Civility and Participatory Democracy
The Importance of Civil Society and Active Citizenship

Thomas P. Boje, Professor of Sociology, Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University, Denmark

This thought-provoking book conceptualizes the importance of civil society and citizenship in building a sustainable and participatory democracy. It considers the ways in which networks and organizations promoting common interests contribute to this mediating space between the public and private spheres, examining the impacts of the diversity of values and attitudes held by these organizations. Taking a normative position, Thomas P. Boje argues for the importance of social justice and civility in an active, liberating, equitable and participatory society. This book concludes with a detailed discussion of the conditions required for a participatory democratic system in which all citizens are involved in the planning, decision-making and implementation of crucial decisions.

'Bridging reflections on civil society and democracy, Thomas Boje addresses the central questions of the conditions under which civil action improves democratic processes. Covering fundamental debates for normative as well as empirical scholarship, he convincingly argues for the importance of social justice and civility for an active, liberating and participatory society.'
– Donatella Della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy

In times where popular resentment against prevailing orders and practices sustains an autocratization of political and social systems, this book presents an engaged and well-informed plea for counter-initiatives. It argues the case for better links between state and society – a liberal democratic order that regains strength by more participatory mechanisms and types of welfare and service systems which foster a co-productive role for the public. The result is a compelling case for an active kind of citizenship and a civility that counts for society at large.'
– Adalbert Evers, Heidelberg University, Germany

'Civil society and civility are basic conditions for participatory democracy. Liberal democratic ideals of civility and citizenship entail a vibrant civil society enabling, through a plurality of organizations, citizens' active participation and mediating between private and collective interests. To make this normative case, Thomas P. Boje draws on a wide range of sociological and political theories and empirical researches, developing a comprehensive view of the significance of civil society for the present and future of liberal democracy.'
– Bernard Enjolras, Institute for Social research, Oslo, Norway

'Thomas P. Boje makes an important contribution to the literature on the role of civil society and active citizenship in building sustainable and participatory democracies. In these turbulent times, when democracy is under threat from rising right-wing, authoritarian populism and declining trust in political institutions and parties, it is essential to examine how citizens' actions and networks, contribute to trust and cooperation. Of course, civil society organizations are not free from conflict, mistrust or competition and Boje deftly grapples with these tensions as he lays out a series of ideas for democratic involvement and emancipation through these organizations.'
– Armine Ishkanian, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

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