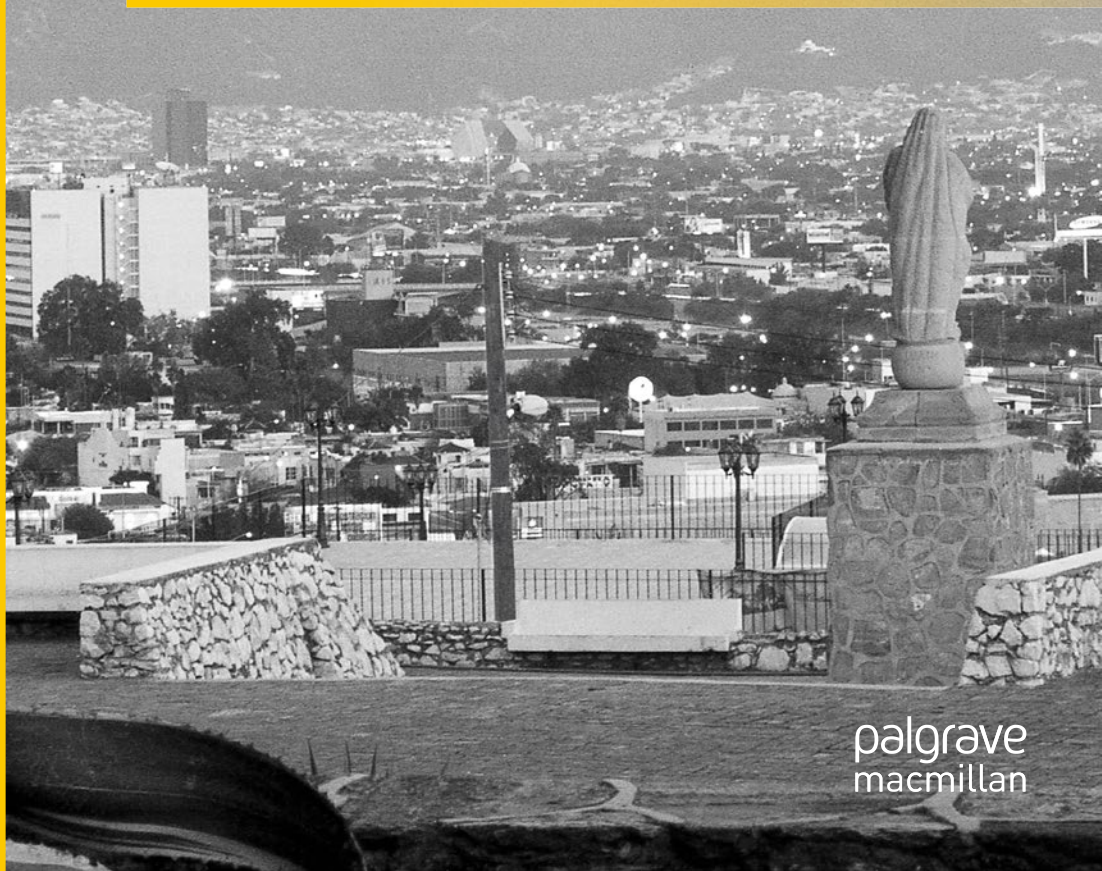
GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN LATIN AMERICA

Participatory Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazil

Valesca Lima



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International Studies
Instituto Mora
Mexico City, Mexico

César Villanueva
Department of International Studies
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Mexico City, Mexico

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Valesca Lima
Maynooth University
Dublin, Ireland

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To my father, Ernane.

Series Editors' Preface

Today, the outlook of South America's biggest countries is leaning toward conservative governments: Michel Temer (Brazil), Iván Duque (Colombia), Mauricio Macri (Argentina), and Sebastián Piñera (Chile). In the early 2000, it was the opposite. Then, center-left governments dominated: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula for short, Brazil), Ricardo Lagos, succeeded by Michelle Bachelet (Chile), and Néstor Kirchner (Argentina). It could be argued that this latest wave of success for the right in South America has been smudged by the particular case of Brazil, which has raised concerns among a multitude of actors, domestic as well as international.

The victory of Lula in 2003 and the economic and political reforms he launched were most welcomed by many actors inside and outside the country. In particular, the attention to the poor via State contributions and focused public policies were highly acclaimed by those who were concerned with stressing poverty alleviation. Lula's Brazil also proposed democratic innovations which sought to reinforce direct forms of representation and the involvement of popular classes in public decision-making. All of this contributed to put the spotlights on Brazil. Indeed, in the era of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, the Workers' Party (PT as shorthand), Brazil was hailed as a positive sign of democracy maturing in Latin America,[1] and one of the outstanding features was, precisely, experiments of participatory democracy. Brazil showed the way in which it was possible to embed mechanisms of participatory democracy in governance structures. Significantly, the center-left PT had as one of its emblematic objectives to extend citizenship and social rights through governance structures to *all* citizens, without any discrimination. Lula became popular with millions of

people not just at home but also abroad; a symbol for a progressive leader with a genuine social pathos.

A chronic social cleavage in Latin American societies runs between the "privileged" and "un-privileged". Back in 2003, Lula launched political programs and measures that aimed to extend social rights to the poor and improve their life conditions. This was hard to swallow for parts of Brazil's economic-political elite who saw this as a project that would undermine their privileges, on one hand, and the country's macro-economic performance, on the other. Expectedly, the right then became very critical of the PT's neo-developmentalist policies and began an incremental process to dismantle Lula's experiment and come back to power. As succinctly captured by the diplomat and former Foreign Minister under Lula and the defense minister under Dilma Rousseff, Celso Amorim: "When policy is carried by the left, it is seen as partisan. When the right carries it, it is perceived as state policy. Perhaps this is because the right has always dominated the state."[2] Seen in this light, perhaps not surprisingly, in a context of deep economic and political crisis, the pendulum swung back.

As Timothy J. Power suggested already in 2010, part of the success of the Henrique Cardoso and later the Lula era rested on the pragmatic coalitions at the federal level between the PT and the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (Brazilian Social Democratic Party, PSDB), which shared common concerns in a broad number of national issues, and managed to agree on a single plan: "on the one hand, moderate growth and low inflation, and on the other hand, declining poverty and inequality."[3] But then, there are many paths to fall from grace in the international community of democratic states. The case of Brazil is intriguing for as many reasons as there are plausible explanations as for why the country suffered such a relentless political crisis. Suffice it to mention the most famous scandals; Petrobras and Odebrecht, the Clean Car Wash (*Lava Jato*) and the "clean slate" law that Lula himself had pushed through but ironically was used against him later for corruption charges.[4]

This study by Valesca Lima, *Participatory Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazil*, helps us to get a fuller picture of the rise and disintegration of inclusive democracy and governance in Brazil from the victory of the leftist candidate, Lula, in 2003 until the triumph of the extreme right-wing candidate Jair Bolsonaro in 2018. It concentrates on the period during Michel Temer's government, taking over after the ousting of Dilma Rousseff in 2016 due to illicit campaign financing. Written in an accessible manner, Lima's study is an important contribution to the literature that

has come out lately which seeks to explain the multitude of factors and forces that somehow coalesced and made possible the descent into political chaos, delegitimized political institutions, and weakened democracy in contemporary Brazil.[5]

The book integrates a series of guiding questions to approach the process of disintegration of democracy in Brazil, and fundamentally, make sense of the implication for other countries in the region and beyond. Since the shift to the right in 2016, what have been the most significant changes in participatory citizenship and the exercise of social rights, for example, through participation in processes or spaces of public policy-making? What are the endogenous factors in Brazil that favor the decline of the popular support for left-oriented politics? To answer these questions, Lima utilizes theoretical literature or concepts from different traditions around citizenship, democracy, participation, governance, and democratic innovations in public policy-making. This analytical-conceptual discussion then forms the background for analyzing Brazil's contemporary democracy crisis. The originality in her work lies in tracing the support for and resistance to the idea of participatory citizenship, a dynamic that has significant explanatory relevance. What becomes obvious in Lima's study is that beliefs about participatory citizenship are colored by ideology. The innovative governance mechanisms that were put into practice during the PT governments which saw the increasing participation of under-privileged groups then became anathema to the conservative and extreme right-wing forces. Lima explores in depth the role of the local and national policy councils and policy conferences as arenas for articulation of citizen's rights, cherished by the PT governments (although to a lesser extent by Rousseff), which after 2016 became arenas for confrontation between the Temer government and his supporters on the one hand, and social actors on the other. From the Temer Administration's side, the strategy has been to "strangle" national councils/conferences by different means, for example, drastic budget cuts or smear campaigns, all with the aim of discrediting and making dysfunctional these spaces for democratic deliberation by forcing them to undergo restructuring in the name of "efficiency." Clearly, this is an indicator of the suspicion held against participatory spaces. In brief, the progressive public policies under the PT governments have been steadily eroded and participatory mechanism in governance and public policy-making increasingly questioned and discredited.

As Lima summarizes: "Temer's administration is part of a revitalized wave of new neoliberal offensives against the neo-developed and post-

neoliberal experiences." Not surprisingly, the cuts in social expenditures and "flexibilization of social rights" had negative impacts on the established policies related to citizenship rights. Importantly, "the centralization of decision-power put forward by Temer's right-wing government is promoting the dismantling of social rights and also Brazil's architecture of participation". In this discussion, Lima also includes the reconfiguration of the Brazilian political landscape after the impeachment of Rousseff, the emergence of new political alliances, and the deeply troublesome "manipulation of mainstream media and judiciary". The challenging effects of "fake news" on people's consumption of news and their view on what is going on in domestic or world affairs is discussed with reference to the aggressive campaigns by then presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro in social media (particularly, Facebook) and the messaging app WhatsApp. As many political analysts pointed out, pre-election polls indicated that Lula, despite corruption charges, would win the elections against Bolsonaro, had not he been barred from participating in the race.[6]

In the light of the dismantling of participatory democracy in Brazil, Lima asks: How can democratic resilience be preserved in Brazil? She proposes three broad avenues: "Reframing the debate with popular mobilization", "Taking Inspiration from Previous Forms of Popular Mobilization", and "Techno-Democratic Qualification Decision-Making for Social Movements". She also invites us to consider the utility of these avenues in other contexts beyond Latin America, marked as well by political crisis and challenges to democratic innovations, visible in "constrained spaces of participation", among others. Her study then reaches into the discussion about how to face the rise of semi-authoritarian or outright authoritarian leaderships situated at both ends of the ideological spectrum, and by what means encourage broad citizen collaboration to defend those spaces of popular participation. Hence, a merit with Lima's book is that it goes to the heart of issues of democratic governance, civil rights, and participatory citizenship that have come under threat elsewhere than Brazil. She leads the reader to the crucial point worthy of reflection when saying: "when a democratic innovation is state-led (…), participation is closely related to the government championing, or not championing, those spaces. This is happening not because civil society abandoned the participatory space, quite the contrary; many groups refuse to accept the dismantling of citizen participation, but it shows that, when democratic institutions are weak, democracy innovations may fall apart."

It is worth pointing out that Lima stresses the fact that the demand for political participation came directly from civil society; it was a bottom-up approach that came as a reaction from PT members and Lula supporters who believed that representative democracy was not enough to promote further democratization, and not fully capable of reducing the historical social inequality in Brazil. Just as it is the case in many parts of Latin America, Brazil also reproduces the struggle between citizenship rights and access to opportunities, which is a political battle that depends on the distribution of power cutting through the socio-economic cleavages. This is not just a question of democracy promotion or rally for popular participation; it is also an issue of transforming ideas on citizenship rights into pro-poor public policies, in a highly contested political arena that is rife with confrontations.

Future seems uncertain for Brazil's democracy. The PT is nursing its wounds after the loss of presidential candidate Fernando Haddad in the October 2018 elections and the political opposition is dispersed overall. Will Bolsonaro continue the anti-democratic and anti-human rights discourse he massively propagated through social media during his election campaign? What will be the working conditions for critical political analysts, academics, civil society, and human rights activists, in particular, under his mandate? Will there be a "brain-drain" from Brazil under the Bolsonaro era? Will Brazil adopt a path similar to the one of the US under the Administration of President Donald Trump? That is, protectionism, unilateralism, disdain for scientifically grounded facts, abuse of social media, to name a few well-known features. Now, Bolsonaro has declared that Brazil will not be hosting the United Nations COP25 on climate change, scheduled for 2019, because of "budgetary constraints", which is the official explanation.[7] However, Bolsonaro and his collaborators could not care less about climate change or environmental concerns neither at home, nor at the global scale.

We contend that this study is a must read for anyone interested in understanding the turbulent times in Brazil from 2016 up until the October 2018 elections. In particular, what actually happened with those civil rights that were acquired during the Lula and Rousseff governments, but then after the *coup d'état*-like ascent to power by President Michel Temer, were restricted. Finally, we can only hope that Lima will continue exploring the overall theme for this book in future studies under the Bolsonaro era, beginning on January 1, 2019. Indeed, we

would encourage her to continue the dissection of participatory governance structures, national as well as local councils and conferences, which seem likely to weaken further under Bolsonaro's rule.

Mexico City
December 10, 2018

Rebecka Villanueva Ulfgard
César Villanueva

Notes

1. For a regional contextualization, see, for example, Thomas Legler, Dexter S. Boniface and Sharon F. Lean (eds.), *Promoting democracy in the Americas* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). The authors analyze "Dimensions of Democratization", which they conclude are transnational by nature, and that frame the tone of domestic political conflicts in the light of broader debates both within academia or international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and its Inter-American Democratic Charter, of 2001.
2. Quote taken from the article "Brazil's Foreign Policy Stumbles Under Temer – Analysis", by Maria Rodriguez-Dominguez, *Eurasia Review*, November 11, 2017, available at: https://www.eurasiareview.com/11112017-brazils-foreign-policy-stumbles-under-temer-analysis/.
3. Timothy J. Power, "Brazilian Democracy as a Late Bloomer: Reevaluating the Regime in the Cardoso-Lula Era", *Latin American Research Review* 45 (Special Issue), 2010, p. 243.
4. "Brazil elections 2018: could a lack of legitimacy make the country ungovernable?," by Mark S. Langevin, blog post, London School of Economics, Latin America and Caribbean Centre, August 30, 2018, available at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2018/08/30/brazil-elections-2018-could-a-lack-of-legitimacy-make-the-country-ungovernable/.
5. See, for example, *Democratic Brazil Divided*, by Peter Kingstone and Timothy J. Power (eds.), University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017; *Media Leaks and Corruption in Brazil: The Infostorm of Impeachment and the Lava-Jato Scandal*, by Mads Bjelke Damgaard, Routledge Studies in Latin American Politics, 2019.
6. Jorge G. Castañeda, "Why Lula Should Be Allowed to Run for President," *The New York Times*, opinion, August 21, 2018, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/21/opinion/lula-president-brazil-corruption.html.
7. "Brazil reneges on hosting UN climate talks under Bolsonaro presidency", *The Guardian*, November 28, 2018, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/28/brazil-reneges-on-hosting-un-climate-talks-under-bolsonaro-presidency.

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I would like to thank those who have supported me during the writing process of this book. In the course of collecting data and researching on an ever-changing topic, one accumulates debts of many kinds, and I am glad to acknowledge them. The question of citizen participation in democracies has generated many distinguished works and my work builds upon their research. I hope to have used the same distinguished works to support the thought that democracy is still resilient in Latin America.

I would like to thank my friends and working colleagues who encouraged me to submit the book. While I started writing this book when I was a postdoctoral researcher in University College Dublin, I concluded it as postdoctoral researcher in Maynooth University. In both places, I found academics willing to discuss the most complex ideas around the crisis of democracy around the world. I want to particularly thank my friends at University College Dublin, Dr. Arya Pillai, Dr. Roland Adorjani, Dr. Supriya Kapoor, Dr. Zihzen Wang, Dr. Barbara Moore and Dr. Purity Mwendwa for being such smart, amusing, and supportive friends. I cannot of course forget my husband Antonio Noca, for providing me with enduring support and endless encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of writing this book.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Democratization and Citizenship

During the relatively short history of democracy in Brazil, the country has hardly experienced a more turbulent period than the current one. Some may argue that the process of impeaching President Fernando Collor de Mello in 1992—when he was accused of condoning influence peddling and thousands of people took to the streets to demand his impeachment—was a tough blow for a country that had two years earlier staged its first direct elections since the end of the dictatorship. Democracy is changing but not because of social revolutions, regime change, or protests. The pattern of democratic changes in Brazil is due to a combination of factors that started taking place roughly around the 2010s, and it is related to electoral results, widespread corruption, economic crisis, and the rise of authoritarianism. Brazil has been shaken by a change in government that saw the impeachment of the president, Dilma Rousseff, member of the leftist Worker's Party (*Partido do Trabalhadores*, "PT"), in a rather ambiguous and politically charged process in 2016. Arguably, this was the start of a deep political and economic crisis. Indeed, it marks the country's turn to the right, a trend observed not only in Brazil, but also in other Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Chile.

V. Lima, *Participatory Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazil*, Governance, Development, and Social Inclusion in Latin America, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19120-7_1

This book addresses the key challenges for participatory democracy in contemporary Brazil. My main reason for writing this book is to explain how participatory citizenship in Brazil has changed since the abrupt government move to the right in 2016. The overall aim of this book is to analyze changes in participatory governance, through the lenses of citizenship and governance theories. Elucidating this process of change is challenging, and my goal is to examine how Brazil's recent turn to the right has had an impact on social rights and on access to spaces of citizen participation, along with an in-depth look at the causes of those changes. There are, then, three main goals: first, to examine the current state-of-the-art that guides the studies of citizenship and participatory democracy; second, to understand why those changes are taking place, and finally, to suggest ways of preserving democratic resilience in the country. These goals are reflected in the structure of the book.

The chapters in this book develop these goals further by focusing on changes in participatory citizenship, through: (a) an analysis of the meaning of citizenship within the context of governance in contemporary Brazil, given the dismantling of spaces for the participation of civil society that is currently under way; and (b) an exploration of the political conflict and the new meaning that participatory spaces (such as housing, health, and education councils) have taken on after the sudden shift to the right, and how these change will shape participatory citizenship in the future.

Based on findings and theoretical framework, two arguments are put forward in the book. First, it shows that Brazil's recent turn to the right has had an impact on social rights and on access to spaces of citizen participation. Second, though civil society participation remains at the center of governance, the institutional setting is determined by the political agenda of the administration in office, defined at the moment by the political agenda of a right-wing government, thus rendering dissimilar agendas in terms of governance structures when compared to previous leftists' governments.

Whether it is Mauricio Macri's Argentina, the conservative government of Sebastián Piñera in Chile, and Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, there is no doubting that right-wing movements are on the rise in Latin America. Many could say this is an obvious counter-reaction to the Pink Tide (a period of nearly a decade in the 2000s, where 70% of the South America countries were governed by leftist governments, and many of those governments implemented successful poverty-reduction programs) or that the Pink Tide run out of steam after economic turmoil and widespread

corruption. To explain how the legacy of the Pink Tide that lasted for over a decade fell in the hands of right-wing governments is difficult, but in this work, I attempt to explain how and why it happened. The signal coming from those right-wing governments are not very uplifting: for example, one of the first actions of Temer's administration after taking the presidential seat from Rousseff was to abolish the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality, and Human Rights (which became a wing into the Ministry of Justice) and appointing an all-male cabinet; Macri launched anti-immigration campaign in the model proposed by Trump in the US, blaming unemployment and crime on undocumented immigrants; and Piñera is slowly but surely pushing reproductive rights backwards in Chile.

In Brazil, where this book is focused, Temer and Bolsonaro's government are part of a shift toward reducing the democratic governance spaces that have been built over the last 20 years. The idea of participation began to be increasingly associated with the image and design of the PT and the dismantling of those spaces of participation is an unambiguous attempt to fracture the participatory policies related to the party, a view that is evidenced by the disarticulation and reorganization of several policy councils.

Furthermore, this book aims to contribute to the wider study of governance and citizen rights in the context of the current right-wing government and the consequences of those political changes for public policies and democracy in Brazil. The data for this book comes from a specific country and specific policy areas, but the questions, debates, and findings are useful for a reflection on the state of participatory citizenship in other Latin American countries.

1.2 The Structure of the Book

1.2.1 Values and Principles of Participatory Citizenship

Chapter 2, "Citizenship and Access to Rights" is intended both as a general introduction for non-theorists who are interested in learning more about the conception of democratic innovations and citizenship in Latin America, and as an overview for scholars who are seeking an up-to-date statement of the current state of affairs in Brazil. The first part of this chapter introduces the topic, outlining its empirical and theoretical significance, engaging the reader in a broader discussion around the topic of governance and citizenship. It lands this discussion in the regional context of Latin America, narrowing it down to the specific context of Brazil and

to the transition from progressive public policies to current political tensions and questioned democratic practices. This chapter refers to current changes in participatory democracy and the consequences for citizenship rights. The second part of the chapter provides an in-depth review of current literature on citizenship and governance. It unpacks this literature according to the characteristics that define the struggle for citizenship rights, and the concept of governance, which, in the Brazilian context, takes on heightened importance.

1.2.2 Changes in Participatory Citizenship

My aim in Chap. 3, "Understanding the Changes in Governance and Participation in Brazil" is to provide an overview of the struggles for citizenship and innovative governance. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce the readers to the Brazilian experience of participatory democracy, as I look at the spaces of participation created since the 1990s, and examine data from policy councils and policy conferences. The analysis then moves to the reorganization of participatory spaces that took place under the government of Michel Temer. In the second part, I demonstrate how the (re) centralization of decision-power put forward by Temer's right-wing government is promoting the dismantling of social rights and also Brazil's architecture of participation. I then explain in which way the economic and political agenda of the Brazilian elites is aligned with the international capital markets, as I look into the social reforms being implemented from the beginning of the right-wing coalition led by Temer's party until the end of 2018 (the time of the writing of this book). I look, in particular, into the significance and consequences of the disarticulation of national and state policy councils in different social areas. The last part of the chapter discusses changes in governance implemented under the right-wing administrations, seeking to understand how the context, structure, development, and implementation of the new political agenda all affect citizen participation. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the challenges involved in maintaining the structures of citizen participation.

1.2.3 Political Crisis and Rising of Authoritarian Politics

Chapter 4, "The Effect of Political Crisis on Citizenship Rights and Authoritarianism in Brazil" sets out to examine the main characteristics of the political crisis and the agenda of the right. It provides a discussion within the context discussed in Chap. 3 (i.e. challenges in implementing

innovative governance practices). It then goes deeper into the right-wing project of returning to power by a process of internal reorganization and new alliances. This discussion focus on this right-wing agenda, which includes changes in public policy spending and changes in social rights, such as labor law and pensions. This chapter focuses on the rise of authoritarian populism and fascism which grew during the 2018 presidential election and became cemented with the victory of an extreme-right candidate. In explaining how this is possible in a country that was once considered a model of democratic innovation, I consider the risk this new administration poses to developments in the area of citizen participation and changes in pro-poor policies. At the end, I outline the leftists' counter-movements against the new conservative trend.

1.2.4 Citizenship, Resilience, and Digital Democracy

The final task, set out in Chap. 5, "Sustainable Citizenship and the Prospect of Participation and Governance in the Digital Era", is to relate the main theoretical ideas present in Chap. 2 to the possibility of maintaining Brazil's framework of participatory citizenship. In examining the challenges for political participation in the era of social media, I discuss some key aspects of participation to democracy social and political goals. This chapter concludes with some reflections on the mechanisms to maintain incentives for political participation and the future of participatory citizenship. These alternatives, I argue, revolve around reframing the debate around participation, popular mobilization, and techno-democratic qualification.

1.2.5 Challenges for Citizenship and Governance

Chapter 6, "Conclusion: Responding to the Great Challenges of Citizenship and Governance" concludes the book with an examination of the main findings and arguments of the study, summarizing their wider implications and generalizability. The conclusion reflects on the outcomes of changes in participatory policies. As to the findings relating to how citizenship through governance has changed since the move to the right in Brazil, the book concludes with some emerging questions about the future of participatory citizenship in the country. After analyzing the challenges of explaining and understanding the concept of citizen participation, I reflect about ways to protect participatory democracy against authoritarian politics.

CHAPTER 2

Citizenship and Access to Rights

For the last 20 years in Latin America, the concept of citizenship in participatory governance has been widely used to examine citizens' engagement with the state. Especially after the post-democratization period, this engagement happened in a variety of forms. From experiences of participatory budgets implemented by the PT in Brazil and to the neighborhood assemblies in Bolivia and Uruguay, those participatory experiences have signaled attempts at deeper democracy by holding the government more accountable and making the institutional space more democratic and inclusive.

Institutions of representation and accountability in Latin America have been historically weak. Large segments of the population were excluded from political and economic life, popular demands were underrepresented, and mechanisms of accountability were absent (Hagopian 2012). At the peak of the neoliberal agenda in the 1990s, which emphasized economic, rather than human and social development, it was nearly impossible to mobilize and press for effective social rights or hold governments accountable (Foweraker 2005). Nonetheless, access to political life has been broadened and innovative forms of political representation and accountability have taken root in the continent and have multiplied over the past 20 years. Political participation can take different forms, as citizens take part in the participatory process, along multiple parallel and intersectional

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channels. The expanding repertoire of participation includes not only participation in institutional channels, but also in meetings, rallies, protests, and demonstrations, to cite just a few. Many of those political actions are motivated by material needs but they often turn into claims for civil, human, and citizenship rights (Irazábal 2017).

