



Workshop - Call for Papers

Deliberation, Participation and Democracy in Contemporary South Asia: Spaces, Practices, Voices

Dublin City University, Dublin, 10-11 November 2023

The Ireland India Institute and the Irish Association of South Asian Studies at Dublin City University invite paper proposals for an academic workshop on “Deliberation, Participation, and Democracy in Contemporary South Asia: Spaces, Practices, Voices” to be held in person at Dublin City University on 10-11 November 2023. The event is supported by a grant from the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS).

The past decade, arguably, has shifted the focus of conversations across South Asia from discussions about deepening and consolidation of democracy to questioning its very nature and workings. A populist shift in national politics across the region, and the world, and the ramifications of such developments for inclusive politics is understudied and under-analysed. The spaces for participation and growing forms of alternative citizen assertions, indicate emerging actors, their demand for representation and “to be seen”. While participation in “traditional” politics such as voting and party membership may have declined, there has also been an explosion of activities that seek to “do democracy differently”. At the same time, debates about ‘who gets what, when and how’ have become more polarised and polarising. In South Asia, a region familiar with protracted conflict, intractable disputes over land, borders and identity, democratic processes have prevailed against the odds, but social, political order is often precarious and social cohesion threatened on many fronts.

With these contemporary processes unfolding, the workshop will explore the role of deliberation, a cornerstone of democratic politics, and one that has experienced a revival in theory and in practice. With the arrival of the digital public sphere, scholars have addressed topics such as the interplay of deliberative and non-deliberative practices within a political system, and opinion formation in social networks. As a conflict resolution mechanism, deliberation is projected as a means of enhancing participation or achieving transitional justice for example through mini-publics and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.





In doing so, the workshop invites a critical rethinking of how state-society relations are being re-negotiated and political participation is practised in South Asia's contemporary divided polities. For this purpose, the proposed academic workshop will bring scholars together to discuss cutting-edge research on this theme across different perspectives, disciplines, and methods.

Of specific interest will be empirical contributions reflecting on the interactions between diverse spaces and practices of participation and deliberation (e.g. the media, social movements, citizen actions, institutions, the digital space); the roles these dynamic relationships play in shaping state-society relations, citizenship, plurality, and socio-economic inclusion in societies of South Asia.

Through this initiative, we situate South Asia at the centre of this timely global conversation about inclusive politics and emerging spaces of participation in contemporary societies. As a site of observation, the region is both a field of investigation and a centre for knowledge production.

The workshop will be structured in an interactive format with peer-review sessions involving in-depth discussion on the individual papers circulated beforehand. To facilitate a substantive interaction on the research work presented and avenues for collaborative research on the proposed theme, the workshop will involve a maximum of 12 participants.

We are particularly interested in papers that address the following topics:

- Emerging methodologies in the study of deliberative practices and spaces.
- Interactions between micro and macro spaces of political action and their interrelated role in shaping inclusive politics and participation.
- Relationships between power, legitimacy, and authority.
- Tensions and forms of resistances between/within different sites of engagement in the socio-political sphere of South Asian societies.
- How spaces of participation/deliberation are reinforcing or challenging existing exclusions, hegemonies, inequalities. Barriers to pluralism and existence of political differences.



One of the planned outcomes of the workshop is preparing a special issue in a thematic or region specific leading academic journal.

The workshop is open to **final-year PhD scholars and postdoctoral researchers** interested in seeking peer-review feedback on their research work on the above mentioned topics.

Application guidelines:

Please submit your workshop application by filling this [Google form](#) with the required information, including an abstract (max. 300 words) and a biographical note (max. 100 words) by **Friday, August 4th 2023**.

Selected applicants will be notified by **Friday, August 18th 2023** and are expected to submit full papers drafts (between 6,000-7,000 words, footnotes and references included) by **Friday, October 27th 2023**.

The workshop is free of charge, but participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

For any queries, please contact the workshop organisers at csas@dcu.ie

