

The Politics of Hope: Reviving the Dream of Democracy and Development: Global Research Priorities on International Development Postgraduate Conference 2019

13 June 2019
9am – 6pm
University of Warwick
Room TBC



What is it that people most want in life? What are their hopes and expectations? Global surveys show people of all ages, genders and nationalities list ‘an honest and responsive government’ among their top three priorities. The other two priorities that regularly top the list are ‘a good education’ and ‘better healthcare.’ Hence, people clearly want not just that their politicians deliver development, but also that they can be held to account. Democracy, good governance and development are intertwined in a hopeful way.

However, the practice is less encouraging, and people are increasingly disillusioned with regard to those issues. Although people still tend to support the abstract ideal of democratic governance, world-wide there is increasing dissatisfaction with how democracy is working in practice. Democracies don’t necessarily perform better compared to dictatorships. Moreover, there is growing support for strong, authoritarian leaders. Populist leaders capture voters with a narrative mixing xenophobia with promises to boost economic growth and development.

This gap between the optimistic theory and the more doubtful practice raises profound questions for scholars to consider, such as how can politics play a role in realising people’s hopes and expectations? The theme of this year’s GRP is reviving the dream of democracy and development. We will address critical development questions through a series of inter-disciplinary events –

seminars, lectures, and our photography competition. The year will see speakers invited from the academic, activist, policy-making and NGO communities and we warmly invite Warwick academics, researchers and students to contribute to events and activities.

This conference invites submissions from postgraduates across all disciplines working on international development issues, which speak to such questions as:

- How can democracy and development be defined and accurately measured?
- How can we assess the expected link between democracy and development?
- How are images and narratives of democracy represented to development audiences?
- How can we build active citizenship, ensuring that people know and can claim their rights?
- How can people demand and monitor the provision of public goods and services?
- How can we improve dialogues between citizens and the state to facilitate collective problem identification and solving?
- How effective are the populist leaders for improving development?
- What are the limits of different types of political systems to sustainable development?
- What are the ways in which gender, other vectors of inequality and their intersections cut across strategies to address democracy?
- How effective are the global institutions to address the current trends to democracy?
- What are the limits of democracy to improve development around the world?

This one-day conference is designed to give postgraduate students from different research areas an opportunity to present and discuss their research and form new networks with their colleagues across different disciplines.

If you would like to present a paper or poster, please submit an abstract following the guidelines below.

Guidelines for Submission of Abstracts

Send an abstract of 200-400 words.

We will accept email submissions only. Please submit the abstract in Microsoft Word format (.doc/.docx).

Please send all abstracts to: grp-id@warwick.ac.uk

Deadline: 12 noon on 12 April 2019

Decision by: 29 April 2019

All abstract which conform to the above guidelines will be reviewed by the organising committee. You will be informed of the decision by the committee via email.

Accepted abstract will be allotted 10 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for discussion.

Further information

Please see our website <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/priorities/internationaldevelopment/> or contact Sanaa Vohra on grp-id@warwick.ac.uk