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Overcoming Coloniality: The Potential of South-South Dialogue about Citizenship, Participatory Democracy, and Development between Brazil and India

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OVERCOMING COLONIALITY: THE POTENTIAL OF SOUTH – SOUTH DIALOGUE ABOUT CITIZENSHIP, PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, AND DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN BRAZIL AND INDIA

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Abstract

This chapter argues that North-South dialogue is heavily influenced by the colonial past and burdened by extreme power inequalities. Former colonizing nations control many of the agendas of such dialogue, exposing it to the risks of paternalism, post-colonialism, and tutelage. As a result, coloniality is a condition difficult to escape in north-south dialogue. South-south dialogue, on the other hand, is less implicated by this burden, thus offering a platform for a potentially free - and freeing – critical interchange of ideas and empirical examples that reflect subaltern experiences and provide opportunities for mutual learning. One area where this dialogue is particularly promising is around the themes of democracy, citizenship, participation, and development. Examples from both Brazil and India of participatory budgeting, participatory planning, and participatory policy-making clearly demonstrate that democratic participation has a positive impact on democracy and development – especially when development is understood the way Amartya Sen (1999) has defined it, namely as an extension of capabilities and agency, both at the individual and the collective levels. By comparing examples of democratic participation from India and Brazil, this paper points at the potential for south-south dialogue and argues for a reconceptualization of such core Western ideas as democracy, citizenship, and development by anchoring them in a strong conception of active citizenship and direct democratic participation.

Introduction

North-South dialogue has been burdened by the heavy legacies of colonialism, slavery, imperialism, hegemony, and dependency, structuring the field of international dialogue in such a way that mutual respect and a fruitful learning from each other was rendered extremely difficult, despite the often-proclaimed good intentions of northern and western organizations - governmental and non-governmental alike. The very real power disequilibrium that characterizes most north-south relations not only complicates a true cooperation; it also pollutes the interchange of ideas and experiences, as northern and western institutions have been able to set most of the agendas and define the terms of what should be talked about and how. As a result, it is difficult to escape the mental and

analytical frameworks that the north and west have defined so long ago, justifying them with a long history of ongoing research and knowledge-production, and thus deciding what a worthwhile worldview is and how such a worldview best translates into research programs and policies; how a successful paradigm looks like; what research questions are worth pursuing with what kind of methodology. The legacies of Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hobbes and the like are impossible to ignore or avoid – and very difficult to compete with in terms of defining alternative approaches to think about and analyze reality, let alone formulate concrete policy proposals (Chakrabarty, 2000).

This chapter argues that some thought needs to be given to the nature of northern and western hegemony and that deconstructing it provides a basis upon which south-south dialogue can be constructed. After outlining this effort, I proceed by focusing on a one concrete domain where fruitful south-south learning and interchange can happen, namely around the topic citizenship and local participation. To illustrate this possibility, I focus on the mutual learnings that comparing Indian and Brazilian examples of community participation in politics and policy-making has to offer, as both countries have engaged in a plethora of highly informative and consequential experiments involving local communities. Their experiences allow us to inductively formulate some general statements about the conceptualization and nature of development in order to rethink it from a south-south perspective.

How to Overcome Western Hegemony
As stated in the introduction, it is difficult, if not impossible, to overcome the Western tradition associated with such names as Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Hume, Rousseau, Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, and the like – to name just a few. Overcoming, or sidestepping, these traditions and focusing instead on one's own, non-western, writers and philosophers, is, in my view, not the most fruitful path to take. The more fruitful way to "deal with" the heavy legacy of Western traditions, I want to suggest, is twofold: on one hand, it is important to rescue non-western traditions and develop autochthonous research programs that rely on non-western thought and tradition so that they can be added to the already existing, Western, traditions and paradigms. This can be easily justified by unveiling the narrowness and limitations of the Western tradition – a tradition that seems inevitable connected to the always current crises of different markets, the degradation of the environment, and the instrumentalization of culture, education, and life itself by narrowing their value and richness towards one single motive: profit. Complementing western philosophical traditions with non-western ones thus promises not only to enrich the spectrum of discussions; it also bears the potential to enlarge the possible mental and ideological frameworks that guide our thoughts and actions towards more sustainability and welfare. Given the state of the world and its population, this seems a rather urgent matter. As there is no shortage of non-western philosophies, ideologies, and mental frameworks, this endeavor should not be too hard to achieve.

