WORKING PAPER
Volume 2011 Number 359

Mobilising the State? Social Mobilisation and State Interaction in India, Brazil and South Africa

Ranjita Mohanty, Lisa Thompson and Vera Schattan Coelho
February 2011

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IDS Working Paper 359
First published by the Institute of Development Studies in February 2011
© Institute of Development Studies 2011
ISSN: 2040-0209 ISBN: 978 1 85864 972 2

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Summary

This paper explores how social mobilisation and the state interact, influence and mutually constitute each other in India, Brazil and South Africa. Given their broad similarities of democratic political structures, as emerging economies that now often commonly characterise them as 'middle-income' and of their persistent socioeconomic inequalities, a focus on these three countries offers opportunities for a comparative analysis on whether and to what extent democracy is deepened to meet the needs of the poor through state-society interactions. Through a political process approach that combines historical analysis with select cases from each country, we critically examine the modes of interaction between forms of mobilisation that raise citizen demands and the state response.

The findings show that these states find it comfortable to adopt participatory modes and to engage with forms of mobilisation that are perceived (from within their institutional ranks) to be close to their own framework and strategy of action. However, the cases in which citizens raise legitimate yet contentious demand through protests and other forms of contestations are highly likely to meet state resistance. However, from the citizen's point of view, action is important, and despite the potential lack of state response, contributes to a sense of agency and empowerment which is crucial for democracy. Not letting the state off the hook, the paper argues, is in itself an empowering expression of citizenship and political identity.

Keywords: citizen participation; democracy; state-society relations; governance; Brazil; India; South Africa.

Ranjita Mohanty is an independent scholar and research consultant based in New Delhi, India. She has been a long time researcher with the DRC Citizenship, and is the co-convener of the synthesis project 'Social Mobilisation and the State in India, Brazil and South Africa'. As a political sociologist she has researched various aspects of social movements, participation, decentralised governance, development, social justice, citizenship rights of the marginalised and complexities of citizen-state relationship. Dr Mohanty was earlier with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, which is a partner organisation of DRC Citizenship, where she headed its research and academic linkage programme. Currently she is directing 'Local Governance and Social Inclusion' research at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (India office), and visiting the University of Western Cape, South Africa.

Lisa Thompson is the director of the African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy at the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape, where she leads research projects on democracy and development in the global South. Thompson specialises in research that examines socio-economic issues pertaining to rights in the South. Southern Africa remains a particular focus of her work, although recent research has tended to examine developmental trends at local level within South Africa and the national and global impacts of these policies. Forms of engagement between society and the state around development and democracy are a central aspect of this research. Professor Thompson and her centre have been partners in the Citizenship DRC, based at IDS. She is co-editor, with Chris Tapscott, of the book *Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South* (Zed Books, 2010).

Vera Schattan Coelho is an experienced social scientist with a particular interest in public policy, political participation, accountability, democracy and development. She is a senior researcher and coordinator of the Citizenship and Development Group at the Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP). She works with both qualitative and quantitative research methods and has extensive experience in evaluating policies and coordinating research projects at local, national and international levels. She has written articles on health, social security, social policies and citizen participation. She and CEBRAP have been long standing partners of the Citizenship DRC based at IDS. She is co-editor, with Bettina von Lieres, of the book *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation* (Zed Books, 2010).

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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CEBRAP	Citizenship and Development Group at Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning
COSATU	Congress of Trade Unions
CSO	civil society organisation
DRC	Development Research Centre
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
IDPs	Integrated Development Plans
KDF	Khayelitsha Development Forum
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MDS	Muktidhara Sansthan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NDA	National Development Agency
NTPC	National Thermal Power Corporation
PAC	Pan African Congress
POS	Political Opportunity Structures
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAHPF	South African Homeless Peoples Federation
SANCO	South African National Civics Association
SOS	social opportunity structures
STPP	Simhadri Thermal Power Project
SUS	universal health system
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TD	territorial development
TINA	there is no alternative
UDF	United Democratic Front

1 Introduction

Democracy is considered the common 'currency' of state and civil society interaction in middle-economic-power states such as India, Brazil and South Africa. In fact the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) link, as it is understood in international relations, is premised upon certain political and economic similarities between these three states in the South, not least their democratic political foundations.[1] In this paper we are looking at the IBSA states from a citizen-centric point of view, embarking upon a comparative analysis of how states deal with citizens' demands from within. Given the broad similarities of democratic political structures, the emerging economies that make the three states middle-income and the persistent socioeconomic inequalities in these countries, such an analysis of society-state relationships in the IBSA countries will have value for understanding how democracies can be deepened in order to make states responsive to citizens' demands.

This paper consolidates and synthesises the insights from an international research project that has investigated citizen participation and the deepening of democratic processes in the southern countries, including the IBSA countries.[2] The aim of this synthesis paper is to revisit the research findings from this project to explore the interaction between mobilisation and the state as they continue to respond, influence and reconstitute each other in the three formal democracies under study in India, Brazil and South Africa.[3] In drawing attention to this feature we expect to shed light on the trajectories and mechanisms of state-society engagement that may strengthen democracy (or democracies) in order to make it more capable of overcoming the historic inequalities that are so pronounced in these three states.

The central question the paper addresses is: *In what circumstances is citizen mobilisation for claiming rights and entitlements addressed, responded to and dealt with by the three different types of democratic states in ways that deepen democracy?* The question we pose above is located within the comparative frame of three democratic states that are compared in terms of their history, their institutions, their processes and cultures, and their socioeconomic settings.[4] Social mobilisation in this paper covers identity and resource claims

1 The IBSA block came up as a state-led initiative when the foreign ministers of the three countries met and signed the IBSA declaration in 2003, with the primary aim of consolidating the economic powers of the South as a way of responding to global issues.

2 Development Research Centre (DRC) project on citizenship, participation and accountability, located at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK. Research conducted as part of this project shed light on the conditions under which mobilisation contributes to the deepening of democracy. Available at www.drc-citizen.org.

3 We draw from country papers written by teams of researchers in India (Pant, Mandakini), Brazil (Menino, Shankland, Favareto and Pompa) and South Africa (Piper, Tapscott and Thompson). The papers were written specifically for the IBSA synthesis comparative project, drawing on existing case studies conducted under the DRC project. The papers were discussed and developed in two work shops held during 17–19 June 2009 in Rio, Brazil and 25–27 October 2009 in Brighton, UK.

by the poor set against a background of formalistic policies and legislations. By exploring how such mobilisations and states interact, influence and mutually re-constitute each other we try to shed light on whether and to what extent democracy is deepened to meet the interest of the poor through such inter-action.We draw a distinction between the 'political' and bureaucratic faces of the state and show how different faces of the state influence forms, strategies and outcomes of engagement. By this we do not mean that bureaucracy is not affected by politics, but that the two aspects of the state have different ways of recruiting members and their areas of focus (political parties are more into framing policies and legislations, and bureaucracy is more into administration and execution of policies) are different, though overlapping.

In pursuing the above, this paper focuses on an underexplored political feature – *the modes of interaction between the state and civil society*. In this paper we refer to 'modes of interaction' as interactions between forms of societal mobilisation and state action. We are treating modes of interaction as an independent variable, the democratic potentials and outcomes of which are what we will explore in greater detail in the paper. In adopting a political process approach, we expect to shed new light over a series of interrogations concerning how, to what extent and in which directions democracy is becoming more inclusive; put another way, we examine the extent to which democratic practices are contributing to reducing the gap between the formal equality guaranteed by representative democracy and the extremely pronounced socioeconomic inequalities present in the three states under scrutiny.

We examine modes of interaction from a perspective that emphasises both historical processes and selected contemporary cases of mobilisation/state interaction, though the aim of this paper is not to compare either cases or contexts. Accordingly, we link the concept to the range of literature on Political Opportunity Structures (POS), where these are conceptualised both as moments of engagement and as conditioned by institutions and historical conditions that enable certain types of action and activism over other types and forms. We refer also to the social opportunity structures (SOS) that are required in order to take advantage of political opportunity structures, but also to help create more political opportunities.

To anchor the analysis in each IBSA state's context we examine the broad trajectories of social mobilisation in each state and six specific cases of modes of interaction from the three states. The cases do not always tie in neatly with broader trends, showing both the observable trends and the variable nature of modes of interaction. It is important to emphasise that the paper does not attempt to argue that there are homogenous patterns or trends either between

4 In this sense, it is known that high levels of social inequality hinder the broad democratisation process. However, inequality (in addition to underdevelopment, poverty and discrimination) does not affect democratisation in the same way in every country (Kaplinksy 2005). The particular manner in which these factors have an impact on democracy in each context depends on how social and state actors frame them; in other words, the way they are interpreted, negotiated and continuously disputed between civil society and the state – resulting, in the final analysis, in determining the outcomes of democracy in each particular country.

