in social movements. In particular, we shall address the following topics:

a) *Movements' criticisms of existing democracy* The new social movements generally are characterized by the claim against the bureaucratic and hierarchical tendencies as well as the strong concentration and selectivity of communication context in the advanced democracies. Our goal (especially within WP3) will be to clarify general criticism of representative democracy, understanding its social and political sources, with reference to specific cultural variables (related to political national and local tradition, specific social actors profiles, policy grounds, social and political timing, national and general political contest, etc.) as well as the territorial level of power addressed.

b) *Movements' internal practice of democracy.* The existing model of democracy is founded on bureaucratic representative structures, concentrated flows of communication on the mass-media, and strong asymmetry in knowledge about policies. Challenging this model, the emerging movement on global issues proposes non-hierarchical organization, based on individuals and organizational networks of horizontal social relationships, with broad participation and inter-changeable leadership. In the Social Forums or similar networks, participatory practices could be traced in the internal structure of the thematic working groups, open to citizens' participation, and in the periodic public local assemblies. Concerning internal dynamics, we want to analyse (especially in WP4. WP5 and WP6) the ways in which agenda and working groups are defined and speakers or facilitators are chosen and rotated. Moreover, we will investigate the presence of tendencies to permanent specialization and professionalisation. With the cross-national and cross-territorial comparative analyses, we shall assess the weight of the variables related to the specific social actors involved (social-professional profile, educational level, generation, gender, ethnic profile, political belonging and previous experiences, territorial context of life, issue of mobilisation, personal time budgeting, etc.) and to the socio-economic, political, institutional and communicational context.

c) *Movements' strategy in the construction of public sphere.* The way of producing information and feeding communication by movement is a privileged field in order to evaluate the innovative, democratic capacity of new technologies. The social movement activists are frequent users of virtual networks (i.e. the Internet), both as internal and semi-public instrument of organization, debate, co-ordination, and as means of direct, unmediated coverage of activities (events, campaigns and various initiatives) of the movements themselves, as well as instrument of protest (webstrikes, mirror—website etc.). In this context we shall observe (in particular, in WP2) a variety of practices, made available by the new communication media, in particular, web sites and mailing lists promoted by the different groups and organizations, or related to specific campaigns and events, or activated by specialized groups of media-activists.

These areas of interest are to be developed at three main geographical levels: supranational level, national level, local level. In order to grasp both macro-dimensions and micro-dynamics of the movements, we shall proceed by integrating different methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative.

Our research on "good" and "bad" practices of deliberative democracies would allow us to identify preconditions for their development. First of all, the research is based on a **cross-national** comparison of a number of European countries (France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and Switzerland), as well as an analysis of supra-national institutions. In our selection of countries we have attempted to ensure variance on certain dimensions that seem relevant for the development of experiences of participatory democracy. This will allow us to assess the effects of different political institutions (degree of territorial centralisation of power, functional division, presence of instruments of direct democracy), as well as the cultural traditions of dealing with challengers on the development of deliberative forms of democracy. Since past research indicated the survival of national characteristics of social movement families in the various European countries, we can expect that the organizational and cultural resources of different movements also to influence their attitudes towards deliberative democracy.

We also expect experiences with deliberative democracy to vary according to the **different territorial levels** concerned: from local, to national, to supranational. Our research aims at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the articulation of a European civil society at these different levels, exploring its internal practices and its pattern of dialogue with the institutions. The institutions more attentive to the new movement's claims tend increasingly to build informal institutional networks to facilitate exchange of experiences with movement organizations.

OPERATIONAL GOALS

At the **supranational** level, a broad picture of the definition, roles and activities of transnational social movement organisations active on global trade issues will be painted on the basis of an analysis of the websites of organisations and events on global trade issues, and in particular on the new agreement on trade in services (GATS).

At the **national** level, we shall look at some main protest campaigns that took place on global issues after 1999, in order to single out the organization and groups that took part in them; their criticism of representative democracy, and their internal as well as external experiments with deliberative democracy.

We plan to choose a "parallel summit" during an official international summit, a European Social Forum and the multi-level campaign on an international trade issues such as GATS.

Focusing on these campaigns we shall single out the organizations and groupings that mobilized protest. An analysis of their documents and organizational practices will follow in order to understand their normative model of democracy as well as their actual organizations. From the same sources, we shall collect and map details of the experiments in participatory democracy in which the movement organizations participated, and their judgements upon them. On this base we shall draw a map of general visions and experiences of participatory methods, and identify the positions of the different actors involved.

At the **local** level, a few cases shall be selected for in-depth analysis. At this level, we shall analyse in details both the internal and external practices of democracy of new-global organizations. Case studies shall focus on: groups and movements acting in local context; experiences or attempts of implementations of deliberative/participatory method, also in the contest of self-organized initiatives (as provision of social or educational services, self help initiatives, small social enterprises, squats); relationship with political institutions, and institutional responses to demands of direct participation. Research efforts will be concentrated on a certain number of specific policy fields that are of central concern for the movement on global issues, such as environmental and social quality of life in urban contexts, social inclusion, and participation of immigrants.