However, for such a complementing of western with non-western thought to succeed, a second effort must be undertaken, namely a critical analysis of the "Western" in western. Stated in other words, hegemonic western traditions need to be critically scrutinized and deconstructed up to the point where they reveal not just their genealogy, but also their limitations and biases. In most cases, this genealogy, I want to suggest, is not western at all, or at least not adequately captured by the "Western" label.

Deconstructing the West

What is the Western tradition? Let me proceed by suggesting what it is not: If we think of a northern hegemony based on a Western tradition, Ancient Greece comes to mind as its birthplace. However, as Martin Bernal (1987) has demonstrated, classical Athens stood at the end of a development that had its roots far beyond Greece, in Africa and Asia. It was much later, under the auspices of German racial science, that Greece was sanitized and declared "Aryan" and "Western." The origins of the western tradition were certainly far less homogeneous and western than they were presented later. In sum, ancient Greece, often considered the birthplace of the West and of Western civilization, was much more heterogeneous and culturally, as well as demographically, diverse than the label "West" suggests.

The same argument holds for the next place commonly associated to the origins of Western civilization, Rome. To declare southern Italy the birthplace of "the West" ignores the populational diversity of this region – and it overestimates its parochialism. Even more after the Roman Republic fell to Octavian, in 27 BC, the reach of the Roman Empire included such a broad variety of cultures, traditions, and institutions that labeling them as "Western" seems unjustifiable and silly. After the head of the Roman Empire moved to Constantinople, in 330 AD, such a label seems utterly out of place. In other words: If the Western tradition is the Christian Roman tradition, then it is by definition more Eastern than Western, at least after the year 330, when the center of the Roman Christian Empire moved to Constantinople.

Furthermore, if Christian religion is declared as the core of the Western Tradition, then we should be aware that Christian religion emerged in the Middle East, splintering away from an anything-but-Western Judaism. From its heartland in Palestine, it first spread to what are now Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece, and Turkey. In sum: Christian religion is hardly a western tradition and, after some very basic scrutiny, the label "West" looses much of its analytical content, as it does not have a clear geographical, cultural, or demographic content.

One final, and more contemporary, example to elucidate my point: When zooming into contemporary Europe, we quickly realize how much institutional diversity coexists within the modern manifestation of the West, i.e. Europe and the EU. The current financial problems of Greece, Portugal, Italy, and Spain allow us to see that within Europe itself, there is a core and a periphery, defined in terms of economical and political power and producing phenomena that are not unlike the kind of tutelage and paternalism that typically characterize north-south interactions. Germany and France tell Portugal and Greece, let alone the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Hungary what to do, how to solve their problems, and which institutions to adopt. So, in terms of the widespread usage of the term "West" – is contemporary Portugal part of the West? Is Latvia? How about Denmark? If "the West" stands for the ability to control other countries, then France and Germany are the contemporary West within the EU, but Germany, luckily, missed the train of establishing important colonies so that there is no relevant German colonial legacy to speak of and Germany's international reach to impose "Western traditions" is greatly limited.

Even within one country, such as Germany, it is not clear what the hegemonic "West" actually is and where it resides, both historically and geographically. A more detailed look rather suggests that some powerful regional organizations, such as the

Prussian state, were able to impose their rules and institutions on other, neighboring, societies, states and principalities, thus effectively colonizing them by forcing their traditions and institutions onto them. The heavily rural and peasant-dominated regions of central and southern Germany do certainly not qualify as the breeding grounds for the Western tradition. They were subject to it. I hope the argument I am seeking to make is clear at this point.

What is the end-result of such a deconstruction of the Western tradition? It becomes clear that "the West" has no clear geographical, cultural, political, or demographical content and thus lacks any analytical utility. It is a much broader and diverse tradition, standing on different cultural and geographical grounds, which include the East and the South. In other words: the Western tradition is not just "theirs" – it is of a rather mixed parentage. Claiming it for oneself is thus not only legitimate, given its mixed and heterogeneous pedigree, it is one necessary ingredient to overcoming northern hegemony and colonial legacy. The "burden" of imposing one's institutions onto others was certainly never just a "white man's burden." During most of history, this self-imposed "burden" was always also a brown, yellow, black, and red man's burden, let alone the burden of white, black, brown, yellow, and red women – if using such antiquated color labels shall be excused for the sake of sticking with the metaphor. More than a true burden, it rather appears that more powerful institutions and organizations – states, kingdoms, dukedoms, and big corporations – always imposed their ways on other, less powerful, institutions and organizations, thus effectively colonizing them and imposing their culture and value system onto them, in most cases against their will. Western and northern empires were no different in this regard than southern and eastern ones, as the Persian, Mongolian, and Ottoman empires quickly remind us.

