

1. Collective Intelligence - **New Forms of Collective Deliberation**

So, good morning, everybody and welcome to this collective intelligence event. My name is Mattia Gallotti. I'm a philosopher by training, but these days I do something different. I coordinate a research programme called The Human Mind Project. Now by research programme, I mean basically a cluster of different academic activities from events, like this one, to selected publications. We're very grateful to Nesta for providing such a great venue for the event.

Now these days when people hear about internal programmes on the human mind they say, oh, no, yet another one. So what's so special about The Human Mind Project? Well as you probably know, there are very big and very well-funded initiatives for the study of the brain.

Nowadays in Europe, in the United States, all over the world, they have a certain approach to questions about the mind. And there is where I think The Human Mind Project tries to differentiate and push for another project. In other words, we now have access to an impressive critical mass of data, concepts, insights, notions, about the functioning of the human brain.

And we think that instead of speeding things up and investing ever more resources in that particular field, probably, we should pause and look backwards at foundational questions about the mind. And again by foundational questions, I mean questions about the nature, the structure, the function, the mechanisms of the mind.

And we will see that in order to capture the complexity, the richness of the mind, we cannot really confine our discussions, our research, to one field or just a few fields. We have to strengthen the links between the arts and humanities, and especially the neuro-sciences. And I think this is a bit of the spirit behind this event, as well.

Today, we're going to focus on one particular kind of mental experience-- the social cognitive sort of mental experience. And we will, I think, dig deeper a bit in the roots of social cognition, especially in the round table discussion. Now we're running already late, so without further ado, I think we can start.

I'm interested in the ways in which digital technology is reshaping different aspects of politics, from the more broadest-oriented politics-- all the big wave of protests we saw in recent years, 2011, indignados, Occupy Wall Street-- to the more kind of traditional and organised forms of politics-- political parties, organised groups and so on and so forth.

And I think that there is a very interesting field where to discuss the question and assess the question of collective intelligence. Because social movements and parties are some of the phenomena where one can see more clearly the ability of individuals to act together and to act together based on a collective intelligence, on the ability to establish an intentionality that goes above and beyond individual intentionality.



One of the key aspects in the construction of this intentionality, what is collective intentionality, is decision making, and more specifically, deliberation. So deliberation has to be defined as the process by means of which decisions are made. So deliberation is associated with a certain type of democracy but is also a mutual term, a term used to describe the process by means to which we decide.

We decide where to go out for coffee or where to go partying. We decide what kind of slogan we use or what kind of protests we do, which day we will go out for a protest. And social movements are, and new parties are, at the [? rain ?] where these processes go on all the time. There are places where there are a lot of meetings, often too many meetings, too long of meetings.

A Spanish friend of mine called assemblies, such as those ones in the squares, iron ass democracy. Because you need to have an iron bottom to actually stand all those very long discussions. And what is interesting there is, how social media and internet and various applications are changing the game, how they're reshaping the ways in which people deliberate, how they are restructuring the process of decision making.

In order to understand that, I need to give you a little bit of theory. Because I think that it is important to have different analytical categories to understand where we are. I mean, when we talk about deliberation [? that a ?] democracy, there are mainly two types, two models there.

One is the so-called the deliberative or participatory direct democracy. That is, it is all about the process. It is all about the procedure. It is all about the quality of the decision. It is about consensus. It involves a suspicion of majority rule. We should involve as many people as possible. We shouldn't make anybody unhappy with the decision.

And the other model is more plebiscitary democracy. Referendum, for example, that's the extreme example-- yes or no, 0 or 1? It really maps onto the kind of binary code of computers, right? [? Athens ?] as in Greece, you want to vote no to the troika or yes to the troika? You want to get out of Europe or stay in Europe.

So the difference there is glaring, in that, it is not a participatory process. It is not a kind of consensus process. It is not a qualitative process. It is more of a quantitative process. That is, let's get as many people involved as possible-- we're talking about millions of people rather than thousands-- and let's get them to vote on an extremely punctual, extremely specific issue, where the options are reduced to two-- yes or no.