At the turn of the century, the landscape of political participation and citizenship changed. Claims for citizenship rights, especially the ones organized around demands for education, access to housing and health services, and the right to the city became prominent among social movements. Institutions of representation and accountability were created, leading to the decentralization of government, and also the liberalization of states and markets. Those two factors prompted citizens to mobilize and old forms of representation to adapt or wither, so innovative experiments began to flourish (Hagopian 2012). But as social changes come in waves in Latin America and elsewhere (Foweraker 2005), hard-won social rights are under threat of being disrupted by a recent wave of right-wing governments in the region.

In this book, the concept of citizenship links participation rights and governance. The myriad experiences of decentralized governance in Latin America allow for an examination of the intersection of the concepts of citizenship rights, participation, and governance. Relating the participation of citizens in policy-making to the struggles for social rights raises some important questions about changes in citizenship rights and the nature of those changes. I depart from the idea of citizenship beyond the perspective of the acquisition of legal rights contained in the study of participatory democracy and governance, developed by Dagnino (2005, 2006) and later expanded by Baiocchi (2005), Cornwall (2008), Avritzer (2006), and other authors in the area of citizen participation. This perspective is focused on the question of extending citizenship, through governance structures, to ordinary citizens, which was a key objective of the PT administrations during the 2000s. While focusing on what factors facilitate or hinder the expansion of citizenship rights, this perspective has sought to analyze the input and the outcomes (i.e. policy impact, effectiveness) of participatory democracy.

In this chapter, I first outline the concepts and applications of innovative governance models in Latin America and Brazil. Second, I will discuss the struggles for citizenship rights in Latin America, with focus on the Brazilian case, while situating the book between the literature on governance and citizenship. Throughout, I lay emphasis on the struggle for

citizenship rights as a fundamental political battle that depends on the distribution of power and the ability and opportunities for the poor to engage in the political sphere in order to try to overcome disadvantages. I attempt to offer a dynamic view of governance and literature on citizen rights in the context of the current right-wing government and the consequences of those political changes to public policies and citizenship rights in Brazil and the wider Latin America.

2.1 Understanding Citizenship Participation and Governance

The issue of extending citizenship through governance structures has been central to the study of participatory governance. Since the pioneering works of participatory governance (Dahl 1989; Habermas 1996; Mansbridge 1983), scholars have pondered how participatory mechanisms empower and mobilize communities and promote deep democracy; and whether by extending citizenship to participatory institutions, they can be steered toward pro-poor policies. The numerous experiences of citizen engagement with issues of policy-making and local governance in Latin America provides an interesting opportunity to re-assess the meaning of democratization in the region, by linking civil society and government reforms in new ways that extend the social rights into inclusive citizenship.

In Latin America, economic liberalization and its neoliberal reforms have put the fragile institutions of democratic representation and accountability in danger, while government decentralization has had a positive effect on political participation and citizenship over the years (Hagopian 2012). The expansion of government institutions, designed to promote the participation of citizens in policy-making in the region, emerged more strongly during left-wing administrations, which were in general more committed to citizen participation and deliberative democracy as alternative models of improving governance and access to social rights.

Latin American countries have been at the global forefront of remarkable confrontations, debates, and shifts in the understanding of citizenship (Sznajder et al. 2012). The main shift relates to changes in the configuration of the meaning of citizenship, and the systematic implementation of neoliberalism as a policy-model has affected the way citizenship is recognized. In the context of neoliberal policies in the region, citizenship began to be understood and promoted as a simple individual integration to the

market (Dagnino 2005). The dispute among the various understandings of citizenship became more apparent during the "Pink Tide" or "turn to the left", terms used to describe the rise of the left during the 1990s and 2000s when nearly 70% of Latin America was governed by a leftist political party. Since then, the region has undergone a profound transformation in terms of the conceptualization of citizenship and participation. These disputes reveal the trajectory of the confrontation between conflicting social projects, which can be seen in the current neoliberal offensive to curtail the social gains of the past decades via a new neoliberal version of citizenship with fewer rights and participatory mechanisms for citizens' involvement in political processes.

2.2 Citizenship and Participation: New Approaches

Citizenship, according to a large body of research, contributes to 'membership' in a political community, improving citizens' lives (Marshall 1965; Turner 1993). As a historical concept, citizenship has been crystallized in modern society as the core idea determining civil, political, socioeconomic, and, more recently, cultural rights, with some groups sharing certain rights and duties while others lack some entitlements (Sznajder et al. 2012). In this sense, citizenship creates boundaries for inclusion and exclusion, and those criteria are fluid when it comes to political movements, ideologies, and mass mobilization. While those processes vary from place to place, many argue that citizen participation has advanced, in a process that often includes attempts to reconfigure citizenship, redefine participation, and promote government accountability (Cornwall et al. 2011; Dagnino 2005, 2006).

But what is it about citizenship participation that contributes to the capability of citizens to exercise political rights and contribute to more accountable governments? Democratic scholars underline the essential role of contestation, participation, and citizenship as core principles of democracies (Pateman 2012; Marshall 1965). Citizenship is central to democratic theory, coming from a liberal citizenship tradition where it encompasses both rights and responsibilities, not as a legal category, but as a normative model of membership and participation in society. In Marshall's seminal work *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), citizenship is fundamentally an issue of ensuring that every person is treated equally and seen as a full member of society. The way to ensure this sense of membership is through according people an increasing number of citizenship rights (Kymlicka and

Norman 1994, p. 354). Citizenship rights are about democratizing democracy, about changes that make social and political life more democratic by providing opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives, as well as in the wider political system (Pateman 2012). For participation to be meaningful, institutions must have real power devolved from the state, in order to produce significant policies capable of improving the lives of citizens (Donaghy 2018).

Marshall (1965) also elaborated on three complementary dimensions of rights in his democratic theory, which are civil, political, and social rights. Safeguarding this trio is vital to democracy and citizen participation as a precondition for citizens to participate in deliberative processes, in pursuit of their interests. But citizens need authentic opportunities to formulate preferences and, as a result, be able to engage in individual and collective action (Avritzer 2002; Fung and Wright 2003). In effect, Marshall's trio of rights brings to light the variations in opportunities for citizens to meaningfully use those rights, as variations across the three dimensions occur across social groups and timeframes. Many types of citizenship, such as cultural citizenship, inclusive citizenship (Jones and Gaventa 2002), active citizenship (Kearns 1995), and insurgent citizenship (Holston 2008) all redefine the practices, values, and rules of citizenship in our daily lives (Irazábal 2008).

Citizenship has become an important part of the debate on democracy, often approached in terms of participation, citizenship rights, and the relationship between states and social actors. Democracies can construct meaningful citizenship when democratic institutions create opportunities for citizens to gather information, organize, and advocate for their interests. Electoral politics can be considered a democratic path in that it allows citizens to vote for those candidates they believe will better represent their interests (Gerring et al. 2015). But, much more than electoral politics, meaningful access to political rights includes the ability of citizens to engage in political competition, contestation, and formal electoral processes (Touchton et al. 2017).

Participation in the political community represents a crucial democratic avenue toward citizenship. It includes dialogue and deliberation among public officials and individual actors, organized or not. The model of representative democracy includes accountability tools that encourage officials to act transparently and to implement more inclusive policies. Research on this area has shown that leftist parties are more likely to expand political access and implement more progressive politics in order

to reduce poverty and inequality, and increase public social expenditure (Hall 2006; Sandbrook et al. 2007). Participation takes place in numerous venues, giving way to policy councils, policy conferences, and public hearings at both the local and national levels (Milani 2008; Snyder 2001; Touchton et al. 2017). These venues foster social accountability, as citizens publicly deliberate with government representatives and propose alternative public policies (Avritzer and Pereira 2005; Putnam et al. 1994).

As a matter of fact, new topics, spaces, and institutions have arisen as a result of experiences of participatory democracy, expanding the meaning of politics and participation and often mingling those two. These practices have shaped the ways in which democracy has developed in contemporary Latin America. As highlighted by Sznajder et al. (2012), there are still significant variations when it comes to citizenship in the region, which has experienced a wide range of types of civil participation, contestation, and mass mobilization. The extension of full citizenship must surpass decades or even centuries of political systems that have left vulnerable groups subject to authoritarian social relations, which is often the case in Latin America (O'Donnell 1998). Whereas the literature pinpoints some advances in citizenship rights, old practices of populism and clientelism did not disappear, but rather adapted to new economic and political situations (this point will be further discussed in the following chapters). I now turn to a particular democratic innovation—participatory democracy, the debates surrounding it, and how it contributes to the expansion of citizenship.

2.3 Democratic Innovations and Participatory Democracy

The emphasis on participation and on mechanisms of participatory democracy as instruments of citizenship revitalizes the hope that citizens' agency matters in the face of historical inequalities and institutional rigidities (Nylen 2011; Dagnino 2005). A central aspect of participatory democracy is the idea that citizen participation in policy-making improves the quality of the decisions being made and also gives voice to underrepresented groups. A growing number of scholars have defended public deliberation as the basis of participatory democracy and there is an ongoing discussion on the best ways to include citizens in debates on the diverse aspects of policy-making (Dahl 1989; Habermas 1996; Mansbridge 1983; Fishkin 2009).

As a concept that re-emerged from the Rousseaunian debate about popular participation in the 1960s, participatory democracy has been developed in full as a theory of democracy and is considered an alternative for addressing democratic deficits around the world (Botwinick and Bachrach 1992). Interpreted as a model of deep democratic practices (Heller 2001; Wampler and Avritzer 2004), participatory democracy is frequently understood as the active political involvement of the citizenry (Fung and Wright 2003). It is a model where the decision-making process is transparent, non-centralized, non-hierarchical, and involves the inclusion of citizens while aiming to achieve consensus. This is an important ideal type for addressing the current challenges of inclusive democratic development, and emphasis is required on the effective participation of social movements representing those affected by public policy outcomes.

Participatory democracy has surged as a counter-theory to the limited view of citizen participation in democracies. It proposes that citizen participation is essential for the political process, contrary to the neoliberal notion of democracy, which assumes citizen participation has a marginal and limited role, consistent with the belief that elites are not committed to encouraging political participation (Fishkin 2009). Participation is the means by which the public is given voice. Hence, if some sectors of society, some demographic groups, or some widely shared viewpoints, are left out, then that voice is distorted (Fishkin 2009).

Three core propositions support participatory democracy. The first is that it transforms citizens and the political community by a continuous self-legislative process, and as a result, a political community will be created, free of dependent and private individuals where partial and private interests become public goods (Barber 2004). The second proposition is that participatory democracy generates a more equal society, with substantial gains for the popular classes. This includes citizens acquiring a political consciousness and a reduction in social inequality levels. This is achieved by small social gains that lead to a bigger social transformation (Pateman 1970). The third and last one is that participatory democracy serves an educative function (Fishkin 2009). Citizens who participate learn how to be citizens by doing. They gain a greater sense of efficacy and become more informed about public issues that concern them. Most notably, they develop a sense of public responsibility, as they discuss public problems jointly and take responsibility for the broader public interest. These three justifications complement one another and point to the understanding that participatory democracy is capable of strengthening the public sphere and expanding collective processes of decision-making.

The main objective of participatory democracy is the involvement of ordinary citizens in decision-making structures. Participatory institutions are created as a space to enable popular participation in the process of decision-making in order to promote the expansion of social rights and advance state transparency on issues that concern the citizens. They are called "participatory" because they rely upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation. This model is supposed to change the ways in which ordinary people can effectively participate and influence public policies that directly or indirectly affect the life of citizens. This "empowerment" through deliberation gives a voice to citizens and connects discussion to action (Fung and Wright 2003).

Most of the successful experiences of participatory democracy start at the local level and are usually supported by local politicians (Wampler 2007). The level of success depends on both political will and on social movements understanding their role in the process (Wolford 2010; Wampler 2008). Research has tried to identify the factors that enable a more sustainable participatory democracy experience and the overall conclusion is that a strong and organized civil society and a committed political class are essential to a successful implementation. Many experiences of participatory democracy have tried, in one way or another, to adopt different approaches and strategies to expand citizen participation. The important national study of city-wide councils in the US by Berry et al. (1993, pp. 295–296) provides a useful account of structural elements that make citizen participation significant and successful. According to them, there are three main elements: first, citizens must be given power to make substantial decisions and the authority to allocate public goods; second, the city administration must undergo significant reform and government officials should be encouraged to work collaboratively with citizens; and third, citizen participation should be city-wide in nature, meaning, each neighborhood should have an association that represents it. Leighninger (2006) complements this discussion by presenting some participatory weaknesses, such as participants that only represent the community but do not engage with community members or do not listen to them. He also cites low turnout as a weakness in those systems.

Thus, a key aspect of participatory democracy is the conditions that lead to its successful implementation. Several studies have documented the conditions under which citizen participation becomes an integral part of government. Central to the scholarship on the topic has been the academic

work by Berry et al. (1993) and Leighninger (2006). Both start from the premise that the proper implementation of participatory democracy depends on the willingness of those involved to work collaboratively.

From a pragmatic point of view, an important debate has taken place about the effectiveness of participatory democracy. Some authors such as Macpherson and Cunningham (2012) and Pateman (1970) take a realistic approach and acknowledge the complex democratic challenges and practical difficulties of implementing participatory democracy in societies accustomed to representative mechanisms. Barber (2004) and Cohen and Arato (1994) contest the effectiveness of participatory democracy by claiming that "thin democracies" (in this case, liberal democracy in its varied elite-dominated forms) are irreconcilable with a participatory system and the replacement of representative systems with democratic ones are utopian. The key problem with such an explanation is that participatory democracy does not imply the replacement of representative democracy by participatory democracy, which would be indeed utopian. As seen in Chambers (2009, p. 308), participatory democracy does not intend to abolish representative democracy, as "it is rather an expansion of representative democracy". Participatory democracy actually suggests the implementation of direct practices as a complement to representative democracy, and the existence of participatory democracy depends on the existence of representative democracy. A considerable amount of research has been published on how to develop a functioning participatory democracy. These studies usually concentrate on developing a fine-tuning between participation and representation, with a view to improving the mechanisms of representation needed for participatory democracy to function satisfactorily (de Sousa Santos 1998).

During the 1980s in Latin America, government policies oriented towards the decentralization of the territory became an important part of the Latin American agenda and were promoted by two main discourses: one that saw decentralization as a route to reduce the widespread fiscal debt in the region, and another that identified the local government as a space for the articulation of an alternative political and citizen-based project. The first approach was championed by the World Bank, while the second was represented by social movements and leftist parties that adapted their strategies to enter the electoral dynamic (Schneider and Welp 2015, p. 16).

Looking at the participatory budgeting experience, not only in Porto Alegre (Brazil) since 1989 but also in other experiences inside and outside Latin America, it is possible to define a basic model of implementation. Those experiences share more or less the same principles: all citizens are

allowed to participate, and are usually represented by local associations; participation takes place through a combination of direct and representative rules; and decisions on how public goods should be allocated are made by a mixture of the community's general criteria and technical criteria. The basic tenets include: the municipality is divided into regions so as to facilitate meetings and the distribution of goods; the government organizes a series of meetings in the communities in order to debate proposals, circulate information, and define community demands (which includes the creation of a municipal Life Quality Index, that will guide the allocation of resources); communities elect their representatives, which in turn elect members to the municipal participatory budgeting council; members of the council approve the municipal budgeting. This budget is then submitted to the municipal legislative body to be approved (de Sousa Santos 1998; Dias 2014; Abers 2000). The success of the participatory budget depends on the local and political context in which it is implemented. The implementation of participatory budgeting, for example, requires the establishment of instances of delegation and representation. Participatory budgeting has been one of the most remarkable democratic innovations in the last decades. The basic participatory budgeting structure calls for an institutional articulation, not only with the institutions of representative democracy (the mayor and the executive), but also with the representative institutions stemming from participatory democracy at the local level. Citizen participation models attempt to reunite the fundamentals of representative democracy (mayor and executive, for example) with citizens organized in grassroots associations and assemblies (Cornwall 2008; Sintomer et al. 2012). This model of participatory democracy has spread and reached virtually every country in Latin America and many other regions across the world and has become one of the most popular instruments of citizen participation (Dias 2014; Pateman 2012; Fung 2011). As participatory institutions, such as participatory budgeting, are replicated in many capitals and municipalities, scholars have been attempting to refine the factors that allow participatory democracy to thrive.

Institutions of citizen participation may have a distinctive influence and power to define public policies directly. According to Schneider and Welp (2015, p. 23), in Bogotá (Colombia), the participation of citizens in government institutions is formalized by a national law (1993) and a local law (2000). Citizen's debates take place on limited dates; however, it can be combined with the choice of delegates who participate in the preparation of proposals prior to a general meeting where the proposals are decided.

Encuentros Ciudadanos deal with Local Development Plans. Decisions reached within the framework of *Encuentros Ciudadanos* are binding and cannot be altered by planning authorities alone; they must also be approved by the Local Development Council and the Legislative Council.

Another example is Uruguay, which used direct democracy on a large scale from 2003 to 2009. This was a consequence of a popular leftist government, which rejected neoliberal policies implemented by previous governments. In Montevideo (Uruguay), the participatory budgeting deliberates basic infrastructure or municipal services and cultural, social, and community projects. These institutions foster deliberation in order to promote debate, the exchange of information, and the building of consensus for informed decision-making (Schneider and Welp 2015).

Such studies of participatory democracy have shown the importance of the societal context on the outcomes of this model and on the level of engagement of citizens. Most of the appeal of this model lies in its applicability in small-scale institutions, such as town meetings or municipal councils, as it permits a face-to-face rich interaction and a solution for collective problems (Fishkin 2009). Big-scale implementation is particularly challenging when issues of costs, logistics, low turnout, and the development of a community-wide system of representation are considered.[1] One possible solution to those issues is the use of the internet, as in "e-participatory budgeting".[2]

To date, there has been little agreement on the potential of participatory democracy to enhance the quality of democracy and increase ordinary citizens' engagement in politics. The issue has grown in importance in light of studies that are overly positive on the outcomes of participatory democracy and others that are overtly critical and deeply skeptical. Although participatory democracy is understood as an instrument to promote democratization and collaboration between the state and society and as a way to encourage citizen involvement in politics, some scholars argue that popular participation in democratic institutions does not necessarily generate democratic results (Payne et al. 2002). Other authors suggest that results on this are mixed (Michels and Graaf 2010). Representatives of both social movements and the state frequently interact with each other in ways that build a dynamic relationship between them. The presence of social movements in democratic institutions brings contestation to those channels of participation (such as local councils) by pressuring the state to be more transparent and responsive. The inclusion of social movements in these official channels of political decision-making creates a different

dynamic in that environment, forcing the state to be more responsive. Nevertheless, given the remarkable challenges posed by economic volatility, high levels of poverty and inequality, and organized crime and violence, the deepening of democracy remains a challenge in some countries (Payne et al. 2002). This is especially true in those countries that are considered young democracies and those which have an electoral democracy without free and fair elections or citizens' participation, such as in semi-authoritarian countries.

2.4 Criticisms of Participatory Democracy Theory

Generally, the level of difficulty in implementing participatory models of democracy is high. But governments around the globe have managed to successfully implement effective participation (in Porto Alegre and Santo Andre, Brazil; Poitou-Charentes, France; and New York City, the US, to cite a few). However, the efficacy of this model of collaborative government is sometimes questioned, since power and public resources are not distributed equally in many contexts. The risk of keeping subaltern or marginalized groups excluded from the institutions of policy-making still exists and there is no guarantee of pluralism within the process of political decision-making (Della Porta 2006).

Although successful in many cases, participatory democracy faces criticism from academics. One main criticism is that participatory democracy is unrealistic and unable to capture the complexity of modern societies, expecting too much of individual people (Hauptmann 2001, p. 400). Critics sustain that participatory democracy is based on the premise that people enjoy participating in politics, sometimes referring to it as a "romantic dogma" (Warren 1996a, p. 58). Warren (1996b) claims citizens are likely to find decision-making burdensome and inefficient. Consequently, most of the participants will withdraw from the process and "this will leave most decisions to an activist few who will, ironically, make decisions based on the authority they derive from a participatory process" (p. 243). According to Warren (1996a), authoritarianism is a limitation for participatory democracy. However, he explains that reliance on authority does not restrain the capacity for democracy and that certain types of authority are desirable, as it allows deliberative democracy to be less burdensome and more focused; for instance, citizens can concentrate their efforts on issues they think are important, delegating decision-making powers to others.

Mansbridge (1983) approaches participatory democracy with interest and skepticism. In her search for the most successful "participatory democracies", she analyses the difficulties and dilemmas of participative practices inspired by the ideas of citizen participation in decision-making. By investigating three case studies (a town meeting, a youth center, and a worker-managed company), she emphasizes the merits and potential of those experiences, but also their limitations and inconsistencies. Concentrating most of her criticism on issues of equality, specifically equality in terms of exercise of power, Mansbridge shows that participants still reproduced inequalities, since some groups or some people who were more vocal or in traditional positions of power were more influential. She concludes that, in large-scale polities, participatory democracy is unlikely to thrive, mostly because consensus between groups with interests that are too diverse is more difficult to be reached (adversarial democracy). However, in "unitary democracies"—or small polities where citizens have common interests and face-to-face contact—participatory democracy is more likely to be successfully implemented (Mansbridge 1983, p. 5).

In terms of appropriation, Polletta (2005, p. 32) highlights the path participatory democracy has taken over time, as she argues it was appropriated by a white middle class. Using the case of a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as her main case study, she gives an account of the rise and fall of participatory democracy, which, according to her, was abandoned when it came to be seen as ideological, oriented to personal self-transformation, and mostly white, the opposite of what it was in the beginning of the SNCC movement and when participatory democracy was seen as practical, political, and inclusive.

Some of the criticism is also directed at the ability of participatory democracy to sustain itself. A common criticism that is directed at the involvement of citizens in politics is related to the idea that the average citizen does not have the capabilities for effective participation and those who have it are not interested. However, evidence on the ground has demonstrated that ordinary citizens are interested in taking the opportunity to participate seriously in decision-making processes (Fung and Wright 2003; Wampler and Avritzer 2004; Baiocchi 2005). When given the right training, information, and opportunity, citizens become able to understand the complexity of the process and contribute to it. That kind of evidence contradicts the simplistic ideas of those who believe that ordinary citizens are not capable of collaborating on public issues.

A study by Touchton and Wampler (2014) significantly illustrates how participatory institutions have evolved over the past 20 years. In this work, they show how participatory experiences involving citizens have attracted widespread support in different locations around the world. According to them, international organizations, such as the World Bank, help to promote the participation of citizens in politics with a view to reducing corruption and poverty levels. Elected politicians obtain legitimacy and public support for new social programs by opening public spending to the general public for scrutiny. To social movements, taking part in participatory institutions means gaining access to government officials, information about public expenditures, and a voice in the policy-making process.

The integration of civil society organizations and social movements in democratic institutions has created space for the development of new conceptual frameworks that explain the impact of these new forms of participation and collective action on state democracies. One of these concepts is the idea of "neighborhood governance" as explained by Chaskin and Peters (2000) and Boyte (2004). Looking for an expansion of the concept of participatory democracy, they argue that new models of citizen participation should work toward a broader inclusion of citizens in practical decisions and should support a strong working community, involving people with different views and interests but willing to work together toward common issues (Boyte 2004). To Chaskin, the implementation of participatory democracy entails a move by government to give away political authority to citizens. This wielding of authority defines the new structures and processes that transform the relationship between society (which according to him includes all forms of non-state institutions) and government. Neighborhood-based governance is a community-level mechanism that guides decision-making, and coordinates activities within the community, including its representation beyond the neighborhood (Chaskin and Peters 2000). Thus, the neighborhood is the starting point for community members to get involved and shape their local communities according to their priorities.

2.5 When Citizenship and Participation Come Together

Local government theories, which claim that decentralization enriches democracy by bringing government and citizens together in a closer relationship (Falleti 2010), gave a distinct significance to the concept of citizenship when it intermingled with notions of participation and governance. This notion drew from local government theories, which claim that decentralization enriches democracy by bringing government and citizens together in a closer relationship (Falleti 2010). In representative democracies, there is an expectation that people can communicate their political preferences by means of voting, while it is implied that the elected representative will work to implement policies and keep the government accountable. But this passive, traditional model of representation is constantly being questioned, especially when other alternative modes of governance are successfully implemented, such as participatory budgeting. Thus, new mechanisms of participation have been explored, which look for a more direct connection between the people and the bureaucracies which affect them (Gaventa 2006). In this sense, a more active conception of representative democracy is one that reinforces citizen participation, which makes even more sense on a local scale, where the state and citizens are come closer (Fishkin 2009; Delamaza 2014).

Research has shown that democratic innovations that create an infrastructure for active citizen participation usually produce positive results, such as the integration of citizenship claims into the political system (Wampler 2015; Fishkin 2009). Democratic innovations are changes in governance design that support the expansion of citizenship (Avritzer 2017). Often, linking participation to the political sphere means focusing on local knowledge as the basis for local actions and other direct forms of participation. An extensive number of participatory tools—such as the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection in Mexico ("INAI"), which incorporated citizen practices in order to prevent electoral fraud by revamping the electoral register—have grown from innovative experiences that emphasize the importance of gathering more pluralistic forms of knowledge in planning and policy processes (Rodriguez 2018; Gaventa 2006). While it is clear that democratic innovation may foster citizenship and participation, the issue of how to make democratic innovations influence the political system remains the

key issue in critical democratic theory (Avritzer 2017). It is also clear that enlarging the concept of participation to include citizenship transforms participation into a right, not a simple invitation by those in positions of power. Lister (1998) makes a strong point that the right of participation in decision-making processes should be integrated as a basic human right, because citizenship, as a proxy of participation, represents an expression of human agency in the political arena. This is also the approach increasingly supported by supranational development agencies, such as the UNDP for Latin America and the Caribbean. (Packenham 2015; UNDP 2016). Various arguments for the right to participate indicate that, when it is not the state granting citizenship rights but the citizens themselves attaining their rights through agency, then the right to participate is a preceding right, vital for making other rights tangible (i.e. as in the right to have rights, from Hannah Arendt). For Gaventa (2003, p. 29) "while the liberal versions of citizenship have always included notions of political participation as a right, extending this to encompass participation in social and economic life politicizes social rights through recasting citizens as their active creators". It means that participation as a right enables citizens to achieve social rights. As Holston (2008) asserts, the "right to the city", for example, encompasses the change from needs-based to rights-based discourses in relation to urban and poverty policies. In this way, people cannot realize their rights to the city if they cannot take part, make decisions, and "build" the city they live in, all of which provides the foundation of urban citizenship.