(or even within each of) the states discussed; but there are certain broad patterns of engagement between different types of social actors and the state in the three countries that emerge from certain similarities in the ways the states deal with their citizens. For example, one finding was that mobilisations are often concerned with issues of recognition of excluded identities such as indigenous, nomads and women, and with the redistribution of state resources to such people. Another was that all three states have shown willingness to engage with the social actors pursuing more 'participatory/collaborative' engagements with them than with those adopting the 'critique/protest' approach.

The cases analysed are less about social transformation than about resource allocation, and the socioeconomic rights of particular groups mobilising on the basis of shared identities. However, in the struggles for rights, one of the possible outcomes of modes of interaction is 'footprints' of democratic engagement; that is, besides small gains in resource distribution – and, at times, big gains in policy change – the interface between mobilisation and state can be critical for making democracy work for the poor. This point is consistent with much of the critical thinking on state-societal interaction in the global South, as is emphasised by Kothari and others (Kothari 2005; Thompson and Tapscott 2010).

In the next section we critically review literatures that suggest that the problems of democracy can be addressed exclusively by the state or by civil society. In our view, democracy should be understood as constitutive both of actors and of their actions, as neither can be understood in isolation from the political and social opportunities which condition interactions. Section 3 presents a historical overview of the political trajectories of democratisation in the three countries. In Section 4 we explore six cases of mobilisation, two from each country, that are selected along two criteria: (a) dominant form(s) of mobilisation (that is, the cases are about social movements/NGO inter-mediation/sporadic protests/mobilisation in state created invited spaces); (b) nature of issues or claims that mobilisations frame (identity, redistribution, recognition, service delivery). In Section 5 we systematically compare the political and social opportunities (as well as the mechanisms of engagement) that make up the modes of interaction described in the earlier sections. And in Section 6, after exploring how citizen mobilisation for claiming rights and entitlements is addressed, responded and dealt with by the three 'emerging' democratic states, we present the outcomes from different modes of inter-action. In conclusion, Section 7 sums up the lessons learned about building inclusive democracies in IBSA countries.

2 Theoretical frame(s) for understanding 'modes of interaction'

By the end of the twentieth century there was overwhelming evidence that the mere implementation of democratic policies and democratically constructed institutions is not enough to overcome the historic challenges that bedevil the South, such as poverty, social inequality and economic underdevelopment. In addressing this evidence, some authors have dug into the 'black box' of the state, hoping to find the roots of democracy's inefficiency in overcoming these challenges in the malfunctioning of state bureaucracies, or in the inadequacy of their institutional designs (Skocpol 1985; Ostrom 1990). Other observers have chosen to blame capitalism and the unequal opportunities available to the poorest countries in the newly globalised division of labour (Amin 1976). A third group has moved in yet another direction, finding the origins of democracy's imperfections in civil society's lack of organisation or absence of 'democratic culture' (Putnam 1993). These approaches have in common the shared belief that democracy can be strengthened from a single one of the following entry points: the state, the market or civil society.

In contrast with these three familiar approaches, we argue that the results of inclusive democracy depend mainly on transformations in the dynamics and structures of interaction between state and society actors that occur through mobilisation and state interaction. From this angle we still acknowledge the importance of state and civil society actors in making democracy happen; but we believe that these factors should be taken into account together, through a model that highlights the specificity of the interactions in question. As so many critical theorists writing in the South have concluded, participation in democratic institutions does not necessarily yield democratic outcomes. Contestation (sometimes illegal and even conflict related) may result in more responsive state action than so-called democratic 'invited' spaces. Yet not all forms of contestation are necessarily supportive of broader rights claims on the part of impoverished or resource-denied groups. Broadly speaking, then, we can take neither the democratic design of state institutions nor the civility (or lack of it) of societal mobilisations as an indication that democratic modes of interaction are taking place (see for example the wide range of discussion on spaces of participation and mobilisation in the Zed volumes edited by Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Thompson and Tapscott 2010; and Coelho and Von Lieres 2010). Modes of interaction are contextual and complex – framing institutional and societal histories and locating the actors, the political and social opportunity structures enable us to examine exactly what dynamics are taking place at any given time, as well as the short-, medium- and long-term implications of such interactions; bearing in mind that successes might not be linear, and that the boundaries between state and society are porous, with constant movement and mediation occurring between the constitutive actors.

Hence, looked at from the perspective of the resource-deprived, the critical issue is not a choice between state patronage or empowerment, but both; not

fear or aspiration for closeness, but both; and not desiring a provider of services (welfare state) or an enabler of empowerment, but both. Mobilisation and state interaction illustrate how these two paradoxical trends – taking place simultaneously, and with reference to each other – shape state-society relationships in the three countries. In this sense, neither civil society nor the state are isolated entities capable of promoting democracy on their own; actors from both fields are constantly engaging with each other, thus shaping and reshaping the society-state relationship.

In defining political opportunity structures we borrow from Tarrow (1994), Gaventa and McGee (2009), and Thompson and Tapscott (2010). As these authors have shown, political opportunity structures are particular political environments in which social and state actors define their struggle; yet political structures are not structures given from 'above', to which social actors merely respond. Rather, such political opportunity structures are themselves conditioned by – and therefore, are a result of – historical processes (including struggles) that shape the behaviour of social and state actors. Hence, what may appear as a 'given' political opportunity structure at a particular instant may have evolved over time through historical struggles. As such, political opportunity structures refer to what political mechanisms are available (for example, constitutions, policies, institutions, legislation) as well as historical opportunities, or moments at which political coalitions are challenged – before and after elections, or around international events such as summits on the environment that have helped to strengthen the environmental movement in all three contexts. These conditions, which can be created both by the state and by civil society, not only constrain the activities of some actors but also stimulate and strengthen the activities of others (see for example Alonso *et al.* in Thompson and Tapscott 2010).

Likewise, social opportunity structures are those enabling or constraining conditions for mobilisation which are socially located, such as social in equalities, cultural features, the nature of associational life and the history of mobilisation in the region (Thompson and Tapscott 2010). In this sense, from society's point of view, aspects such as religious disputes or historic exclusion of certain groups may work as bonds or impediments, determining the capacity of these groups to form networks of solidarity that are fundamental for their mobilisation in relation to the state.

In adopting a more process-oriented approach, we argue that features of representative democracy and social mobilisation are building blocks of state-society relations; and we explore how they are conditioned over time, by different historical contexts and forms and strategies of engagement. We examine how forms of mobilisation and engagement with the state lead to a process of ongoing contestation and mutual re-constitution. In our view, this process is critical in understanding how democracy can be understood as constitutive of actors as well as of their actions, and neither can be understood in isolation from the political and social opportunities which condition interactions.

3 Interface between forms of mobilisation and the state: the historical context

There are obvious difficulties in comparing three states with differing historical and political trajectories of democratisation and participation. India's democratisation process began in 1950, while Brazil had a democratic 'window' between 1946 and 1964 and then again from 1984. South Africa's democratisation is but 16 years old, beginning officially in 1994 with the first non-racial democratic elections. The three countries are different in terms of their 'age' of democracy, South Africa being the newest or youngest of the three, and therefore the respective societies and polities have gone through stages (Brazil with an intervening period of military rule) of state formation and democracy. The nature of the ruling coalitions is also very different in each case, perhaps reflecting the specific historical trajectories of these states.

The international or global contexts in which democracy was established in each country are also different. India became a democratic state at a time long before globalisation, in the cold war era, when the nation-state was still the sovereign authority in deciding the issues pertaining to development and economic growth. Brazil's second phase of democracy coincided with what is called 'the triumph of democracy', with the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of communism and beginnings of the free market. South African democracy is very much part of the post-cold war, 'there is no alternative' (TINA) phase of global history: democracy is established as the desirable political system, and globalisation and the free market influence the economic settings and internal governance of the country. We can see the signs of India transforming into a neoliberal state, and the corresponding changes in mobilisation as Indians grapple with new issues. The Brazilian democracy was born at the start of neoliberalism and struggled to balance the liberalisation of the economy with the maintenance of welfare policies; and South African democracy was born squarely in the neoliberal period. At the time of writing the three countries have broadly similar contexts, in which the state in each case must manage the socioeconomic development and interests of the poor and at the same time respond to the global contexts of economic growth.

The three countries have shown strong political mobilisation, which has led to the end of colonisation (and in the case of South Africa, the end of apartheid) and the formation of democratic states. But their trajectories have differed afterwards. What follows is a snapshot of aspects of the modes of interaction that are important to our analysis.

