

## BOOK REVIEW

**Vera Schattan P. Coelho and Bettina Von Lieres (eds.), *Mobilizing For Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, London: Zed Books, 2010, 287 pp.**

*Mobilizing for Democracy* is the last in the series on Claiming Citizenship, published by Zed Books in collaboration with the Citizenship Development Research Centre (CDRC) between 2005 and 2010. Edited by Coelho and von Lieres, the work introduces eleven empirical case studies from the Southern context on how different forms of citizen mobilization have resulted in democratic outcomes. Covering cases such as Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, it is an impressive volume that has a broad focus, both in terms of its geographical coverage and the diversity of issues discussed.

Thus far, scholarship on democracy has long been dominated by mostly Western scholars. In this context, the current work provides a fresh approach, as it is one of the few volumes that feature non-Western scholars, with contributions from social activists as well. The eleven case studies contribute various viewpoints on how ordinary citizens and their organizations are able to mobilize people to deepen democracy. The case studies further demonstrate how different forms of political mobilization have been able to engage with local formal institutions in ways that have been central to the development of democratic politics. These cases shed light on the contribution of citizen mobilization to the progress of democratization and the building of state institutions. At the same time, they also reveal the uneasy relationship between citizens and institutions.

It emphasizes that citizen mobilization is an active process of ongoing engagement and action, in contrast with a democratic process that is confined by periodic elections. Furthermore, citizen mobilization does not only signify participation in community