# ICLD Local Democracy Academy
Umeå Sweden
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Proceedings of the academy

# Content

# 1. Overview

The ICLD Local Democracy Academy is an academic programme that brings together an international group of leading scholars, junior and senior researchers, for an intensive week of mutual learning, critical thinking and joint exploration of new ideas and approaches to address global challenges from a local government perspective. The academy provides a unique setting to:

- Connect leading scholars to share ideas and provide innovative policy recommendations
- Strengthen junior scholars by matching them with senior researchers and policy makers, providing space for fruitful collaboration that leads to research that can answer to current societal greatest challenges
- Collaborate across disciplines, write innovative research proposals, cutting edge papers, and concrete policy briefs
- Provide policy labs for researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss concrete problems experienced by local governments and provide possible solutions

The 2019 academy's theme was Global Challenges and Local Governments: Toward Transformative Policy and Practice.

## 1.1.  Main Objectives

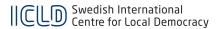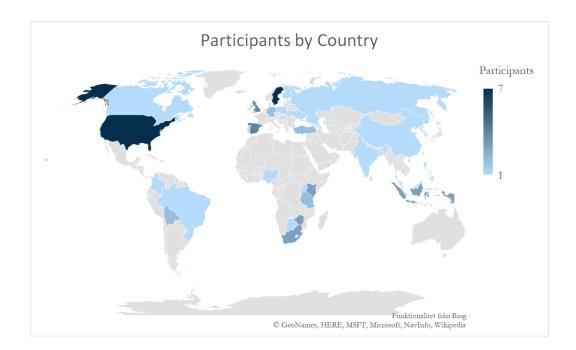| | |
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| **Bring new knowledge to ICLD** | **To discuss the latest research in the field of local democracy** <br> For results, see section 3. 'Challenges and Opportunities for local democracy' |
| **Influence of research on policy** | **To develop researchers' capacity on how to translate findings into policy recommendations** <br> For results, see sections 4. 'Sessions', 5. 'Local Policy Labs', and 6. 'Further Research' |
| **Foster collaborations** | **Create a network for reseachers in the field of local democracy** <br> For results, see section 7. 'After the Academy' |

## 2. Participants

A total of 60 participants joined the academy: 43 laureates, 14 faculty members and 3 representatives form UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments). There was a mix of junior and senior scholars with 27 males and 33 females from 30 different countries illustrated by the map below. For two days, an additional 25 participants (researchers, practitioners and government officials) joined to participate in the Local Policy Labs.



## 3. Challenges and Opportunities for Local Democracy

One of the main objectives of the Local Democracy Academy is to bring new knowledge to ICLD's programs (Municipal Partnership Programme, International Training Programme and the Knowledge entre). During the academy, trends, challenges and opportunities were identified in the field of local democracy.

### 3.1.    Challenges for Local Democracy

The sessions identified a number of challenges related to local democracy. Among these were challenges connected to decentralization. Decentralization may entail a strengthened central control over local governments, and implementation from municipalities could be limited by national government. A disconnect between local governments and national or supranational authorities were also identified as well as the disconnect between policy and implementation. Policies such as migration policies are often set at national or supranational level. Therefore, local government must work within the boundaries of these policies. Additionally, policies regarding climate or natural

resource management may override or discredit the mandate of local governments. Another identified challenge was the absence of local government and governance structures to support participation of marginalized groups such as children and youths in local decision making.

Many of the challenges must be dealt with at higher scales, and many challenges also have to do with institutions at higher level refusing to transfer functions and power to elected local governments. Instead, these institutions prefer to create their own institutions or participatory processes – despite promises of representing citizen needs and aspirations.

A contributing factor to the challenges faced by local government is an increasingly autocratic trend: autocratic leaders have gained power in many democratic countries. This makes it difficult, or impossible for local governments to address global challenges. In turn, local councils' inability to perform well undermines citizens' faith in elected local councils.

## 3.2. Transformative Polices and Opportunities for Local Democracy
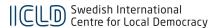
The sessions identified a greater need for transformative policies, meaning policies that in some way change our conceptualization of global challenges or shift the discussion. Many of the policies adopted by local governments are not transformative but instead reactive and often seek to simply mitigate conflict at one moment in time, rather than addressing the issues in a way that is more forward-looking.

A fully transformative agenda must seek to engage with competing interests, complexity and messiness, the unknows which are inevitably in the future, and questions of power and politics.

Transformative policies are those endowed with active constituents and come with force – meaning, that they hold potential to transform societies at large. However, policy change is an iterative, and often difficult process which goes through advances and setbacks. Several stakeholders are commonly involved in the procurement of transformative policies. In instances where transformative policies are blocked or taken back, observant stakeholders and actors fight to ensure that the policies are well crafted, inscribed in law, and translated into practice. The research community is another example of such. Policy change is difficult and slow. It is an iterative process with advances and setbacks. But, if there are advocates for the policy, the advances should outgain the setbacks.

The sessions identified a number of opportunities and policies for local democracy that are worth exploring further. A few examples are (1) social audits, (2) local jurisdictions' power to emancipate non-citizens and (3) citizen formation (education and solidarity with other scales of social existence) to make local government more effective.