3.1 India

The democratic state that was formed after freedom from colonial rule was expected to remain an independent and autonomous actor that would reform

society, create opportunities for the poor and promote growth, but would remain above the diversity, complexities and divisiveness of Indian society. But as the subsequent years revealed, the state could not remain an independent actor. The socioeconomic transformation agenda was subverted by the same forces against which it was planned. The landed elite, the industrial class and the higher castes – historically placed in a dominant position – applied pressure to the state to mould the democratic polity and appropriate developmental benefits, thereby undermining the purpose of democratic institutions and a developmental agenda (Kothari 2005; Bardhan 1984, 1988; Kohli 1987, 1988; Dhanagre 1987). However, there were no major stirrings in the social sphere for almost two decades after independence, due to what is elusively called the phase of 'nation building'. Since the state assumed the role of provider, protector and regulator there was a consensual expectation on the state to deliver. The general belief among the people was that the state was responsible for framing the best way to govern its citizens. But in the 1960s it became increasingly clear that the state had not been able to live up to its democratic promises.

The 1970s marked the emergence of social movements in India. The Naxalite movement in West Bengal mobilised poor peasantry to demand land reforms; the Chipko movement in Uttaranchal mobilised women to protect the forests against commercial encroachment; and Sampoor Kranti ('total revolution') mobilised students to critique the very foundation of governance, which had turned in favour of the ruling elites (Tandon and Mohanty 2002). How the state responded to these movements is significant. It crushed the peasant movement with brute force; student movements were dealt with by putting the leaders in jail. Only the Chipko movement emerged as successful, for two reasons: the movement was peaceful and did not make a radical critique of the state; but in addition, it coincided with the Stockholm conference on the environment – the international context meant that the state was obliged to take ecological safeguards. As our case studies in the next section will illustrate, the pattern of state response remains the same today. It is hostile to contestation, but will tolerate and talk with mobilisations that subscribe to state ideology.

The 1970s are also significant because they witnessed one of the periodic shifts in the nature of the Indian state; in this case, one which led to the redefinition of the relationship between civil society and the state in India. The national emergency declared in 1975 by the ruling Congress party was in operation for 19 months (June 1975 to March 1977), during which time the democratic system was undermined. Declared on 25 June 1975, against a backdrop of social and political agitation, the emergency revealed the democratic state's hidden potential to turn dictatorial. The period saw the curtailment of people's fundamental rights, the power of the judiciary, and freedom of the press. Dissident political leaders were jailed. The state of emergency and the subsequent restoration of democracy not only redefined and extended the boundaries of civil society; by redefining the relationship of the citizens with the state, they also restructured civil society in a significant way and made it more alert to transgressions of its boundary by the state. The most important consequence for civil society were the questions raised concerning the collapse of state institutions and their inability to protect

citizens' rights. Until then, the civil rights movement had remained confined to the piecemeal addressing of issues such as the suppression of the Naxals. The state of emergency galvanised the movement – democracy, citizenship and constitutional protection of fundamental rights became important issues for public debate and several organisations promoting these ideals were formed in the post-emergency phase. The People's Union for Civil Liberty and the People's Union for Democratic Rights were two such organisations (Tandon and Mohanty 2002).

The 1980s saw the growth of voluntary development organisations (mostly NGOs), which were formed to address issues of rural development, ecology, education and health. The organisations occupied space both at grassroots and at provincial and national level. Grassroots activist groups were supported by urban-based research and advocacy organisations. In the late 1980s the policies of the government, particularly at the national level began to treat the 'voluntary sector' as a source of policy engagement. This is when committees and consultations between NGOs and government began. The legitimacy of grassroots knowledge for informing policy began during this period (Pant 2010).

With the advent of globalisation and the liberalisation of the economy, a complex interplay between society-state and market began in the 1990s. Several critical trends emerged and continue to exist: social movements contesting economic growth (particularly in the form of industrialisation and special economic zones) have met the brute force of the state (Mohanty 2010); where NGO representation is sought in policy matters, collaboration is increasingly facilitated through various consultative forums created by the government; and local governance institutions are reinvigorated through constitutional declarations promoting the participation in democracy of people at the grassroots. NGOs are now on the forefront, working with both rural communities and state officials in promoting the participation of the socio-economically deprived poor in local governance. Thus, at the time of writing, two dominant modes of mobilisation are social movements that contest the economic growth processes followed by the state under a neoliberal agenda and NGO intermediation to interface between citizens and the state in a manner which is less threatening to the state.

3.2 Brazil

The notion of 'citizenship' in Brazil has usually been associated with adjectives such as 'conceded', 'regulated' or 'negative' (Carvalho 1997). Historically at least, citizenship has been regarded as a 'favour' from the state to society rather than a genuine 'right' of all Brazilians. Brazil was the last American country to abolish slavery, in 1888 – yet it did so without establishing the minimal conditions for the social integration of freed slaves on an equal footing. Black people remained largely marginalised from the productive system, forming clusters of poverty in the urban peripheries or joining the landless peasant communities. Something similar occurred to indigenous peoples, who have traditionally been regarded as 'relatively incapable' and submitted to a regime of state tutorship (Fausto 1981; Franco 1969; Ramos 1997).

The country has changed its political institutions often. In less than 200 years of independent history, Brazil has been a monarchy (1822–1889), an oligarchic republic (1889–1930), an authoritarian civil state (1930–1945), an autocratic democracy (1945–1962), a parliamentary democracy (1962–1964), an authoritarian military state (1964–1985) and finally a liberal democracy (fully established in 1988). Such institutional fluidity has marked the dynamics of state-society relations across time and has certainly affected the full implementation of civil, political and social rights.

Brazil started its late but 'accelerated march' (Carvalho 1997) towards modernity only in the 1930s. After four decades of an oligarchic republican system (1889–1930), the country adopted a centralised and authoritarian political apparatus, which allowed it to implement a fast industrialisation process based on import substitution and a new immigrant labour force. The state was the central agent of this transformation, and the model of state-society articulation revolved around the political incorporation of the social actors engaged in the productive process – industrial employers and urban workers – within a single corporatist structure controlled by the state. In this context, access to social rights was extended to urban workers who were legally registered in the state-controlled unions. However, civil and political rights remained strongly restricted, and rural and undocumented workers remained unable to access these rights at all. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, state-society relations were characterised by populism and paternalism, which to this day are still a notable legacy of the top-down approach tendencies of the state towards society (Santos 1987).

After a short democratic period (1946–1964), military dictatorship was established, in 1964. The following decades were marked by fast economic growth and fierce suppression of political opposition. The so-called 'Brazilian Economic Miracle', based on foreign investment, centralised economy and state control over production and salaries stimulated the concentration of wealth, uncontrolled urbanisation and an extreme rise in social inequality.

Ironically, although civil liberties were severely confined during the military period, political rights were only partially restricted and social rights were even increased. Welfare benefits were expanded to include rural workers and other excluded sectors of the population. Housing, basic sanitation and several social assistance programmes were implemented by federal agencies during the 1970s (Arretche 2002). Although these initiatives represented new forms of state control of the rural areas, they also contributed to the establishment of new channels for social mobilisation among the rural population. Another distinguishing feature of Brazilian dictatorship was that it maintained some political institutions from the previous democratic regime. The Federal Congress continued to function and indirect elections for states and municipal governments were permitted throughout the military years. Of course, those allowances were very limited. But they proved to be fundamental during the democratic transition of the late 1970s, when the official opposition channelled the growing popular discontentment with the military regime (Lamournier 1988).

However, in the last 30 years this picture has gradually been transformed. Firstly, the end of 21 years of military rule and the promulgation of a new

democratic constitution in 1988 put important institutional changes in place. General elections were re-established, amnesty was given to exiled leaders and political parties were liberalised in the early 1980s. The new constitution took almost three years to be written and received important contributions from diverse sectors of civil society, including health movements, indigenous organisations and representatives of the black movement. The 'Citizen Constitution', as it was called, was guided by the principles of *institutional decentralisation* and *popular participation*. Broad fiscal reform was also initiated, which determined that state and municipal governments would receive greater shares of tax revenues and would consequently acquire new responsibilities in areas such as health, education and security.

Secondly, in addition to decisive macroeconomic reforms that helped the country to regain stability and control super-inflation, the social policy sector was largely transformed after the inauguration and expansion of social policies for poverty reduction, initiatives for popular participation in decision-making and the emergence of affirmative action and recognition policies. Motivated by the global and national renaissance of ethnic identity claims, movements of all sorts proliferated in post-democratised Brazil, demanding public recognition for specific marginalised groups such as family farmers, indigenous and slave-descendent populations. These new movements, although historically associated with movements from previous decades, present characteristics that are generally distinct from those of the civil organisations of the pre-democratisation period. Contemporary movements are mostly locally based, with well-defined, popular, grassroots bases and identities; they favour short-term goals and pragmatic strategies; they act in multiple arenas of negotiation and their political ties reach national and international networks that go far beyond the alliances of the movements of the pre-democratisation era. The new guidelines in policy-making are redefining actors, strategies and the patterns of interaction between state and society.