When we are exploring these models of democracy, we have different principles and criteria we need to take into account. I mean one is the efficiency and one is the legitimacy of decision making. Efficiency is how rapidly and how clearly and how strongly can you make a decision?

Usually the person, the leader, the personified leader in the individual is the best equipped to take an efficient decision. Because a person can take a decision in a second. And if the power is so concentrated, say in the personal dictator, the decision will have an incredible strength.



But this might not be legitimate, which is the other criteria. In order for a decision to be legitimate, instead, it needs to be recognised as something that has a kind of popular support, popular backing, a decision that has taken into account the ideas of several people.

And as you can see, these two principles are competing. It is difficult to have a decision that is very efficient and very legitimate. For example, the assemblies of 2011, they were criticised among others by [NON-ENGLISH] a figure of Podemos as being extremely democratic because people could participate a lot, could speak a lot, but extremely inefficient. Because sometimes it took days to make a decision. A decision such as, should we relinquish the camp, or not? So then there is competition between these two principles.

Another criteria is the position between extension, extent-- sorry about extension there-- extent and intensity. This is the two competing logics. That is, on the one hand, you can have decisions that are, at a very large extent, I mean they encompass a great number of people, a referendum. [? All ?] in Greece. Millions of people mobilised, but the quality of decision making is very limited, is two options, yes or no, 0 1, binary code.

At the opposite end, you have intensity of participation, that is, people who are actually able to qualitatively influence discussions, to qualitatively influence the content of a decision. That is, establish the topics that are going to be discussed, establish the content of the topics, for example, a policy.

First, deciding that this policy, a, is important. Secondly, establishing that this policy should go in this direction. And then in turn, that it should be implemented in this way. So these are all criteria that are important to take into account to kind of map out the field of collective deliberation and collective deliberation online.

So when we are trying to look at practical examples of that-- I mean, at the two opposite ends we have, as I said, as already kind of anticipated a bit, an assembly-- social movement assembly in public space. Say, for example, all the people in this room you measure your activities, your part of the social movements and you all decide together, let's go out and protest in Westminster.

And possibly all of you, in a six-hour discussion, or almost all of you, will have a chance to actually speak and say what you think. This type of democracy is very strong qualitatively because people can, almost all the people present can express their ideas and they can have a qualitative impact.

They don't just say yes or no. But they can actually say, hey, I think we should do it this way or I think that we should use this slogan. They can have actually an impact on the content of decision. But the number is very small.

At the opposite end, once again, the referendum-- millions of people, but just a very simple choice. So in a way, as you can see, these intensity and extents are, in a way, competing principles. It is impossible to have a decision that has a very high intensity and a very high extent. Or it is very difficult.



If you have a bit of a systematisation of that-- again extension, I don't know why. Yesterday night I changed extent for extension. I'm sorry, Shakespeare, to do that to you but I couldn't help it.

So we can have four quadrants there. I mean we can have forms of deliberation where we have a low intensity and a low extent of participation. For example, mailing lists, general mailing lists where people write an email once a month. And also, the number of subscribers is quite small.

Then we go to other platforms that allow for a high extensional participation but quite low intensity of participation. Petition websites-- Avaaz, change.org, 38 degrees-- I mean, they do a great job in what they do. But actually, come on people, ordinary people. That is, people who are not launching petitions, we're not acting as organisers, say, have a very low degree of interaction. That is, the choice is basically, again, a binary choice. Which maps onto binary codes, 0 or 1, support or not support, sign or not sign, there's the choice.

Then we go down to the left, bottom quadrant where we have high intensity of participation and low extent of participation-- small online communities, Facebook groups, Mumble chats, spaces that are used, for example, internally within activist groups or parties, to make decisions. So there are few people involved, but there is a high intensity of participation. People can interact a lot and can make decisions almost as if they were in the same room.

And then finally, the bottom right quadrant is where we have something approaching an espousal of these two, a marriage of these two principles-- high intensity and high extent-- for example, large Facebook pages in which people are debating, which hundreds of thousands of people are debating, topped with Twitter hashtags that make it into trending topics where people are intensively participating, yet they have a kind of mass outreach, or systems of collective deliberation utilised by various movements and parties.

