The election of Evo Morales – an indigenous and cocalero leader – and his Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party became the most important political milestone in Bolivia’s recent history. The MAS promised to represent the most excluded sectors of the country, challenging the foundations of liberal democracy and the economic development model promoted during neoliberalism. In this talk, I will ask: how does a highly politicized program like that proposed by MAS in Bolivia come to implement rural development projects once in government? What are the differences between MAS proposal on participation and other visions of more technical and instrumental views on participation and rural development? What can we learn about contemporary moves towards postneoliberalism and alternative development? I argue that despite the MAS government’s efforts to politicize participation and agrarian development, the relationship between reaching technical efficiency and social justice is largely contingent; there is no one-to-one relationship between politics and technology. Concrete interventions in agrarian development have technical aspects where both versions of participation have to collaborate.