3.3 South Africa

South Africa's social history has been characterised by high levels of state authoritarianism and state-societal conflict; from colonial times, through to the beginning of fully representative democracy in 1994, until now. Ironically, while its Constitution is one of the most democratic in the world, and South Africa boasts some of the most democratic and progressive rights-based policies and legislation in existence (the free basic water and public housing policies being cases in point), state-societal relations still manifest a large degree of direct contestation and conflict, most acutely demonstrated through what have come to be known as 'service delivery' protests (Thompson and Nleya 2010).

The development of the South African state from the Union of South Africa in 1910 (a political outcome of the Anglo-Boer war of 1898–1902) to the official policies of 'apartheid' under the National Party in 1948 can be seen as directly linked to cultural nepotism and racism. Under the Union agreement, all non-whites (as they were called –including the racial categories 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'African') were considered culturally separate from the white nation and

were thus systematically denied both political and economic rights, including the right to own land in 'white' areas. The 1913 Land Act consigned African blacks to tiny areas of rural land, later to become known as the Bantustans. These policies of segregation were intended to stratify South African society spatially in order to prevent political and ideological allegiances (Piper, Tapscott and Thompson 2010). Nonetheless, strong social movements opposing the apartheid state arose in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The African National Congress (ANC), a liberation movement operating from both within and outside the country, as well as other fragments of the liberation struggle such as the Pan African Congress (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP), formed alliances with township-based movements such as the South African National Civics Association (SANCO), Black Sash and others. The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1984, and later the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), united the NGOs and social movements in a broad alliance of resistance to the increasing repressiveness of the apartheid state.

Post-1994, the nature of social movement activity changed dramatically. The liberation struggle movements lost many of their leaders to government, and labour-related social movement organisations such as the Congress of Trade Unions (COSATU) received greater prominence through their involvement in negotiating a new economic strategy for South Africa through the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). While these alliances and the mood of collaboration did not last long, the initial phase of absorption into government structures served to weaken and disorganise civil society organisations (CSOs) and co-opt many NGOs into the new developmental paradigm (Ballard *et al.* 2006). SANCO has continued to function, but perhaps best characterises the problems involved in renegotiating a political platform and socioeconomic position at grassroots level separate from the ANC (Zuern 2006).

While social movements have grown in strength again post-2000, the broad-based resistance and coherence of pre-apartheid mass-action platforms remain a thing of the past. Some social movement organisations, notably the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) have gained both grassroots, national and transnational prominence, and others have seen temporary prominence – the South African Homeless Peoples Federation (SAHPF) is a case in point. Broadly speaking, issue-based social movements have had more success mobilising support than movements such as the anti-globalisation campaign. Alliances between broader social movements and developmental NGOs remain weak, partly because, as Ballard et al. (2006) point out, funding to these NGOs has taken place through the state-regulated National Development Agency (NDA). Substantial contracts for development services have also been sub-contracted to developmental NGOs through the NDA, effectively silencing critical opposition to government policies. Criticism of South Africa's home-grown structural adjustment programme, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR), was left to labour-based social movements such as COSATU, with little impact on changing the course of government's economic policies because of the narrow social support base of the organisation – most of SA labour is not unionised.

Thus the South African civil society-state relationship remains contested by organisations and social movements who claim that the South African government 'talks left and acts right' (Bond 2001; Mehta *et al.* 2010), referring to the dichotomy between pro-poor policies such as free basic water combined with a strongly neoliberal macroeconomic strategy overall. Yet much of the resistance remains fragmented between more organised social movements with narrow support bases (such as COSATU) and more broad-based forms of resistance that lack social organisation (for example, grassroots movements protesting poor service delivery). Social unrest over service delivery is commonplace, but to date has not been sufficiently organised into an articulated strategy of resistance to specific policies. The state has remained oppressive to social opposition in the post-apartheid era, with government responses to service delivery protests mimicking the apartheid state's responses to unrest in African 'townships' (settlements). The authoritarianism of the apartheid state has been replaced with a call to political loyalty and political-party allegiance which the ANC has imposed as the ruling power since apartheid. Criticism of the state is treated as disloyalty to the ANC, with very negative consequences for social contestation.

Looking at the historical trajectories of the three states, we find that while India and Brazil have had strong mobilisation since their respective democratic states were created, such mobilisation is weak in South Africa, where social organisation among the poor is often fragmented and episodic. Hence, unlike in India and Brazil, where both mobilisation and the state have evolved through their interaction (though such interactions are not always successful) and in contemporary times we even find alliances between the two in certain cases, this is not the case in South Africa, where the state appears to be more closed. In Brazil (and, it must be said, over a much longer time period) social movement organisations have built up strong forms of networking and collective action; thus, formal engagement through SMOs has become the dominant form of engagement. In India – much like Brazil, with a history of both strong social movements and of the role of NGOs in mediating the claims of the poor and discriminated-against – mobilisation takes place at many levels, spanning both the grassroots and the national spheres. However, India still does not match the scale of Brazil's participatory spaces. In South Africa (where social movement organisations remain, by and large, fairly weak and/or disorganised) spontaneous forms of social mobilisation and protest – led by small and mobilised political movements, such as the housing movement *Abahlali baseMjondolo* – dominate as a form of participation.

Evidence from case study work undertaken in the three countries shows some consistency with the dominant patterns presented above, as well as some important differences.

4 Modes of interaction in India, Brazil and South Africa

The historical trajectories discussed above highlight the following: despite the fact that all three states offer a number of opportunities for civil society to engage in politics, these opportunities do not only differ in nature, but social actors seem to use them differently in each country. To better understand these specificities we have selected six case studies that cover recurrent forms of mobilisation that make claims for both redistribution and recognition.

4.1 India

We examine two cases in the Indian context: the first one deals with issues of identity of nomadic tribes and their land rights (the claims in this case concern identity, recognition and redistribution); and the other deals with issues of rehabilitation and resettlement of communities whose land has been appropriated for industrial development (here, the claims concern redistribution of developmental gains, as well as claiming one's own resources from the state). In both cases, the dominant form of social mobilisation is NGO intermediation on issues and understandings of development and of how state policies ostensibly aimed at developmental progress can negatively affect political rights. Marginalised groups themselves are often 'spoken for' as a result.

As the traditional lifestyle and livelihood of nomadic communities living in the Alwar District in the state of Rajasthan, India, were progressively threatened by changes in the economy, the need for such communities to claim land titles and alternative living space became a survival need. Conflict with other local communities began as soon as the nomads tried to settle in any specific geographical area. A recurring point of conflict was land rights. Even when the nomads sought to camp in demarcated government land near or within villages they came into direct conflict with the villagers – often supported by the administrative officials of the government themselves – all of whom accepted the stereotypical social belief that nomads are criminals and therefore to be kept outside the villages. In certain instances the local community reacted violently, demolishing the huts of the nomads or engaging the local administration to evict them from the village.

To make matters worse, the nomads' invisibility as citizens deprived them of developmental benefits from the state (such as housing, water, electricity, sanitation, health, entertainment and education), marginalising them even further. Pant (2010) attributes this to the 'misrecognition' of nomads. Since the nomads 'fall in different lists of scheduled castes, scheduled tribe and backward classes in different states and although inclusion in these lists entitles them to the associated affirmative actions and safeguards, the reality is that their way of life makes it difficult for them to access even the most basic rights and opportunities as citizens, let alone avail any special provisions' (Pant 2010).

The nomads are too poor and disorganised to be able to make claims to their rights and entitlements. Muktidhara Sansthan (MDS), a local NGO, intervened to address them as a collective and facilitated the articulation of their concerns to the state. The right to ownership and control of land, the right to a settled life and the right to live with dignity were included in a comprehensive demand encompassed by the right to life as a fundamental human right. MDS also provided much-needed legal aid and direct legal services, provided mobilisation support through public hearings, processions, and highlighted issues in the media in order to put pressure on the state to act. It also lobbied for the nomads by sending them in delegations to present their petitions to government officials at the district administration. The local administration acceded to granting land rights (in some settlements) and other accompanying rights such as ration cards and voters' identity cards. However, the NGO's intervention was not welcomed by all and created friction, particularly when it organised nomads to campaign against the local administration (Pant 2005).