Ultimately, it is also evident in the literature of social mobilization in Latin America that citizens learn new notions of democratization and start to practice it, generating important new inputs for the political system (Avritzer 2017). Social movements have impacted the redefinition of citizenship in the Latin American region, as they have also persisted in the development of ever-wider repertoires of contentious actions and ever-stronger and dynamic forms of participatory democracy. Stahler-Sholk et al. (2008, p. 5), argue that contemporary social movements originated from a centuries-long battle against colonialism and elite domination and that contemporary social movements in Latin America have established new forms of political struggle with some new political objectives, that go beyond citizenship as "market participation", but as a broader and inclusive citizenship. It is not by chance that Latin America is sometimes referred to as one of the main centers of modern-day political innovation. Apart from the broad perception that virtually all Latin American countries have a vari-

ety of new voices for revitalizing local politics, today's social movements are led by a new generation of activists that are seeking to make politics more open and inclusive, as they strive for social change and social inclusion. Some of those newly created movements are concerned with clean and transparent electoral processes, such as the *Bancada Ativista* (bench of the activists) that envisages winning legislative seats in São Paulo by electing grassroots activists to the legislative; the *Wikipolítica* progressive collective in Mexico, which campaigned for independent congress-representatives in the 2018 election; and Argentina's *Partido de la Red*, which promotes the use of technology for deepening democracy by increasing online voter engagement with elected representatives. Other forms of protest to mobilize resources and pressure for changes in the allocation of budgets also put pressure on governments, such as the school occupation campaign in Brazil that saw massive high school students' protests in 2015 and 2016, against the closure of public schools by the former mayor of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin. In Brazil, this student movement highlighted the return of progressive mass mobilization and paved a path for new forms of youth political engagement (see, for example, da Silveira et al. 2017). Another similar, interesting example is the #YoSoy132 movement in Mexico, in which students organized online and protested against political corruption during the 2012 Mexican presidential election (see Breuer and Welp 2014).

The principle of autonomy from traditional parties, social justice and horizontal participation have stimulated some rethinking of traditional ideas in the context of seeking fundamental social change (Prevost et al. 2012). Chávez in Venezuela and Lula's government in Brazil have both, for example, revised legislation and created mechanisms of political participation and access to public goods that support the inclusion of the poor in the policy-making process. The institutionalization of social movements in structures of participatory democracy embody the challenge of incorporating changes in the meaning of citizenship, to continually develop demands for the incorporation and inclusion of major social sectors (Sznajder et al. 2012), which has constituted one of the major continuous challenges for modern democracies trying to promote instances of participation and deliberation. Social reforms intending to expand citizens' rights by promoting political participation are aimed at reshaping the relationship between citizens and the state, especially in places where trust in government is low, such as in Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, and Brazil (Latinobarómetro 2018). Some expect that participatory democracy will have the power to reengage citizens, but it will

only happen if they see any value in joining those spaces (Donaghy 2018). Participatory processes have developed from a very particular set of circumstances in which the alignment of political elites and civil society united toward the goal of social inclusion for disadvantaged groups (Baiocchi 2005; Montambeault 2015; Delamaza 2014). Thus, it makes sense to indicate that in Latin America, participatory arrangements have centered around the idea of connecting diverse participatory and deliberative processes together and linking those processes to the political system and the state. This integration happens via institutional mechanisms (i.e. policy councils and participatory budgeting), in an attempt to bring the results of deliberation into the political system (Avritzer 2017). These changes are usually seen in a positive light by democratic theorists (Nylen 2011), as the general consideration is that democratic innovations help to foster citizenship, even though this is not always the case.

2.6 The Setbacks in Citizenship and Participation Rights in Brazil

Since 2003, participatory policies started being implemented at all political administrative and levels. But the PT administration forcefully ended in 2016 and a president was removed from office Brazilian politics moved to the right. Those events have had an impact on governance and citizens' rights to participate in public policy-making. Academic work on the post-PT government has been limited when it comes to these changes, as academics are only starting to grasp these political developments.

Brazil is not the only country in Latin America unable to fully implement Marshall's (1950) trio of civil, political, and social rights. The numerous experiences of citizenship expansion through participation are today an established phenomenon in Brazil and has opened the door for an extensive amount of literature being generated about it. Since the 1990s and 2000s, authors have discussed the range of innovative trends in governance in Brazil, such as collaborative governance and participatory democracy (Baiocchi 2005; Fung 2011; Avritzer 2006). This is the context for relevant changes in terms of citizenship rights, one that was widely promoted by 14 years of PT administrations but that is under threat under the conservative governments: the concept of participatory governance in policy councils, which is associated with the ideas of emancipation, citizenship, democracy, and social rights. Claims for social rights have long surpassed government responses to those demands, as the long road for

securing citizenship rights has been often hit by setbacks in terms of access to citizenship rights. As underlined by Hagopian (1996, 2012), every modern democracy is, from time to time, hit by reversals, with relapses into authoritarian politics and restrictions that violate some fundamental political rights of citizenship. The relevance of this debate in contemporary Brazil is probably best reflected in policy-based evidence on the retractions of social rights and political violence, as a consequence of a stagnant economic scenario and political crises. The move to the right has uncovered weaknesses in the Brazilian governance system. More recent conservative views and measures have emerged, arguing that previous arrangements to promote citizen participation were too costly and lacked transparency, leading to the closing or disassembling of key policy councils and conference councils at the national level. This has fostered a debate over the dismantling of citizen participation bodies, which was a noticeable practice in the current administrations. Temer and Bolsonaro's governments are part of a shift toward reducing the number of democratic governance spaces that have been built over the last 20 years.

Until recently, Brazil was an outstanding case of democratic innovation that blended representative democracy with direct forms of representation. It received the attention of academics and civil society all over the world because of its institutionalized mechanisms of participation that tackled issues of inequality, accountability, and transparency. But when a democratic innovation is state-led, as is the case in Brazil and many Latin American countries, participation is closely related to the government championing, or not championing, those spaces. Since 2016, national policy councils and national conferences have been systematically thwarted by the federal government, which is in charge of funding and organizing it, but is slowly deactivating and disempowering it. As Brazil seems to go down a path of "anti-democratic" movements and conservative politics and policies, those lauded democratic innovations are showing first signs of vulnerability. This is happening not because civil society abandoned the participatory space, quite the contrary; many groups refuse to accept the dismantling of citizen participation, but it shows that, when democratic institutions are weak, democracy innovations may fall apart.

A problematic trend was that the idea of participation began to be increasingly associated with the image of the PT. Previous research shows that parties to the right of the political spectrum that emerged at a municipal level, succeeding the PT (or even PT administrations) have in some cases dismantled the instances of participation previously built (Baiocchi

et al. 2011), but not as systematically as in Temer's government and Bolsonaro's government. Additionally, the view that this phenomenon may be an attempt to break the participatory policies relating to the PT has gained credence and is evidenced by the closing of policy councils. Thus, this book addresses the key challenges for participatory democracy in contemporary Brazil. To sum it up: The current changes in the Brazilian democratic context in terms of experiences with inclusive governance and citizens' engagement in participatory mechanisms offer a rich basis for an examination of the pathways of democracy in Latin America, and also some of its inherent weaknesses signaled above.

Notes

1. Academic work by Lukensmeyer and Brigham (2005) make some considerations on that.
2. The use of the internet has been proven to be a useful tool for increasing opportunities for citizen participation. However, the articulation of the internet and participatory democracy innovation calls for careful reflection that cannot be undertaken in this book. For an overview on this approach, see Breuer and Welp (2014) and Barros and Sampaio (2016).

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CHAPTER 3

Understanding the Changes in Governance and Participation in Brazil

In just a few years, Brazilians lived during a euphoric time of finally enjoying the status of a prosperous nation with policies of poverty reduction and an expanding international role, to an unprecedented political and economic meltdown. This crisis has seen the reversal of hard-won social rights and the decline of democratic levels in the country. This is interesting because, despite the creation of several mechanisms of citizen participation in the early twenty-first century, we observe currently a transition from more progressive public policies to political tensions and the questioning of democratic institutions and their legitimacy in the country.

Brazil captured the world's attention with its accomplishments in democratic governance since the successful implementation of participatory budget in Porto Alegre. Positively, mechanisms that help to boost citizen participation by including civil society in the policy-making process were an ambitious and successful democratic reform in which "(…) there are simply no analogs of similar scale and depth in North America, Europe, Asia or Africa" (Fung 2011, p. 868). Fung also highlights that the literature on democratic innovation has pointed two main ingredients for the success of those experience of participation: citizen's political leadership and civil society commitment with structures of participatory democracy. Political leadership in Brazil can be seen in the increased engagement of citizens in governance practices. This new citizen leadership in Brazil was highly influenced by the PT's leftist ideology,

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which supported the implementation of a variety of democratic innovations, such as participatory budgeting, policy councils, policy conferences, urban and housing plan revision, and so on (Wampler 2007; Baiocchi et al. 2013). The second ingredient is civil society commitment to citizen participation. Civil society members take part directly in political structures to fight for their preferred policies, but also to defend those spaces of participation. In many cases, those participants are independent, numerous, and enthusiastic regarding the idea of participatory governance (Avritzer 2009). But these two ingredients for success are rarely found together (Fung 2011), and even if Brazil was arguably capable to hold them together for nearly two decades, a conservative congress and political turn to the right in 2016 have accelerated the process of decline of participatory governance.

This chapter examines the rise and fall of participatory democracy in Brazil, when much of the literature on the topic still considers the country Brazil a laboratory of democratic innovations with practices of citizenship inclusion and institutional innovation. It starts with a brief contextual analysis to examine the expansion of participatory policies. It then moves to an analysis of the reorganization of conservative movements and Temer's government approach to participatory citizenship. The data I present in this chapter indicates how the coming to power of a right-wing government much more aligned with the international neoliberal agenda and averse to democratic participation has started a process of dismantling the infrastructure of participatory citizenship.

3.1 The Brazilian "Little Miracle" and the PT

Brazil's income inequality is associated with regressive public transfers, low quality public services, higher wage disparities, and regional inequalities. In short, it is a rich and powerful country with an impoverished population. Nearly 20% of its people live below the poverty line (on less than US$ 1.25 per day) despite being the 9th largest economy in the world in 2018, according to the International Monetary Fund (Brazil was the seventh largest economy in 2014, falling two positions in four years). Nationally, extreme poverty was reduced considerably, from 24.9% of the population in 2000 to 9% in 2012, only to increase again in 2017 attaining 11.2% (see Table 3.1). According to the Continuous National Sample Survey of Households (PNAD), the number of people in extreme poverty

Table 3.1 Brazil social indicators (1990–2017)

Series name	*1990*	*2000*	*2007*	*2009*	*2010*	*2012*	*2014*	*2017*
Extreme poverty (% of population)	N/A	24.9	16.1	13.3	12.5	9.1	7.4	11.2
GDP (US$)	460 bn	655 bn	1.397 tn	1.667 tn	2.208 tn	2.460 tn	2.417 tn	2.005 tn
GDP growth (annual %)	−3	4	6	0.12	7%	0.1%	0.1	1.5
Income share held by lowest 20%	2.33	2.44	2.97	3.17	3.26	3.62	3.62	No data
Gini index	60.5	58.3	55.2	53.9	53.4	52.7	51.4	56.7
GNI per capita, PPP ($)	6450	8570	11,870	12,470	13,880	14,750	15,330	15,488

Source: Author's elaboration—The World Development Indicators (various years)

in Brazil went up by 11.2% in 2017 when compared to 2016, rising from 13.34 million to 14.83 million. Economists voiced that the increase in extreme poverty is largely related to the rise in the informal employment sector, which accounted for 37.1% of the employed population in the country in 2017 (IBGE 2017).

The program *Bolsa-família* was in great part responsible for the reduction in extreme poverty levels and it is also one of the main features of PT administrations. Bolsa-família is a conditional cash-transfer program that provides a minimum income to poverty-stricken families. It is a means-tested social welfare benefit that involves health and educational programs under the same benefit (for instance, in order to keep this social benefit, parents need to prove that their children are attending school regularly and they must not miss medical appointments). In addition, PT governments invested heavily in education, creating training and educational programs to address the increasing demand for high-skilled positions in the job market (e.g. the Science without Borders Scholarship Program and the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment—PRONATEC). Strong economic growth in the 2000s caused by an unprecedented commodity cycle coincided with a solid decline in inequality due to social policies centered on job creation and social welfare (Carvalho 2018). Extreme poverty fell from 2000 to 2014 (Table 3.1).

The trend in poverty reduction from 2000 to 2014 is also explained by strong economic growth and effective social policies implemented by the PT administrations. There was a variation of almost 1% in the percentage of income share held by the lowest 20% of the population. This higher income, aligned to GDP growth, helped decrease income inequality (measured by the Gini index) to reach a 50-year low of 0.514 in 2014. Conversely, the fiscal adjustments carried out by Temer's administration have restricted public spending and public revenue, generating unemployment and accelerating poverty (Carvalho 2018). Evidence of that is the increase of the Gini index (a measurement of income or wealth distribution) from 51.4 in 2014 to 56.7 in 2017, as Brazil social advances retreated 10 years in only two and a half years.

It is believed that one of the main positive aspects of the conditional cash-transfer programs in Brazil is that low-income families are more inclined to vote according to their interests, an electoral attitude that can help to weaken the influence of the traditional oligarchies in the region. There is evidence that the poor population has supported former president Lula da Silva and PT candidates in local elections during PT administration as a response to the improved access to income and social services in their communities, breaking the long cycle of dominance by the powerful local families (Bohn 2011; Zucco and Power 2013).

As an emerging economy in the 2000s, Brazil was one of the few countries that was able to lift millions of people out of extreme poverty. One of the most visible results was economic performance. After a long period of slow growth (1995–2002), GDP levels per capita showed a significant increase year on year (2003–2014). The impact was especially observed on the population's purchasing power and the growing rate of new business investments. The reasons for the growth in GDP are connected to the increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio (particularly after Brazil changed its position from IMF debtor to IMF creditor), consumer spending, yearly increases in the minimum wage, higher spending on social security, and the expansion of social programs, among others.

This growth in GDP was inevitably reflected in employment rates and salaries. Unemployment levels dropped from 12.1% in 2001 to 4.8% in 2014. Following economic growth and the improvement in the job market, PT administrations have also centered their efforts on augmenting the purchasing power of the population in receipt of the minimum wage. The impact of this decision was felt by that part of the workforce with fewer

qualifications who could then have access to other services previously denied to them, such as private health insurance, access to paid entertainment (cinema, shows) and savings accounts. This income group—elevated from a low-income class to middle class by the social and economic changes that were made—is called the "new middle class" so as to differentiate it from the traditional middle class (Nogueira 2015; Rocha et al. 2016). The growth in income and credit expansion allowed those members of the new middle class to access spaces and places that were previously restricted to the traditional middle class.

Despite this "little miracle",[1] the GDP increase did not translate into equal growth in all sectors. Even with the strong reduction in inequality, the gap between rich and poor is still about five times that of OECD countries (OECD 2015) and the efforts to improve the life conditions of the poor by income redistribution schemes did not address social divisions effectively along the lines of race and income.

In spite of those accomplishments, inequality remains at a relatively high level for a middle-income country. As many of the new social programs were being created or expanded, structural changes were not made in order to avoid social inequality. The traditional middle class clearly showed its discontent at having its space "invaded" by the new middle class. A good example of it is the rebirth of ultra-conservative groups bitter with the achievements of rights, the public policies of center-left governments, and the progress of democratic practices (Mustafá et al. 2018). This rejection reveals the social class tensions and deep social issues that elites and even part of the middle class have against the poorest sectors of society. In an insightful work, Jessé de Souza in *A Elite do Atraso* (*Elite of Backwardness*) (2017) explains the role of the Brazilian elites in perpetuating racism and sub-citizenship.

It is also important to refer to the *Operação Lava Jato* (Car Wash Operation), which brought to light the unethical practices of several national building contractors and politicians inside and outside the country. The outcomes of this investigation opened up for instability and tensions in Brazil's democracy. Together with many other politicians from several parties, PT was engulfed by a series of corruption scandals. From there, a seemingly well-functioning democracy quickly overrode checks and balances (Damgaard 2018), and replaced a head of state with a shady vice-president, with the support of a right-wing Brazilian media, which played a crucial role in the parliamentary coup by manipulating

public opinion and selectively associating PT with pervasive corruption and attributing the serious economic recession to the party (de Albuquerque 2017; van Dijk 2017).

Having briefly discussed the socio-economic impacts of the PT administration and its subsequent weakening, I now move on to consider Brazil's architecture of participation.

3.2 The Origins of Participation and the Right to Participate in Brazil

The Brazilian experience with democratic innovations emerged after a prolonged political opening toward re-democratization, arising from the military rule which lasted for 25 years (1964–1985). After this period of authoritarianism and repression, Brazil restored its political institutions and decentralized power to the subnational level. During the first years of return to democracy, many political observers were skeptical of the country's capacity to overcome the challenges of an institutional design that facilitated clientelist policies (Hagopian 1996) and other challenges of governability, such as weak party system, presidentialism, and faulty constitutional system (Limongi 2007). Regardless of these possible deficiencies, Brazilian voters have enjoyed consecutive elections in municipal, state, and national elections. Competitive elections for president were held between 1994 and 2014, when two parties governed the country, respectively, the center-right PSDB (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*) and the PT (Morais and Saad-Filho 2011). This regular competitive pattern was only broken in 2016, when president Rousseff was impeached on flimsy charges in a congressional maneuver spearheaded by the MDB (*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*), which was at the time the main party in the presidential coalition.

3.2.1 The 1988 Constitution

Since the late 1970s, different groups began pressuring for political and governmental decentralization. Social movements across the country were making specific claims on the state (for hospitals, childcare, pensions) while at the same time organizing themselves around the project of re-democratization (Baiocchi et al. 2011). The intense process of political and social change ultimately led to the new 1988 Constitution (Avritzer 2002), a ground-breaking milestone in the process of return to the democratic rule, curtailed by dictatorship since 1964.

Civil society developed significantly during the re-democratization period, as social movements mobilized to safeguard access to rights, spaces of decision-making and public goods (Avritzer 2002). These movements included a variety of social groups such as students, women movements, and indigenous people advocating for the expansion of social rights in the new Constitution. This mobilization gave rise to a Constitutional Assembly (1987–1988) that resulted in a new 1988 Constitution. It protected social rights such as housing, employment, health care, and education along with political rights that would allow for the advance of a broader democratic architecture (Touchton et al. 2017). The new Constitution became known as the "Citizen Constitution" because it included mechanisms of direct and participatory democracy, and it admitted popular amendments[2] to articles put forward by civil society associations (Whitaker 1989).

The process of constitution-making and participation in Brazil had an important role on the stabilization of the democratic regime in the country, which greatly increased participatory formats. Many direct forms of participation are included in the 1988 Constitution preamble: plebiscite, referendum, and direct law initiative. In addition to that, it was established that spaces of participation should be created, which were concretized in the form of national and municipal policy councils. Ultimately, the Constitution legalized the possibility of many bottom-up participatory arrangements, such as public hearings, public policy management councils, policy conferences, and participatory budgeting. Avritzer (2012) argues that for a participatory tradition to become strong it needs to be based in a constitutional tradition that is open to participation. Brazil's 1988 Constitution satisfied this condition.

The idea of participation was a fundamental vehicle for the democratic process in Brazil. The idea of participation as a social right inspired not only the new 1988 Constitution, but also the entire architecture of participation that originated from it. However, this original sense of participation in the Constitution was weakened by the political game that followed. Many new rights were only aspirational, as the government struggled to deliver public goods under fiscal austerity (Huber 1996, p. 171). Economic constraints forced the government to confront a surge of new social demands. A neoliberal economic reform agenda was adopted based on fiscal austerities formulated to curb poor economic performances and hyper-inflation in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Touchton et al. 2017). During this period, Brazil was one of the most unequal countries, 41% of the population was considered poor and about 20% indigent, with a Gini coefficient of 60.5 in the early 1990s (see Table 3.1).

Despite its slow initial take up, Brazil's architecture of participation expanded in the 1990s and 2000s, as policy management councils, policy conferences, and experiences of participatory budgeting emerged as the most frequent mechanisms attempt to expand citizens' voice and deepen the quality of democracy (Touchton et al. 2017; Avritzer 2002). Brazil's architecture of participation features three main participatory models that are institutionalized: policy council, policy conference, and participatory budget. These venues are characterized by the use of spaces for dialogue officially created and guided by individuals engaged in participatory activities, with the explicit purpose of influencing specific policy decisions (Abers et al. 2014). Those venues of participation all express different forms of "institutional participation".

3.2.2 Policy Councils

The origins of policy councils are not connected to the 1988 Constitution. A few of them already existed before the new Constitution and were reactivated and expanded considerably after 1988.[3] The representation of civil society in policy councils is very diverse, and council members come from different backgrounds, such as NGOs, neighborhood associations, social movements, and sometimes businesses (Lima 2017). Council membership typically involves equal representation from civil society and government. Council members have specific functions, including proposing new projects and policies, approval of reports and monitoring the implementation of policies. Depending on the council, they can be deliberative or consultative (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014). In any case, the final approval of councils' decisions lies in the hands of government officials and elected representatives (Wampler 2015).

Policy management councils at the local level are the most common type of participatory institution in Brazil. In 1999, the Municipal Basic Information Survey (MUNIC) identified 26,900 councils spread throughout the country, averaging 4.9 councils per municipality. Fifteen years later, the number of municipal-level councils increased to nearly 60,000, with an average of 9.9 councils per municipality. In terms of participants, at least 300,000 citizens are elected to hold positions on them (Touchton et al. 2017; Wampler 2015).

The mapping of municipal councils shows that there are priority issues. In Table 3.2, I used data from MUNIC reports elaborated by IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), covering various years, to

Table 3.2 Municipal policy council coverage (1999–2009)

Policy areas	*Existence of councils*	
	Percentage of municipalities in 1999	*Percentage of municipalities in 2009*
Health	98	97
Education	90	90
Children/Adolescent	71	91
Environment	21	56
Housing	8	42
Urban policy	3	17
Transport	4	6

Source: Author's elaboration—MUNIC/IBGE, various years

estimate the coverage of municipal-level councils per policy area from absolute numbers. Health councils' existence was registered in 97% of all Brazilian municipalities in 1999 and 98% in 2009; while Education councils remained in 90% coverage in the space of 10 years. The very high incidence of health and education councils indicates the centrality of these areas for public policies and civil society. It is also important to note that Education councils and Health councils are among the oldest, as they have been in existence at the national level since the 1930s. Children and adolescent rights councils also appear in great numbers, being registered in 91.5% of the municipalities in 2009. Found in a little more than a fifth of the municipalities (21%), Environmental councils increased nearly threefold in 2009. Housing councils also expanded greatly from 8% of coverage in 1999 to 42% in 2009. Municipal-level housing councils were present in 59% of municipalities in 2017.

Social movements' efforts for greater influence in urban policies were key to increase citizens' participation in the urban policy councils figures in Brazilian municipalities. For instance, in 2012, 1231 Brazilian municipalities (22.1%) had councils for urban policies (Table 3.3). Among the 1231 municipalities, 56.6% of them have populations ranging between 20,000 and 500,000 inhabitants. This is the cohort where there is more institutionalization of councils for urban policies. Looking at territorial differences (Table 3.4), the southern region of the country concentrates the majority of municipalities with urban councils, 40.3% of the regional total of municipalities. The Southern region is followed by the Southeast region with 21.3% of the total of its municipalities, in turn followed by the

Table 3.3 Brazilian municipalities with a council of urban policy or similar in 2012

Population size	*All municipalities*	*Municipalities with a council*	*Percentage of municipalities with a council*	*Municipalities with an active council within the last 12 months*
Up to 5000	1298	134	10.3	95
From 5001 to 20,000	2598	355	13.7	245
From 20,001 to 100,000	1381	522	37.8	370
From 100,001 to 500,000	250	187	74.8	149
More than 500,000	38	33	86.8	29
Total	5565	1231	22.1	888

Source: Author's elaboration—MUNIC/IBGE (2012, 2017), CNPD (2018)

Table 3.4 Brazilian municipalities with a council of urban policy or similar per major regions in 2012

Per territorial division	*All municipalities*	*Municipalities with a council*	*Percentage of municipalities with a council*	*Municipalities with an active council within the last 12 months*
North	449	94	20.9	59
Northeast	1794	209	11.6	138
Southeast	1668	362	21.7	255
South	1188	479	40.3	379
Midwest	466	87	18.7	57
Total	5565	1231	22.1	888

Source: Authors elaboration—MUNIC/IBGE (2012, 2017), CNPD (2018)

North region with 20.9%, Central West with 18.7% and, finally, the Northeast region with only 11.6% of its municipalities with duly established urban councils. As in other policy areas, not all councils are active, that is, they do not meet regularly. Table 3.4 shows how many urban policies councils met in 2012.