We see these kind of processes at play in many of the experiments launched by recent social movements and recent political parties. What we have there are two types of phenomena. We can categorise phenomena in two different buckets.

The first one is dedicated systems of online deliberation, of online discussion and decision making. That is, platforms that have been designed explicitly for the purpose of deliberation-- DemocracyOS, Loomio, liquid democracy-- in recent years is really impressive the intensity of experimentation and development in the area, development of new digital democratic platforms designed explicitly for decision making.

But then we also have a number of so-called non-dedicated platforms. That is, platforms that are kind of general purpose, yet are utilised informally as a platform of decision making-- social media, Facebook, Twitter, and many others-- and the way in which the interactions and the volume and the quality of interactions online comes to act as a sort of means of a permanent consultation between political vanguards, political leadership groups, and their bases-- an internet crowd, so to speak.

I'll give you some examples of these. If we look at the first bucket, that's one of the clearest examples, the five star movement which launched its platform called the system operative



cinque stelle-- five star operating system. It's not a Macintosh Operating System or a Microsoft. It's [INAUDIBLE] the [? party ?] operating system, where you have different areas where you can express your opinion on laws, on bills, on draughts.

Then you have an area with decisions. There's one to your right, where you can decide yes or no, candidate or no candidate. Am I going to support this or not support this?

Unfortunately, recently it has been utilised a bit as a digital guillotine by [? graylow ?] in a sense. Like, this guy didn't really respect the party rules. Should we kick him out or not? Out, out. It's good, [? nephews ?] of the Romans, Italians sometimes like to say yes, die, die.

And there is other things. I mean it is a system that encompasses-- less than 50,000 people are subscribed to this-- between 35,000 and 50,000. People have all these interactions available to them.

This, for example, is a screenshot of the internet primaries that were conducted back in 2013, no 2012 before the last national elections. This was the system in which candidates fielded in local constituencies were decided.

The funny thing was that some people were selected with just 100 votes. Because very few people actually-- it was 35,000 people who could participate in the system but locally, sometimes few people participated. So people ended up basically being fielded as a candidate and eventually becoming MP because just 100 people, or 120 people, said they should run. So which can be seen as a distortion of a democracy.

And this is a screen shot from the operative system where you see one of the consultations that they launch sometimes. So, for example, when there is a law being discussed in parliament when they want to know what the base thinks about the law and how the base thinks the party should vote on this law, they often launch consultations. Such as, which electoral system do you prefer?

It's a bit of a variation on the referendum formats, in the sense you have three options. It's a kind of trinary code instead of binary. It's not 0 or 1, but it is first past the post, and other systems that I won't go into.

Podemos, the party in Spain which is considered kind of like a successor, a spin-off of the indignados movement, have developed a system of decision making that is more sophisticated and more transparent than the one of the five star movement. What it integrates is more of an element of discussion through a Reddit platform, Plaza Podemos. They're using Reddit, a section of Reddit to discuss various issues.

Whereby, the issues that are considered by internet users on the page as the most important one, then are supposed to be discussed at higher level and be approved on a decision making platform. So what they do here, they use basically the system of recommendation, the vote up of reddit as a form of consultation to decide, what are the issues that the base really cares about? And what [? other ?] issues should be voted about?



And then they have their own platform, Participa, which allows people to vote on various issues. What you see there is a screen shot for electing internal figures, internal roles in the party, the secretary, and the kind of leading team in the party which was performed back in 2014.

Podemos has a much greater number of people who are actually participating on the website. I think at this time it was a bit less than 200,000. And now according to recent figures, it's almost 300,000. So it's 300,000 people who can vote on various issues, on candidates and policies, and so on and so forth. For much recently, has been criticised for even being more limited.

So I'll just go quickly to the second bucket of forms of digital collective deliberation. That is, social media as a space of deliberation. What I think is very interesting there is, besides the presence of dedicated online decision making platforms, we are also seeing how increasingly social media are becoming an informal space of decision making.