In the other case of land claims in another region – Parvada in Vizag District in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India – poor communities affected by large-scale land acquisition and displacement caused by the public sector industry Simhadri Thermal Power Project (STPP) (under the aegis of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)) were mobilised to claim compensation and resettlement from the state. STPP acquired prime agricultural land, which meant that farmers lost their livelihood; it also affected the livelihood of a number of families who worked as agricultural labourers. Loss of grazing land meant loss of livelihood for those villagers who maintained livestock such as buffalo, cows, sheep and goats. Fish populations were wiped out by effluent discharge, which affected the livelihood of fishermen. The acquisition of salt-pans led to thousands of people from the coastal areas losing their livelihood. While resettlement and rehabilitation policies are put in place, claims by poor people who lost their agricultural land and habitat to industry are often ignored.

The STTP Rehabilitation and Resettlement Department while providing some community development services like bore wells in the village, furniture for schools, short term loan to student for computer courses, bus shelter, roads etc, has ignored the most critical issue of resettlement and rehabilitation of those whose land the project took. As Pant (2010) writes

> it avoided the larger issues of compensation, employment and its responsibility towards the displaced communities. STPP officials claimed that providing job was not part of their package as STPP is an automated and capital-intensive industry and does not require much manpower. Compensation was on the basis of joint land holdings. In Vizag families receiving compensation were not entitled for any employment within the plant once constructed. As agricultural labourers did not have any entitlement to land on which they worked, therefore, they did not receive any compensation.

Local NGOs have tried to advance the cause of these communities in many ways. In Vizag, where STTP is located, Sadhana (a local NGO) has been the frontline organisation in the campaign dealing with the STTP/NTPC plant. It has conducted surveys of villages most affected by the plant in order to

compile data as evidence of the impact on their lives, and has recorded their demands and how they would like see them met. The findings were shared at local *gram sabha* as well as *panchayat* meetings and were fed into a people's development plan.

As part of the process of resettlement, the industry is required to hold public hearings where people can make their claims. A notice must be placed in one local English newspaper and one regional language (Telugu) newspaper, a month in advance. Details are also required to be submitted to local *panchayat* offices to allow people to look over the documents. But NTPC deliberately placed announcements in the least widely-read local newspaper in the area and the announcement was made for one edition on one day (Rao and Kumar 2004).

The challenge for the NGOs was to ensure that people heard about public hearings and were aware of the implications of development on their livelihood. Local NGOs (including Sadhana) used multiple mobilisation strategies – media exposure, direct dialogue with industry and government officials, public hearings, etc – to negotiate fair deals for the communities that were to host the industrial projects. Persuading the NTPC to attend public meetings organised by NGOs was a difficult task. Direct appeals by NGOs on behalf of communities have consistently been refused or not acknowledged at all. Despite these communities building alliances with sympathetic elements within the government, as well as with groups within civil society such as trade unions, NGOs, the media, medical practitioners and scientists, the district administration ignores and refuses to meet their land entitlement claims.

4.2 Brazil

In the Brazilian context we have two examples of modes of interaction. The first deals with issues of territorial development and links to claims to do with the *quilombola* identity, the debate about sustainable development and the political dynamics involving state bureaucracies, parties and participatory forums; and the second deals with health policy and the problems of universal rights and access to health, discussing the tensions between the public universal health system (SUS) in Brazil and the indigenous health subsystem. The case focuses on universal rights, indigenous identity and political dynamics, involving health professionals, the indigenous movement, state bureaucracies, parties and participatory forums. In both cases the dominant form of mobilisation is social movements; both also feature elements of constitutional rights, public policies and tensions between universal and target policies.

The first case focuses on territorial development policies in the region of Vale do Ribeira and how they have reshaped the modes of interaction between state and civil society actors. Adopted in several parts of the country, territorial development (TD) policies gained ground in the late 1990s, as they translated the widespread rhetoric of sustainable development into concrete acts. Initiatives such as the Program for Familiar Agriculture (Pronaf) and Territories

of Citizenship (Territórios da Cidadania), both recently implemented in Vale do Ribeira, combine essential 'beliefs' of the post-democratisation era – such as the belief in popular participation in decision-making and the belief that development plans should take regional integration, territorial sustainability, attention to territories' specific needs and cultural embedded features into account – in opposition to strictly localised development projects or centralised top-down initiatives. TD policies have also attracted innumerable actors – from state bureaucrats to community leaders – who have had to reframe their collective identities in order to have their interests heard, with inevitable results for the democratic process.

The region of Vale do Ribeira, despite its location between two of the richest metropoles in the country, is known for its low human and economic development indicators. It hosts the largest preserved area of Atlantic Forest in Brazil and is the home of many traditional populations, small farmers and ethnic minorities. Numerous conflicts exist in the region, making TD a real (yet urgent) challenge. Strict environment-preservation laws have prevented the local population from developing traditional economic activities and have diminished the region's attractiveness for investments; large infrastructural projects (especially roads and dams) have increased the competition for land. On top of that, only half of Vale do Ribeira's territories are regularly demarcated and the majority of rural communities currently working and living in Vale do Ribeira do not have legal possession of their lands. In reaction to these grievances, popular mobilisation in Vale do Ribeira has taken off, particularly since the 1980s. Several grassroots movements (originally organised by Catholic activists) have emerged, such as the mobilisation of historically significant *quilombo* communities and the new family farmers' union (Sintravale).

The rapid expansion of these movements, their unique strategies of mobilisation and their particular ways of interacting with the state through various and new mechanisms display the common trends of state-society interactions in contemporary Brazil. Therefore, in order to illustrate these recent trends in state-society relations in Vale do Ribeira and how they relate to similar processes occurring in the whole country, this case study asks: are the new TD initiatives helping to combat historic inequalities and structural social problems? Are the new invited spaces contributing to a more 'effective' interaction between social and state actors?

Our findings suggest two major trends. The first is the difficulty in overcoming the 'poor policies for poor people' conundrum. Territorial policies have reproduced the existing dichotomy between 'urban' and 'rural' policies: when dealing with rural impoverished areas, the state accesses only those parts responsible for agricultural and social policies, while infrastructural project and economic stimulus policies remain focused on urban areas. Also no infrastructure department or large-budget state secretaries with their 'powerful state bureaucracies' have been involved in these policies, which have remained the 'monopoly' of the social sector bureaucracy (Abramovay 2006; Favareto 2006). This dynamic contributes to keeping investors, companies and individual shareholders away from the region, leaving it as the arena for politicised civil society groups and party coalitions.

On the civil society side, once social movements perceive that their claims are constantly ignored by 'developmental' sectors, they turn their attention to the 'social' sectors. This means that every time movements need to access the state, they look for the same partners, the same people and the same channels within the state bureaucracy. This mechanism ends up consolidating the state's institutional split between the 'social' (and less dynamic) sectors and the economic (and more 'developmental') sectors.

The second trend is the limited inclusive capacity of participatory forums. When we observe which actors have actually engaged in discussing the path of territorial development in the region, we notice that only collective and historically organised sectors of civil society have managed to correspond to the technical requirements of state programmes and to follow the numerous bureaucratic negotiations taking place in simultaneous arenas of debate. Limited deliberation and the need to be collectively organised to be heard both contribute to expanding the social, economic and political gap between mobilised and de-mobilised social actors.

The second case study analyses new forms of political engagement in the area of health policies. The public health sector was profoundly transformed by the 1988 Constitution, which established health service provision as 'the right of all and the duty of the state'. The Constitution and subsequent Basic Health Law (1990) also provided for participation and *controle social* (or 'citizen oversight') of health policy through the institutionalisation of management councils. More than 5.500 of these councils were created over the course of the 1990s, at national, state and municipal level. In the largest Brazilian cities (such as São Paulo), sub-municipal or district health councils have also been established. Besides participation and social control, another key principle of the new unified health care system (SUS) is decentralisation, which has led to the progressive transfer of responsibility for managing primary care to the municipalities and their Municipal Health Councils. At the local politics level, these councils have come to play a key role in health service planning and provision, becoming important arenas for participation, decision-making and public accountability for government actions. At the macro-institutional level, this autonomy gained by the municipalities meant that larger public resources were transferred to and controlled by lower spheres of state bureaucracy.

Despite achieving quite satisfactory results overall, both in terms of a more equitable distribution of resources between regions and in terms of health indicators, SUS exposes some paradoxes of the post-democratisation era. The system – to which social movements from the democratisation era gave a decisive contribution – is based on the idea of 'universal' health provision and on a highly interconnected structure of shared responsibilities between municipal, state and federal levels of government. However, the SUS's structure is increasingly being confronted by recent claims for differential treatment, such as those related to special provisions for indigenous populations and other ethnic and minority groups. Investigating this paradox – between universal care and ethnic group demands – and its consequences to social mobilisation and state action is fundamental to understanding the current challenges of Brazilian democracy.

