



UNPACKING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

From theory to practice and
from practice to theory



ISID

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY
OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES DU
DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL



McGill
UNIVERSITY



McGill Centre for Human
Rights and Legal Pluralism

Centre sur les droits de la personne
et le pluralisme juridique de McGill

ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP

The last three decades have seen the almost universal endorsement of “democracy” as the only acceptable form of governance. It no longer needs to be argued that, transparency, accountability and participation should then be important defining and guiding principles for democratic governance. While political leaders seemingly swear by these democratic principles, citizens across the world have been struggling and campaigning to move beyond the rhetoric of these potentially powerful concepts, to apply them in practical and meaningful ways in their interaction with State, and even non-State powers.

Of the three, ‘participation’ is central to real democracy, while it remains its biggest challenge. Democracies are being taken over by structures of representation. People on the other hand, feel a growing sense of alienation from decisions taken by elected representatives acting on their behalf. The nature of peoples campaigns and struggles for democratic rights have changed. Today, those fighting for transparency and accountability demand participation in all spheres of governance and decision making. However, this has to be realized through practical and actionable entitlements which empower both citizens and the concept of citizenship; which are the real touchstone of sovereignty and legitimacy. As ordinary people assert their citizenship, it has become clear that “democratic participation” has to be unpacked and detailed step by step, so that it is connected to theory, law, policy and practice.

The workshop being planned and organized by Aruna Roy the 2016 ‘Professor of Practice’ for global governance at McGill University, comes at a time when there is serious need for reviewing democratic practice. This is a forum to discuss, debate, understand, and learn from contemporary theories and practice, to place people at the centre of democratic governance.

Drawing on the position of the ‘Professor in Practice’, this workshop is titled “Democratic Participation: From theory to practice; and from practice to theory”. The workshop is proposed to be held in two complimentary parts, in Canada and in India.

The workshop at McGill, Montreal in November will bring together theorists and practitioners of ‘participatory democracy’ to reflect on the contemporary crisis in democratic practice. It will look at the powerful concepts of transparency and accountability in defining the participation of people in democracy. The second workshop will be held in the State of Kerala, India in the context of Asia.

PROGRAM IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Funded by the Erin Jellel Collins Arsenault Trust

This conference is part of the Program in Global Governance at the Institute for the Study of International Development at McGill University. The Program was created in 2013 to address challenges in contemporary world politics by exploring new, practical ways of improving global governance. Based at ISID in the Faculty of Arts, the Program is a collaborative effort with the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism in the Faculty of Law. It represents a bold attempt to marry the research and intellectual power of McGill University with the most innovative efforts by leaders from the public, private and non-profit sectors to design new forms of governance that are more appropriate for our new global circumstances.

Given the complexities that global governance necessarily entails, this Program defines global governance as the formal and informal rules and practices designed to promote sustainable, inclusive development and democratic governance. While such rules and practices would typically be applicable at the supranational and transnational levels, they may also include local or national experiments which demonstrate the potential for wider application.

Generously supported by the Erin Jellel Collins Arsenault Trust, the Program in Global Governance has three main components: Professors of Practice in Global Governance, Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Global Governance, and ISID's Speaker Series.

This year, the Program in Global Governance is pleased to welcome and support, as the Professor of Practice in Global Governance, Aruna Roy, the main organizer of this conference.

SPECIAL THANKS

Vinay Jain, Suchi Pande, Nikhil Dey, Iain Blair, Sherryl Ramasahai, Moyukh Chatterjee, Sara Mahboob, and Ayesha Vemuri for all their help in coordinating many aspects of this workshop.

We also thank volunteers from Professor Roy's seminar, "Transparency, Accountability and Participatory Governance: Lessons from people's movements in India": Aude Raffestin, Corrina Vali, Holly Norris, Matilde Alvarez Morera, Mandakini Akella Chandra, Nanda Kishore Daggupati, Nicki Siamaki, Robin Nyamekye, Samiha Sharif, Sonya Peres, Yohnny Raich

DAY 1: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND

9:00-9:20

Welcome Remarks and Scope of the Workshop

Sonia Lazlo, Director, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University

Welcome by Elder from Kanien'kehá:ka traditional territory

Aruna Roy, Founder-Member, MKSS and NCPRI, India, and Professor of Practice, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada

9:20-10:20

Introductions

Moderator: Suchi Pande, Scholar in Residence, Accountability Research Center, American University, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

10:20-10:30

Coffee break

10:30-12:00

Session 1: Examining contemporary theories of participatory democracy

Patrick Heller, Professor, Sociology and International Studies, Brown University, U.S.A.