That is, a space where people come to perceive metrics such as likes, re-tweets, favourites, not just as an interaction but as actually as an expression of a certain opinion from the base. Whereby, for example, if we write a Facebook post on a political page, and it gets 1,500 likes, the message I'm receiving is obviously very different from a post that only get 15 likes. That is, it becomes a measure of consensus for a certain decision and for a certain message and the connected course of action.

So the principle we see there is basically, one like, one vote. Whereby metrics such as, number of likes, re-tweets, followers, favourites, plus ones come to act as an indication of the interest and approval for a certain content. So the interesting thing of social media in the space of deliberation is that they marry two things that are difficult to marry.

Referendum, for example, many people participating-- yes or no-- and the participatory element of participation. That is, the ability to qualitatively influence the content of discussion. It is not just say yes or no, but say yellow or black, or tomorrow, or in three months, or because of this reason, or because of this reason.

The affordancies of social media, the fact that people can use user-generated content as well as produce interactions allow to marry these two elements. So I'll just give you-- I'm cognizant of time-- so I'll just give you some brief examples of how that operates. One interesting case is the Kullena Khaled Said Facebook page which I studied quite a bit during my time in Egypt.

The Kullena Khaled Said Facebook page was the page through which the 25th of January revolution in Egypt was launched. Egyptian activists sometimes joke that it was the first programmed revolution. It was the first revolution you could RSVP to, that you could get on your Google Calendar. And actually, it is not a joke because it was the exact page that first launched the idea of the 25th of January protest.

And the interesting thing was, there were two attempts. The first attempt had planned in late December 2010 at a time in which the political climate was not very good for movements. Wael Ghonim, the admin of the page, wrote a post, what do you guys think about having a



protest on the 25th of January, the National Day of Police? Let's celebrate our police. The response was very lukewarm, which signalled that the base was not in favour of that. Therefore, it translated as a "no" decision.

There was a second attempt in mid-January 2011, coinciding with all the enthusiasm provoked by the victory of the revolution in Tunisia, which is sealed on the 14th of January 2011. And guess what? Same message, pretty much the same message gets an avalanche of likes. Now, I don't remember the exact number, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000-- I mean, a clear measure of strong consensus. What does that translate into? It translates into the fact that the admin of the page creates a Facebook event to launch the 25th of January day of protest.

So you can see there the way in which Facebook interactions-- you have a graph of comments and likes, spikes on the Kullena Khaled Said page-- how they translate into permanent consultation mechanism. A temperature check of the base's sentiments, of the base's moods, which allows the vanguards, the leadership, the admins, because there are admins, there are vanguards, there are leaders-- I won't go into that-- to basically gauge the sentiment of the base and see whether there is sufficient support for a line of action.

You want to launch a complaint, right? You want to see if you actually have the people to launch that complaint. These instruments provide an affordable tool to identify if that resource is present. I won't really go into this, because I don't have time.

But I will just conclude by saying sometimes social media are presented as horizontal space where everybody is equal. No flat world, which it doesn't matter if you are whatever, a dog, nobody will see that on the internet. Everybody can interact. But actually it's not like that. It is quite a central space. It is quite hierarchical space in many instances.

But it is a circular space. There is very strong affordances allowing for a quick feedback loop between the vanguards and the crowds, between the people who are launching informal or formal consultations, and the people who are participating in them. Thanks, so much.

OK. Thank you, everybody and thank you to inviting me. This is a pleasure to be here and explain our analytical and life experience in Spain around 15 May. Today, I'm going to talk about-- thank you [Stephana ?] to invite me-- today I'm going to talk about the 15 May movement and how this experience can help us to think the challenge of network democracy or the future democracy that probably we need to battle with.

I have divided my presentation in three parts. The first part is about to explain, just a little bit, the 15 May movements and which things can be interesting for the discussion that we're going to have today. The second part is about a concept that we have elaborated, call it, multitudinal identity and if this can work also to think the collective intelligence. And the third part is about which learnings we can take from the movement to apply in the network democracy.

