ignored in political conversation, and particularly in the form we know as democracy'. Further, he suggests that, 'speaking has garnered the lion's share of attention, both in terms of the skills to be developed and the ways in which we should understand what improving it might entail'. Dobson's argument is that a listening democracy would be a far better democracy because it would be more responsive – something that doesn't seem to be the case at the moment. This links us back to the previous two sub-sections in multiple ways. The growth of democratic voice is in no small part down to changes to the technological landscape. However, it is also a wider cultural shift that we have noted earlier whereby it is assumed that individual preferences are more important than anything else. The idea of democracy as a *collective* endeavour has been lost, and so it is no surprise to see a growth of many, many voices shouting for competing and contradictory ideas in democratic spaces. Meanwhile, fewer and fewer people are *listening* because it goes against the principle idea of the autonomy or even sovereignty of the individual that dominant, neo-liberal ideas are encouraging in democratic culture.

We have argued in this section that public attitudes have changed significantly because of what appears to be a cultural shift towards individualism and the primacy of the market. Market-logic brings with it a set of assumptions about rational behaviour that rarely presents individuals in a positive light or being capable of selfless behaviours; it also offers little in terms of understanding the role of democracy in terms of the collective pooling of resources in order to combat shared risks. The 'Logic of the Market' and what might be termed 'the Logic of Democracy' are therefore arguably diametrically opposed. As Sir Bernard Crick's seminal *In Defence of Politics* (2013 [1962]) illustrated with great verve and wit, the institutions of democratic politics were intended to act as a counterweight to potentially negative and vicious market forces and instabilities. This arguably extends to the global financial crisis of 2007-08, which resulted from a democratic failure to regulate financial markets. As such, debates and issues around the past, present and future of democracy have a global reverberation that has been underexplored. It is to this issue and the challenge of (re)designing for democracy that we now turn.

4. Conclusion: The global reverberation and (re)designing for democracy

This chapter has examined the state of democracy. It has outlined a number of problems and challenges, many of which are core features of the existing literature. The focus of this concluding section is to make a slightly more novel and provocative contribution to this literature through a focus on three issues. The first is on what might be termed the global politics of democracy and, more specifically, on *the global politics of national democratic politics*. This aims to highlight the existence of very different causal linkages and relationships that deserve further analysis. The second issue is a focus on what we term 'the nexus' or 'nexus politics' and draws attention away from the common problems, issues and themes that have dominated the analysis of democratic change in recent decades, and towards a focus on the *intersection* between many of those themes and issues. The third and final issues is what might be termed 'a twist', or 'a hook' or 'a barb' in the sense of a plea to political and social scientists to consider a quite fundamental shift in their approach to the analysis of democracy towards a more solution-focused and design-infused mode of inquiry. Rephrased, it could be said that the three core themes of this section are the *matrix*, the *nexus* and *the promise*. We make no attempt to engage with these themes in any great detail but simply offer them as topics that seem to us to offer great intellectual traction and leverage in terms of understanding both 'democratic politics as theory' and 'democratic politics as practice'.

In order to open up an under-acknowledged field of inquiry, we draw on the work of Bauman (2000, 2003), whose focus on the changing nature of human bonds has been instructive. These bonds or connections are at one and the same time necessary enablers in life but simultaneously can also be limiting. They have altered in terms of form, texture and substance as a result of technological advances that fit with a broader meta-narrative concerning fluidity and mutating form. At one level people are connected as never before through the power of a smartphone that can transmit pictures, videos and messages to a global audience at almost no cost. People have more (Facebook) friends than ever and emojis provide for demonstrative expression at the touch of a key. Dating apps (e.g. Tinder and Grindr) provide a range of opportunities for personal interactions with likeminded individuals with no emotional commitment or long-term obligations. Relationships can therefore be traversed and navigated without investment and connections can be disconnected at the touch of a key. Modern life has taken on a technologically facilitated sense of semi-detachment from traditional emotional or relationship expectations. As Bauman (2003) argued, semi-detached couples stay together only long enough to enjoy the fun but not long enough to create complex emotional bonds. It is the personal equivalent of the economic model of the gig economy in terms of being low commitment, temporary, highly fluid, etc. – the employer and employee do not stay together long enough to create any legal responsibilities. The Tinder generation and the gig economy flow into this chapter's focus on the changing civic culture and a predilection – notably amongst the young – for political relationships that are similarly non-existent, fleeting, short-term and instrumental. The challenge from this perspective is simply that such relationships may become the expected way that *all* relationships (political, inter-personal, economic, etc.) are approached. Taking this a step further, it may become normal never to risk investing in collective