John Harriss, Professor, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India and Professor, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Discussant: Patrick Brennan, Executive Director, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Moderator: Nandini Ramanujam, Professor, Faculty of Law and Director, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

12:00-13:00

Lunch Break

Catered lunch for workshop participants only

- 13:00-14:30** **Session 2: Representation and Participation: The Constitutional and Legal Framework**
- Suzanne Legault**, Information Commissioner of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- Nikhil Dey**, Founder-Member, MKSS, NCPRI, and SR Abhiyan (Rajasthan), India
- Tom Blanton**, Director, National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington D.C., U.S.A.
- Discussant: Marlihan Lopez**, Intersectionality Committee, Federation des femmes du Quebec
- Moderator: Catherine Lu**, Associate Director, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- 14:30-16:00** **Session 3: The Limits of Theorizing: Perspectives from Peoples' Movements and Campaigns**
- Hussein Khalid**, Executive Director, HAKI Africa, Kenya
- Vivek Ramkumar**, Senior Director, Policy, International Budget Partnership, Washington D.C., U.S.A.
- Ellen Gabriel**, Indigenous Human Rights Activist, Kanehsatà:ke Mohawk Territory, Quebec, Canada
- Discussant: Dolores Chew**, Program Director, South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC), Montreal, Canada
- Moderator: Sonia Laszlo**, Director, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- 16:00-16:15** **Coffee break**
- 16:15-17:15** **Public Lecture: Participatory Democracy: Political and Civil Society in Brazil, India and South Africa**
- Patrick Heller**, Professor, Sociology and International Studies, Brown University, U.S.A.
- Moderated by Aruna Roy
- 17:30-20:00** **Cocktail Reception and Dinner**
For workshop participants only

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD

9:00-10:00

Keynote address: The dialectic between theory and practice

S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India and Professor, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Moderated by Nikhil Dey

10:00-10:30

Coffee break

10:30-12:00

Session 4: Moving beyond the rhetoric: Lessons and experiences

Kenneth Winston, Lecturer in Ethics (retired), Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University, U.S.A.

Anne Marie Goetz, Professor, Center for Global Affairs (CGA), School of Professional Studies, New York University, New York, U.S.A.

Fredrik Galtung, President, Integrity Action, London, U.K.

Discussant: Tess Tesalona, Vice-chair, International League of Peoples Struggles – Canada, Montreal, Canada

Moderator: Toby Mendel, Executive Director, Center for Law and Democracy, Halifax, Canada

12:00-13:00

Lunch Break

Catered lunch for workshop participants only

13:00-14:30

Session 5: Impact of movements on democratic governance

Rajesh Veeraraghavan, Assistant Professor, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

Mukelani Dimba, Executive Director, Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC), South Africa

Renata Terrazas, Researcher, Fundar Centro de Analisis e Investigacion (FUNDAR)

Discussant: Pearl Eliadis, Law Office of Pearl Eliadis, Full Member, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, and Lecturer, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Moderator: Warren Krafchik, Executive Director, International Budget Partnership, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

14:30-14:45 **Coffee Break**

14:45-16:15 **Session 6: Challenges of participatory democratic practice**

Abha Sur, Professor, Women and Gender Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, U.S.A.

Marie Wilson, Commissioner, Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2009-2015) and 2016 Professor of Practice in Global Governance, ISID, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Alejandro Salas, Regional Director of the Americas, Transparency International, Berlin, Germany

Discussant: Eliane Ubalijoro, Professor of Practice, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Moderator: Vrinda Narain, Professor, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

16:15-16:45 **Concluding Remarks**

Aruna Roy, Founder-Member, MKSS and NCPRI, India, and Professor of Practice, Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, Canada

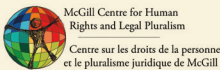


Institute for the Study of International Development, McGill University

The Institute for the Study of International Development is home to an interdisciplinary group of scholars doing research that focuses on the areas of poverty and inequality; governance and society; and environment and sustainability. ISID is also the institutional home of three undergraduate programs, in International Development Studies (INTD), Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS), and African Studies (AFRI), as well as the Development Studies Option (DSO) M.A. program in the Faculty of Arts. Through cutting edge research, academic programs, and executive education programs, ISID makes a difference by building bridges between research, teaching, policymaking, and development practice.

ISID's Program in Global Governance was created in 2013 to address this challenge by exploring new, practical ways of filling this governance void. Based at ISID in the Faculty of Arts, the Program is a collaborative effort with the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism in the Faculty of Law. It represents a bold attempt to marry the research and intellectual power of McGill University with the most innovative, if not audacious, efforts by leaders from the public, private and non-profit sectors to design new forms of governance that are more appropriate for the circumstances we find ourselves in.

For more information on the institute, faculty and mission, please visit: <https://www.mcgill.ca/isid/institute-study-international-development>



Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, Faculty of Law, McGill University

The Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism is a focal point for innovative legal and interdisciplinary research, dialogue, and outreach on human rights and legal pluralism. The Centre's mission is to provide students, professors and the larger community with a locus of intellectual and physical resources for engaging critically with how law impacts upon some of the most compelling social problems of our modern era.

For more information on the centre, faculty and mission, please visit: <http://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights>.