Well established policy areas, such as such as Health, Education, Children's and Adolescents' Rights, Environment, and Housing are

Table 3.5 Municipal-level policy councils' coverage of new thematic areas in human rights (2009–2014)

Policy areas	*Existence of municipal level councils*	
	Percentage of municipalities in 2009	*Percentage of municipalities in 2014*
Older people	25	61
Person with disability	10	19
Promotion of Racial Equality	2	5
LGBTT rights	0.1	0.3

Source: Author's elaboration—MUNIC/IBGE, various years

important arenas for policy debates. The social demands put on the public administration on the municipal level have repercussions in the creation of councils, in both the state and municipal level. In addition to the significant quantitative increase in participatory spaces, a notable achievement was the extension of these spaces to new thematic areas (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014), especially in the area of human rights for minorities groups. New themes, such as the rights of the elderly, rights of persons with disabilities, rights of LGBTT, and racial equality were introduced. Table 3.5 shows the coverage of municipal-level councils in those new thematic areas, which only started to appear in IBGE's statistical reports in 2009.

Councils targeting specific groups are another democratic instrument to influence policies and actions to promote human rights. Municipal councils directed at people with disabilities had a significant increase in the six-year period (2009–2014), from 25% in 2009 to 61% of coverage in 2014. Affirmative actions directed toward the Afro-descendant population, including quotas in public universities and other measures to curb racism, have been demanded by the black movement. Pressure led to the creation in 2003 of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality and the Council of Promotion of Racial Equality. In the six year period (Table 3.5), the number of municipal-level council for the promotion of racial equality increased from 148 councils 2009 and 280 in 2014. The rights of LGBTT groups have a relative lower weight in municipalities, as only 21 municipalities had a council for rights of LGBTT in 2014. To some LGBTT activists, previous governments have advanced in the opening of the dialogue with the LGBTT community, but this approximation

did not result in an effective action. Pereira and Santos (2017) forewarn that after a cycle of progressive governments that ended in 2016 and the recent advances of conservative agendas, the presidential decree[4] creating the National Council for Combating Discrimination against Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals (CNCD/LGBTT) could be revoked. This would lead to the extinction of the council and it would represent a huge setback for the Brazilian LGBTT population, a group historically excluded and marginalized.[5]

In the first PT administration in 2003, Brazil's architecture of participation proliferated across the country, as the design of participation was empowered and largely expanded (Maricato 2017; Lima 2017). The total of new policy councils and policy conferences established during Lula's two presidential terms is notable, as are public resources and the number of people involved in this process. Just at the federal level, Dagnino and Teixeira (2014, p. 46) identified 60 institutions that could be considered councils, and more than one-third of those council were created during Lula's presidency. In addition, their research points out that 25 new national councils were created between 2003 and 2010.

Other national councils were restructured during this period to address policies for specific social minorities and underrepresented groups, such as indigenous people, the elderly, the disabled, women, and youth. The inclusion of these minorities groups in the federal level of policy-making is remarkable for democratic innovations (Lüchmann et al. 2016). Together with other national councils that were reformulated, some of the new councils created during Lula's governments are Eradication of Slave Labor (*Erradicação do Trabalho Escravo*), Sustainable Rural Development (*Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentável*), National Youth Council (*Conselho Nacional da Juventude*) and Cultural Policy (*Política Cultural*), the National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality (*Conselho Nacional da Promoçao da Igualdade Racial*), among others. The National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality, for example, has been very active over the years in the political and social spheres to respond to situations of discrimination and inequality against black people in Brazil, with the creation of legislation in 2010 against racial discrimination and racial inequality, the Statute of Racial Equality (Díaz 2010).

3.2.3 Policy Conferences

Similarly, policy conferences are vibrant spaces of discussion, where conflict among different viewpoints and social projects often occur (Dagnino

2004). They promote dialogue between government officials, civil society, and social movements in order to elaborate propositions for particular public policies. These conferences integrate a broader group of participants directly or indirectly connected with the issues under discussion. Any debates or policy recommendations presented in a conference are for the purpose of discussion; and public policies and the outcomes of these discussions are compiled in a final report. These policy recommendations may be incorporated into public policies, but it depends on success in passing such proposals to the national council, which in turn may send it to the Congress. After that point, recommendations are analyzed by lawmakers and they may transform conference recommendations into legislation (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014). Research on the topic has shown that these conferences became a strategic moment for social movements and government to share experiences and build up social networks at different levels of public policy, local and national (Pogrebinschi and Ventura 2017; Avritzer 2012). Regardless of the potential weakness of these venues, it has been found that policy councils operate as new interfaces between state and society, where participants interact and a significant growth in the number of socio-state interfaces in federal government programs has been observed (Pires and Vaz 2012). The main difference between conferences and policy councils is that the conferences are convened for a specific period of time and are preceded by municipal stages, held every three or four years. In contrast, policy councils have a continuous and regular dynamic.

Policy conferences are multilevel deliberative processes. In conference meetings, citizens and public officials debate public policy advances in meetings that take place first at the municipal, and then at the state and national levels. Conference participants have opportunities to recommend changes in legislation and to suggest other public policy innovations. All proposals have to be discussed in conference meetings up to a point a where a final list of policy recommendations is produced. Conferences are organized in three phases: local conferences, state conferences, and national conferences. It starts at the local level (e.g. Municipal Conference on Housing) and attendees discuss public policies at the municipal level. They evaluate and reflect on public policies under implementation and make proposals to improve them. Proposals are presented to the plenary, and they decide which proposal will advance to Phase 2, the conference at the state level. At the end of the conference, participants put their names for a quick ballot to elect the representative of the municipality in the next conference on the state level. Participants bring the policy recommendations approved by the

Fig. 3.1 Actors involved in the conference organization at the municipal level. Source: National Housing Policy (2009) and author's field notes

plenary in the local conference to the conference at the state level (e.g. State Conference on Housing). The same process of debates, talk shops, and elections take place again and a group representing the state attends the conference at the national level which is the final stage (e.g. National Conference on Housing). Figure 3.1 presents a summary of actors involved in the conference organization at the municipal level.

Conferences were given a boost during Lula's term and this has continued during Rousseff's administration (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014; Baiocchi 2005; INESC and PÓLIS 2011). The most visible achievement in this democratic process has been the growth and consolidation of the Brazilian architecture of participation at the federal level (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014). Some of those national conferences are the precursor of policy management councils, such as the National Council of Youth and National Council for Combating LGBTT Discrimination, among others. The federalization of participatory democracy and social controls presupposes that the policy of control and participation has become part of the state's agenda (Vera and Lavalle 2012). During Roussef's term in office, the structure of the conferences and councils were maintained. However, critics say she abandoned the open dialogue created by the former president and kept fewer spaces for proposals from civil society in her administration (Dagnino and Teixeira 2014).

While more numerous at the local level, between 2003 and 2014, the federal government hosted 100 national policy conferences with the

participation of nearly 9 million people, an average of 10 conferences per year (Pogrebinschi and Samuels 2014). These conferences mobilized around 5 million people and the attendees approved more than 15,000 proposals and 2000 motions during 2003–2010 (PÓLIS/INESC 2011). The numbers of conference participants vary, but figures show that a lot of people are intensely interested in participating and they make time to be present in a national conference process. For example, the 1st National Conference on Public Security, which took place in 2009, engaged a total of 524,461 attendees; out of this total, 225,395 participated in person and 256,598 via internet (CONSEG 2009).

In Lula's administration, national conferences became one of the main forms of citizen participation at the federal level (Avritzer 2012). From the 154 national conferences held between 1941 and 2016, 74 of those conferences occurred in Lula's administration (2003–2010), which indicates the weight of participatory citizenship policies in the period (IPEA 2018).[6] Thus, from a quantitative point of view, the increasing number of conferences at the federal level indicates a participatory policy centered on national conferences. The large number of conferences held during the period was not a novelty in the national scene, since conferences were held (sporadically) since 1941. The uniqueness of this process is the intensification of the use of conferences as a tool of interaction with civil society, which is a more recent occurrence.

44 different themes were approached in national conferences since the first edition of the National Health Conference in 1941, which included traditional topics such as education, social welfare and health, but also other conference topics that were created between 2011 and 2016, such as technical assistance and rural development in 2012, regional development in 2013, employment and decent work in 2012, migration and refuge in 2014, indigenous policies in 2015 and social control also in 2012 (IPEA 2018).

The literature on national conferences points to its potential as a democratic innovation and to the significant changes brought to public policy formulation in Brazil. Pogrebinschi and Ventura (2017) claim that national conferences have a strong impact on the legislative activity of the National Congress. According to their research, national conferences as a democratic innovation have the potential to improve popular representation and participation by adding more voices into the participatory process. Between 2003 and 2008, policy recommendations from national conferences generated a total of 2233 bills, 163 constitutional

amendments bills, 216 laws, and 6 constitutional amendments in the Brazilian legislature (Pogrebinschi and Tanscheit 2017). Among the conferences with major impact on legislative activity are the conferences dealing with human rights and minority groups, including public policies for women, youth, indigenous groups, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTT) community. For example, in the 2003–2010 period, 19 national conferences were held on topics related to human rights and minorities, with a high number of proposals reaching the legislative level. Other areas, such as health and social protection, also show a strong impact on the legislative branch. But different from minorities' demands, those more traditional policy areas have experienced a much longer experience of social mobilization and their institutional participation has been robust over the years. Nevertheless, the literature has demonstrated that when triggered by national conferences, the legislative body seems to be notably responsive to the demands of historically underrepresented groups, which indicates the capacity of national conferences to push demands of minority groups into becoming policies and laws (Avritzer 2012; Pogrebinschi and Ventura 2017).

The inclusion of underrepresented groups in policy conferences created institutional spaces for citizens to carry out innovative projects. It has been said that the differentiated needs and identities of some groups can only be accommodated through "group-differentiated citizenship", which in general represents a more radical view of citizenship (Kymlicka and Norman 1994). While many theorists try to create a universal concept citizenship, Young (1989, p. 259) argues for the need to affirm rather than ignore group differences, and "the solution lies at least in part in providing institutionalized means for the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups". The formation and implementation of policy in ways that enhance political equality promote social justice, and encourage effective governance drew broad social sectors beyond organized social movements. It also included minority groups as empowered decision-makers into matters of policy and social and political inclusion.

In the past two years (2016–2018), eight conferences were held.[7] Conferences in this period have had a different dynamic when compared with the first PT administration. I now move on to examine a phase of decline of inclusive participatory democracy in Brazil.

3.3 Decline in Participation

As previously stated, the structure of participatory citizenship has expanded significantly in the last 20 years, with a large number of participatory mechanisms. Among these, participatory budgeting, policy conferences, and policy councils stand out. A central issue encompassing all those participatory venues was to ensure that these participatory institutions and the actors involved are articulated in such a way that collective decisions are absorbed and implemented (Abers et al. 2014). While on one hand participatory venues saw a great expansion in the first two PT governments (Lula's administration, 2003–2010), the participatory activities started to decline in Dilma Rousseff's second term (2011–2016). This decline is particularly accentuated in the aftermath of the parliamentary maneuver that led to Micher Temer's government (2016–2018).

When the activities of participatory institutions in Brazil during Lula's and Rousseff's terms are compared, there are clear differences in the level of commitment to keeping the spaces of participation active and the channels of dialogue between government and civil society open. Participatory citizenship was still under construction during Lula's government, a process that was welcomed and widely promoted in his term. However, adopting a critical view, this expansion was highly influenced by Lula's commitment to use the strong base organized around social movements that had been pushing for the construction of participatory citizenship since the 1970s.

In Lula's government, the political profile of senior government positions included former union leaders that actively participated in government decisions, a fact that does not come as a surprise considering the PT origins in the trade unions movement (D'Araújo 2009; Riethof 2018). Research carried out by D'Araújo (2009, pp. 45–46) demonstrates that a large number of high-ranking ministers with a significant level of social and trade union involvement participated in Lula's administration. For example, 43% of the ministers in Lula's first administration, and 45% in the second had connections with the trade union sector. Those numbers are significant especially if compared to Fernando Henrique Cardoso's previous presidential administration in which it was less than 25%. D'Araújo points out that these figures held on leaders with close relations with social movements suggests that the Lula government was able to represent a wider range of diverse interests. Consequently, in a context where political

leaders are close to popular groups, social movements and government representatives tried and experimented with a pattern of state-society interaction that had been stagnated from years of authoritarian and exclusive politics. This novel state-society interaction was remodeled to include institutional changes, and it resulted in the development of formal participation in the process of elaboration of public policies, through councils and conferences (Abers et al. 2014).

Differently, in Dilma Roussef's administrations some decline in participation could be observed, even before her forced removal from office. Rousseff had to a certain extent continued the pace of participation and had as well expanded their scope into additional policy areas (Pogrebinschi and Samuels 2014), especially by strengthening the Secretary General of the Presidency (SGPR), which is responsible for assisting the president's articulation with civil society. However, the patterns of participation have not remained the same between 2011 and 2016. As scholars started to investigate the differences in the state-society interactions between Lula's and Dilma's governments, there is enough evidence to say that Rousseff kept distance from the PT supporters base and from social movements (Saad-Filho 2013; Abers et al. 2014; Dagnino and Teixeira 2014; Alonso 2017; Morais and Saad-filho 2011). Undoubtedly, Rousseff was elected by Lula's social base (constituted mainly by poor groups) and with the support of the large capital. As a technocrat, Rousseff had a limitation: she had never been elected to public office, and also did not have her own political base (Saad-Filho 2013). In addition, her administration faced the hurdle of economic slowdown, following the economic boom of previous years.

The strongest evidence that Rousseff's administration had distanced itself from social movements was the massive protests in Brazil in mid-2013, also known as *Jornadas de junho* (June journeys). Whereas Rousseff sought to sustain Lula's project for a "Brazilian social democracy", her administration overlooked the central role for movements and unions. Even though a classical social democracy—such as Brazil—features pragmatism and multi-class support, a stable support of the working class and left-oriented ideology are prerequisites; therefore technocratic excellence in state and public policy management is not sufficient for dealing with social and political conflict (Baiocchi et al. 2013).

Also, differently from her predecessor, who governed by a pact with business sectors and social sectors without challenging neoliberalism and keeping it at bay, Rousseff drifted away from this pact by confronting

financial interests by reducing interest rates, arguably with the purpose of supporting manufacturing capital. It was done in addition to a reduction of tax burden to encourage investment and production that would guarantee the return of economic growth. Moreover, it was expected that a more assertive state intervention would be tolerated because its policies would benefit the capital as a whole with job openings and industrial development. In practice, this agenda "involved the reduction of interest rates, the devaluation of the real, the containment of public expenditures and investments, and a policy of increasing tax concessions" (Carvalho 2018, p. 76). This technocratic approach was misguided, especially considering that the capital does not hesitate to sacrifice economic growth for political control (Saad-filho 2017).

Returning to participation, Rousseff's technocratic profile favored expertise over deliberation (Pogrebinschi and Tanscheit 2017). This is confirmed by a quick look at the number of national conferences that took place during 2011–2016 (about 5.5 years of Rousseff's administration, up to the impeachment). In Lula's term, there were 52 conferences held in the first six years of his administration and 42 in Rousseff's term (see Fig. 3.2).[8]

The waning of the participatory project is evident in the case of the *Conferências Nacionais Conjuntas de Direitos Humanos* (National Joint Human Rights Conferences), when all five national conferences under the umbrella of SHD—*Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos* (Special Secretariat for Human Rights), were convoked to take place simultaneously in the same location. The enormous conjoint five national conferences were the following: the 10th National Conference on the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent, the 4th National Conference on the Rights of the Elderly, the 4th National Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 3rd LGBTT National Conference and the 12th National Conference on Human Rights.[9] This huge conference reunited over 7000 people over six days in April 2016 in Brasília.

This was the first time that Brazil held thematic conferences simultaneously, with the aim of "guaranteeing the principles of transversality, interdependence and indivisibility of human rights", according to a declaration of the Special Secretariat of Human Rights.[10] On the one hand, the experience of a conjoint Joint National Conferences on Human Rights can be viewed in a more positive light by its capacity to integrate different aspects between minorities segments of Brazilian society. In a way, it championed a policy of alliances, diversity and mutual recognition, and solidarity. On the other

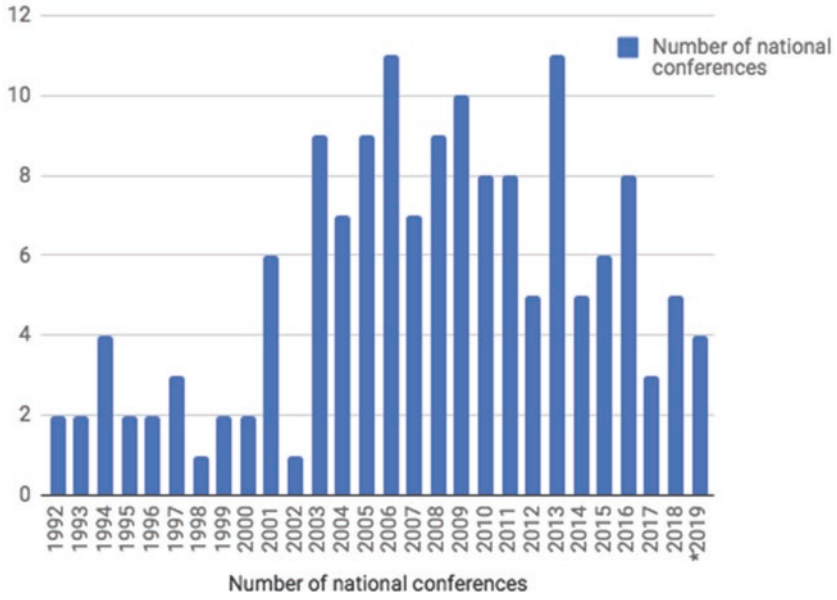

Fig. 3.2 Number of national conferences per year (1992–2019*). Source: Author's elaboration—Secretariat of Government reports, various years. *2019 scheduled conferences

hand, the negative aspects of a conjoint conference are the lack of focus on priorities, tensions, and discrimination that affect those groups (Feitosa 2018).

Another criticism from organized civil society was that the conjoint conferences was a strategy of the Federal Government to save public funds, which may put in danger the already precarious spaces of participation at the time. One of the remarkable aspects of national conferences is the systematic articulation of municipal, state, and national conferences (mirroring a certain hierarchy), which did not occur in the conjoint conferences. For example, some state conferences took place alongside with the respective national conference, which demonstrate a lack of articulation in the overall conference process.

In fact, the conjoint human rights conferences were held in an extremely chaotic and unfavorable political conjuncture. They happened on the eve of the impeachment process that started the process of impeachment of

Dilma Rousseff. The final plenary of the event saw the support for ministers attending the conference, in which the Special Secretary of Human Rights declared "without human rights there is no democracy and no democracy there is no human rights", where he advocated for democracy as mandatory for the defense of human rights (CNCD/LGBTT 2016). During the conferences, participants shared a sense of threat of continuity of the conferences as a space of popular participation, given the ongoing process of political disruption in the federal executive (Cruz and Daroit 2017).

The final conference plenary, where all participants of the five conferences attended together, became a space of protest: a call for the maintenance of the result of the 2014 elections that elected Rousseff was staged by the participants of the event. However, the unification of five different national conferences into a single event and the presence of the president did not produce the feeling that the demands and protection of the minority groups was a priority. Rather, there was a preoccupation for the broader human rights agenda, which disappointed the LGBTT public, for instance (Feitosa 2018). Even if present in the political discourse, the idea of "transversality" of human rights cannot be expected to happen only in the conjoint conferences. While they confirm the emergence of human rights as a "transversal" objective and an important step in this direction, precaution is necessary to make sure that the broader agenda of human rights is not supported in detriment of particularities issues of minority groups.

Also, with the advance of conservatism in different aspects of Brazilian society, an Anti-Terrorism Law[11] was created in Rousseff's government. That was for many a disturbing and contradictory decision, especially because Brazil is a country with no history of terrorist attacks. Despite this obvious issue, the anti-terrorism law came to force in 2016. The anti-terrorism legislation potentially criminalizes activists and the various expressions of social movements representing vulnerable groups. Several civil society organizations and politicians saw it a serious setback to the daily exercise of street democracy and the culture of protest in Brazil.

The pressure for the implementation of an anti-terrorist law in Brazil started in Lula's government, when the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental body founded by G7 to improve international cooperation in combating money laundering, began pressuring Brazil to create specific legislation to criminalize terrorism (Suarez et al. 2017).[12] In 2011, President Lula accelerated the process of development for a legal framework for an anti-terrorism law through Presidential Decree.[13] If initially created only to show a commitment to

fight terrorism and to implement Resolution 1989 of the UN Security Council adopted in 2011 (Suarez et al. 2017), the debate around the necessity and merit of this new legislation became more narrowly focused on domestic security threats after the June 2013 protests. In combination with a stronger external pressure for an anti-terrorist framework for the mega-events, such as the Olympics (2016) and FIFA World Cup (2014) that took place in Brazil, conservative forces' discourse against the protests ultimately made the country update its anti-terrorism law in 2016 (de Oliveira and de Ávila 2018).

In the anti-terrorism law, the weight that the state attributes to the increased criminalization of demonstrators and social movements is at stake. The legislation is composed of vague and malleable expressions, leaving a lot of space for interpretation. For example, it is not clear what can be characterized as "social or generalized terror" (article 2, caput) or "mass destruction" (article 2, paragraph 1, item I) (Cambi and Ambrosio 2017). Several organizations expressed concern that it might be used to describe social movements as terrorists or actions of protest as acts of terrorism. This concern is not unfounded. Gohn (2011) has already pointed that repression and criminalization is part of the history of social mobilization in Brazil. Among other restrictions, such as the characterization of attack on public servants as acts of terrorism, the new anti-terrorism law draft to be voted in 2019 includes political and ideological activities in the list of motives that may characterize the crime of terrorism in Brazil. This is one of the most controversial points which, if approved, could typify those involved in the occupation of urban or rural properties—a frequent Landless Workers Movement (MST) repertoire of protest—as a creator of "generalized terror".[14] In this regard, the Brazilian anti-terrorism legislation has a highly repressive political dimension, which can pose a threat to participatory politics.[15]

3.4 From a Gradual Sinking to a Rapid Decline

The mechanisms of the conferences and policy councils encounter resistance from part of the political class. Conservatives understand this process to be saturated formulas, due to the protracted processes and discussions. Since Dilma Rousseff was removed from office and Michel Temer assumed presidency, Brazil's architecture of participation has been hard-hit and has descended into a sharp decline. This is evidenced by the number of policy councils that were reformulated into rubber stamp

spaces, the emptiness and neglect of conferences, and the reaction of civil society to the systematic attacks on the participatory system.

Facing a major political and economic crisis, Temer's government systematically attempted to implement a social reform aligned to a neoliberal agenda and the international capital. His government left aside the state-oriented policies in core areas initiated in previous administrations. In clear opposition to Lula-Rousseff's neo-developmentalist approach, which in the Brazilian case denotes a hybrid policy regime that levels the liberal agenda based on the Washington Consensus and more state interventionism associated with macro-economic stability (Ban 2013), Temer's administration was part of a revitalized wave of new neoliberal offensives against the neo-developed and post-neoliberal experiences. In the particular case of Brazil (and also Argentina and Chile), it means the return of policies of social dismantling and come back of the old neoliberal model that was unsuccessful in the 1990s. Another feature of Temer's government that differentiates it from the previous governments is the depreciation and consequent weakening of the participatory spaces as instances of public policy-making.

Instead of a space for deliberation and policy debate, the national councils were turned into an arena for clashes between civil society and the executive branch (Pogrebinschi and Tanscheit 2017). Even as an interim president, while president Rousseff was suspended and waiting for the impeachment vote, Temer dismantled the National Education Council (CNE) by revoking the appointment of new council members made by Aloisio Mercadante as Minister of Education a few days before Rousseff's suspension. Out of 12 names appointed by the previous president, 5 were already part of the council and were reappointed to their mandates. While six were removed by Temer's new minister of education, four places in the council were filled by representatives of private education enterprises, keeping representatives of teachers' unions and NGOs entities out of the collegiate.

The revocation of the Rousseff's appointees was the first time a presidential appointment was revoked in the council since its creation, an act that sent a red flag to educational and academic entities, as concerns arose for the continuity of the works and independent character of the CNE. The government changes in the composition of CNE appeared as an attempt to avoid representatives of a leftist leaning to be involved in the new *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*—BNCC (National Common Curricular Base), which is a normative document that delineates the set of essential

learning content that all students must develop through the stages of basic education in Brazil. At the time, a bill was being proposed to change the core of the national curricular base, but this proposal provoked stronger reactions of academics and educational entities that see the reductions of core courses to only Maths and Portuguese as a decline in the quality of education.[16]

The National Council of Cities and the National Council for the Youth have also been suffering systematic assaults. The National Council of Cities is connected to urban movements, and over the years it has become a relevant instrument for the implementation of urban development policies and democratic management of cities. By presidential decree, Temer's Government transferred the previous competences from the National Council of Cities to the Ministry of Cities. This decree removed the secretariats that were part of the council such as the National Transport and Mobility secretariat, to the Ministry of the Cities, so it is no longer a member of the council. In practice, it means that the Ministry of Cities can alter conference documents and convoke or cancel conferences without the input of council members. It also opens the possibility for the federal government to appoint the next members of the council without an open election, which should take place in the national conference.[17] Another controversial alteration was the change in the interval of the National Conference of Cities from three to four years, which affronts a joint decision taken in the previous council's meetings. For civil society members of the council, these are serious measures that disregard the democratically elected entities that are part of the National Council of Cities.

