

Decolonizing Law? Methods, Tactics & Strategies

April 02-03, 2018 (Windsor, Canada)

"We also have no history of colonialism..."

Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper (September 25, 2009)

"Our nations and countries are colonies no more. Now we are free, sovereign and independent. We are again masters in our own house."

President of Indonesia Sukarno, Bandung Conference (April 18, 1955)

Call for Papers

Colonialism, imperialism, and settler colonialism continue to affect the lives of people around the world. Law has played an active role in the dispossession and disenfranchisement of colonized people. Law and its various institutions are the means by which colonial, imperial, and settler colonial programs continue to be reinforced and sustained. Law has the potential to decolonize our respective communities and societies. There are recent and historical examples in which law has played a significant role in dismantling colonial and imperial structures set up during the process of colonization. Nevertheless, law has not been successful in completing the decolonial processes.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its findings along with 94 Calls to Action. The Calls to Action center on the recognition of the enduring legacies of settler colonialism and moving forward with an ethos of reconciliation. Since the publication of the report and the findings, various institutions, including universities in Canada, have been quick to launch a raft of responses that interrogate and challenge current legal systems. Simultaneously, the year 2015 also marked the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference of Asian and African leaders confronting the legacies of European imperialism. In reflecting on the 60th anniversary of this conference, we can identify tensions between emancipatory impulses in these discussions and the use of law to challenge the effects of colonialism and imperialism. In both instances, law occupies a prominent and crucial role in shaping the various possible outcomes. These outcomes are built around notions of decolonial practices.

Our conference will explore synergies and divergences relating to the meaning and scope of decolonization at the intersection of both Indigenous and Third World decolonial movements. We seek to transcend disciplinary boundaries and explore various conceptions of decolonization with scholars, writers, and activists working within and from the Global South and Indigenous communities. Questions organizing our gathering include: Is decolonization of law(s) possible? Is decolonization of law(s) warranted? How can we decolonize law(s)? What does the decolonization of law(s) look like? What type of law(s) ought to be decolonized? Who will decolonize law(s)? How have scholars and activists deployed the term decolonization in law (and society)? Can the array of movements of Indigenous Peoples and the peoples of the Global South working to decolonize, stand in solidarity with one another within the process of decolonization? What are the various methods, tactics and strategies in decolonizing law and the respective societies it governs?

Decolonizing Law (and Society)? Methods, Tactics & Strategies (April 02-03 2018)

We welcome submissions of proposed presentations and/or panels (composed of three to four speakers) relating to the above themes/questions from various perspectives including interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and community-based approaches. Applications should include:

- Paper abstract (max 300 words) or panel abstract (max 500 words);
- Your name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and contact information.

Applications should be emailed to decolonizinglawwindsor@gmail.com by Monday, November 13, 2017.

We hope to host 30 to 40 participants. Confirmed speakers include: Dr. John Borrows, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria & Dr. Usha Natarajan, Department of Law, American University of Cairo and Liliana Obregón from Los Andes University in Colombia.

Our gathering will be hosted by the Faculty of Law at the University of Windsor (in collaboration with Water Research Centre for Agriculture and Mining, Universidad de Concepción, Chile & Osgoode Hall Law School, York University) situated on the territories of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Pottawatomie. Limited ground transportation and all conference catering, materials, and activities will be covered by the host organizations. A limited amount of funding for travel costs and accommodation will be available to assist presenters based in the Global South and Indigenous Communities on the basis of financial need. Please indicate at the time of submission if you will need such assistance. We look forward to seeing you in Windsor, Ontario.

Conference organizers:

Amaya Alvez Marin, Faculty of Law/CRHIAM, Universidad de Concepción
Amar Bhatia, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University
Karen Drake, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University
Signa Daum Shanks, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University
Jeffrey Hewitt, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor
Valarie Waboose, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor
Sujith Xavier, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor



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