If the Western tradition is understood not as a geographic, ethnic, cultural, or political entity, but as a tradition that favors reason and rationality, as Max Weber (1978) has argued, then I want to suggest that the Western tradition is indeed not western at all. Reason and rationality are certainly not exclusively western achievements, for two reasons: Western rationality is wrought with irrationality, having produced two world wars, several financial meltdowns, and unprecedented environmental degradation. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (2007) have made this point brilliantly clear by highlighting how the Western Enlightenment tradition produced the Holocaust. At the same time, non-Western traditions have certainly also produced a plethora of rational frameworks of thought and analysis. Not recognizing, or denying those can only be explained by Western ignorance and chauvinism. In sum, there is nothing special about the West, with the exception of capitalism, but capitalism has proven anything but rational. What remains of the Western tradition, after some preliminary scrutiny, is the ability of some powerful organizations to dominate and colonize others for the sake of profit. Something as vague as "the Enlightenment," i.e. critical and rational analysis of the world, has certainly flowered at different places of the world and received much cross-fertilization – even in such "high culture" places as ancient Greece and Rome.

This also implies that there is a West within the west and there also is a West within the east and within the south – just as there is a South within the west and a South within the south, because each country and each region has its own powerful institutions and elites that seek to control and dominate others.

To put this into a nutshell: it does not make much sense to talk about a "Western" tradition to begin with and claiming that it alone produced rational analytical frameworks and actions is untenable, more revealing of the bias of the one who makes it then telling us anything about reality.

Next in this deconstruction of the "West" in the west is the project to integrate diverse voices and traditions into the dialogues about development, growth, and well-being so that these voices can translate into research programs and paradigms and join those others that have already been selected by most researchers over the past centuries. The aim in this endeavor should not be, as already stated above, to substitute those institutions and programs that unjustifiably carry the label "West" – as they have proven helpful, if limited. The aim should be to enrich and add to those already existing voices, traditions, and institutions once they have been recognized as limited and once nonwestern traditions have been recognized as equally valuable. (Chakrabarty, 2000)

One way to overcome Western hegemony is to analyze and compare examples from the global south and produce some general statements induced from the concrete examples thus analyzed. To achieve this, this paper focuses on practices of active citizenship from India and Brazil in order to delineate some general, if tentative, conclusions about a different, "southern," conceptualization of citizenship and development.[1]

Citizenship

There are many definitions of citizenship and its treatment often depends on the ideological corner from which an author draws his or her conclusions. For many liberals, citizenship is a matter of rights and nothing more. If rights are ensured – civil, political, and social, then citizenship is ensured, maybe even guaranteed. For those thinking from a republican tradition, citizenship is first and foremost equal membership in a collective – the way it was back in classical Athens and the way Rousseau has imagined it to be. For these authors, citizenship is a matter of rights and responsibilities, where rights grow out of active participation.

This sorting out of theoretical camps is important – even if it does not allow us to move forward much. After all, favoring one over the other ideological position is a matter of preference and conviction and there is no right or wrong way to think about what citizenship is, was, and should be. It is an altogether different matter if we assume a less sanguine position towards theory, one best labeled "pragmatist." A pragmatist view, the way I understand it, prompts us to be aware of both these ideological camps and from this awareness formulate research questions and programs that allow us to analyze – not stipulate a priori – what citizenship means to different people at different times. If we do that, we can draw on both camps and stipulate that we should examine what rights states guarantee to different people – and what rights they withhold. We can then also ask how many rights states actually enforce – and which ones they merely formulate without ever caring to actually make them a reality. At the same time, we can ask what responsibilities citizens have in different states. Furthermore, we can ask what impact having many rights has on citizens and how this influences their relation to the state, and we can ask if some

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[1] It seems problematic to proceed in the traditional, deductive way if the theories and hypotheses used and put to a test continue to reflect the Western tradition. To overcome this problem, induction must be tried.

groups have more rights whereas others have more responsibilities - and how such a distortion impacts their relationship to each other and to their government. In short: a pragmatist position is one that does not seek to answer these question a priori and with the use of theory – but one that uses the available analytical frameworks to inform specific empirical research programs that can give concrete, if limited, answers and provide insights into the dynamics of citizenship.

