

High lights

Constitutional Resilience in South Asia Workshop 2019

Between 5-7 December 2019, around 60 authors (mostly early career scholars) and discussants came together at Melbourne Law School to participate in a workshop on “Constitutional Resilience in South Asia.”

The Workshop was organised and funded by the:

Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford
Centre for Asian Legal Studies, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore
Melbourne Law School, the University of Melbourne

PART OF OUR ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS 2019-2020



Bonavero
Institute
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Rights





Melbourne, Australia

OVERVIEW

The Asian Law Centre and the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies at Melbourne Law School hosted the Workshop. VRU: World Comparative Law Journal and the Legal Theory Workshop (Melbourne Law School) also contributed towards the workshop expenses. The organisers were Tarunabh Khaitan (Melbourne), Swati Jhaveri (NUS) and Kate O'Regan (Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford).

The workshop examined the tumultuous and varied relationships that South Asian states have with constitutional democracy. Papers focused on the resilience of democratic institutions in one or more countries in the region. Authors considered the design and functioning of institutions such as political parties, the judiciary, legislatures, the political executive, the bureaucracy, courts, 4th branch/integrity institutions (such as electoral commissions), the media, and military, and their role in strengthening or undermining constitutional democracy. The workshop saw academic discussion on a region that has otherwise remained relatively ignored by constitutional law and democracy scholars. The discussions over the 3 days were intense, but rewarding, in their exploration of the issues and institutions under scrutiny. The workshop looked at these issues from the perspective of events and developments in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.

In view of the focus on the scholarship of early career academics, the organisers also held two lunchtime workshops that focused on building a writing and research portfolio and profile.

Future events organised by the partners of this collaboration will continue exploring constitutional issues of importance in South Asia / the Global South. This is with a view to mainstreaming these regions in comparative public law conversations, including comparative Asian conversations.



FEEDBACK

“Thank you to Melbourne Law School and the other event organisers who put in significant effort to make this conference happen. Personally, it was a highly beneficial experience – I learned a lot, and it was a great forum to be introduced to a remarkable group of scholars working in the field. In particular, the contribution of the wider community at MLS added so much throughout the proceedings. I get the feeling that in 10, 15+ years I could be looking back at this conference as a significant moment in my professional journey.”

Public Policy Analyst Mr Iain Payne, Niti Foundation

“The workshop was excellent. You guys did an amazing job putting it together. I learned a lot in the course of the discussions, and the feedback on our paper was very helpful.”

Research Fellow Mr Devendra Damle, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy

“Just a short note to say congrats on the workshop—it was a total success—and thanks for having me along. ... I’ve learned a great deal and enjoyed some fascinating discussions.”

Senior Lecturer Dr Zim Nwokora, Deakin University Faculty of Arts and Education

“many thanks and congratulations to you, Tarun, for taking the initiative and having the vision to put such a thought-provoking event together.”

Laureate Professor Emeritus Cheryl Saunders AO, Melbourne Law School, The University of Melbourne

“I wanted to thank you and the entire team once again for a wonderful and well organized workshop. I never got a chance to tell you, but I enjoyed reading your papers very much.”

Ms Shrishti Agnihotri

“Congratulations on the great success of the conference! It is not only intellectually rich for all participants but also very helpful for junior scholars’ career planning. Thank you so much for inviting me to be part of it. I look forward to reading the final products and seeing you again soon.”

Associate Professor Weitseng Chen, National University of Singapore Faculty of Law



“Thank you for bringing together such a fantastic workshop Tarun. All the hard work that you and others put into this event paid off extremely well. It was evident that the participants were more or less on the same wave length. That made the discussions that much more rich and impactful. You were able to run the event with the same intensity throughout. That’s not an easy feat.”

Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Dinesha Samararatne, ARC Laureate Program in Comparative Constitutional Law, Melbourne Law School, The University of Melbourne

“This was a most excellent workshop which fostered a lot of learning and thinking both theoretically and comparatively. Thank you once again for organising the workshop and facilitating our travel and stay in Melbourne. The format was most useful with everyone required to do readings and then contributing with a sense of purpose to the proceedings.”

Associate Professor Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University

“Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity. The workshop gave me a valuable exposure and platform for exciting interactions and exchange of creative ideas. It was indeed a great learning experience for me. The feedback and comments on my draft paper that I have received has been extremely helpful and I have started to revise my paper accordingly.”

Doctoral Candidate Ambar Ghosh, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University