To exacerbate the open advances against the achievements of the urban development policy and the construction of democratic cities, the 6th National Conference of Cities expected to take place in July 2017 was postponed to 2019 with no specific date. Alleging lack of resources, the Ministry of Cities decided to postpone the conference without the support of council members, who were not consulted about this change. This decision affected the whole system of municipal and state conference phases that take place before the main event. In addition, the Ministry alleged this delay would give more time for municipalities that missed the deadlines for holding the municipal conferences of cities. Inconsistently with this allegation, not even the methodology of the national conference—which is constructed jointly by the members of the council—had been approved by July 2017, since the executive committee had not met

to make those decisions. To many activists, professionals, and civil society entities, the omission and neglect of the Ministry of Cities toward the National Council of Cities threatens the structure of the system of popular participation and democratic decision-making in urban policy issues.

Civil society entities reacted to this attempt to dismount the council by asking for the intervention of the *Ministério Público* (Public Prosecutor's Officer), which after considering the facts involving the delays in holding the conference determined that the Ministry of the Cities should convene the Council of Cities to decide on a date for holding the national conference (until then not defined). The general prosecutor judges decided that the government actions in this area contradict "the constitutional clauses of participatory and democratic management" and "signs an intention to disarticulate the attributions and activities of the National Council of Cities". The decision warned that failure to comply with the recommendation may lead to civil and criminal lawsuits against public officials.[18]

Along the same lines, other participatory entities continue suffering attacks ranging from financial cuts and removal of representative of civil society, such as the *Conselho Nacional da Juventude* (National Youth Council) and the *Fórum Nacional de Educação* (National Education Forum) to the total extinction, such as the case of the *Conselho Curador da Empresa Brasil de Comunicação* (Curator Council of the Brazilian Communications Company). Outraged by the explicit aim of reducing the participation of civil society in public space, many representatives of federal councils resigned from their positions in protest, as in the case of the *Conselho de Política Penitenciária*—CNPCP (Penitentiary Policy Council). In January 2017, six members of this council resigned alleging the Temer's administration and the new minister of justice, Alexandre Morais, planned to include their own appointees into the council. The former councilors claimed that by the proposal of increasing the number of members of the council was a "clear message of distrust" and an attempt to transform the CNPCP into "rubber stamp" space.[19] In June of the same year, members of the *Fórum Nacional de Educação* (National Education Forum) also resigned from their positions collectively.

The cuts in government spending have affected the functioning of national councils and continue to threaten their existence. The changes are felt in all levels, including in the administrative level, and in the public policy collegiate bodies. There are groups of public servants whose direct

functions are the provision of administrative and technical support to national council and conferences, so the councils can accomplish their functions effectively. Since 2016, national policy collegiates have been experiencing complex challenges marked by change and uncertainty. The drastic agenda for the reduction of resources and expenditures by the Executive Branch, in the name of fiscal balance, and the low supply of human resources are critical points (Avelino et al. 2017, p. 6). Due to budget reductions, collegiates have to rely on temporary staff and less resources, which has affected the quality and the functioning of these spaces. Avelino et al. (2017) also suggest that collegiates are being forced to adapt quickly to the new circumstances, including the compensation for the lack of resources with extra personal efforts carried out by technical support teams. Eventually, considering the collegiates will not have the resources to perform their jobs well, the quality and quantity of the work they do will obviously collapse, reinforcing the idea that these models of participation are not effective. Also, the requirement for efficiency was converted as a valid justification for the extinction of spaces of participation, and so conferences and councils are under the risk of extinction or deep reformulations.

Fewer national conferences took place from 2016 to 2018; only seven conferences took place during this period (see Fig. 3.2). The ones held in 2016 were already scheduled in Rousseff's administration, whilst the others were conducted under financial strain and dissent from entities of civil society. After the cancelation, postponing, and defunding of councils and conferences, historically strong entities in the area of education organized the *Conferência Nacional "Popular" de Educação* (National Popular Education Conference) to discuss alternatives against the dismantling in the sector, especially after the federal administration altered the conference calendar constructed in previous conferences and postponed the conference to a date to be set in the future (the conference was then rescheduled to late November 2018). The alternative conference took place in May 2018 and followed the same format of the regular conferences, with the support of 18 state-level councils of education. The event was marked by protest and the construction of educational proposals aiming to question the recent changes in the National Education Council and the changes in monitoring and evaluation of educational policies that should include professionals and civil society entities.[20]

3.5 Conclusion: Social Participation in a Context of Change

The process of deepening democracy and citizenship expansion focus on concrete principles, such as the involvement of citizens' representatives in the decision-making process and the deliberative development of solutions of problems (Fung and Wright 2003). While participatory citizenship was slowly being expanded, especially since the 1988 Constitution, the legacy left by PT in the area of participatory citizenship in its varied forms has been systematically dismantled. Temer's conservative administration went against the social demands for more voice and greater powers to intervene in policy-making, and the disassembling of citizen participation bodies was one the marks of his administration. It has hastily and without warning dismantled the struggles of ordinary citizens, and participatory spaces are under constant attack and call for resistance. His government was not open to dialogue with civil society, which is a contradiction to the years of social mobilization toward democratic citizenship in Brazil.

With the reduction of spaces of democratic governance in the last 20 years, the current strategy of the right in Brazil seems to be an attempt to break loose from a type of policy that was related to the PT. It has happened in the municipal level in a handful of cases, when governments that succeed the PT disarticulated participation instances previously built to necessary minimum. The difference now is that this dismantling is currently being implemented in a national scale. The academic circles denounce this is an attempt to make a possible political recovery of the PT unfeasible by removing the social base that supports and cherishes participatory democracy. Whereas resistance is in place, such as in the space of the education and cities conferences, the attempts to dismantle democratic achievements in Brazil seem to be showing their first impacts.

As pointed by Barbalho (2018), only recently, academics in the area of democracy and citizens' participation have started to understand and grasp the challenges that the post-impeachment poses to popular participation and the limitations the new right-wing government imposes on participatory institutions and the effects of those drawbacks. In the next chapter, I examine the facts leading the conservative right back to power in Brazil.

Notes

1. The Brazilian little miracle (or "milagrinho brasileiro") is a term I borrowed from the economist Laura Carvalho. In her book, *Valsa brasileira: Do boom ao caos econômico*, she examines the expansion of the Brazilian economic between 2003 and 2013.
2. Specific social areas, such as education and health, were among the subjects that most mobilized the proponents of amendments. To be taken in consideration by the constitutional assembly, a proposal should put together a minimum 35,000 signatures. The themes with the biggest numbers of submission were the ones dealing with the maintenance of commercial and industrial learning services (SESC, SESI, SENAI, and SENAC) which achieve 1,659,130 signatures and included 5 amendments (PE00036-9). The theme of agrarian reform brought together 1,473,679 subscriptions and 6 amendments, and the area dealing with the rights of children and adolescents put together 1,350,535 signatory and included 4 amendments.
3. For example, the National Health Council was created in 1937 as a consultative council. In 1990, its attributions changed, and it became an elaborator of health policies. In 2006, in the view of the deliberations approved at the 11th National Health Conference and the 12th National Health Conference, the Council elected its members by election process—previously members were appointed by the Minister of Health.
4. Decree 7.388 / 2010 is an important instrument for the LGBTT movement. It has created a specific body in the federal public administration for the LGBTT population. LGBTT policy council at national and municipal levels give opportunities for historically excluded and marginalized to exercise social control and expand the conditions for the achievement of human rights (Pereira and Santos 2017).
5. On April 11, 2019, Bolsonaro signed the presidential decree 9.759, which intends to reduce from 700 to less than 50 the number of councils, including the CNCD/LGBT. I wrote an analysis for the *Washington Post* about the impacts of this decree; see it here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/07/brazils-new-leaders-are-challenging-tradition-participatory-democracy-hereswhy/?utm_term=.935f3fa5b5bd.
6. This data can be accessed in the following link in the Github repository: https://github.com/ValescaL/National-conferences-Conferencias-nacionais.
7. Data on national conferences was obtained through a request to e-SIC (Sistema Eletrônico do Serviço de Informações ao Cidadão) which provides government data. The e-Sic system was created in 2011 by the Access to Information law (12.527).

8. The national conferences held in 2016 were held or schedule before the Senate vote removed President Rousseff from office by a 61–20 in on 31 August 2016.
9. The five national human rights conference in Portuguese: *12ª Conferência Nacional de Direitos Humanos*, *a 10ª Conferência Nacional dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente*, *4ª Conferência Nacional dos Direitos da Pessoa Idosa*, *4ª Conferência Nacional dos Direitos da Pessoa com Deficiência e a 3ª Conferência Nacional de Políticas Públicas de Direitos Humanos de Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transexuais.*
10. See official declaration: https://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/especial/noticias/conferencias-conjuntas-de-direitos-humanos-comecam-hoje/.
11. Law number N° 13.260/2016, signed on March 16, 2016 by President Dilma Rousseff. The implementation of anti-terrorism legislation has been the focus of strong criticism from civil society organization since its first drafts. This legislation was again under discussion, as amendment bill PL 5.065 / 2016, which intended to tighten the points of the legislation that were originally vetoed by Dilma Rousseff.
12. FATF has an infamous blacklist includes countries that do not implement their "recommendations". Being on this blacklist can seriously affect the credit rating of a country, which can be considered not safe to financial transactions (Suarez et al. 2017).
13. Decree 7606 of November 17, 2010.
14. Until 2017, eight terrorist suspects were condemned and jailed for acts of terrorism. Human rights advocates and the families of the condemned criticized the abusive practices of law enforcement. See (in Portuguese): https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2017/05/1881176-justica-condena-8-brasileiros-acusados-de-terrorismo-antes-da-rio-2016.shtml.
15. In a statement, dozens of entities repudiate the draft bill intended to change the Anti-Terrorism Law In June 2017 (in Portuguese) http://www.global.org.br/blog/congresso-nacional-caminha-para-um-grave-retrocesso-com-alteracoes-na-lei-antiterrorismo/.
16. The government's plan is to make only Mathematics and Portuguese mandatory in the national curriculum, a concept largely used in the US. In the Brazilian context, this proposal has also to do with the distorted conservative view that humanities and arts studies promote leftists values and "gender ideology" in schools. A final controversial point is that the new curricular base wants to pass some of the government's responsibility for providing free high school to the private sector, which would include distance learning and the nonessential college diploma for school teachers. A popular petition against the new curriculum had more than 29,000 signatures by August 2018. The main point of criticism against the educational reform can be seen in this letter to the members of the National Education

Council from June 2018 (in Portuguese): https://www.scribd.com/document/385328174/Carta-Aos-Conselheiros-Do-CNE-Sobre-a-BNCC-e-a-Reforma-Do-Ensino-Medio.

17. Presidential decree 9.076/2017 of June 7, 2017.
18. The Public Prosecutor's recommendation on the Cities Conference (in Portuguese): http://pfdc.pgr.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-e-conteudos-de-apoio/temas-de-atuacao/direitos-humanos/atuacao-do-mpf/recomendacao-3-2017-pfdc-mpf.
19. Letter from former council members (in Portuguese), https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/membros-do-conselho-de-politica-penitenciaria-pedem-demissao/.
20. The National Education Plan is also related to the approval of Constitutional Amendment 95/2016, which freezes social expenditures for 20 years, which directly affects public investment in education.

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CHAPTER 4

The Effect of Political Crisis on Citizenship Rights and Authoritarianism in Brazil

In this chapter, I examine the causal processes contributing to the rise of the right-wing movements in Brazil by examining the main features of the political crisis that is altering and disrupting Brazilian politics. I start with an analysis of the Workers' Party (PT) neo-developmentalist policies and the challenges of Brazilian elites in accepting the extension of participatory citizenship and the improvements of living conditions of low-income families. I then move to explore the right-wing, conservative project to return to power, which included their reorganization around a new agenda, new alliances, and the manipulation of mainstream media and judiciary. In the final part of this chapter, I focus on changes in governance models implemented under right-wing administrations and the renewed discourse of militarization and neofascism in Brazilian politics.

In the literature of participatory democracy, it is clear that democratic innovations have the potential to foster citizenship and participation. It is also clear that participation provides citizens with democratic concepts that if put into practice, can create important new inputs to the political system (Avritzer 2017a). However, we should not underrate the obstacles posed by some key actors in the political system to avoid or block the changes produced by democratic innovations. While the new 1988 Constitution initiated a process of democratic expansion with the establishment of citizenship rights further expanded by leftist governments in

V. Lima, *Participatory Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazil*, Governance, Development, and Social Inclusion in Latin America, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19120-7_4

Brazil, in the 2016 to 2018 period we see evidence of what may represent the end of this unprecedented cycle of construction of citizenship rights.

As seen in Chap. 3, before the new 1988 Constitution, social participation was not established in the legislation. The inclusion of popular participation in the body of law offered sustainability to the creation of an architecture of participation, which began in the early 1990s and was further expanded in the 14 years of the PT government. The parliamentary coup that brought back an elitist, majoritarian white, right-wing government, expressed the dissatisfaction of Brazilian elites in accepting the expansion of citizenship rights, putting an end to a cycle of democratization that commenced nearly 30 years ago. In this context, civil society has been systematically removed from participatory institutions, and unfortunately, laws are not sufficient to preserve them in those spaces and maintain them empowered.

The 1988–2015 cycle marked a period of democratic expansion, the recognition of the rights of minorities and the enlargement of the public space, but the events of 2016 opened the door for conservative forces interested in the rollback of hard-won social rights and put Brazil back on the neoliberal track to avoid progressive projects in the future. This agenda was already under way since the 2014 elections when the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) candidate Aécio Neves contested the results of the presidential election, as he lost the runoff against Dilma Rousseff by three million votes. The rise of the extreme right-wing groups and fascism-leaning candidates in the 2018 election is an expression of the growing of an extreme right-wing movement in Brazil. The political pendulum has moved to the right and will not return so soon (Fagnani 2017). The neo-fascist tendencies observed in many countries, such as the US (with white nationalists) and the AFD party (Alternative for Germany) in Germany, are evidence that far right-wing ideology is coming back across the world and Brazil has not been spared from its advances. The 2018 election has been marked by the far-right and fascist rhetoric, in the person of a presidential candidate that fulfills the dream of the elites of putting the poor in their place again. This candidate was the result of political forces that resented the advance of a project that in their view threatened their legitimatized place in political decisions. This neofascism is permeated by a class ideology that manipulated the public discourse to blame PT as the cause of the increasing poverty and inequality in the country. As we will see in this chapter, the rise of the

far-right discourses marks a new path of authoritarianism, hate, and violence in Brazilian politics.

This chapter sets out to examine the causal processes of the political crisis that led to the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff, and the actors and actions that have contributed to the rise of the extreme-right in Brazil. I study here the main mechanisms of the political crisis that altered and disrupted politics. The political and economic crisis, I argue, was part of the agenda of the right to remove PT from power and put Brazil back on track toward the international capital. For a better understanding of those mechanisms, the sequence of facts and events are important. For that reason, this chapter is organized as follows: firstly, I examine the conflicting relationship between different social projects, one supported by the upper middle class, and the other supported by PT. I analyze PT's neo-developmentalist policies and the challenges of Brazilian elites in accepting the extension of social rights and the improvements of living conditions of the poor. Secondly, I delve into the right-wing, conservative project to return to power by a process of reorganization around a new agenda, new alliances and the manipulation of mainstream media and judiciary. This discussion focuses on the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and the return of the right to power through a parliamentary coup, as I outline the changes in public policy spending and flexibilization of social rights, and the impact of these policies on citizenship rights. Thirdly, I discuss changes in the governance models implemented under the right-wing administration of Michel Temer. Fourthly, in the last part of the chapter, I focus on developments that opened the doors to the ugly side of the coming back of right-wing politicians: the return of the discourse of militarization and neofascism that has reached Brazilian politics.

4.1 The PT Administrations, the Social Welfare State, and Neo-Developmentalism

The legal transformations in Brazilian law started in 1988 with the new Constitution, and since then Brazil has undergone profound changes. When PT came to power in 2003, social rights were at the center of Lula's presidency (2003–2010). While it has consistently privileged the interests of domestic elites, PT governments have also produced important social gains, leading to a significant improvement living and working conditions. Some of those gains include rise in minimum wages, the expansion of

welfare transfers and benefit payments, protection of family agriculture, the expansion of universities and professional schools, the introduction of racial and social quotas for access to universities and the civil service, public housing programs, and lower tariffs and expanded access to the electricity, sanitation, and internet (Boito and Saad-Filho 2016). These socio-economic transformations led to expanded social rights alongside economic growth; for example, Brazil's growth in 2010 reached 7.5%.

However, an important cluster of structural problems was not tackled in PT administrations. These problems have to do with the incoherence of PT's proposed social project and the adoption of an international, neoliberal agenda. On the one hand, as a direct consequence of economic growth, the market expanded and jobs increased, so families' income improved. The main indicators of growth were job creation, higher consumption, and reduction of extreme poverty, as a result of better articulation between economic and social objectives, which stemmed from the improvement in the living standards of the population (Fagnani 2017, p. 8). On the other hand, the PT's hybrid neoliberal-neo-developmentalist strategy was aligned with the international capital agenda, evidenced by PT's macro-economic policies that encompassed high interest rates, inflation targets, and monetary exchange rate policy (Carvalho 2018).

The implementation of this hybrid neoliberal model that combined a social state in close relationship with the international capital (i.e. market finance) disappointed the social sectors that longed for economic growth with lasting social inclusion. Boito and Saad-Filho (2016) claim that since 2003, PT changed from an "alternative project" that included distributive policies to include the hybrid combination of elements of neoliberalism and Latin American neo-developmentalism, in line with neoliberal policies introduced by president Cardoso (1995–2003). More closely, these hybrid policies included an intimate alliance between monetary and exchange rate policy to limit deficit and support the internalization of important production chains. It also encompassed the expansion and lowering of the cost of the domestic public debt in an attempt to bring up interested rates. The capitalization of the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES—*Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*), which started to offer subsidized loans to expanding enterprises, generated new regulatory changes to incentivize large companies to invest in transport and infrastructure sectors (Boito and Saad-Filho 2016, p. 194). In another words, new developmentalism refers to a middle ground between neoliberalism and old developmentalism (Bresser-Pereira and Theuer 2012, p. 8).[1]

The redistributive policies of PT nearly double the minimal wage. They introduced means-tested programs funded by general taxation and the creation of new jobs incorporated workers in the formal market (Hunter and Power 2007). It also expanded tertiary public education, including quotas for vulnerable groups, taking away the upper class' near monopoly of specialized jobs (French and Fortes 2012). These gains brought the poor to spaces only occupied by the upper middle class, such as airports, bars, restaurants, beauty parlors, places where low-income workers had no facilitated previous access. These advances profoundly perturbed the upper classes, the main consumer of lower-end services and also accustomed in getting the "good jobs". An example of the significant social changes under way during the PT administration was the regulation of employment rights of domestic workers, which were finally regulated in 2013, in Rousseff's administration. This was one area that saw a particular strong regulation and further improvements of working conditions for domestic workers in Brazil. These workers include: cleaners, nannies, cooks, drivers, gardeners; workers commonly employed by Brazilian upper class. Among the new benefits were formal contract (with clear pension rights), paid holidays, limited working hours, and overtime pay. These policy changes raised the costs of employment and could affect the authoritarian and paternalistic dynamics of domestic work in Brazil.[2] The improvement of social rights, the expansion of democratic citizenship, and the threats to the privileges of the upper class generated fierce opposition and a strong reaction from this group.

On the one hand, PT was perceived as the party representing the working class, as it managed to improve the living conditions of the poor, helping to lift 28 million people out of poverty, and it was the first political party in the Brazilian story to affirmatively address sensitive issues, such as racial quotas, LGBTT rights and large social welfare programs (Kröger 2012). On the other hand, PT became the main political vehicle of the domestic and international capital that saw the state as the main obstacle to development, and wanted more space for markets and private business investment. PT's neo-developmentalist policies were successful not just because it expanded some industrial sectors such as shipbuilding and oil, but also because it injected public money into selected firms, the "national champions", in the words of Bugiato (2014). Those firms expanded through subsidized loans from the Brazilian Development Bank (Araújo and de Negri 2017; Boito and Saad-Filho 2016; Lavinas 2017). This approach does not take the credit of PT's national-popular project, yet this

policy was a neoliberal program with a strong state presence. In practice, it was a distribution of income without confrontation. To execute such a national program, alliances were necessary (Singer 2012).

The Brazilian Development Bank and Petrobras are the highlights of the Brazilian neo-developmentalism implemented by PT. It was, at least for some time, the aggregator factor that made Brazilian upper middle class and PT administration to hold an alliance. This alliance became the focal point for a number of economic policies that required a more active state intervention, which was less liberal in nature (Carneiro 2012), or an alternative to economic liberalism (Bresser-Pereira 2010). As already mentioned, those government policies and programs have benefited especially informal workers with job creation, who, over time have turned the most reliable base of support for PT presidential candidates since 2003 (Singer 2012, p. 88).

The upper class in Brazil are not fully against the extension of rights and improving living conditions of the poor, on the contrary, they accepted PT's hybrid neo-developmentalist policies, up to a point where it is working for them. Upper middle classes are truly believers of meritocracy and (white) privilege (Acciari 2016; Boito and Saad-Filho 2016). However, the upper class and part of the middle class found the poor underserved of tax-payer money, and though cash-transfer programs and quotas to be unfair. As a consequence, the upper class has gravitated around the political right. This is a significant position, because the upper middle class played an important role in securing the ideological hegemony of the Brazilian elites through schools, universities, churches, and the media, which are normally managed by professionals from these classes (Boito and Berringer 2014; Boito and Saad-Filho 2016).

While the PT's agenda and alliance building focused on the broadest possible pact with different sectors of the society: left, center-left, and center, PSDB (*Brazilian Social Democratic Party*) which represented the rival socio-economic project in Brazil (minimum state vs. social state) started to regain its old influence. This happened in the context of economic slowdown that started in 2011 in the first year of Rousseff's government.

4.2 How Alliances Break Down

The mainstream media, the PSDB, and the judiciary are the key actors of "anti-PT" ideas (an anti-PT sentiment) that became strong during the two last PT administrations. Together, these three entities articulated an

efficient anti-PT campaign, using their power and influence on the middle and popular classes to mobilize society against PT. This strategy was largely successful in bringing the right back to the presidency and has lasting consequences on the Brazilian economy and political system.

The national mainstream media is almost entirely owned by family business such as the family Marinho, which owns Rede Globo television network, and the Macedo family, owner of Grupo Record television network. These giant media corporations are not engaged with a national development strategy, contrarily, they are dedicated to the financialization of the economy and the transnational integration of the Brazilian economy with international allies (van Dijk 2017; de Albuquerque 2017). Instead of being an instance of mediation of the public sphere, assuring the circulation of disputed arguments, the mainstream media is an instrument of private interests that are exposed as if they were public interests (de Souza 2017). As a powerful media company, Rede Globo has a dominant position in Brazil's communications landscape and has a broader impact on political and social democratization. Porto (2012) has investigated the changes in Rede Globo since the 1990s, when it abandoned its traditional authoritarian stand for a more open format, but one that still influences civic engagement, elections news coverage, presidential communication, and accountability (de Melo and Drumond 2014).

Rede Globo is also known for its ambiguous relationships with the military dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, and many still see Globo as a former supporter of the dictatorship. There is very little doubt that there was a close relationship and incentives exchanged between Rede Globo and the dictatorial government (de Melo and Drumond 2014), but some research also points to the notion that Globo and the dictatorship did not have the same political position, since Rede Globo was censored by the regime in some instances. According to Porto (2012), Rede Globo's coverage of elections and political topics has improved, and many changes were translated into greater political accountability, such as broader and balanced election analysis. He also highlights, however, that greater balance did not compare to lack of bias. As an example, Porto considers a brief prepared by Rede Globo about a dossier, when two PT members were arrested by the Federal Police after trying to buy a dossier linking the then PSDB candidate for the São Paulo government, José Serra, to a fraud scandal. After the investigation, it was confirmed that the dossier was false. Rede Globo coverage of this facts prevented discussion of relevant policy issues and political alternatives. To Porto, the case illustrates that the

media conglomerates in Brazil have an important role in Brazil's recent political history, most notably Rede Globo, in shaping Brazil's democracy and political discourse.

Allied with the international capital in the support of orthodox neoliberal policies, Rede Globo has joined PSDB in the attacks on PT. The conflict between PT and PSDB is not recent. Previous PSDB governments (1994–2002) have implemented neoliberal policies in Brazil, which, as in other Latin American countries in the 1990s and early 2000s, curtailed social and labor rights, privatized and denationalized state-owned companies while deregulating finance to please the international markets (Loureiro and Saad-Filho 2018). In PT administrations, for a period of time domestic elites had become identified and even supportive of the hybrid policies of the PT, which ended up isolating the PSDB leadership. During this time, PSDB leadership figures—Aécio Neves, Geraldo Alckmin, and José Serra—heavily criticized PT policies related to Petrobras and the Brazilian Development Bank, which were central in the PT neo-developmentalist policies. While PSDB called for more opening up of foreign capital in the Brazilian market, PTs neo-developmentalist policies, with the support of the upper class, pushed for the development of a national industry.