My plead in this thus is: let us be pragmatists and examine empirical reality in order to gain insight into the dynamics of citizenship, instead of finding ways to force reality into our already existing thought models, that are old, rigid, and Eurocentric to begin with. Let us look at the everyday dimensions of what it means to be a citizen in different contexts. What rights and responsibilities it contains; how these are allotted across different groups, and to what effect. Let us be aware that different groups, even living within one state and legal framework, will most likely not experience the same degree of rights as others, and that some groups might feel entirely left with responsibilities without having access to any meaningful rights, even though they are formal citizens.

Agency
One of the things we can achieve when being pragmatic in our analyses of citizenship is that we can analyze, empirically, how active citizenship and political participation connect to other core tenants of democracy, such as agency. Similar to citizenship, agency has long received the attention of political theorists and thinkers – even if under different labels. The most traditional way to think about agency in politics is the one done under the label "autonomy." Autonomy, for classical liberalism and republicanism alike, is a core requirement for democracy – one without which democracy cannot survive. For some, like John Stuart Mill, autonomy is "one of the elements of well-being." Similarly, for Immanuel Kant, individual autonomy was one of the core requirements of liberalism, as liberalism can only work if and as long as an individual's will is respected. For republican thinkers, such as Rousseau, individual preferences feed into the general will and to be able to do so, they should not be influenced, but taken for granted and respected. No matter which ideological camp one adheres to, individual autonomy is crucial in itself and instrumental to achieving liberal democracy. If "the people" shall rule, then their wants and wishes have to be respected. Taken for itself, autonomy quickly translates into respect and recognition of one's will and opinion – and against manipulation by more powerful and hence more influential members of the collective – any collective. Kant has thus rightly called paternalism the worst form of despotism.

Amartya Sen (1999) has translated this language of autonomy into the more technical language of economics, when discussing utilities and individual capabilities. For Sen, capabilities also have an instrumental and an intrinsic aspect. Capabilities have a positive affect on democracy and on markets – but they are also to be valued for themselves, because they are related to a person's agency, that is: her capacity to act freely, to life the kind of life she has reason to value, and to be accepted by her peers as a complete person with a voice and an opinion that deserves equal respect in a public forum.

It is this treatment of capabilities that allows us to link autonomy and agency to citizenship. Put simply, increased agency *is* citizenship, because it broadens the

possibilities of voice, visibility, and action of a person, which is of particular relevance in such divided and exclusionary societies as the ones of India and Brazil. Here, in the words of Brazilian sociologist Evelina Dagnino, "what is at stake in struggles for citizenship in Brazil is more than the right to be included as a full member of society; it is the right to participate in the very definition of that society and its political system, to define what we want to be members of." (Dagnino in Kabeer, 2005:157f). In Brazil, as in India, significant parts of the population have been withheld from acting and performing the roles and actions that citizenship in theory engenders, despite the fact that formally, they are all citizens. Hence, to the excluded, having a saying in one's political community and being able to act in, and influence, the politics of one's community is where agency and citizenship meet. If certain groups have no agency, or systematically less agency than others because of their characteristics, then their citizenship is negatively affected. The core of democratic citizenship, after all, is self-rule, at least in its original promise, as explained by Constantine Castoriadis:

> Democracy is the correct articulation of the three spheres [public, private, and public/private sphere of the agora or meeting place] as well as the becoming-truly-public of the public sphere. That requires the participation of all in the running of common affairs, and this in turn requires institutions that allow people to participate and urge them to do so. That in turn is impossible without *effectively actual* political equality. This is the true meaning of equality: a society cannot make people equal in the sense that it would make everyone capable of running the hundred-meter dash in ten seconds or of playing the *Appassionata* sonata superbly. But it can make them equal as concerns their effectively actual participation in all instituted power existing within society. (Castoriadis, 1992:6)

Participation, then, provides an avenue to enlarge the agency of citizens, which is particularly relevant to all those citizens who have historically been denied a voice and a place in their public spheres, because they have been deemed unworthy, too poor, too badly educated, or all of the above. The cases of Brazil and India allow us to highlight some of the concrete mechanisms at work in active citizen participation.