The 15 May movement-- we believe that it's an interesting process of self organisation because in just one week we can see the spread of, for example, the camps that we have in the first picture. And we had around 200 camps in the main cities of the country with no central



point of organisation. Nobody says that you have to create your own camp, but everybody created their own camps.

But the interesting thing is the self organisation process is not just happening during 2011, it's happening until today. In the other picture you have, for example, the [? igroups ?], this platform who is working for the housing rights and who is preventing the evictions on the poor families who have been evicted.

And you have, for example, a lot of groups that have been multiplied around the country. Or you have also the circle groups. This is the main legal structure of Podemos groups in the cities. And this picture is from June 2014 and we have around 800 circles.

Taking data from Twitter and from different years, we have the camps in 2011 and the global mobilisation in 2011 on October coinciding with the explosion of Occupy Movement. And you can see that the connections between the 15 May movement and the Occupy Wall Street movement and there are a lot of connection there through the network.

For example, then we have the 2012 action to surround the Congress in Spain, where we had also a lot of activity and also coordination through the neighbours to the action. And finally, we have an interesting graph about-- we have two main communities and rule one is that the government, the Partido Popular government, and the green graph is the people pushing them to approve a law to stop the evictions. And this is interesting how the people is pushing to the governments, also through the networks.

And this is also interesting in the 15 May, the evolution of the movement. We have the camps in 2011 and every body knows. But after that we have like hundreds of new initiatives that was born with different specialisations, like political parties, or the people working about the debt problem, or housing, or water, or health care, or education, a lot of groups born after 2011.

And finally 15 May movement have been a movement with different impact. For example, it has changed the dynamics of social movement. For example, in 2011 we had 20,000 demonstrations in Spain and in 2012 we had double, 40,000 demonstrations. This is very interesting how the protests is in the civic society of the country.

We see also a lot of effects on political institutions. For example, how they try to introduce transparency measures in their laws or try to clean all the corruption scandals that they have during the last three years. And also we can remark the impacts or the effects in society. For example, the politics is in the street.

To give you an interesting example, that the most important TV show on Saturday night is about politics. And there are a lot of politicians talking about the corruption and the new measures that they are going to do. It is very interesting because seven years ago it was like impossible to think that the TV show on Saturday night was about politics.

The second question I'm going to talk about today is this notion about multitudinal identities. And it's based on a study that we had during the taking data from the three years on Facebook



in pages related to the movement. And we have tried to [? delimitate ?] what is the 15 May in networks.

We have this graph in your left. This is the green graph is the movement and you have the yellow graph connected to the green graph and this is Occupy Wall Street movement and we use it to see how the different needs from other political organisations will use the two main unions in Spain [NON-ENGLISH], the two red points, and we have seen that the difference between the 15 May movement and the unions, we can see clearly the difference between them.

And also to just to be sure that this is like this and there exists this kind of differentiation, we have taken the different communities and we have stressed them with analytical technique of network analysis. Call it [? cacord ?] [? discomposition. ?] And we have found that the 15 May communities is very strong and more resistant if you take out the most important edges. This is a little bit technical, but after that we can discuss. But it is very interesting to understand how the collective mind could work on the social protests.

The other question very interesting is the revolution of the movement. We have different moments on different periods of time. And we can see moments of synchronisation and moments of desynchronisation of the movement. And this is very interesting because in different movements and different moments, we have different main actors.

In July of 2011 we have, for example, the camps like the main [? cones ?] of the activity of the network. And then we have in 2012, for example, the initiative who want to launch the campaign tools around the Congress. This is very interesting because we can take two main concepts here.

One is this notion about temporary distributed leadership. This is very interesting because the 15 May is not one actor, it is a lot of actors and different leadership between this kind of cloud of actors. And then we have another kind of functional specialisation, in the sense that each actor can realise different functions. And the other thing is the question of participation and all the engagement in the 15 May. Almost all the engagement in 15 May is based on the action.