This conflict became more apparent in 2011, when the economy started to slow down and the support for the PT neo-developmentalist policies started to lose attractiveness. As argued by Jessé de Souza (2017), promoting equality in Brazil is the same as an unscrupulous attack on the privileges of elites, which see the very demand for equality as tantamount to suspicion. According to him, Globo has helped to sustain social inequality, leading to the criminalization not only of politics, but also the idea of social equality and poverty alleviation.

Taking advantage of the political and economic momentum, PSDB brought up its old conflicts with PT about the role of the state in development. In this context, the PSDB and the mainstream media stepped up their attacks on the PT by mobilizing the judicial system in support of their strategy of aggression. The objective was to delegitimize PT and undermine the support of civil society for PT's policies. Judges, prosecutors, attorneys, and the top levels of the Federal Police have joined the PSDB leadership in systemic attacks against the PT administrations (Boito and Saad-Filho 2016, p. 202). The response from conservative, right-wing, upper-class sectors came in two well-organized offensives against PT representatives: the "*Mensalão*" scandal in 2005, which involved

government members paying a monthly allowance to congress members in exchange for votes and the *Operação Lava Jato* (Operation Car Wash), a criminal investigation carried out by the Federal Police on money laundering, bribes, and kickback deals in Petrobras, involving large construction companies, such as Odebrecht. Both were major political scandals, but the Car Wash operation is a much greater and vast scandal, involving multiple political parties, Petrobras and suppliers' companies, construction building companies and also politicians and business people in Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, and the US.[3] It is noteworthy that the investigation was authorized by President Rousseff herself, who refused to stop it and rescue political allies under scrutiny, when many of her political allies (and rivals) were implicated in the investigations (Ansell 2018).

This is not to say that PT was erroneously accused of wrong-doing. Indeed, evidence was strong and sent several politicians and some of Brazil's wealthiest businessmen to prison, including members of PT, PMDB, and PDT, but no PSDB politician has ever been arrested or convicted, even though the party is in the fourth place in the number of people investigated. This is one of the main features and controversial points of the Car Wash Operation: the obsessive political destruction of PT and former president Lula himself. Rede Globo and the Car Wash Operation offered concrete means of attack by illegally leaking audio and evidence on PT members, as if only PT were involved in frauds, making the population believe that only the PT had committed illegalities (de Souza 2017; Azevedo 2017). The selective, negative coverage was enough to discredit the party, and helped PSDB return as a mainstream party in the 2016 municipal elections, setting the scene for the popular support for the impeachment process that ousted a democratically elected president.

4.3 June Protests

When Dilma Rousseff's second administration term came to an early end in August 2016, many saw it as a surprising outcome. Brazil was until then seen as a young but strong democracy, holding elections, boasting an expansive system of democratic institutions, an independent judiciary, and citizens accountability. The events that led to the impeachment of president Rousseff took place a few years before the impeachment itself. The first sign of the challenges ahead of her second administration (2014–2016) started with massive protests in June 2013, before the 2014 FIFA World cup in Brazil. A wave of unprecedented street demonstrations drew more

than one million people into the streets, which eventually became a major point in Brazilian politics. People on the streets were protesting against poor-quality public transportation, corruption, overcrowded hospitals, and poor investments in public education. The protests were a clear message Brazilians were not buying anymore into the "Brazilian Miracle" that had impressed the world in previous years. Two facts contributed to the events in June 2013, according to Alonso (2017). The first was the wave of global protests for social justice, from 2011 to 2013, which attracted worldwide attention with their autonomous repertoire and the hosting of mega-events in Brazil; the FIFA Confederations Cup (2013), the World Cup (2014), the Olympics (2016), which provided a global stage for street protests. The second fact was the change in the relationship between government and social movements. For most of her administration, Rousseff maintained little dialogue with the organized society, while also leaving aside important demands from civil society, such as urban infrastructure problems and the efficiency of public policies.

If in the beginning, the protests were against hikes in bus fares in the city of São Paulo, the extreme police brutality against protesters made the news nationally and internationally (d'Andréa and Ziller 2016), and soon more protests started follow, now to include the repudiation of police violence, neglection of urban infrastructure, partisan politics, rejection of the costs related to the World Cup and criticism on Rede Globo's coverage bias.

The miracle of the Brazilian economy between 2006 and 2010 had raised the expectations of the poor and the lower middle class. While those two groups have accepted for a long time their "second-class citizens" status, the ascending of millions of people lifted out of extreme poverty, and the poor moving up into the lower strata of the middle class made them believe they had the same right to quality education, transport, and healthcare. After nearly a decade of prosperity, the decisive factor in the economic development of the country between 2006 and 2010 was an economic growth, which favored the development of more income-intensive industrial sectors that demanded a little more of skilled labor and investments in the bottom of the social pyramid (Carvalho 2018). The new demands from a new generation of lower middle class were not being met, and there were clear signs of frustration, especially with the quality of those public services people now saw as the government's top priority (Winter 2017).

Although many politicians were taken by surprise with the sweeping protests, in the weeks and months after the demonstrations, bus fares hikes in São Paulo were withdrawn, and Rousseff declared she supported the protests and understood it as a sign of a strong democracy. After this statement, Rousseff proposed a "national pact" to reduce corruption and enhance public service provision, accompanied by a plebiscite call to assess the reform of the political system (Peña and Davies 2017). As those promises of political reforms were made to protesters, they were promptly blocked by her political allies, especially Michel Temer, Rousseff's vice-president from PMDB, who would later advocate for the impeachment against her. Despite the creation of the *Mais Médicos* program (More Doctors) that intended to supply the shortage of doctors in the heartland municipalities with Cuban medical doctors, concrete changes did not take place in the aftermath of the 2013 protests. Others, however, believed Rousseff's attempts to address protesters demands were not genuine (Santos and Guarnieri 2016).

Alonso (2017) delineates two important groups that emerged from the protest in 2013: the reformist and the patriotic groups. The former was the group of autonomists and socialists that stood by the PT administration with a reformist agenda, demanding better public policies and the expansion of social rights. They were unhappy with PT's successive corruption scandals constantly mentioned by the mainstream media, but they believed that PT and the political class would (and should) implement the promised political reforms. The latter, the patriotic group supported more liberal ideas in favor, for example, of a lean and efficient state. They were conservative and some were supportive of a military dictatorship to put an end to ineffective political institutions and corruption, as they associated the rampant corruption in Brazil exclusively with PT and the left. The conservative movements that emerged in the wake of the street protests (*Movimento Brasil Livre [MBL]*, *Vem Pra Rua, Revoltados on-line*) eventually became organized groups that later played a crucial role in the narrative that supported President Rousseff's impeachment.

In an environment of political instability fueled by the trial of politicians involved in the *Mensalão*, the groups MBL, *Vem Pra Rua* and the *Revoltados on-line* came up with a style of activism that tightened the weak ties between loose demonstrators in 2013, especially the angriest ones (Alonso 2017). Conservative groups gained strength especially in social media, where they singled out PT as the source of corruption. Until then,

the protests were generic in its criticism of PT government, but due to patriotic groups, the judiciary, and the mainstream media, protests soon blossomed into "anti-petism". Screaming "*Fora Dilma*"! (Dilma out!) and targeting PT for the many problems in the country, those groups politicized the movement, transforming themselves into a self-identified anti-corruption movement positioned against President Rousseff (Avritzer 2017b).

Even if winning the 2014 presidential race, Rousseff was not capable of reacting to the major demands of the demonstrators; the plebiscite on a political reform became a dead initiative a few weeks after being sent to Congress (Avritzer 2017b). The conservative groups reunited around Aécio Neves' candidacy were disappointed by the outcome of the presidential election, when Dilma won the runoff against Aécio Neves by about three million votes. After losing the election, Neves, the opposition candidate for PSDB, contested the election results (Venceslau and Chapola 2015). No fraud was committed but the unfounded suspicion put into question the reliability of voting counting and the electronic vote procedure.[4] As a result, Rousseff faced strong resistance from congress and conservative movements since the very beginning of her second mandate. From there, in less than three months her approval rating started to fall and she did not gain any support among conservatives and liberals, as both criticized her new economic plans (Avritzer 2017b).

In early 2015, a new Petrobras fraud scandal emerged, a large kickback scheme investigated by the Federal police, known as *Lava Jato* operation (Car Wash). Many politicians from a variety of parties were implicated in this investigation, but the news on the *Lava Jato* investigations selectively reported nearly exclusively on Lula and the PT. Aécio Neves, from PSDB, for example, was at the same time downplayed despite being mentioned at least six times in the plea bargains related to *Lava Jato* conducted by federal judge Sérgio Moro in the city of Curitiba (Feres Jr. and de Oliveira Sassara 2018). The sequence of the investigation gave new energy to anti-government protesters that went to the streets wearing green and yellow, the colors of the Brazilian flag. MBL, *Vem Pra Rua*, and *Revoltados online* defended a liberal and neoconservative agenda, which made possible their connection with the political system via PSDB. For the activists connected to these groups, corruption and state intervention are fundamentally correlated. To them, corruption is a direct consequence of state intervention in both private and public enterprises. Moreover, the group is neoconservative, and contrary to various social and cultural contemporary rights (Gohn 2017).

The new protests against corruption and against Rousseff took place in all Brazilian states in 2013, with thousands of participants around the country and 135,000 people in São Paulo only. The response from government supporters was much smaller at the time, as the president disapproval rates reached its lowest level; 71% of dissatisfaction (Alonso 2017). If during the June Protests in 2013, protest participation was constructed mainly by progressive social actors and the PT, participation in the 2015 protests was pluralized with the inclusion of middle class social actors, transforming the protests into something else. This sector was key to the PT electoral success in the 2014 presidential election, but its support was short-lived. In March 2015, only three months after Rousseff's inauguration as president for her second term, protesters were back in the streets, fueled by the economic crisis, the negative coverage of the *Lava Jato* operation, and the new narrative of PT corruption widely promoted by conservative movements and Rede Globo (Avritzer 2017b). From there, the political crisis and social unrest continued, this time people in the streets were asking for Rousseff's impeachment—they just did not have an excuse for an impeachment yet. However, the reason that would justify impeachment was not clear. The priority, according to one of the MBL leaders, would be to rid the country of corruption perpetrated by PT, not corruption in general (Limongi 2015). It changed when Eduardo Cunha, the then President of the Chamber of Deputies received an application for impeachment filled by Hélio Bicudo and Janaína Paschoal, denouncing Rousseff for "fiscal pedaling".[5]

4.4 The Impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and the Intensification of the Conservative Wave

The impeachment process was based on artificial accusations created by Rousseff's opposition, fueled by the negative media coverage and the bias of the *Lava Jato* operations against PT. While the economy was doing well, the middle upper classes tolerated PT's social programs. But from 2012, the economy slowed down, the urban infrastructure was falling apart, crime was growing and economic policy was uncertain. The entrenched elite discontent over expanding economic and political inclusion for the nation's majority, and centuries of elite fear of popular mobilization fed a deep resentment towards the gains of the working class (Pitts 2015). According to de Souza (2017), the support of the middle class against PT was key for the propulsion of the impeachment. Afraid of the recent social gains of the working class, the elites activated all their forces to

accelerate the impeachment proceedings, mobilizing both the public opinion and the judiciary against the PT (Avritzer 2017b; Silva 2017; Alonso 2017; de Albuquerque 2017).

The role played by accountability institutions—read judiciary, Lower Courts, and the Federal Supreme Court—is a relevant dimension of the impeachment procedures and the unfolding of the *Lava Jato* operation. The legal tradition in Brazil comes from well-established law schools where the Brazilian elite reproduces (Silva 2017). The judges ahead of the *Lava Jato* started to identify political sovereignty with their own actions to downplay the electoral aspects of Brazilian democracy. The action of the *Lava Jato* judges has had heavy impact on Brazilian politics, the best example being the release of audio conversations between President Rousseff and Lula da Silva, which hastened the impeachment proceedings against Rousseff and inflamed the opposition even more.[6]

Since the new 1988 Constitution, the Brazilian judiciary has acquired great autonomy in relation to the executive power and the Congress. Judiciary members enjoy extremely high salaries and senior judges enjoy enormous privileges (Vianna 1999; O'Donnell 1998). In the *Lava Jato* operation, judicial autonomy is a tricky item as the courts are dominated by a coalition of powers with particular interests. As already suggested by O'Donnell (1998, p. 7), the horizontal accountability in democracies might mean that the judicial autonomy of judges will see themselves taking on their mission to guide the country, leaving little room for accountability to civil society. This seems to fit well with the federal judge who has been the face of the *Lava Jato* operation and its cult figure, Sérgio Moro. It is then that the newly self-confident and young judge comes into the picture, in an investigative operation enabled by previous PT administrations (Mische 2018).

As the anti-PT wave consolidates and the mainstream media is on a quest to take the party out of office, the investigative operation deepened the distrust on political institutions. Even if directing most of the investigation and long news reports to PT's wrong-doings, business people and politicians connected to parties other than PT were also implicated in the investigation, and many other used their parliamentary and judicial justifications to shield themselves from criminal prosecution, including former president Michel Temer (de Albuquerque 2017; Mische 2018; Limongi 2015).

One of the most attention-grabbing aspects of the impeachment was that it does not happen in spite of, but with the active participation of

accountability institutions, especially the media and the judiciary, which presented PT as a threat to democracy (de Albuquerque 2017; Santos and Guarnieri 2016). Elites controlling the mainstream media and the accountability institutions shaped the narrative of the impeachment. The federal investigation did not implicate Rousseff for personal gains, but the president of the Lower Chamber decided to open the case against her, taking the *pedaladas fiscais* as base. Peculiarly, a few days after the impeachment vote, the Senate decided the *pedaladas* were not a crime.[7]

Considering the many complexities of the impeachment, several political scientists and analysts have considered it a parliamentary coup (Encarnación 2017; Van Dijk 2017; Santos and Guarnieri 2016; Singer 2018; de Albuquerque 2017; Ansell 2018). A parliamentary coup because differently from the 1964 coup, when the military assumed government by force, Rousseff's impeachment happened within the limits of the law, but in a clear distorted application of the law for the benefits of others, as PMDB and PSDB united forces for a constitutional maneuver in the name of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF). In recent times, the impeachment as a constitutional procedure to put a final check on the president's power constitutes a new type of instability in Latin America, which has replaced the former military coups.[8]

de Albuquerque (2017) documented the media campaign calling for the Rousseff's impeachment. The campaign presented the impeachment as the best solution for the economic and political crisis. National journals of big circulation, such as *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Globo*, and *Correio Brasiliense* called for the impeachment and associated the economic crisis with corruption in PT administrations. The media was a strong cheerleader for those calling the impeachment and emphasized gender and sexist stereotypes in an attempt to discredit Rousseff's skills and administration (Encarnación 2017). News media and magazines portrayed the then president as an emotional person, inclined to fits of anger. The gendered aspects of the impeachment were picked up by international feminists and the United Nations, which condemned the political violence of sexist nature directed against the president.[9]

It is not possible to argue that Rousseff's impeachment was illegal. It happened according to legislation but it was malicious and a misuse of impeachment procedures. Rousseff's impeachment procedures started in late 2015 with a petition accepted by Eduardo Cunha, then president of the Chamber of Deputies. The impeachment procedures were formally initiated on April 11, 2016 with the activities of a special committee

formed to review the petition's admissibility. Once this committee approved the impeachment petition, it was then moved to the next step, the voting in the Lower Chambers. In one of most vexatious episodes of the Brazilian Lower Chamber, a full Lower House voted in favor of impeachment, 367 for and 137 against (342 were necessary for it to pass). In a session that lasted over nine hours with live coverage in open TV, house representatives had 15 seconds to declare their vote. That was an aberration show that fully exposed the nature of the impeachment: holding the signs of *Tchau*, *querida* (good-bye, darling) representatives took their 15 seconds to send happy birthday messages to granddaughter (Sérgio Morais, PTB); former captain Jair Bolsonaro claimed the "memory of Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra", the dictatorship's most notorious torture chiefs during the military dictatorship that was in charge of Dilma Rousseff's torture session when she was jailed in 1970; others praised judge Sérgio Moro (Mauro Pereira, PMDB), while others voted for their families, for Brazil, for the peace in Jerusalem. As well put by Singer (2018, p. 15), the voting session in the Lower Chamber was a variety show within the limits of the law, though "it wounded the soul of the Constitution". The other 137 voters that were against the impeachment used their 15 seconds to defend the legitimacy of the popular vote that re-elected Dilma in 2014, the personal honesty of the president, and to remember national figures such as Luís Carlos Prestes, Olga Benário, and Carlos Marighella. They also denounced the man who presided over the session, Eduardo Cunha, who not ironically was removed from his position by the Supreme Federal Court only 18 days after this voting session, as he was under trial for corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion. He was later condemned to 15 years in prison, but this did not affect the impeachment procedures. During this time, Michel Temer, the vice-president from PMDB, assumed power as an interim president. It is important to note that 303 out of the 513 members of the Lower Chamber were facing criminal charges or corruption investigation at the time of the impeachment vote, a caustic contradiction of a process said to "clean" politics.

In the Senate, the voting session lasted seven days, and the president's defense team presented their defense pieces. Rousseff had the chance defended herself from accusations in a 47-minute speech, and during a 13-hour marathon she answered questions from 47 senators. On August 31, 2016, the Senate removed President Rousseff from office by a 61–20 vote, considering her guilty of breaking Brazil's fiscal laws. They did not,

however, removed her political rights as it was expected, meaning she is not prevented for running for office again in the following eight years after the impeachment. This Senate decision showed a nuanced view from some senators related to the guilt verdict.

The discussion of whether it was a parliamentary coup, a coup within the Constitution or not, will remain for a long time. But these are the facts: PMDB and PSDB, with support of the middle upper classes, TV Globo, and the judiciary, joined forces to overthrow the president, without proving the crime of the president's responsibility. The lack of evidence of a crime of fiscal responsibility was acknowledged by many jurists, academics, and even by newspaper, such as Folha de São Paulo, which has no sympathy for the PT. International watchdog organizations, such as LASA (Latin American Studies Association) released a fact-finding report on the impeachment of Rousseff. LASA's report denounced the impeachment process in Brazil as anti-democratic and called the world's attention to the "dangerous precedents that this process establishes for the entire region" (LASA 2017, p. 5).

More than two years after the impeachment, it is possible to conclude that the elites' plan to recapture the state from PT did not go well. Despite deep austerity measures, failed infrastructure investments, and social cuts the economy is still struggling to recover. As already mentioned in Chap. 3, unemployment has reached record levels in Temer's government and the high living costs affect the poorest. The freezing of social investment for 20 years by a constitutional amendment approved by the congress in 2017 is a direct response to PT's social programs that improved the living conditions of the poor.

4.5 Rounds of Blame: What PT Was Not Able to Do

The Brazilian population had all right to be discontent with the condition of public services and corruption scandals. It is important to explore the opportunist strategies of parties that channeled public discontent into the government, in an attempt to bring the right back to power. The strategy of the right to regain power and influence in Brazil generates two important analyses that I develop in the remainder of the chapter. The first is that PT did not bring Brazil to a stage of post-neoliberalism, which I analyze through a participatory citizenship approach. The second is the rise of a proto-fascist politician in the country, who eventually won the

presidential elections by manipulating the distrust in political institutional and influencing public opinion with fake news on social media.

In the 2000s, Brazil was leading the "Pink Tide", a wave of left-wing administrations that carried 70% of Latin America government at one time (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Bolivia). The belief that guided the PT's ideological evolution was centered on the idea of citizenship. This idea moved from being an ideology to being an instrument of participation and inclusion (Nylen 2011). The idea of letting citizens be increasingly organized to directly participate in public administration—not just in decisions but in deliberation processes—constituted a new way of making politics, one that did not always resonate well with those accustomed to political privileges and decision-power. When looking at the trajectory of participatory democracy in Brazil, it is important to recognize PT's contribution to democracy, where the party, together with popular movements, expanded social, political, and economic rights, including a new model of participation and development. It is also imperative to understand what PT was not able to do with its moderated discourse that veered toward more neoliberal policies even as redistributive programs went forward (i.e. *Bolsa Família*).

Contrary to analysts who suggested Brazil and other leftist governments were in a post-neoliberal state (the Pink Tide), Sader (2011) argued that Brazil—and Latin America—were not there yet. Leftist administrations in Latin America started a trend of governments that put poverty and inequality reduction as a priority, and this trend created legacies that new right-wing governments have to deal with, especially with respect to social policy. Undeniably, the PT's ascent to power has resulted in a number of significant changes in a post-neoliberal or neo-developmentalist direction, but these dynamics are in constant flux (Pickup 2016). While there was a better articulation between economic and social objectives, which resulted in an improvement in the living standards of the population and economic growth (especially in Lula's second term in office), it does not signify that a new model of overcoming neoliberalism was under implementation. In effect, Brazil progressive administrations and other leftist governments elected in several Latin American countries' would-be "post-neoliberal" democracies were far from overcoming and turning the page of neoliberalism (Fagnani 2017).

Especially in the 2000s, Latin America moved toward building a less perverse growth model than the historical pattern, and it was the only continent where it was possible to speak of some form of socialism in the

twenty-first century. During this time, South-American nations came together around the strengthened Mercosur, the Southern Common Market. The continent's post-neoliberal narrative is only partially true. In fact, the state had more control and intervened more on the economy, and several companies were nationalized, such as those in the case of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Even if some of those governments identified themselves as post-neoliberals—because of redistributive policies and an expanded South-South integration—calling them post-neoliberal is not supported by evidence (Sader 2011).

As explained by Boaventura Santos in his book *Democracia al borde del caos* (Democracy at the edge of chaos), there was a stronger state activism that went against the trend of the international capital. For that very reason, international neoliberalism does not forgive these governments and "wants to destroy them".[10] During the Pink Tide, Brazil promoted a light version of post-neoliberalism internally to achieve some measure of social redistribution. But these measures implemented by the government did not question international neoliberalism, financial capitalism, and free trade rules. On the contrary, the Brazilian development model was still neoliberal (Santos 2014). The Lula-Dilma administrations promoted social inclusion without structural reforms, and an important set of chronic structural problems were never addressed (Fagnani 2017), such as low taxation of the rich and absurdly high interest rates. Some can argue that it was part of a transition period that oriented the agenda of PT. According to Singer (2012), PT governments sought to make social inclusion within order and without ruptures through gradual changes. In this sense, PT promoted a fight against poverty for millions of people, expanded education, and promoted the rights of minorities groups, while the demands of the financial community were accommodated. These policies were beneficial to the poorest without seriously affecting the economic interests of the rich.

Following the PT initiative to open up spaces for participation of social movements, the rich and the mainstream media charged that inclusive policies drain the economy. The promotion of institutional innovation is one of the best ways to improve the quality of the political system (Levine and Molina 2011), but it is also clear that innovation, in this case democratic innovations, does not transfer itself automatically to the political system. Avritzer (2017a) also adds that most political systems are closed to political innovations. This idea resonates well with the Brazilian elites' contempt for inclusive and redistributive policies in PT's administrations, as they saw

the political inclusion and benefits for the dispossessed as a threat. Those were benefits they could not enjoy, and a direct affront to their long-lasting privileges. This elites' contempt for the poor was termed by de Souza (2017) as simple "class hatred".

The social changes brought by democratic innovations were not easy to implement. In opening the political space for previously excluded groups, the expansion of participation was often blocked by a conservative and homogenous congress. In particular, this conservative majority stood against the expansion of social participation in Brazil proposed in the Law Decree No. 8243, which intended to create the National Policy on Social Participation (Avritzer 2017a). In effect, the legitimization and compulsory creation of policy councils around the country was a top-down decision, in which the majority of the states and local governments complied and created policy councils. But it is important to acknowledge that the demand for political participation came from civil society, since PT members and supporters believed that representative democracy was not enough to promote further democratization and was not fully capable of reducing the historical social inequality in the country. So, the idea is that democratic participation could open up the decision-making process for society to participate actively and influence policies. This process must be seen as the means through which it would be possible to confront what is one of the fundamental questions of democracy: social inequality in its various forms, not only the economic form.

When PT assumed power for the first time in 2003, the country had a correlation of favorable forces that made possible the election of the PT. However, this favorable correlation changed rapidly with the economic crisis, which in Brazil was marked by the return of the right to power. It is from there that we have a very evident confrontation of political projects, as the country is suffering a crisis of at least two dimensions: first, one of the most acute recessions in the country's history and one of the biggest corruption scandals among democratic countries. Thus, the advance of the right in Brazil occurred because the government was left-wing and was portrayed as solely responsible for the crisis.

4.6 Lula, Political Crisis and the Rise of Fascism

The parliamentary coup staged by the right has failed to overcome the political crisis and resurrect the economy after impeaching Dilma Rousseff. The combination of an economic crisis and a waning confidence in

government institutions resulted in a political crisis that is damaging democracy. Starting with the June protests in 2013, mass disenchantment with politics led to the election of an extreme-right presidential candidate in the 2018 presidential election, Jair Bolsonaro, to the highest executive post in the country. The conservative forces that elected Bolsonaro railed about state inefficiency and the corruption scandals that touched virtually all political parties. Thus it is not surprising that the new leaders on the right came from outside the major political parties in the 2018 election. The elite and the upper middle class selective moralism of the state and political corruption have undermined political institutions, and the consequence of this currently is a spike in intolerance, political violence, and hate speech. Right-wing populism with fascist features is a currently serious menace to democracy in Brazil, and it threatens political liberties and popular sovereignty.