Citizenship Participation in Brazil and India
Such authors as John Gaventa (2010), Peter Evans (2004), and Leonardo Avritzer (2010) have all demonstrated that there is a causal and empirically proven connection that links active citizen participation to such outcomes as economic growth and broader goals, normally subsumed under the term "development." Citizen participation makes for more informed and more critical citizens who are able to hold governments more accountable and who apply these learnings to their own agency in other, non-political, arenas. Active citizens also can have an influence on making government perform better, more efficiently, especially local government. All of these are old truths, long presented and debated in political science. They have now received critical empirical testing to further support their validity.

Vera Coelho and Bettina Lieres (2010), for example, conclude that

> Democracy is not built by political institutions or developmental interventions alone…citizen mobilization has successfully contributed to the articulation of

citizens' concerns, the promotion of democratic change, and the pressuring of states to act more accountably and democratically. (Coelho and Lieres, 2010:2)

This is not a statement made lightly. It reflects the core insights gained from a ten-year research project that brought together "some sixty researchers and practitioners working in twenty countries, hosted by the Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex." (Gaventa in Coelho and Lieres, 2010:xiv) Together, these researchers have produced over 100 original case studies on citizen action.

One of the findings they present is that "associations can make a difference in building democratic citizenship by increasing people's knowledge of their rights and by bolstering their capacity for political action." (Coelho and Lieres, 2010:8) This potential, however, is dependent on the kind of association and the kind of participation it offers – a finding that resonates with other, more general, findings about the nature and conditions of civil society activism:

> A closer look at civil society points to following a democratic praxis and pursuing democratic aims as the main criteria to determine civil society's democratic potential. After all, it matters for what reason people gather, if to promote rights, to organize against minorities, or simply to bowl. Bowling per se has no influence on democracy whatsoever, as it can as readily serve as a platform for the cultivation of racism and male chauvinism as it can be a breeding ground for democratic mores. What decides about its democratic potential is not the state or the 'context' (Armony, 2004), but who participates, how democratic this participation is, and what aims, other than bowling, a given group pursues. (Reiter, 2009:32)

When it comes to more formalized ways of citizen participation in forums, councils, and other institutional settings that are closely linked to local governments, Coelho and Lieres (2010) highlight "the challenges of citizens to enter institutionalized participatory spaces." (Coelho and Lieres, 2010:11) This finding also resonates with the literature on participative budgeting and planning in Brazil, as there as well, the condition for successful citizen participation was access to information and empowerment of citizens so they can participate on an equal footing with technocrats and specialists. (Reiter, 2009a, 2009b)

Along the same lines, John Gaventa and Gregory Barrett (2010), drawing conclusions from the same 10-year, 20 country, project mentioned above have concluded that in the areas of the construction of citizenship, the strengthening of practices of participation, the strengthening of responsive and accountable states, and the development of inclusive and cohesive societies, "citizen participation produces positive effects across these outcome types, though in each category there are also examples of negative outcomes of citizen participation. We also find that these outcomes vary according to the type of citizen engagement and to political context." (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010:3)

The type of citizen engagement, access to information, and the political context thus stand out as critical to the success of citizen participation – if in formal governance structures or in NGO activism. The work of Karen Coelho, Lalitha Kamath, and M. Vijaybaskar (eds. 2011), further consolidates this finding. These authors discuss citizen

involvement in India, for example a public-private partnership for providing underground drainage in Alandur, Chennai, and the *Bangalore Agenda Task Force,* aimed at providing ways for local government to interact more directly with businesses. They also find that to be successful, citizen participation needs to be substantive and not only aim at economic growth – and it needs to include the historically excluded segments of a society (Coelho, Kamath, and Vijaybaskar, 2011:29f). Research on participative budgeting in Brazil has produced similar insights into the dynamics and conditionalities of successful and effective citizen participation (Leonardo Avritzer, 2011; Brian Wampler, 2004; Gianpaolo Baiocchi, 2003; Rebecca Abers, 1998; Bernd Reiter, 2008).