endeavours or forging deeper emotional relationships or even understand why such an approach to the art of life may offer far deeper value and satisfaction. The loss of solid social anchorage points provides a slightly oblique and unconventional way of thinking about democracy in the twenty-first century, yet also one that offers a clear connection to the three themes that form the pillars of our concluding focus.

The notion of *the matrix* relates to the existence of both vertical and horizontal relationships between democracy and globalisation. The horizontal dimension relates to a relatively well-known pool of scholarship on the democratisation of global governance (e.g. Stevenson and Dryzek, 2014). This offers a general focus on the upscaling of democratic structures, values, procedures and relationships to the global level in order to close the democratic 'gap' that appears to have emerged. Democratisation, then, not of the nation-state but of global affairs more broadly (Erman, 2012; Kuyper, 2014). It is in this vein that democratic theorists have argued that global democracy is increasingly important and a justified pursuit. John Dryzek (2011, p.213), for example, has identified three justifications: first, global democracy is instrumental to the achievement of global justice (over issues such as climate change); second, democracies are particularly good kinds of systems for solving complex collective problems; and third, it is intrinsically valued and thereby crucial to ensure the legitimacy of global institutions, including the WTO, IMF and World Bank. This logic has led to more specific proposals such as calls for a global parliament (Falk and Strauss, 2000); the creation of cosmopolitan institutions (Held, 1995; Archibugi, 2008); building stronger links between domestic and international structures (Keohane *et. al.*, 2009); global political parties (Patomäki, 2011); deliberative systems (Dryzek, 2009); or, democratic global constitutionalism (Peters, 2009), among others.

There is a second more vertical dimension to *the matrix* that has received less attention and that is the global reverberation at the national level. By this, we simply mean the negative externalities caused by globalisation in terms of creating exactly those democratic frustrations that have been so effectively utilised by populist nationalist parties in recent years. This vertical focus directs our attention to the many different layers and levels at which governments operate (multi-level governance). This has, according to Pierre and Peters (2004), created a Faustian bargain. While increased multi-levelled structures provide new problem-solving capacities, they also come at the cost of reducing democratic procedures and blurring lines of accountability. As the rise is anti-establishment populist parties has risen, it seems that this bargain was not worth paying.

The intersection – or *the nexus* – encourages to re-think understandings of contemporary anti-political sentiment for the simple reason that, in reality, very little of this sentiment is actually *anti*-political. Very few groups, protestors or politicians are arguing that politics and democracy are in some way unnecessary. Behind the 'anti-political' demands of veiled protestors is actually a more positive demand for a different form of 'doing' politics. What is lacking, however, is a tangible linkage or nexus between the demands of

what are generally fairly fluid, bottom-up explosions of democratic energy and the capacity of generally bureaucratic and inflexible top-down structures of democratic politics. It is at the nexus between these two forms that global democratic theories and innovations may offer great potential to create new structures in new spheres.

This brings us to a final focus, namely the importance of the social and political sciences. If anti-politics is actually a social demand to 'do politics differently', then surely it is for the social and political sciences to play a role in designing and testing new democratic innovations. This is not a new argument. As long as 60 years ago, C. Wright Mills wrote *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), in which he outlined the importance of understanding both a 'trap', i.e. social trends and pressures that make it increasingly hard for individuals to understand their place in the world (forerunning Bauman's arguments (2000, 2003); and a 'promise'. It is this promise of the social sciences that exits to help make sense of the world and promote the public understanding of society and politics. One question for the future is therefore whether these disciplines can, at last, begin to deliver just a little of this promise by focusing upon designing *for* democracy and how exactly we might 'do' politics differently. This seems to be the biggest challenge of all. With this thought, it is worth returning to the Acropolis in Athens, where we opened our chapter. While the buildings may be damaged and under constant renovation projects, they are still standing. The Parthenon remains a towering example over the ancient city of Athens, and the ideas that it represents will, we hope, continue to endure.

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