The rise of Bolsonaro is not casual or accidental; on the contrary, it has international ties to the spectrum of right-wing populism, a tested doctrine already under way in other countries. The many similarities to the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Donald Trump in the US, are the threats to democracy and the roll back on minorities rights, such as migrants' rights, women's reproductive rights and affirmative policies. This right-wing populism is a phenomenon that is closely associated with the expanding role of social media and the radical reaction to the economic crisis as outcome of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis. Right-wing populism combined with nationalism reinforce values of white majorities with criticism of the economic and political elites, calling them corrupt and manipulative; ideas that resonate with the popular classes. Right-wing populism disseminates that the state is inherently corrupt and that it promotes the degeneration of customs. For this reason, right-wing governments use religion, moralism, and privatization to fight the subversive state. Popular right-wing candidates have simple language and place themselves as crusaders promising to fight against the system.

In Brazil, Temer's government promoted the agenda of international business and corporations, leading to deepening impoverishment of the people who had experienced a small social ascension with the PT's governments. Brazilians were told that political corruption of PT was the cause of poverty. When the corruption of the political parties becomes obvious

to some, the judiciary actions and the discourse of the media and conservative groups started to encourage distrust with the state and its political institutions. Even without being completely suppressed but deeply distrusted, the whole state and political system started losing representation, a sentiment that opened the way to opportunism and conservatism.

The coup de grace on Brazil's young democracy was the imprisonment of former president Lula on plea bargain evidence. The judges who unanimously ruled against Lula seriously frustrated his presidential prospects. The arbitrariness that judges and prosecutors displayed in Lula's case became evident by forcing the reversal of the burden of proof, relegating to defense the role of proving innocence, and removing from the prosecution the burden of proving guilt. This approach carried enormous significance for Brazil. Regardless of the debate between those who support Lula and those who want him in jail, the number of Brazilian jurists saying that due process was abbreviated in order to convict Lula is troubling. That apparent legal shortcut had a clear reason: to prevent Lula from running the 2018 presidential race.[11]

The conviction on corruption charges disqualified Lula from running for office in the 2018 elections based on the Clean Slate Law (*Lei da ficha limpa*), which makes convicted politicians ineligible for eight years. Absent in the 2018 elections, Lula's condemnation to imprisonment opened the door to candidates that otherwise would not stand a chance to win against him. Fact is, Lula has been the winner in consecutive electoral polls and would win any electoral scenario, including against the ultra-conservative candidate, Bolsonaro.[12] As one of the most prominent politicians in Brazil and in the world, Lula had a strong support from the popular classes and clearly stood a chance to win a fair election. His absence from this election gave new energy to conservative movements that abandoned PSDB and PMDB supporters' base and moved their support to the appealing Bolsonaro, a member of a minuscule party, Partido Social Liberal (PSL—Social Liberal Party).[13] The party's motto is "*Brasil acima de tudo, Deus acima de todos*" (Brazil above everything, God above all.)

4.7 The 2018 Election and the Power of Social Media

In the final days leading up to the presidential runoff (the second round was held on October 28), Bolsonaro's campaign was based on the dissemination of misinformation. His campaign was largely run in the social media

by his fans who were not shy of sharing fake news via WhatsApp, which in the 2018 turned out to be the go-to political weapon, used by 120 million people in the country. Bolsonaro's strategy was centered on the lack of debate and the incitation of violence and incendiary speech, proved by more than 70 politically motivated violent attacks committed by Bolsonaro's supporters in the three weeks before the second round of the presidential election. Families and friends became divided along political issues and the online wars intensified in the days leading up to the presidential runoff on October 28, 2018.

The "meme war" and fake news again shaped the results of a presidential election. Everywhere in the world, fake news attracts more attention on social networks than accurate information. A study from MIT found that false stories receive 70% more shares on Twitter than real ones (Vosoughi et al. 2018). Deceitful posts on WhatsApp are shared thousands of times and most people do not bother to check or care whether the material is true before re-sharing them. That was the case in Mexico and Sri Lanka, where elections in 2018 were plagued with false claims widely shared on Facebook and WhatsApp. In Brazil, WhatsApp is the most accessible mode of communication since mobile phone plans are very expensive (some companies offer data plans exclusively for social media). WhatsApp is adopted by business, news media, and political campaigns, making it even more popular and highly pervasive within users' social networks.

The high penetration of social networks and the rapid spread of rumors in WhatsApp turned it into the perfect vehicle for Bolsonaro's electoral campaign to disseminate its conservative agenda. Incentives for acts of violence against opponents, intolerance toward gays and non-evangelical religions, misogyny, and false claims against the opposition permeated the conversation in WhatsApp. There were more than 1500 pro-Bolsonaro groups on WhatsApp, against 147 groups of pro-Haddad candidacy.[14] For Bolsonaro's campaign, the formula was successful. The activism in the networks included distorted speeches excluded from the formal political debate, one that quickly formed a militancy that reproduced deceitful material in the public and private groups in WhatsApp.

The chaos caused by the mix of lies and truths, fiction versus reality was fed by the far right-wing candidate, as his campaign depended on the lack of debate as a means to spread misinformation. A clear evidence of the lack of debate is that Bolsonaro refused to attend political debates. In the first electoral round, he already declared he would not take part in debates that

would "damage" his campaign. It became world news that he ended up missing debates because he suffered a knife attack, a consequence of the hate and violence disseminated in the period. This attack revealed the very ugly side of the presidential campaign: intolerance and political violence. As he started to feel better and was discharged from hospital, he gave exclusive hour-long interviews in news channels that openly supported his campaign, such as Rede Record. His opponent, Fernando Haddad invited Bolsonaro for debates several times but he refused, alleging it was against medical advice. Ultimately, Bolsonaro declared publicly that he was not attending debates as part of his "strategy".

It is not mandatory for Brazilian presidential election candidates to participate in debates, but the 2018 elections was marked by a lack of debate around Bolsonaro's most controversial proposals, such as long-distance learning for all students in public school to curb "Marxist ideals", the opening of military schools, the facilitation of gun ownership, lowering of the age of criminal responsibility, among other proposals that make little sense in terms of reducing criminality and expanding social rights. It was not clear how these proposals may be implemented, but Bolsonaro campaign clearly had no interest in explaining them to those who would like to understand. Nevertheless, some of his fans are already in line with Bolsonaro's proposals: scaring minorities online and in persona threats, telling students to spy on teachers, creating a sense of fear and barbarism.

On the other hand, Haddad's campaign worked to expand the range of support to consolidate democracy. In comparison with Bolsonaro, his campaigning was more transparent, focused on the sharing of his proposals and the combating of fake news. Yet, misinformation flows free and fast and stopping the spread of fake news has proved nearly impossible. Many voluntary groups, such as Comprova (Prove it) check facts in the media and public debates and publish their findings, but this new information has not always reached voters on time, while more deceitful material is constantly produced and shared.[15]

On October 18, 2018, the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* reported that at least four companies paid for Massive Shoot messages on WhatsApp in support of Jair Bolsonaro and criticizing PT. The scale of the intervention of private companies in the 2018 election is striking: according to the newspaper, the packages of mass messages reached the individual value of R$ 12 million reais (around US$ 3.2 Million) to send hundreds of millions of messages. Bolsonaro officially declared an expense of R$ 1.2 million

(around US$ 322,000) to the *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* (TSE) in the entire first round of his campaign. According to the electoral legislation, the ceiling is R$ 70 million per candidate in the first round. These undeclared political campaign expenses are against the Brazilian electoral law, which does not allow for private business donations to electoral campaign and does not permit the use of third-party data for political campaign. Meanwhile the TSE and the Federal Police are investigating the allegations by *Folha de São Paulo*, and WhatsApp has banned over 100,000 accounts associated with electoral spam. If the main elements of the report are confirmed, it means that several electoral irregularities took place.

Bolsonaro's right-wing populism attracts people who often have genuine grievances against elites, but it channels such resentments in ways that reinforce social, cultural, political, or economic power and privilege by combining attacks on socially oppressed groups with mass mobilization at the grassroots and distorted forms of anti-elitism based on scapegoating (Berlet and Lyons 2018). The response from the elites was to criticize social equality projects while instilling the "fear of communism" in the population with baseless claims that PT would turn Brazil into a new Venezuela, where the government is socialist. Despite depositing some support on the PSDB candidate Geraldo Alckmin in the first round of the 2018 presidential election, elites quickly turned to Bolsonaro, who nearly won the vote in the first round, and went to second round as the likely winner. Elites understood Brazilian fascism as "tolerable" and an important force to defeat PT. At the same time, this meant that they empowered a misogynist, homophobe, racist, gun-lover, and dictatorship enthusiast with a sharp hate speech powerful enough to mobilize the masses.[16] During the presidential election, political violence exploded in Brazilian streets, including attacks on PT voters, blacks, indigenous villagers, and homosexuals.

The triumph of right-wing populism at the polls in Brazil in the 2018 election can also be explained by the growth of conservative Pentecostalism coupled with several anti-corruption scandals, and the search for the return of "family values", said to be perverted by feminists and the left. Christian evangelical groups have grown exponentially in numbers and comprise nearly 25% of the Brazilian population, and their support to Bolsonaro's campaign was key to his success. Similar to the 2016 presidential elections in the US, social media platforms and attacks on the freedom of press were crucial to form the pillars of this new diffusion of conservative political ideas. However, Bolsonaro's campaign was

different in that the presence of army officers as campaign planners and his disdain for human rights (not just migrants rights, but any rights of someone not deemed a "good citizen"), which makes his presidency (2019–2022) a dark time for his opponents and critics, who have already been threatened with imprisonment and exile.[17]

Despite the fear that under Bolsonaro's government democracy is going to perish, it will not be easy to upend Brazilian democracy. His campaign discourse already vowed to criminalize social movements labeling them as "terrorists". This is a direct carryover of various actions against social movements that had already started in Rousseff's government during the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympics, and later developed in Temer's administration. Looking ahead at the Bolsonaro era, it seems likely that further repression of social movements will occur. In the new proposed anti-terror legislation, protest with political or ideological motivation might be considered acts of terror. The goal is to criminalize social movements such as the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) with sentences ranging from 12 to 30 years of imprisonment. Bolsonaro's supporters in the Congress put the anti-terrorism legislation to vote in early November 2018 but the action was blocked by the opposition, who claimed Bolsonaro wanted to associate this harsh legislation with Temer's government instead of his.

Challenges to Bolsonaro's penchant for authoritarianism are likely to come from below. Bolsonaro's opposition pledged strong resistance, for example, the #EleNão (#NotHim) movement tried to prevent him from winning the election. It was not successful but it already demonstrated strength to assemble the anti-Bolsonaro contingent. Composed mainly of women but also of male supporters, the movement functioned initially as an online campaign, but #EleNão has mobilized protests in the streets and engaged people on the left, center, and many others unhappy and afraid of Bolsonaro's extreme-right government.

4.8 Conclusion

Whether or not threats to democracy actually materialize in Brazil, this threat will not be as it was in 1964, with a military regime and prohibition of opposition parties. It is more likely the road to fascism in Brazil is taking the form with elimination of basic civil rights, especially for minorities and the poor. The possibility of creating more seats in the Supreme Court was already signaled by Bolsonaro's new minister of cabinet, thereby increasing

the size of the Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF) by indication of his allies to the Supreme Court. Bolsonaro won the election by touching a topic very precious to the poor in Brazil: violence. He used a hardline discourse to curb violence and organized crime. If Bolsonaro launches a war against criminal factions, Brazil will become very violent quickly (cf. for example Mexico's troubled experience with the "War Against the Narcos" during the Felipe Calderon administration).

With this inflammatory and authoritarian populist agenda, it is likely that national and local councils will be disempowered or disarticulated. In Bolsonaro's government proposals, establishing communication with civil society and maintaining policy councils were not even mentioned. Contrarily, Fernando Haddad intended to expand popular participation in councils that oversee public agency actions, with increased representation of social groups (true to the idea of encouraging of citizens diversity), including in the National Council of Justice. In this moment when democracy is on the edge, the country that became the source and inspiration of democratic innovations seems to be changing, signaling a throwback to its authoritarian past. But many still believe the country is resilient and that citizens will stand up to defend democracy.

Notes

1. The economist Bresser-Pereira is considered the architect of neo-developmentalism. According to him, neo-developmentalism encompasses an alternative to economic liberalism, where the state is an important actor without a heavy, regulatory hand. For a more comprehensive discussion on neo-developmentalism, see Lena Lavinas (2017) *The takeover of social policy by financialization: the Brazilian paradox.*
2. Domestic workers are commonly employed by the upper class in Brazil. It is the country with the biggest number of domestic workers in the world, seven million in 2017. Their profile is predominantly female, Afro-descendant and low schooling levels. The domestic work in Brazil is fueled by inequality and social dynamics created mainly after the abolition of slavery in Brazil (Souza 2015).
3. See more How Operation Car Wash changed Latin American politics: https://brazilian.report/power/2018/04/13/operation-car-wash-latin-america/.
4. Later in 2017, it was revealed that Aécio Neves' fraud allegation in the Superior Electoral Tribunal against PT was made only to annoy the opposition, as he knew no election fraud had happened. See more [in Portuguese]

https://politica.estadao.com.br/blogs/colao-do-established/acao-no-tse-era-to-encher-o-he-said-aecio-a-joesley/.

5. A term from Brazilian Portuguese. The term "pedalling" covers a creative accounting sleight that allows administration to fund social program using money that was not reimbursed in the normal period with no need of Congress consultation. This practice creates a misleading impression that state finances are stable, which is not always the case.
6. The releasing of this particular audio was later deemed illegal by the Supreme Court. Judge Moro was reprehended but not removed from the investigation. His actions, however, had a strong impact on the results of the impeachment and could no longer be reversed.
7. Two days after impeachment, Senate approves law that allows fiscal pedalling [in Portuguese]. https://economia.ig.com.br/2016-09-02/lei-orcamento.html.
8. A similar parliamentary coup took place in Paraguay in 2012 and in Honduras in 2009. A comprehensive analysis of those "soft coups" can be found in the NACLA Report on the Americas (2016) called "twenty-first Century Strife: A NACLA Roundtable", in which Latin American scholars consider the impeachment of presidents Manuel Zelaya, Fernando Lugo, and Dilma Rousseff.
9. The Campaign to Impeach Brazil's President Is Viciously Sexist: https://www.thecut.com/2016/04/brazil-sexist-impeachment-campaign-dilma-rousseff.html.
10. Boaventura Souza Santos in an interview to the journalist Steven Navarrete Cardona for the Colombian newspaper "El Espectador" on 26th Oct 2014 [in Spanish]: https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/elmundo/el-neo-extractivismo-esta-acabando-america-latina-articulo-524282.
11. The judgement of Lula's appeal was the fastest in the Lower Court [in Portuguese]: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2017/08/1912821-recurso-de-lula-foi-o-que-mais-rapido-chegou-a-2-instancia.shtml.
12. Lula tem 34%, Bolsonaro, 17% e Marina, 9%, aponta pesquisa Datafolha para 2018 [in Portuguese] https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/lula-tem-34-bolsonaro-17-e-marina-9-aponta-pesquisa-datafolha-para-2018.ghtml.
13. PSL is an ultra-conservative political party supporting the ideology of militarism, nationalism, limited role of the state, and anticommunism.
14. Fernando Haddad was the leftist presidential candidate in the 2018 elections. Former mayor of the city of São Paulo, he gained national projection as the Minister of Education during 2005–2012 but he was still relatively unknown in some parts of the country. Haddad replaced Lula as the PT candidate in the 2018 presidential election, since Lula's candidacy was barred under the *Lei da Ficha Limpa* (Clean slate law). Haddad's electoral

platform included higher public spending and introduction of tax cuts for the poor and higher taxes for the rich. Haddad lost in the presidential run-off against Bolsonaro, with 44.87% of the votes against the 55.13% of Bolsonaro.

15. Fake news is responsible for Bolsonaro's victory in Brazil: https://www.vox.com/2018/10/26/18022864/brazil-presidential-election-bolsonaro-haddad.
16. Jair Bolsonaro Wins Brazil's Presidency, in a Shift to the Far Right: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/world/americas/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-election.html.
17. Brazil's Polarizing New President, Jair Bolsonaro, in His Own Words: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/world/americas/brazil-president-jair-bolsonaro-quotes.html.

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CHAPTER 5

Sustainable Citizenship and the Prospect of Participation and Governance in the Digital Era

5.1 Keeping Incentives for Participation

The #EleNão (#NotHim) movement has already entered history as the largest manifestation of women's movements in the history of Brazil. The movement put hundreds of thousands of people in the streets on September 29, 2018. It was not only the biggest manifestation of the 2018 election, it was also a protest against Bolsonaro. It began with a Facebook page "*Mulheres Unidas Contra Bolsonaro*" (Women United Against Bolsonaro) with more than three million members. The movement is an echo of the resistance against conservativism and authoritarianism in such a polarized context, proving to be transgressive in such a politically charged moment.

After the 2018 presidential election, the media portrayed the #EleNão movement as unsuccessful because protesters' efforts to avoid Bolsonaro's election were not effective. By a different measurement, other media outlets were aware of issues of participation and resistance by recognizing the power of mobilization and collective peaceful action. Different groups with diverse ideologies showed that it is possible to fight against a common adversary. Under this lens, the anti-authoritarianism movements that emerged or were strengthened during 2018 elections have been very effective. Although Brazil's election results favored businesses and the upper classes, the election of a new government also means the establishment of a new opposition, and grassroots movements are organizing themselves

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toward building resistance to the right-wing extremist president. These include the Marxist-inspired *Movimento dos Trabalhadores sem Terra* (MST), indigenous people movements, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* (MTST—Homeless Workers Movement), university lecturers, feminists, left-wing governors in the Northeast, environmentalists, and many others who form a resistance coalition of tens of thousands willing to defend democratic freedoms.

The long-term effects of the resistance against authoritarianism will only be observed when mobilization is able to influence programs and strategies. Manifestations like the #EleNão revealed the potential for creative thought and information sharing platforms attributed to fact-check organizations, online influencers, and digital politics that can impact democratic developments in the next years, disabling future undemocratic developments. These can, hopefully, give new strength to Brazil's civil society. The sharing of information, the respect for different needs and ideals has encouraged people to think and question the new right-wing agenda in Brazil. This activity demands a critical thinking capable of inciting some degree of introspection among the Brazilian left (and maybe center), which is necessary for the creation of a strong alternative of governance that will engage ordinary citizens.

In this setting, any cooperation between ordinary citizens, social movements, and political parties needs to take cues from participatory learning, which should not be underestimated in its capacity to provoke social change (Hsieh 2013). The strategy of (re) developing ideas of governance in Brazil passes through the process of re-engaging citizens with democratic innovations. On the one hand, the discredit of political structures and the harmed reputation of the political class induce citizens to feel disconnected from the state. These people believe that only a "heavy hand" can make politics "clean" again. On the other hand, there are those who believe in people's capability to influence political decision-making and contribute to political life.

After two decades since the implementation of participatory innovations in Brazil, it is possible to evaluate the sustainability of those models in the context of a democratic crisis and the rise of the far-right in the country.

Numerous experiments of participatory democracy have been successful, and many traditional models of political participation have been created and adapted, expanding a new set of democratic institutions where citizens decide over resource allocation and priority-setting (Heller 2001).

The problem is that in a more closed political space, just as the one Brazil has entered since 2016, the arenas once open for citizens and for public scrutiny are no longer accessible to citizens who wish to take part in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. In this context, it is important to understand the new power dynamics in this new stage Brazilian democracy is entering, through the lens of participation as a political practice, which is a particularly useful framework to examine the transformation participatory institutions are undergoing.

To Cornwall (2013, p. 75), spaces for participation convey permeable arenas in which citizen participation is encouraged. These spaces constitute a domain in which new intermediary institutions and new opportunities for citizen involvement see the light. During the PT governments, attention was paid to design particular institutions to fit specific social actors, and the presence of citizens together with the dynamism of political agency forged new possibilities for raising the voice of vulnerable groups. The recent changes in governance schemes and political institutions in Brazil have shown that the dynamics of power, voice, and agency have been retracted to rollback strategies for transformative social action, which in turn are barring the access of civil society to spaces that had been previously open, taking away their capacity for influencing decision-making on public policies. One of the characteristics of participatory governance is that it captures spaces *in* constant transformation as well as potential arenas *for* transformation (Cornwall 2013, author's emphasis). Meaningful representation is a challenge, so tactics of engagement in this period of setbacks is key to keeping spaces of participation alive and maintaining citizens active in those spaces.

Spaces of participatory citizenship are never neutral. Those who are suspicious or just afraid of citizens' capacity for social change have often questioned the value of popular participation and charged it as resources-drain. Spaces such as policy councils and policy conference are permeated by power relations, and these interactions might put into question hierarchies and inequalities. While it is a fact that spaces of participation may actually reproduce inequalities, these can also be spaces of resistance, and its condition of procreator or challenger of inequalities varies in an endless struggle of dominance and resistance, in a relationship of "power and counter-power", as argued by Castells (2007). It is not a coincidence that one of the first decisions of Temer's administration was to postpone national conferences and replace key people at the administrative level of national councils with people more aligned with his agenda. As exten-

sively examined by Foucault (1991), discourses of participation and inclusion are a configuration of strategies and practices that are constantly being transformed, instead of a coherent and singular set of prescriptive ideas. In the current environment of setbacks in participatory democracy under right-wing governments, spaces previously filled with civil society members are likely to be refilled with people and agendas more articulated with the right, a move that is already giving way to centralization of decision-making and authoritarianism. Additionally, spaces created with one purpose in mind can be modified to attend a different agenda, such as in the case of the Brazilian National Education council, which has been top-down remodeled and realigned to prioritize the agenda of private educational businesses.

The deconstruction of participatory citizenship in Brazil is viable, but only partially, for two reasons. First, because democratic innovations in Brazil (and largely in all Latin America countries) are state-led, so there is a limit up to which citizens can go to change the flaws of the democratic system. Therefore, the impotence of citizens to stop the emergent process of regression of participation and social rights is an inherent part of the dynamics of power in spaces of citizen participation. The institutionalization of participation may ensure that democratic innovations remain in place, but it cannot ensure that these innovations will permanently be democratic or legitimate (Pogrebinschi and Tanscheit 2017). Second, because of the agency of citizens who already took up the spaces of participation and the correlation of forces in constant transformation, civil society has a lot of participatory learning and a history of mobilization. Thus, because of these two factors, it is still possible to think about contestation and resistance to keep the architecture of participation alive in the current conservative environment, but a lot more energy and organization is necessary to resist the advances of the extreme right-wing agenda. This is possible, I argue, through improved access to information and a combination of elements that can shape democracy in Brazil in the years to come.

5.2 Democracy and Access to Information

One of the bases of democracy is access to information. It is not without reason that the so-called fake news is one of the main causes of concern with respect to the future of democracy. Fake news creates a distorted reality that has a vast impact on those who have no access to (or sometimes no interest in) accurate facts. By mixing hard facts with falsehoods and

hyper-partisan views, fake news and misused data worries journalists, academics, politicians, and everyone who is aware that misinformation plays to the fears and prejudices of people, and that it can influence voters' perceptions, plans, and their behavior. Those are relatively new events in the digital era, but they raise particular concerns about the way online data could be used to manipulate the outcome of elections and similar important political events (i.e. Brexit) (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Bastos and Mercea 2017; Shao et al. 2017).

In some countries, democracy is an intangible ideal to be achieved. When authoritarian governments assume power and negative attitudes are demonstrated in the electoral process (e.g. political violence, hate speech, discrimination of minorities), the tendency is that democracy, if kept at all, will be implemented as a one-way, top-down fashion. In fact, democracy is fragile, and constant checks and balances are necessary. Governments that keep away, and even criminalize, sectors of civil society, are no longer acting in accordance with democratic values, and as it often is the case, democracy will no longer be sustainable.

Education and critical thinking are fundamental components for keeping democracy alive. Access to information and the encouragement of critical and creative thinking are part of the evolving ideal of genuine democracy moving in a positive direction. Where democratic innovations have been implemented, governments have to some extent recognize that citizens indeed have power and that they constitute the critical mass of the society; thus, they deserve to be heard. Contrarily, where people remain unheard and detached from political decisions, the ideals of democracy can increasingly become distorted with autocratic societal structures (Hsieh 2015).

The media, especially social media, has had a strong impact on politics and society. Those who control the most powerful systems have a great deal of control over politics. In the past, corporation power policies posed as threat to democracies, but in the scenario for the twenty-first century, issues related to freedom, social justice, and democracy are increasingly in the hands of people who design the digital systems that people use in their everyday lives. The power of a media that shares accurate facts can be reflected in constructive long-term changes in democratic practices. However, only recently, social media firms have started acting against the potential threats on their platforms. While a lot of manipulation of the online public sphere has already happened, further damage to democracy can be prevented. Thus, it is likely that changes in the way news media and

information circulate and possible safeguards of "quality control" will eventually be made, but to what extent such changes may effectively fight back the problem of fake news remains an open question.

5.3 Challenges Facing the Digital Information

There is an urgent need to find ways to enable democracy to defend itself, and to bring into the open the intentional tactics being used to undermine public discourse and democracy (Morgan 2018). Responses from civil society and government regulators to create resilience in the digital world is possible. Addressing the challenges facing the digital information involves cooperative sharing and regulation.

While the print media, such as newspapers and magazines, maintain a relationship with their readers based on reputation, social media news spread their content fast as a result of the power of networks. False information outperforms true information, as people are more willing to share fake news than accurate news (Vosoughi et al. 2018). Countries in which people are informed by social networks are more prone to the influence of falsehoods. In the US, 39% Americans get most news on social media (Reuters Institute 2018), even though 57% of the people have concerns about the accuracy of information spread online (Pew Research Center 2018). In Brazil, where social media plays an increasingly important role in news consumption, this trend is not very different. In 2017, 83% of the population were frequent users of social media, and 57% got most news via Facebook and 46% via WhatsApp. In 2018 (Fig. 5.1), the continued rise in the use of WhatsApp for news was observed, as consumers looked for more private (and less confrontational) spaces to communicate, especially using services of companies such as WhatsApp, which offered encrypted messaging services. In the year of the presidential election in Brazil, the number of people getting information mostly by WhatsApp rose to 48% (Reuters Institute 2018).