The people participate because exist an interaction existent in a specific action. It's not like an ideological [? inscription. ?] It's like I'm part of, because I can participate through Facebook, or through Twitter, or through the public assemblies in squares, or with my neighbour, neighbourhood assemblies, or wherever. And this is very interesting, because it's not like I'm a communist because I believe with the communist ideologies about the question of to be part of doing something specific.

The third part of my presentation is how this 15 May experience can contribute or can give us some tips about how to construct, how to build a network democracy. The first one is, it's obvious that democracy is in the centre of the explosion of the movement in 2011. For example, here you have a graph on Google searches in Spain and you have the word "crisis" and we can see that the explosion in 2008, but we have also the word "democracy" in 2011. It conceived on May 2011.



And this is very interesting because democracy is in the centre of the movement. Why in 2011 everybody's talking about democracy? Because democracy is there, democracy is in the main cities in their mind and in the movement.

Also, about the tools, we tend to think that the movement had this kind of mistake just to think that we have to find the perfect tool for the democracy of the future. Like, if there exists a tool that can solve anything in the democracy and we believe after the experience in 15 May that the tool is just a result of a social process.

For example, in 15 May they don't have the best tools. They use the tools that they had, for example, Twitter and Facebook and forums and blogs and WordPress or whatever. The importance is how collective intelligence can re-appropriate these tools to hack it or to change the functions because they are designed and how they can redefine the uses.

Which learnings also we can take from the 15 May? One, I will say that the deliberation and decision making process cannot be separated from the grassroots and collective social dynamics of the movement. This graph is very interesting. It's from the last local elections in Barcelona. And here we can see all the Twitter relations related to the local elections.

And each colour is a party. We have all the different parties, but in the green colour is very interesting because it's the party who won the elections, Barcelona in Common, who is a kind of social platforms coming from the movement. And this is just the one cluster who has two clusters.

One is the front end, the public figures, the leader and the collective account of the party. But behind, you have another green community that is a lot of people supporting them with distributed behaviour and it's very interesting because we have two close communities working together in a difference from the other all parties.

Yes, this is the last slide. This is what the movement calls the praise and the institutional [? Sal ?], how the movement arrived to the institutions. And after the local elections we have some interesting experience in Madrid, Barcelona, Saragossa, the most important cities where the citizen platform related to the movement and they tried to create different platforms and participatory process about to bring the initial spirit of 15 May.

This is very interesting, for example, that how today Spain is a kind of laboratory for direct democracy and experimentation around these kind of issues that today we're going to discuss. But I just say something, the first important thing is how important is the process, not just the tool or the final front end of our website. We need to involve all the actors in civic society in the movement and the citizen with no inter-mediation to participate.

And another important thing is that the decision and the decision making-- finally it has to be bending because to give to the process credibility. And also we need to have in mind all the problems of politics that always are there, like leadership, or lobbyists pushing in the decisions, or, for example, the importance of the mass media in the deficient process of communication, the fruition of participatory process. But, yes, this is the challenge and we have a lot of knowledge accumulated through four years. And I think that better later with the questions, I can solve your more specific questions. Thank you.



The problem is there was so much hope in online democracy. And there's been a longstanding utopian discourse about online democracy, which has been there at least since the '90s. This idea that, you know, we'll get rid of our [MPs, ?] and we'll all be there with our mouths voting on any deal. Which was very problematic in a way.

Actually, what we see now is the most diffused and actually the most working model, the most influential model of online democracy. We are seeing is more of the plebiscitory form. That is basically an online referendum. An online referendum which allows for the participation of hundreds of thousands of people, possibly even more, possibly even millions, but which has some serious problems.

That is, it allows for the participation of many people, but then there are questions as to who decides the questions. Who decides, what is the topic people are going to vote about? We saw also that in the Greek referendum, for example, there were many discussions about, man, does that question even make sense? How can you vote on a programme that is not really the programme that the Troika is going to propose anyway?

And these kind of questions about the heartbeat or the character of a referendum are always there. Who decides? Who picks the decision? And that act of deciding what the question is, is an act of leadership. It is not something that comes from bottom up process. There is someone there, a leader, [INAUDIBLE], or anybody else was basically asking for a mandate.