In order to provide a more general overview of the complexity of these processes, this second case study presents evidence from two distinct realities: the indigenous health subsystem in Acre (in the Amazon region) and the experience of the health councils in the populous metropolis of São Paulo. Without doubt, the challenges faced by health policies in these scenarios are quite different. Acre lies in the far west of Brazil, in the heart of the Amazon Forest, and borders the countries of Peru and Bolivia. With a total population of 680 000, Acre is known for its indigenous minorities, which currently account for less than 3 per cent of the state's population. São Paulo, on the other hand, is the largest metropolis in South America, with approximately 18 million people living in its greater metropolitan area.

Despite their differences, both São Paulo and Acre are part of SUS, having their own management participatory councils and following the same national health guidelines. Hence a comparison between such diverse contexts may provide us with clear insights into an important current political processes guiding state-society interaction in Brazil.

In the case of São Paulo, data from 2001 to 2008 show that in the early 2000s there were important differences in access to services, with basic services and high-complexity services concentrated in the central areas of the city where average education and income levels are higher, leaving the poorer inhabitants of peripheral areas with the burden of travelling to the centre of the city to seek access to these services. Nevertheless, more recent data indicates that the number of health facilities and the consumption of services are increasing at a faster rate in the poorest areas (Coelho, Dias and Fanti 2010).

In the case of Acre, the distribution of health services was completely reshaped after 1999, when an alliance between local indigenous movements and health reformers succeeded in pushing through a law mandating the creation of an 'indigenous health sub-system', to be coordinated as part of SUS. The law ordained that the subsystem should be organised around special indigenous health districts (*Distritos Sanitários Especiais Indígenas*, or DSEIs) and should respect the cultural differences of indigenous peoples.

In contrast to the realities of other poor Brazilians also living in rural areas, overall spending on indigenous health has risen fivefold in the decade since the creation of the indigenous health subsystem. This has contributed to overall improvements in health indicators, although indigenous Brazilians continue to have by far the worst health status of any group of citizens (Shankland 2010).

In this case – unlike with broader SUS policy, where there was a systematic refusal to aim services at the poorest – it has been argued that inclusion is not enough: the SUS itself would have to change to take indigenous Brazilians' very different understandings of health and forms of social and political organisation into account, and consequently a special system (the subsystem) is better tailored to matching ethnic and cultural specificities. But how far can the process of institutionalising a system to deal with these differences take us in the attainment of universalistic goals of social justice? What are the risks of a perverse crystallisation and reinforcement of institutions that in a near future could block changes concerned with more universalistic and less specific

goals? This case points to some of the tensions and trade-offs that appear when society decides to work towards equality by prioritising the necessities of the neediest members of the population through a target system.

4.3 South Africa

The two case studies of modes of interaction in South Africa highlight the obstacles facing the urban poor in lobbying government for public goods, either through formal spaces of participation or by other forms of mobilisation, including protest action. The case studies highlight the South African trend towards a formalistic form of inclusion into state policy formulation and implementation processes, as well as the resistance of the state (both politically and bureaucratically) to activism and social protest. In an examination of forms of interaction and aspects of mobilisation concerning service delivery in Khayelitsha the limits to both types of engagement are clear, with the state at local level allowing only certain kinds of engagement and input and repressing forms of social activism that openly challenge the state, especially protests. The second case study examines the case of social movements accessing formal participatory spaces, in particular the ward committee structures in KwaZulu-Natal. This is linked to a broader critical discussion of these formal invited spaces as a viable mode of interaction for civil society to address issues relating to poverty alleviation and socioeconomic redistribution.

Currently the dominant form of mobilisation in South Africa is protest action by citizens. The reason for this becomes clearer through examining the specifics of the two South African case studies: the first deals with public participation processes at local government (municipal) level in two KwaZulu-Natal municipalities (Msunduzi and eThekweni), and the second examines forms of social organisation and perceptions of governance in an African township (Khayelitsha) in the Western Cape.

The insights gained by examining public spaces for engagement at local level reveal the empty promise of democratic participation in the new South Africa. Piper and Nadvi (2007) have examined the operation of the formal 'invited spaces' of participatory local governance and how these are linked to forms of popular mobilisation. In spite of progressive legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (which defines the municipality as consisting of elected councillors, administration and residents) there is very little to suggest that much has changed at local government level. Indeed, while Piper, Tapscott and Thompson (2010) point out that these institutions are functioning very badly, civil society in general has yet to take a stance which is clearly articulated and well organised. The case studies from eThekwini and Msunduzi show that social movements do have a presence, in the form of movements such as *Abahlali baseMjondolo* in eThekwini, yet their organisational strength and popular base vary greatly.

This conclusion is enforced by the Khayelitsha case study, which focuses on the popular perceptions of citizenship and popular mobilisation in this Western

Cape township. By employing both quantitative methods (a survey) and qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups) the Khayelitsha case study illustrates a 'view from below' with regard to state-society relations in South Africa. The study highlights the high levels of social cohesion in the township (which is comprised almost entirely of migrants from two of the former Bantustans in the Eastern Cape – Transkei and Ciskei – who thus share a great deal of political and social history and forms of social organisation).

The Khayelitsha study highlights parallel forms of governance; communities engage in forms of community organisation that date back to pre-apartheid days, in the form of street committees linked both to SANCO (who used street committees as a way of organising grassroots resistance to the apartheid state pre-1990s) and to new forms of community governance like the Khayelitsha Development Forum (KDF), as well as Ward Committee structures (called Ward Forums in the Western Cape). The study highlights a continuum of participation: from more collaborative (through representative structures) to more conflictual (protests). The survey data shows that those who participate in formal channels of participation are also more likely to protest (Thompson and Nleya 2010). Mirroring national social movements, societal disaffection seems to be moving from collaboration to more contested forms of engagement – although the Khayelitsha study shows that, like SANCO itself, communities may sometimes choose to ally themselves strategically with government, and take to the streets at other times.

As Piper, Tapscott and Thompson (2010) point out, it is worth noting that the Constitution outlines specific commitments to participatory democracy, which include as a requirement a responsiveness on the part of local government to the needs of local communities; and sections 151, 152, and 195 carry an explicit commitment to encouraging community involvement. This is underscored by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000.

The case study material from both KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape shows the limits to the ward committee system, which is the cornerstone of inclusive local governance in practice. In both cases communities have had to confront representative democracy that is insufficiently responsive to local needs. Piper, Tapscott and Thompson (2010) point out that participation at ward level is often seen as a form of information sharing

> … and unidirectional at that, with information transmitted from the community to the council. The idea that residents may want to participate in debate – over how the needs should be prioritised, what strategies should be adopted, what form implementation should take and the like, is clearly not part of [local government's] vision.

Thus, in the case of eThekwini and Msunduzi, rather flimsy public participation policies emerged only after more than five years of consultation. Similarly, ward committees have failed to deliver, and Piper and Deacon (2009) have concluded that these structures have made practically no difference to either community participation or decision-making at local government level. While consultation regarding development planning and the municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) has been marginally better through the organisation

of the series of what came to be known as the 'Big Mama' workshops aimed at identifying community needs, overall the public participation process has shown little direct benefit to communities. On the contrary, the expression of community needs appears to have been superseded by what Piper refers to as growing managerialism, especially in eThekwini.

Similarly, residents in Khayelitsha, Western Cape indicate that public participation through formal structures of local representation is only occasionally a successful strategy. Although formal channels are not eschewed, and there are high levels of community association, it is clear that local communities are becoming increasingly disaffected with formal channels.

If we examine the continuum of participation in protest, the surveys conducted in Khayelitsha indicate that due to the failure of the formal institutions in identifying and meeting community needs, many citizens have participated in protest action. In 2007, approximately 45 per cent of respondents had attended at least one march in the preceding year and nearly 80 per cent said they would join a protest if they had a chance. Not surprisingly, shack dwellers have a much higher participation rate in marches (50 per cent) than the 37 per cent of house dwellers (shacks make up 70 per cent of housing stock in Khayelitsha). Since 2007, the number of protests in Khayelitsha has continued to rise, indicating that the disaffected (and politicised) segment of the community increasingly prioritises protest as the most effective form of participation, underlining the ongoing failure of formal channels of participation to meet the needs of the very poor.

5 Comparing cases of mobilisation-state interaction

5.1 Issues that trigger mobilisation

Our study of the three countries shows that mobilisation occurred concerning issues of recognition (that the state recognises the particular identities of the poor and marginalised) and redistribution (that the state makes provision for fair distribution of material or developmental goods to the poor). However, we find that in societies as characterised by a high level of socioeconomic inequality as the three countries under study, recognition and redistribution are not two distinct categories or interests; they are often two aspects of the same interest that are in constant reference to each other.