This line of research has also made it quite clear that not all forms of citizen participation achieve what they set out to achieve – and some have outright negative impacts on democratic processes and equitable outcomes – a phenomenon appropriately called "extreme voices" by Morris Fiorina (in Skocpol and Fiorina,1999). As Cooke and Kothari (2001) have shown, participation needs to be substantive and real in order to be able to produce these positive outcomes and it must be inclusive of previously excluded voices. These authors provide several examples where participation is merely included as a token that allows for the securing of goods and services that formally require participation. Fake and instrumentalized participation can do more harm than good, as it runs the risk of frustrating those that seek to participate while casting a negative light onto those that require it without caring for its substantiveness (Reiter, 2008).

Gaventa (2007) has summed up the main findings of our knowledge in this field of research as follows:

> Looking across these case studies from Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, South Africa, Britain, and Canada, the book argues that the impulses and innovations for more 'participatory', 'deliberative' and 'empowered' approaches to democracy have contributed to a fundamental change in the relation of civil society and the state, creating in many settings a new 'participatory sphere' that is becoming a crucible for 'a new politics of public policy'. Such a participatory sphere has great potential for revitalizing democracy, creating new forms of citizenship and contributing to tangible developmental outcomes. (Gaventa in Cornwall and Coelho, 2007: xv)

For participation to have such effects, it needs to be inclusive and substantive, which also means giving all participants the same means to actually participate on equal footing. It also needs to be embedded in broader political structures, or it runs the risk of not transcending the singular experience in question. If political powers actively oppose such experiments, then citizen participation will not even become an option. (Reiter, 2009a) Similarly, where citizen participation is merely paying lip service to a new donor requirement it remains empty and runs the risk of further alienating the population from the government.

However, and here all the available studies on citizen participation agree, when substantive participation is a reality it bears great potentials for narrowing the gap that often separates the many that are being ruled from the few that actually make decisions on their behalf. Bridging, or at least narrowing this gap is the core aim of both democracy and citizenship, as I have argued above. More then a means to achieve improved governance, successful and substantive citizen participation is a goal in itself, as it adds to

the capabilities and the agency of the citizens – especially those citizens for whom self-rule has remained a vague ideal and who have been systematically denied a voice and a saying in the forging of their own destinies. Participation in this sense *is* self-rule – and as such it also *is* democracy, as well as citizenship, because it enlarges citizen agency and hence the scope of their freedom to act and make decision that affect their lives.

Conclusion: Implications for Rethinking Development

The pattern emerging from Brazil and India point to a different model of democracy than the representative model that currently dominates in the west and the north. Empirical examples of successful and failed citizens participation in Brazil and India all point to the possibility to establish local democratic forums with intense citizen involvement, aiming at concrete outcomes, such as budgeting, urban planning, sanitation, among others. Much can be learned from the successes and failures of this emerging model – and the learnings extent far beyond the empirical cases analyzed. Representative democracy is in crisis and the Western model of representative democracy has led to alienation from politics, frustration, lack of confidence in politics, blind consumerism, and empty materialism. It has produced empty democracies without true and genuine citizenship – to the point where most citizens of the west and north have long lost the sense of what being a citizen can mean and actually means to those that have a voice and influence in the shaping of their own destinies. Their sense of agency is greatly enlarged as they participate in local participative forums where they learn and experience what being a citizen actually means.

From these findings it is not a far stretch to induce that development must mean first and foremost the extension of individual agency in all relevant realms – but especially in the political realm, so that citizens can have a say in the shaping of their futures. Sen (1999) has said as much when framing development as freedom. This freedom is linked to agency and the ability to participate effectively and we can learn from Brazil and India when such participation actually occurs and under what conditions. What emerges is a new and different democratic model, one that grows out of the practical experiences of active citizen involvement in politics and policy-making (Nylen and Dodd, 2003). This new, participative model, while new to the contemporary political discussion, is at the same time intimately linked to the original ideal of self-rule. This ideal never was only Western, even if it was Greek in its origin – at least as far as we know. To claim it and to disseminate its significance is of utmost importance and this time of democratic crisis. South-south dialogue promises to play a central role in this task.

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