That is what mostly this type of decision making process is. Is it leader, or force, neither collective or individual, asking a base for a mandate. So that, I think, can have a lot of power in certain situations where you need to have punctual decisions of the yes or no character or limited options.

But it is not what people had in mind when they had this more utopian idea of online democracy as a process where many people can participate, get involved. So, I think, to me, the kind of the big issue is how can we combine in a workable mix, in a workable blend, a kind of participatory desire with this need for mass participation which tends to go towards more plebiscitory forms.

I would like to offer an additional consideration which is this question of who builds the platform. Because any decision that you platform, within it has its internal logics and its internal affordance around decision making and that kind of unfortunately affects the outcome.

Totally. There are questions as to the ownership of the platforms. For example, the five star movement has been criticised because it runs all working operations in-house. While Podemos utilises an external company dealing with verification of all voting which allows for more transparency. Because you have, basically, somebody outside of your organisation that is actually seeing what you're doing.

And then there are questions about the various parameters involving decision making, which are actually very-- are not technical decisions they are extremely political decisions. Where do you set the bar? Where do you set the threshold for a certain discussion to go into the general discussion, for example, on Reddit. What is the threshold?



If you have a very low threshold, it means you will have lots of entropy, a lot of information overload. If you set a very high threshold, that is, for example, a discussion needs the support of 10% of all subscribers to be discussed and voted upon, then you're risking to limit participation.

So to me it is really a matter of where you pitch all these parameters. But again is not a technical decision. It is not a decision that has merely to do with questions of efficiency. It's a question of a political decision because it involves a certain vision of what democracy is.

So if you see a difference, for example, with a social movement that specifically focuses on one issue versus movements that have to create a whole broad scope.

Definitely. I mean, the [INAUDIBLE] movement, because of the largely unexpected culture of the movement, largely spontaneous-- though it was organised-- but spontaneous, nobody could plan it, the movement could not develop platforms of decision making of its own. So the problem was the platform of decision making were the assemblies.

And assemblies are beautiful. They're a fantastic human experience. They can work in certain circumstances but they're very inefficient in the long term. I mean everybody but the most [? farazike ?] believers in [? that ?] democracy would have to admit to that. So I think what is interesting in these online platforms is that they allow to translate some of those principles onto a larger scale, while keeping with some of the participatory experience of direct democracy in the squares.

According to recent commentators, Podemos has disappointed idealists of collective decision making because they ended up being much more centralised than maybe it looks like from the outset and I'm sure you have your own opinions on that. Could you maybe sketch out for us what's an ideal national but collectivist party system might look like?

We're at two hours here, three minutes maybe, if you can manage it.

Yeah. There's nothing immediately. It is very difficult to say this because the real politics is the politics of the travels and the negotiations. And I'm sure that the Podemos is doing some things wrong, but they're having interesting tension inside. For example, the people pushing inside the party to open the participatory process and, for example, if you get a determined number of signatures you can approve a kind of law that later can be approved for all the militants in the party.

Ideally, I don't know that ideally is like walking, asking, and solving the problems that you find in the way. There's no ideal. But I think that Podemos-- the interesting thing is the combination between the citizen intelligence, the ability of the movements to push this process, and the ability of the institutional power and in the moment that activists are in the institutional power how they can open this process to the citizens and we are moving in these tensions in the debate.

I was wondering whether you had some data on who actually participate in those things? Because I would suspect there would be some inequality regarding access to [? YouTube, ?] so younger people socially connected. Well, so I was wondering whether there were things to



be done to make access more popular and whether there were some data, but how popular were those participation forums?

Yes. I forgot to say but, probably, this is the most important thing. And just the people who is connected is just a little part but is an important part. Because they have the ability to promote campaigns and to be like a new mass media in the sense of the ability to push politics, and to promote the initiative like the camps.