The struggle for the recognition of certain identities (for example, the *quilombolas* in Brazil) is to put pressure on the state for the distribution of certain developmental resources to the bearers of those identities; in other cases (in India, for example) the existing nomadic identities help in accessing land resources from the state. In the case of the nomads, the identities that are mobilised are those of the Scheduled Castes (low castes) and Scheduled Tribes (indigenous) to which the nomads belong. This is a strategic advantage

for redistribution of resources, as the two identities are constitutionally recognised by the state. In South Africa, too, black identities and redistribution of resources are interlinked.

Hence we can say that new (and persistent) claims in the three countries are arising concerning the recognition of identities and the redistribution of resources to the bearers of those identities. Mobilisation strategies therefore use both identities and interests as part of a two-pronged approach to interactions with the state.

Our cases indicate that mobilisations are more pronounced and visible when concerned with existing policies that deal with the distribution of resources to the poor. From a mobilisation perspective, we get the picture that existing policies are potential triggers for mobilisation, either due to inadequacy in their provisioning for the poor (as the cases from Brazil and South Africa point out), or inadequacy in their implementation (as the Indian cases show). They provide mobilisation with an already existing base of state-action upon which to raise their demands. The trend in IBSA countries also proves that merely formulating policies does not guarantee that they will be beneficial to the poor, or will be implemented to the advantage of the poor. People need to mobilise and engage with the state to make the policies real.

However, this does not mean to suggest that the state should formulate policy and then social mobilisation will takes place to guarantee access to benefits. Policy outcomes in themselves are interactive processes between political opportunities and social opportunities that have occurred through historical, institutional and social processes over a period of time. Democratic foundations such as constitutions, policies and institutional settings are the results of mobilisation and state interaction, which in turn produce opportunities for new policies and new mobilisation.

5.2 Political and social opportunity structures

In South Africa and India the historical legacy (including, cultures, languages, religions as well as apartheid in South Africa and caste politics in India) has left a much more rigid set of identities than in Brazil. Despite and because of this historical legacy, identity policy and claims to distributive actions are, as we saw in the previous sections, growing and gaining momentum in all the three democracies. The extent to which these legacies contributed to craft different styles of activism of citizens' organisations and social movements seems to be, accordingly to our cases, highly dependent on the: affirmative action provided by the state to a certain section of people; socioeconomic policies for poverty eradication; participatory spaces created by the state; and above all, a political environment in which claims can be made and a functional bureaucracy or public administration system where all social actors can interact.

Our study reveals that political opportunity may not necessarily be created if strong social opportunity structures are lacking, as in the case of South Africa. But political opportunity can also create grounds for social opportunity to emerge in South Africa, though such social opportunity will take time to

crystallise into effective mediating voices. Strong social opportunities can put pressure on the state to create new political opportunities (as seen in both the Brazilian cases) or make the state respond to existing political opportunities (as in the case of the Indian nomads). Also strong social opportunities may not always result in strong political opportunities, as seen in the Indian case of claims made by people displaced by industry. Despite strong mobilisation by NGOs, the state may not listen to people's demands.

5.3 Interaction with the political and the bureaucratic faces of the state

In South Africa, because of the recent transformation of the state from apartheid to democratic, those who mobilised against apartheid are now in the ruling party and occupy positions in state administration. Membership of political party and bureaucracy therefore overlap in many situations, which means that mobilised actors seem to be engaging with the same set of people whether their engagement is with a political party or a bureaucracy. Depending on which province one is referring to, this happens to a greater or lesser extent. Where ANC rule has remained constant there is a large overlap between political party and bureaucratic roles, with the former being closely tied to obtaining the latter. In the Western Cape, successive rearrangements of the political status quo have caused great instability at local government level, with the Democratic Alliance and the ANC hiring and firing top bureaucrats (and senior managers) whenever each wins electoral control over the province. In the South African context, intermediaries are still struggling to define their ideological and political agendas and identities in relation to the state; for example, SANCO – as a largely ANC-created and -run civics organisation – has had to redefine its social movement role as a (previously revolutionary) movement now partly constituted by the state as well as representative of civil society (office-bearers in SANCO may be in government positions at the same time).

In Brazil – over a much longer time period – social movement organisations have built up strong forms of networking and collective action. There seems to be a constant migration between political parties, professionals and bureaucracy, indicating that mobilised actors are interacting with all three. Also, mobilised actors in Brazil may occupy seats inside the state, playing bureaucratic roles. The Brazilian context suggests different parties in power have shown different perspectives concerning development and distribution of resources. For example, while all parties supported industrial development, left wing parties have been more open to respond positively to mobilisations for land distribution to the poor.

In India, from the very beginning bureaucracies have remained distinct from political parties (though a certain amount of party influence on those at the higher levels of bureaucracy cannot be ruled out). Bureaucracy functions on its own as the executive wing of the state, as different from the legislative wing constituted by political parties. Hence, mobilisations wanting the state to implement policies which are already in place often interact with bureaucrats,

whereas mobilisations wanting new policies or changes in existing policies interact with ruling government which comprise of elected parliamentarians as well as bureaucrats at the national level who are instrumental in making policy decisions. However, it is important to note that in the Indian context mobilisations interact with the political parties without making any alliance with them. Due to historical betrayal of the Congress Party to the cause of social movements, movements define themselves what Kothari has famously referred as 'non-party political spaces' (Kothari 1984) .

The state levels at which interaction and mediation take place may also differ: our case studies reveal that in India, mobilisation and state interact at district level (below the provincial level), as the execution of specific policies for which mobilisation is demanded is at district level even though the policies are of pan-Indian character. As for which face of the state the mobilisations interact with – in the Indian context, when it comes to the implementation of existing policies, it is the bureaucratic face. However, the social movements that contest state policies also interact with the political face of the state at the provincial and national level. We can perhaps say that the level and face of the state with which a mobilisation interacts depends on if the demands are for the execution of existing policies or the creation of new policies. In South Africa at the time of writing there still appears to be some disjuncture between the disaffections of local communities and more organised social movements at provincial and national levels. In Brazil, the growth of the participatory sphere has opened up opportunities for mobilisations that begin at the local level to interact at the state and national levels. In addition, national social movements find spaces at the sub-national level in which to communicate and fight for their agendas.

5.4 Mechanisms of interaction

Looking at the six cases we can identify two main mechanisms of interaction. One of them concern cases where society organises and makes demands on the state. The other type brings together cases where state invites society to participate on the development of policies. The mechanisms therefore become different, not only in terms of political opportunities, but also in terms of the processes of interaction. In the former, there is a given set of policies and legislations, and mobilisation occurs to place demands on the state for their implementation. The spheres of the state and that of mobilisation are clearly defined and the state interacts with mobilisers outside the state domain. In the later, the state not only provides policies and legislation, it also provides the structures, rules and modalities of interaction by 'inviting' mobilisation to be part of it. Both the mechanisms, in particular contexts, result in some amount of success in re-distribution of resources to poor and forging of new coalitions and alliances. And both, again, in particular contexts, may fail to deliver. Mobilisations around resource distribution to the culturally and economically marginalised have gained success in India and Brazil, and they have also failed as one case from India indicates. Likewise, participatory democracy has resulted in some success in Brazil, but has failed the poor in South Africa, thus

forcing them to recourse to street protests for the delivery of basic services of water and housing. The outcome of these cases and what leads to their success is discussed in next section.

6 Outcomes of mobilisation-state interaction

In this section we explore the extent to which mobilisation-state interaction as shaped by historical contexts and what we discussed in the previous section has lead to different sets of developmental and democratic outcomes.

6.1 Successful, concrete and visible gains for the poor

From cases where society put demands on the state, we find that successful ones occurred in India and Brazil, in situations where the state bureaucracy and politicians channelled resources such as land and health care facilities to groups mobilised around cultural and ethnic identities that were already legally recognised. These situations also reinforced the recognition of cultural and ethnic identities by society and the state. The cases, particularly the Brazilian case, have resulted in new alliances between political parties, bureaucracy and mobilisation, thus promising future gains.

Participatory forums, by their turn, channeled resources to communities according to other rules. In the Brazilian case the final destination of resources channeled through these forums was heavily dependent on local alliances. These alliances reinforced what we called the 'poor policy conundrum', poor people linking to bureaucrats placed in poor departments responsible for policies that are at the margins of the more dynamic sectors. Despite producing modest results in terms of fostering the desired sustainable development, this mechanism seemed to produce the political inclusion of new groups in local and even national politics leading in some cases to innovative experiments that nurtured new coalitions.

