

OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Susan Williams

Maurer School of Law, IU Bloomington

“Dialogic Democracy, Feminist Theory, and Women’s Participation in Constitution-Making”

Monday, February 20, 2017

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



The paper describes and analyzes women’s participation in the recent constitutional amendment process in Liberia and argues that a feminist, dialogic model best captures the lessons learned from this experience. The proposed model borrows from dialogic democracy theory, as reinterpreted by feminist scholars like Jane Mansbridge, Iris Marion Young, and Nancy Fraser. The model also focuses on two primary modifications of dialogic democracy: (1) adopting a systemic perspective on the dialogue and (2) expanding and deepening the conception(s) of political representation. The goal of the paper is to develop a theoretical framework that can be used to design participatory mechanisms in constitution-making that will be more inclusive of women and other marginalized groups.



Susan Williams is the Walter W. Foskett Professor of Law and the Director of the Center for Constitutional Democracy (CCD) at IU Maurer School of Law. She has taught at Cornell Law School, the University of Paris (II), the European University Institute, and Wolfson College, Cambridge University. Before entering law teaching, she clerked for Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Her scholarship focuses on the intersection of feminist theory and issues in constitutional design, including plural legal systems (customary and religious law), women’s political representation, and processes of constitution-making. Professor Williams has advised constitutional reformers in Burma/Myanmar, Liberia, Libya, Yemen, Vietnam, and Cuba on how the fundamental legal order can be designed to create and sustain democratic institutions, practices, and cultures ([website](#)).

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).