Figure 5.1 shows the ranking of countries in the Americas that consume more news through Facebook and WhatsApp and total use of social media for accessing news. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico show similar levels of online access for news (including social media). While Brazil comes in fourth in Facebook use for news, it comes up first with 48% of WhatsApp users seeking priority information on the platform for news. In a hasty analysis, it is easy to point out that compared with Canada and the US, educational systems in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico are pre-

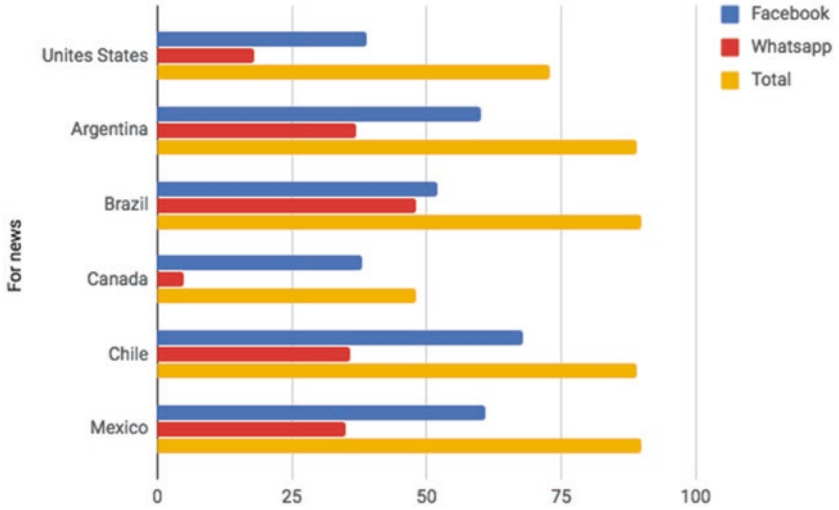

Fig. 5.1 Top social media access for news in the Americas in 2018. Sources: Author's elaboration (Pew Research Center 2018; Reuters Institute 2018)

carious, which would contribute to a scenario of informative superficiality. In effect, it has more to do with the horizontality of communication and relationship of trust among those sharing and receiving news. The virtual environment was significantly modified with new ways of making journalism via a more horizontal communication among users. If, on the one hand, this horizontal communication allows any citizen to be a producer of information, on the other hand, it is no longer necessary for professional journalists to be included in a large newspaper press, with all its barriers and regulations (for instance, fact-checks) before publication (Viana 2015, p. 17). In this manner, WhatsApp comes in handy as an intimate form of communication, where people believe and trust in the person who shared the news, especially if people believe they are in danger. On a large scale, those messages are products of extreme partisanship, which have developed into the focus of fake news and online misinformation over the past few years (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). Nevertheless, in the Americas, there is a consistent low trust in information shared on social media platforms, and the Reuter Digital Report found that "in many countries the underlying drivers of mistrust are connected to deep-rooted political polarization and perceived mainstream media bias" (Reuters

Institute 2018). Ultimately, it might be the case that the oversharing of fake news are related to low educational levels, but for now more research on the topic is needed.[1]

Apart from sharing accurate information, the media also has the role of sharing new voices, and any citizen should know that their voice is critical and that they can exercise this criticism to become a stronger voice together with others'. There are ways to address some of the challenges of misinformation in the digital age, such as making the companies who manufacture technology recognize the tremendous power and money they have. These companies are not regulated as "traditional" media companies despite curating content in some instances. Moreover, companies such as Facebook and WhatsApp turned out to be what constitutes news nowadays. These companies have been entrusted the role of regulated news media, but without any kind of regulation (Morgan 2018; Susskind 2018). Some governments around the world have established enquires to investigate the impact of fake news on elections and on public opinion, but solutions to stop the spreading of false information often meet with criticism from those defending the freedom of speech (Peters 2017). Susskind (2018) has backed a more rigorous training in ethics and politics for the new generation of social engineers of the digital world; more transparency in the way the political class use social media to share their political project and the need for citizens to apply some civic skepticism toward new technologies. Undisputedly, the power of these new technologies affects society and people, not just as consumers, but also as citizens, who can in turn use their critical thinking to question social media in general and fake news in particular, thereby contributing to rescuing a specific dimension of democracy under threat nowadays.

5.4 Contestation and Resistance: Strategies for Change

It is hard to envisage the possibility of continuation of participatory governance in Brazil under Bolsonaro's far-right administration. Still, it is not likely that national councils will be eliminated, and municipal councils will be wiped out, because the architecture of participation is strongly established in legislation and the participatory citizenship experiences demonstrate the vitality of the Brazilian democratic process. Nevertheless, it is clear that the right-wing government of Temer and subsequent far-right one of Bolsonaro is putting at risk the achievements of democratic

mechanisms. The president's proposals of amalgamate ministries, such as the ministry of environment and the ministry of agriculture to ensure production takes priority over protection, raised fears this merge can ramp up conversion of Amazon rainforest into farmland. A move like this one might affect the already thin balance of forces in dispute and generate operational difficulties that could result in further environmental damages. This merger can affect the agendas of both the National Council for Environment (CONAMA) and National Council for Agriculture (CNA), for example. Other proposals that included the privatization of several state-owned companies, such as Correios (Brazil's Post Office) and Petrobrás (Brazil's oil giant company).

In the context of the roll back in social and citizenship rights, the actions of powerful lobby groups have helped to set the pace of decline of decentralization of decision-making processes. The 2018 general election solidified the power and control of the "bullet, bull and bible" and banks lobby in Congress.[2] They are the Brazilian parliament's large conservative public security, evangelical and agricultural caucuses, which control the legislature both in numbers and in influence. Arguably, this lobby group does not represent the diversity of interests of citizens.

As I have evidenced in previous chapters, the spaces of citizen participation in public decision-making are in the process of becoming disempowered. This is a problematic trend, coupled with the fact that spaces where citizens can enact their right are shaped by the conditions of engagement, which as mentioned earlier in this chapter, are often state-led. Considering Brazil's existing governance arrangements, the history of social mobilization, particular identities, and local forms of exerting power, it is possible to challenge the process of limiting citizen influence by implementing strategies that can lead to a more instrumental intervention to preserve the influence of citizen participation in political and policy matters. There are three strategies: Reframing the debate with popular mobilization; taking inspiration from previous forms of popular mobilization; and technodemocratic qualification.

5.4.1 Reframing the Debate with Popular Mobilization

Different strands of the literature on citizen participation have addressed the challenge of including citizens in the process of decision-making and the complexities of fostering transformative participation (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2005; Fung and Wright 2003; Hickey and Mohan 2005; Mohan

2006) In this literature, citizen participation is theoretically and strategically informed by a radical notion of citizenship, which is pursued as part of a wider radical political project (Hickey and Mohan 2005), involving a profound political reform that requires giving voice to ordinary citizens, social movements, trade unions, and neighborhood associations in important decisions. These reforms implicate innovations in the institutional designs and a review of the range of mechanisms of public engagement and deliberation. In his review of institutional choices and their consequences, Fung (2003, p. 28) questions some deliberative choices that are taken-for-granted habits; practices commonly observed in decision processes done through conventional institutions. To realize transformative participation within a project of radical citizenship, it is necessary that citizens contest political decisions using strategies that are multi-scaled and that cross over multiple political arenas. It requires the involvement and dedication of political actors engaged with both structural conditions and popular agency to achieve a broader project of social justice and emancipation (Hickey and Mohan 2005, p. 69).

Strategies that prioritize crossing the boundaries of political arenas and political networks can allow participants to reframe debates, providing them with a chance to articulate their perspectives and experiences (Cornwall 2013). For this, a new political imaginary of empowerment in a context of fear and repression can be traced, one that is directed toward achieving relative levels of empowerment within networks, instead of producing localized spaces of liberation (Willians 2004). As we think in terms of political networks, changes need to reach beyond the local to involve involving multi-scalar strategies that are operationalized at all levels: individual, structural, and institutional (Hickey and Mohan 2005). In the Brazilian case, it does not mean to downplay local needs, but it involves the creation of a consistent, complementary, and inclusive national project of resistance to meet the rise of authoritarianism in the country.

Facing the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism is problematic. New strands of economic nationalism have cropped up in recent years, such as the models defended by Marine Le Pen in France and the Five Stars movement in Italy, which channel hate and resentment at minorities rights, migration, and international capital. In Brazil, the right-wing populism speech is producing unfounded criticism against the social welfare system and social investments, as citizenship rights are in the process of becoming

deconstructed and contested. It is likely that with the influence of a new nationalist project, government strategies seek to demobilize popular support for citizenship, in the name of bringing about enhanced social order. This is not to ignore the many flaws of participatory citizenship in Brazil, but rather to note that the incoming authoritarian and nationalist government of Bolsonaro has selected the left, the immigrants, and the minorities as the enemy of the people. Through engagement with a radical political project anchored in the idea of promoting citizenship, participatory approaches may still have considerable benefits and advantages over authoritarian policies. The future discourse of the political opposition and societal resistance needs to "find a new 'gradualist' language", in the words of Hickey and Mohan (2005, p. 20) with which to exalt the benefits of citizenship rights.

5.4.2 Taking Inspiration from Previous Forms of Popular Mobilization

The recent unleashing of hate speech, devotion to leaders, suspicion of the news media, protest and mobilization of the right, and a sense of injustice have awakened both sides of the political spectrum, left and right, highlighting their deeply conflicting social projects. While the far-right project makes advances, resistance carried out with respect for the diversity of alternatives that the different movements represent can provide sufficient scope for contesting and reshaping the new boundaries of political participation and citizenship rights in Brazil.

The element of popular mobilization to defend spaces of participatory citizenship presupposes that maintaining citizen participation is not only about intervention. If the intention is to make the most of channels for citizen influence and keep them relevant for the defense of citizenship rights, some strategies are required. Holston (2008) describes in his studies of insurgent citizenship in Brazil the spaces where citizenship was reimagined. These spaces of reformulation or re-imagination were not simply passive contexts where actions take place, but rather correspond with social and spatial contexts in which citizenship takes form as concrete, specific actions (enacting rights). The experiences of social actors involve desires and demands for seeing themselves as citizens. These spaces are often "unruly spaces" with possibilities for political action, such as taking part in protests, a type of mobilization that is closely linked to the trans-

formative potential that underpins citizenship. In this way, Holston highlights the fluctuations, the ebb and flow of the citizenship capacity to tackle, contain, and redress formations of difference and inequality; its ability to institutionalize structures of power and to dispute them; and its role in establishing arrangements of power, discipline, and hierarchy, and in challenging those structures (Holston 2008; Clarke et al. 2014).

Accordingly, the experience derived from the feminist movement as a space for radical opportunities for a marginalized group can work as an encouragement in this situation. The movement was useful in enabling women all over the world to reframe and redefine themselves using their own scope for agency rather than assuming pre-defined spaces within the established spaces delimited for them (Katzenstein 1998; Cornwall 2013; Zaremberg 2013). The escalation of the feminist movement meant that women passed through an intense process of growth in which they changed from being "actors of democracy to protagonists of governance" (Zaremberg 2013) by defending the right to difference as a fundamental part of the foundation of citizenship (Holston 1999). The experiences of feminist movements in reinventing participation in the public sphere with emphasizes on 'invented' spaces of citizenship created, used, and appropriated by people where access to 'invited' spaces were not realistic (Irazábal 2008). In the current context of citizen participation in Brazil, people have been "uninvited", and the creation of new spaces and practices where all citizens can be inspired by the feminist critique is opportune. The right-wing governments in Brazil, just as elsewhere, are spreading notions of citizenship that assume the identities, rights, and duties of citizens as fixed and universal. Challenging these notions and developing alternative narratives that reframe marginalized groups, as the feminist movement did and does, can collaborate to build the basis for resistance and contestation of the attacks on citizenship rights that have already taken place and those that are under way.

The struggle against reduction of social rights and for the implementation of a radical project of transformative participation has to be anchored in the acknowledgment of possibilities of interaction among diverse interests and demands. The articulation of politics of resistance against the far-right project for the nation needs to consider a more instrumental use of information and communication technologies to safeguard mechanisms of citizen participation in political and policy matters and create a sense of hope for Brazilian democracy.

5.4.3 Techno-Democratic Qualification Decision-Making for Social Movements

Divergent political projects coalesce around participatory citizenship, since it is a potent mechanism of exchange between governmental discourse and popular sentiments (Clarke et al. 2014). Thus, the third element of the strategy to (re)empower participatory citizenship comes from another area of studies on citizens participation, which is digital democracy, understood here as a strategy to maintain citizen participation that is operational and relevant with the use of different models of digital democracy. As already discussed previously in this chapter, new technologies have impact on citizens' lives and they are contributing, for better or for worse, to shape the future of democracy. The democratic innovations framework has proven to be very useful in investigating the role of citizens in democratic institutions and public decision-making, but the challenge now is to examine future scenarios in the light of sustainability of spaces of citizen participation.

Hence, a growing perspective to guarantee the sustainability of citizen participation in the current political and communicative crisis requires the development and expansion of e-government and e-democracy models. Digital technologies are powerful drivers of institutional and social change (De Blasio and Sorice 2018; Smith 2009; Fung et al. 2013), and so may have the potential to reinvigorate social cohesion and trust in institutions with facilitated access to information and transparency. According to Rodota (1997, pp. 77–79), the access to new technologies can play an important role for the revitalization of democracy by making it more "concrete" and "long-lasting". This is feasible because the redistribution of power promoted by new technologies facilitate connections among different political subjects and, thus, enables a permanent rebalancing in which a new form political communication for democracy can be built, one in which authoritarian practices of control and power would face more difficulties to gain influence.

In an interview with Dalea and Robertson (2010), BoaVentura Santos speaks about forms of resistance for sustainable public participation and for promoting citizens' empowerment. He explains that it needs to pass through a multi-dimensional articulation between participatory democracy and techno-democratic qualification, which consists of equipping citizens with more skills to be competent in their use

of new technologies. This articulation starts in the educational area, with the integration of "alternative knowledge" that is not only school based, but one based on the Paulo Freire practice of freedom in which citizens can obtain qualifications to use new technologies and join political debates on issues that matter to them.[3]

Gerbaudo (2017) described that once past the early forms of digital activism that saw the internet as a separate countercultural space where activists could find solace from oppression, the second and current waves represent counterhegemonic politics of popular mobilization. It denotes that "digital politics" is the centerpiece of contemporary society, where the internet is part of mainstream politics to be occupied by all types of citizens engaged in mobilization. The digital space is then capable of attracting not only highly politicized people but also a significant share of the general population (Gerbaudo 2017, p. 484).

Now, what kind of digital technologies have the capacity to transform politics in the era of technology and democratic setbacks? Fung et al. (2013) have evaluated these models of digital technologies. Their research examined six models of digital technologies that might affect democratization levels. These models are the empowered public sphere, displacement of traditional organizations by new digitally self-organized groups, digital direct democracy, truth-based advocacy, constituent mobilization, and crowd-sourced social monitoring. On the one hand, research results predicted that despite the high expectations on the transformative role of digital technology for democracy, the three first models are not likely to be implemented successfully because they require a close interaction with people in positions of power, which in practice does not happen often enough. On the other hand, the other three are more incremental contributions of democratic governance (truth-based advocacy, constituent mobilization, and social monitoring) and have become increasingly visible and relevant as digital technologies amplify the efforts of organizations and individuals to achieve the aims of circulating accurate information and promote transparency.

The access to information is imperative to qualify citizens with a critical mass of knowledge that offers meaning and substantial information that can contribute to the quality of democratic governance. In reality, citizenship is not possible without the freedom to participate in the political process, and a sustainable participatory democracy in the context of right-wing populism is not possible without critical reasoning that enables citizens to exercise critical reflection as basis for action.

5.5 Conclusion

While the combination of three strategies—reframing the debate with popular mobilization; taking inspiration from previous forms of popular mobilization; and techno-democratic qualification—can offer some possibilities of resistance and hope to preserve participatory citizenship rights and the full realization of citizen's influence in policy-making, research still needs to go further to determine which digital democracy models are more effective in domestic political systems. The ideas generated in this chapter help to situate citizen participation within the political forces they are challenging, in this case, right-wing authoritarianism. Extending this approach to those places where this political force holds the domains of political decision-making authority could help to maintain the optimism and reasoning about constructive outcomes of technological intervention in political processes. By framing the possibilities that might sustain participatory citizenship in Brazil (and Latin America) in the future, I hope to be sharing knowledge learned from academics and activists who have inspired me in the process of investigating citizenship and rights in a particularly troubled time in the country's history.

Notes

1. Fact-check online communities became common in the past years, but a serious challenge is to make the debunked information reach the people that shared falsehoods in the first place. See more: Who decides what's true in politics? A history of the rise of political fact-checking https://www.poynter.org/news/who-decides-whats-true-politics-history-rise-political-fact-checking.
2. The Parliament in Brazil is dominated by the bullets (military, police, paramilitary), bull (agribusiness), Bible (Pentecostal evangelicals), lobby groups, and banks.
3. In his book "Education, the practice of freedom", Paulo Freire considers pedagogy as a civic, political, and moral practice. Freire rejected educational regimes that are structured around the needs of the market. He considered that education was part of a project of freedom and eminently political because it offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life, and particular notions of critical agency (Giroux 2010).

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: Responding to the Great Challenges of Citizenship and Governance

This book was concerned with the changes in participatory citizenship in Brazil in the context of the rise of right-wing governments. The definitions of citizenship used in this book relate to a particular meaning of citizenship situated in a particular place and time frame. The meanings of citizenship keep changing, and the government understanding of those meanings determines the contours of the policies guiding the notion of citizenship. In this final chapter, my aim is to consider participatory citizenship in the context of restructuration and change.

Exercising citizenship through governance has changed since the shift to the right in Brazil, a shift that is linked to the political and economic crisis that has been examined in Chap. 4. This crisis has had a wider influence in domestic politics and has altered the very foundations of Brazil's democracy. The wave of turns to the right is applicable to other Latin American countries, where we observe a change towards more conservative politics. However, it was in Brazil that this trend came to its most acute expression, and got sealed, with the election of an extreme right-wing president and an aligned conservative Congress. These events signaled the emergence of right-wing populism as the new major political force in the country. The very notion of citizenship that links participation with governance is being challenged by another notion that links citizenship with nationalism and moral superiority based on conservative and religious values.

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Citizenship rights are again under dispute as they have become connected to conflict and dispute and not only consensus and agreement (Clarke et al. 2014). Citizenship acknowledges differences and allows for the development of different policy responses likely to include previously excluded groups. Thus, more than just an instrument for change, participatory citizenship can have a direct consequence on policies that benefit the poorest, which might help to break with the dominance of interests of one particular group over the others. However, as the political landscape is transformed, there are consequences for both mainstream public policies, such as education and health, and policies for minorities, such as indigenous and black people. This is the case because the new populist pact being developed between state and citizens confers an important dimension to how state resources are used, and those who do not align with the narrative of nationalism, moralism, and the will of the majority are then perceived as outsiders and should be excluded. These views employ ideas of civic nationalism, protectionism, anti-politics, and incendiary political language to put forward positions that are dangerous for democracy and put social rights at risk. This rhetoric is effective to mobilize a variety of social groups, from the economically insecure to the upper class, as its leaders constantly link corruption with leftist parties and the economic crisis with inherent flaws of the state. The political violence against dissents and minorities in Brazil is a pertinent example of the challenges to citizenship rights.

Throughout the book, my consideration of participatory citizenship has been closely tied with the concept of governance, as I argued that Brazil's move to the right is affecting different schemes of governance and citizen participation, and also changing pro-poor policies. I believe the reflections in this book are timely because it is important to recognize the profound political changes now affecting Brazil, Latin America, and several countries in Europe. The common trend is, precisely, the dismantling of citizens' rights and spaces or mechanisms for exercising rights, which in itself reflects the government responses to citizens' demands, which are no longer a government priority. Simultaneously, there is the rise of counter-movements against the new conservative trends, which is helping to build resistance against the raise of authoritarianism and fascism, such as the one put up by teachers mobilized around the idea of keeping the National Council of Education

independent and block the project "*Escola sem Partido*" (School without party) away from classrooms.[1]

This imbalance of power and the exclusion of dissenting views are likely to reflect in the way policies get implemented in the future. In fact, policies are already changing to accommodate to a greater degree, the interests and benefits of the business community (changes in labor laws and in pension legislation, for example), a change that reveals the lack of pluralism in the current democratic process. The number of people taking part in protests, signing petitions, organizing demonstrations, and sharing accurate information suggests that people in Brazil still feel empowered and drawn into defending a pluralistic project of democracy. While the right-wing populism bolsters the idea of anti-politics, there are still citizens engaged with the notion of participatory citizenship—people who are committed to the challenges of influencing collective outcomes that affect them.

Citizenship is an inherently political perspective on participation (Hickey and Mohan 2005) and as Rosanvallon and Goldhammer (2008, p. 19) remind us, the idea of "democratic disenchantment" needs to be debunked. Thus, it makes more sense to say that

> citizenship has changed in nature rather than declined. There has been simultaneous diversification of the range, forms, and targets of political expression. As political parties eroded, various types of advocacy groups and associations developed. Major institutions of representation and bargaining saw their roles diminish as ad hoc organizations proliferated. Citizens now have many ways of expressing their grievances and complaints other than voting.

The evidence presented in Chap. 3 suggests that participatory democracy in Brazil is becoming less inclusive and centralized, hence moving away from the very notion of inclusive participation. As I write, participatory institutions are being disjointed and disarticulated. The purpose is to block citizens' decision-making capacity in participatory bodies, making them vulnerable and inoperable. The growing evidence that Brazil's architecture of participation is under threat of being disempowered renders the task of documenting and analyzing those changes even more necessary. In assessing changes in citizenship rights, it becomes more difficult because the centralization of information and decision-making thwarts accountability and responsiveness of institutions. The movement that is taking the power

away from participatory institutions was examined in Chap. 4, where I examined in more detail the causes of the rise of right-wing populism and its main consequences for the notion of citizenship. As this notion is always a changing concept, citizenship finds itself caught in the middle of struggles for dominance and hegemony, and it can both, in successive periods or simultaneously, empower and restrain, liberate and oppress, endow with rights and burden with responsibilities (Clarke et al. 2014). But it can also stimulate people to act, to make them feel empowered, and motivate them to bond with others in order to build new connections and networks.

Latin America has a difficult relation with democracy, but in fact, the region has demonstrated a strong resilience toward democratization. Truth be told, the region is often seen as devastated by authoritarian strongman hold. Factually, it has happened, but as democracy comes in waves, these strongmen also come and go. We have seen this happening in market-populist oriented governments in Peru, Mexico, and Argentina, but so far, democracy has survived those assaults on its existence. It has been possible only because of institutional innovation, as Latin America has been the cradle of many grassroots movements that defend and support democracy. The current wave of authoritarianism, now headed by Bolsonaro's presidency is one of the many signs that the region is backsliding into authoritarian, populist leaderships again. Attacks on democracy in the region will not stop, and the current one will not be the last one. Despite important signs of democratic regression, however, it is imperative that citizens not retreat from the public space, as they have been doing over the past decades.

Brazil has a strong relationship with citizenship practices and this experience has been sedimented by those engaged with social equality, the right to difference, democracy, and participation. The democratic resilience and the substance of citizens' involvement with democracy did not vanish and many groups of resistance remain focused on keeping the spaces of participation open. The conditions of participation and the perspective of citizenship rights provided many activists, council members, and ordinary citizens with a much better understanding of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and how it all connects with public policy-making. The future of participatory citizenship will depend on several factors, for example, new technologies for information and communication,

but the resistance put up by the sectors of the society interested in keeping the spaces of participation open and inclusive is an indicator of the struggles for an inclusive and empowered notion of citizenship and will continue.

Just as with democracy, what we have is a construction of citizenship, because democracy and citizenship are both processes in constant transformation. Citizenship is often linked with a social rights-based approach and understanding the new mechanisms of political participation can certainly help to assess which are the most effective innovations to achieve democratic goals. Democratic innovations pushed by counter-authoritarian movements can help to preserve the main infrastructure of democracy. A new strategy to provide Brazil's democratic systems with empowered participation that develops personal preferences into enriched collective opinions and clever collective decisions must establish participation as a political right that can be claimed by marginalized groups to transcend the notion that citizenship is not only for a few and selected citizens, but for everyone.

The main conclusion I would like readers to take away after having read this book is that changes and struggles are inherent to the understanding of citizenship. Even when a progressive government is in power, the understanding of citizenship rights can be seen under a different light. The next generation of activists for citizenship rights are becoming increasingly connected and digital, and all the knowledge and wisdom they have access to make this process even more dynamic. I therefore hope that this book will contribute in one form or another to the understanding of the changing nature of citizenship rights in Brazil, as well as to the advancement of the literature focused on extending citizenship through governance structures.

Note

1. The project "Escola sem partido" intends to impose restrictions on what can and should not be taught in the classroom, especially on issues related to sex education, history, and politics. The counter-movement defends the "Escola sem mordaça" (School without muzzle) that wants to keep those items in the school curriculum. The project "Escola sem partido" has been highly criticized for its intention to impose censorship in classroom and incentivize students to report on "indoctrinator teachers".

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