In the cases analysed above, the states responded positively as they perceived the framework and strategy of mobilisation legitimate and corresponding to their own, and therefore did not pose any challenge or threat to them (Oommen 2004). As our cases have shown, the present governments of the three states seem to be comfortable with strategies of mobilisation that do not directly threaten state power through protest. This is evident in India (in the nomads case, the local administration accused the NGO of organising protest and was open to interaction only when the NGO adopted a negotiating position) and also in South Africa, where the state resisted protest about service delivery. In Brazil the more visible pattern of mobilisation and state interaction is collaboration, though protests have sometimes happened, even in the cases analysed.

However, there is no straightforward relationship between negotiating strategies and state response. In India, while we have examples of worst-case state oppression to suppress protest against state-led development through industrialisation, there is no evidence that the state will listen if mobilising actors use strategies other than protest, as the case of resettlement of displaced people by the National Thermal Power Corporation illustrates. In South Africa too, people have turned to protest after their efforts to engage with the state appeared to be futile.

What then will force the state to respond, even if selectively? Again, from looking at the case studies, the trend in India is that the state responds when issues (particularly those related to development and distribution of resources) fall within the ambit of a policy framework that is well-laid-out on paper, is doable and that does not threaten the interests of the government or of its allies. For example, in the case of land distribution to nomads, the state responds because there is a policy provision for it; but in another case of land distribution (the NTPC case in Andhra Pradesh) the state takes away resources for industrial development but does not make adequate provision for the resettlement of those whose resources it has taken away, even when the policies are in place for resettlement. The state does not respond because it is not possible to compensate people with land, as land is a scarce resource.

Besides, the lack of response in this case also relates to how industrialisation is conceptualised by the government. In India, industrialisation is called a 'public good', for which the state is entitled to take people's land under the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. Hence the state is entitled to prioritise development over people's resources. Even though in this paper we have dealt only with a single case, the history of industrial development in India is filled with stories of how the state has grabbed land from the poor using false promises, stealth and terror (Mohanty 2007, 2010). The two Indian cases deal with the issues of land allocation to the poor, but it is the conceptualisation or framework of the development that makes it respond differently to mobilisations for land distribution.

As a broad generalisation we can say that state response to mobilisation is often selective – states are protective about their frameworks, strategies and ideologies, and often it is the ideologies and strategies of mobilisation that are not radically different from those of the state that seem to elicit some response. This meaning, that those mobilisations that receive an answer are those related to entitlements endorsed constitutionally as well as to the very existence of a bureaucracy prepared to deal with the requirements involved in making these rights real, and more crucially mobilisations are not too overtly critical of the state, though part of the mobilising process do contain elements of putting pressure on the state.

6.2 Citizenship, democratisation and accountability

The modes of interaction described in this paper indicate incompleteness and fractures in the state-led discourse of citizenship in liberal democracies. While

the state conceptualises citizenship in universal terms, mobilisation brings citizenship issues of vulnerable identities to the citizenship discourse. Mobilisation thus reveals the issues of exclusion of certain identities and their interests from state action. The state action suggests that while the state (acting through the constitution) bestows universal citizenship, in practice that citizenship is selective of only certain identities and interests. When the state responds to the demands of mobilisation, it is an acknowledgement of that fractured citizenship. Hence, while there is a tenuous relationship between the state discourse of citizenship and the discourse of mobilisation, engagement between the state and mobilisation enables the evolution of a citizenship discourse that will include the identities and interests of poor and vulnerable groups (Gaventa and Barrett 2010).

A positive response from the state leads to reinforcement of agency, but agency and empowerment are not to be validated based on state response. As we found in our comparative analysis, the three democratic states do provide certain political opportunities, but that does not guarantee that they will put them into practice until pressure is generated from below. However, as each state's response to mobilisation remains 'selective', making the state accountable can at best be partially successful and at worst have a negative outcome. As our cases and modes of interaction show, selective and partial gains have occurred in certain cases, but in others the state has remained completely closed to citizens' demands.

Even in situations where the state's response is negative, agency created in the process of mobilisation and interaction with the state does lead to a greater sense of citizenship rights. In South Africa, the high levels of protest in Khayelitsha indicate the potential for forming more organised social movement activity in time to come, should local governance structures continue to fail to meet community expectations relating to the supply of public goods and development programmes. Khayelitsha, the largest township in the Western Cape with approximately a million inhabitants (and in a similar way to the city municipalities of eThekwini and Msunduzi), shows how local communities have already come to terms with the failed promise of participatory democracy at local level. Forms of more organised mobilisation and social movement activity still need to catch up with this groundswell of disaffection. The resurgence of street committees as important channels of community organisation indicate that social movements such as SANCO are indeed reinventing themselves, although SANCO has not associated itself with protest about service delivery in any substantive way at the time of writing.

Historically, we thus find several 'footprints' of democracy that have resulted from mobilisation and state interaction. As India and Brazil are the oldest democracies in this study, the footprints are more visible; in South Africa they are only beginning to emerge after a decade-and-a-half of democratic state formation.

7 Conclusions

Brazil, India and South Africa are useful sites for exploring discourses and realities of inclusive democratic practice through state-societal interaction. While much of what is evident here in terms of patterns of interaction is also present elsewhere in the global South, it is illuminating to focus on the patterns of engagement that emerge in three such different cultural, societal and geographical contexts, as it helps to establish whether or not there are similar patterns of engagement over time.

While the three states – by virtue of being 'formal' democracies – do provide certain democratic foundations in the form of constitutions, policies and institutions that create the space necessary for mobilisation to take off, it is evident that mobilisation is still required despite such democratic foundations and political opportunities. Formal democracy means little without action on the part of the citizenry.

Often, debates about the 'nature of the state' or citizenry reify and ideologise both state and non-state actors, but it is evident that roles and identities are far more complex and variable, on both sides of the state/non-state equation. The IBSA states are no exception. The nature of representation at both levels (state and civil society) is problematic here, as this exposes the true nature of participatory democracy (or the lack of it) in action. In the cases examined here it is obvious that forms of interaction and engagement become more varied and sophisticated over time, yet the democratic gains are not always as clear. Despite the countries having few instances of social struggles leading to critical policy changes, the gains from mobilisation-state interaction are hard to achieve, thus making democratic outcomes a non- cumulative process. Mobilisation and state interaction, as our cases reveal point towards both progressive and regressive democratisation.

Recognition of excluded identities and redistribution of resources to poor, marginalised identities remain the critical issues around which mobilisation is taking place in all three countries. Such gaps point to the inadequacy of state responses to the poor, despite many pronouncements and policies proclaiming otherwise. Action is required to ensure delivery; however, not all action is taken by the poor themselves and the tensions between state and non-state actors and representatives are visible more frequently in the face of organised, large-scale, social-movement forms of mobilisation. While smaller-scale efforts at resistance (local protests in South Africa, for example) also evoke tensions, these are more readily addressed by the state, but not always in mutually satisfactory ways. Repression in different forms is not beyond the purview of the purportedly democratic developmental state.

Thus, from the point of view of concrete gains won by the citizenry from interaction with the state, such gains are selective and partial, depending on what the state in question and the governments in place prefer to respond to; and it is clear that these responses depend on a complex set of historical, institutional and situation-specific criteria, as well as political, economic and

social opportunity structures. We can conclude that since state responses and gains for citizenry are selective, building inclusive democracy through state-society relations is also selective, and certain groups are more likely to be included than others. Knowledge and access to resources are powerful leverage tools. However, as the literature on social movements has long maintained, the closer to the state the social movement gets, the less likely it will be to achieve major transformatory changes; co-optation is more likely, if not inevitable (Klandermans 1984).

However, looked at from the citizen's point of view, action (as constitutive of the construction of citizenship) is important and, despite the potential lack of state response, a sense of agency and empowerment is crucial in keeping the 'democracy debate' alive. Knowing the state can be held accountable – in other words, not letting the state off the hook – is in itself an empowering expression of citizenship and political identity. Furthermore, while the cases discussed here show only a fragment of the national and international component of such empowerment, other examples in all three states do illustrate this point: for example, HIV/AIDS resistance action in South Africa by the TAC. In the same way, the environmental movements in Brazil and India have raised international solidarity and support through struggles for more equitable development that is less damaging to the environment and to livelihoods.

Both the broader patterns of engagement and the cases analysed here show that the state is comfortable to adopt participatory modes and engage with forms of mobilisation that are perceived (from within its institutional ranks) to be closer to its framework and pattern of action. The cases in which citizens raise legitimate demand through protests and constestations are highly likely to meet state resistance. This reveals the 'other side of the democratic state', that is the rough dynamics and non-linear nature of creating democratic processes around formalistic structures.

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