But this is why I say that the importance is the process and not the tool. The tool is just the result and we need to dedicate a big effort to digital [? authorisation ?] and the digital promotion and to put centres to help people to participate in every neighbourhood. The analogical actions and digital actions, they have to work together.

And yes, this is the secret to promote. And you have to use the mass media to promote the participatory process and you have to use every, I don't know, every promotional space to-- the democracies are kind of new culture, that we have to put inside the society in everywhere. Because we have to learn to participate and we have to learn to be active.

And we have to learn how to be involved in the public decisions and not just one time every four years. But if I want, I could have participate a lot of times a year in different political process. And this is not just about this participate in some deliberative process, participatory budgets process, whatever. There are a lot of mechanisms and a lot of countries and cities in the world start to use it.

[INAUDIBLE], a broader spectrum of cases to discuss.

I mean, I don't have any specific data on the demographics, more anecdotal data looking at interviewing people. Obviously, the kind of selection of people who participates in these processes tends to be quite biased, in terms of class, in terms of education. I mean gender often is quite balanced.

But I would say it's-- there's been a very long debate about the digital divide. How should we do for people who are left outside? And is very important to actually continue pushing in that sense. But the great difference in the debates now vis-a-vis say, 2000, and the early noughties or before. It's actually, now, the internet has become the mass media. It is not anymore a limited medium.

So, in a way, any form of participation you would always be biased, any participatory process, any form of internal democracy, especially, because most of the things we're talking about here-- besides the things I was talking about-- which are kind of city democracy experiments, partisan movement is internal democracy. And actually reactivating internal democracy, I think, is a fundamental step to reactivate democracy at large.

Because what is the problem we have been facing in the last years? It is called democratic deficit. That is, you have, for example, the Tory party or the Labour Party, but the only interactions you have with them is only during elections. Instead, it is important to [? research ?] forms of interaction on an almost daily basis, so that the members of the Labour Party can discuss policies.



Hi. Thank you for your talk. I guess my question was very similar to that. To what extent do you think [INAUDIBLE] communities are actually inclusive of the populations generally? But I think you answered that very clearly now.

But I think that is a very important question in terms of the future research agenda in terms of pushing and understanding the composition of those communities and to what extent the access barriers can be overcome.

Just to add a little thing, in the 15 May experience, it's very interesting how the people start to use digital technologies after the experience in the squares. For example, a large group of old people call it [NON-ENGLISH]. It's a group of people older than 65, who start to organise and to do actions in the city.

But they start too old, so using intensively Twitter and Facebook and a website and this is very interesting how, through the movement experience, they start to use some different digital tools to organise it. And different groups, like educational groups or health care defence groups also do the same. And they had this learning experience with digital technologies.

I'm sorry just one more question and I've decided to give priority to women. So-- to balance, I apologise.

I wonder if you've done studies in terms of a sustained engagement? So you were mentioning just now that people were perhaps not using technology first, and then movement started in the squares. Then they went online using Twitter and other form of media, and then how long do they keep engaged? And are these a sustainable form of discussion and democracy, or are the people then leaving?

Well, the activity depends on the campaigns and the different movements. But the thing that we have been observing is that when we have a peak of activity, the communities engage again. It's like this temporary leadership, and we see the different moments where the people is in the networks but is when the people come together in the networks and also in the different campaigns. And it is interesting how the first connection starts in 2011 but the weak ends don't break, it keep it. It can be reactivated a lot of the time, and this is very interesting.

I think the prognosis and [INAUDIBLE] is a huge one, because what you see many of these experiments is that at the beginning there is a lot of enthusiasm, lot of people subscribe, a lot of people participate. But then a sort of depression effect starts, which you see a very kind of severe drop in participation. And you saw that in five star. You saw that in Podemos.

And, in a way, the problem is, how do you make it more sustainable, more long term, in a way? Because it is also a bit about our fluid visual culture. We are very good at start-ups. We are not very good at sustaining things. So very good at beginnings, but then that long, medium, and long term is more difficult. And I think that raises the research question, what are the mechanisms that we can establish in order to guarantee a stabilisation, say, of certain structures and forms of participation.