A conclusion from the sessions is that transformation is possible, but it requires conscious efforts by committed decision-makers. Moreover, it is important to recognize that many local governments have limited power which undermines their ability to achieve transformative policies

ICLD Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

# 4. Sessions

## 4.1. Thematic Sessions

During the thematic sessions, the participants presented their papers to receive feedback from the group, including the session leader. The participants met twice for the thematic sessions, first for laurate paper discussions on the 10th of June, and second for a presentation on the 13th of June. The thematic sessions were divided in six different themes: 1) Social accountability and alternative forms of participation in local democracy, 2) From climate crises to climate action: roles for local governments, 3) Global Migration: Rebel Cities and Communities in Search of Inclusion, 4) Children and youth influence in local decision making, 5) Urban creativity and inclusive cities, and 6) Local governments in post-conflict countries: conflicts and possibilities. The following section provides a summary of the topics and results from the different sessions.

### 4.1.1. Social accountability and alternative forms of participation in local democracy

Due to a large number of applications, the participants were divided in two groups, Session A and B. The overall theme of the session concerned prospects for participatory democracy in various national settings. Social accountability and alternative forms of participation were sub-themes addressed in the sessions, and further found to be essential for a well-functioning local democracy.
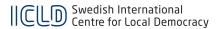
**Group A**
**Session leader - Anders Lidström, Umeå University**

On the sub-theme *social accountability*, Mohammad Shahjahan Chowdhury discussed what determines citizen' trust in local decision-makers in Bangladesh. Savaş Zafer Şahin reported on the varying roles of the planning profession in metropolitan planning in the UK, Turkey, China, India. From India, Yogesh Kumar presented the effectiveness of social audits as a mechanism for accountability.

Regarding the sub-theme *new means of participation and democracy*, Brenda Ogembo discussed what happens if deliberative democracy is introduced in a system of government characterized by patron-client relations in Kenya. From Indonesia, Amalinda Savirani presented an agreement between the urban poor and a local candidate as a new way for political influence. From Botswana, Maude Dikobe reported on the patterns of gender inequality in Gaborone city council. From Azerbaijan, Zulfiyya Abdurahimova discussed if local democracy can be inserted from the outside in authoritarian societies.

Many of the local approaches and policies presented during the session were innovative. The paper concerning deliberative democracy in a client-patron relationship shed new light on the importance of democracy reforms being adjusted to the particular context where they are carried out. Otherwise, the final result may be contrary to what was intended. Important lessons could be learned from the example of social audits as an effective means for accountability and the prospects it holds for transferring democratic reforms across national contexts/nation states.

The agreement between the urban poor and a specific local candidate posed an interesting example of new ways for political influence. Although problems may be associated with this type of influence, it may be considered as a way for disadvantaged groups to exercise influence in decision-making processes. Indeed, such practices may also be relevant in Western contexts where party loyalty is decreasing and voter volatility is on the rise.

**Group B**
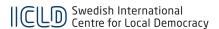**Session Leader – Rebecca Neaera Abers, University of Brasília**

From Tanzania, Deodatus Patrick Shayo reported on the use of an on-line platform for electoral monitoring. From Zimbabwe, George Tonderai Mudimu analyzed decentralized governance institutions in rural land reform settlements. From Russia, Olga Demushina discussed the adoption of high-technology governance instruments in the city of Volgograd. From Colombia, Clara Rocío Rodríguez Pico presented research on municipal level "direct democracy" initiatives such as mayoral recall and referenda. From Poland, Anna Kołomycew presented a study on Local Advisory Councils in 65 cities. From Brazil, Sérgio Barbosa dos Santos Silva discussed the ethical problems of conducting research about political participation through the WhatsApp messaging service. The studies thus examined very different forms of citizen participation in different contexts, ranging from state-initiated mechanisms to bottom up social mobilization processes. And from modes of improving citizen control of electoral processes to systems for getting them more involved in public policy design or implementation.

Despite these differences, some common themes emerged from the debates. Firstly, almost all of the cases involved significant limitations and setbacks with respect to the possibilities for deepening democratic participation. In Zimbabwe, new forms of decentralization only seemed to complicate the lives of poor rural inhabitants who had to negotiate with traditional authorities in addition to the state and party forces. In Colombia, legislation to allow municipal voters to recall mayors or decide on policy issues has practically never been used. In Poland, a national system requiring municipalities to create local advisory councils in eight policy areas has had little effect on actual decision-making. In Russia, the advance of smart governance systems has failed to promote new forms of citizen participation. In Brazil, the expansion of access to WhatsApp has deeply transformed the ways citizens participate in politics but has also expanded polarization and misinformation. On a positive note however, a relative success was found in the Tanzanian case whereby the use of on-line electoral monitoring during the Tanzanian election enabled citizen participation and collaborative production and sharing of information.

### 4.1.2. From climate crises to climate action: roles for local governments

**Session leader - Jesse C. Ribot, American University, Washington**

From India, Aarathi Gangalekshmy reported on how climate crisis is being used by India's central government to delegitimate state and local democratic authorities in opposition areas by withholding of post-disaster aid funds to Kerala. Mawa Karambiri's paper investigated how participatory forest policy is being translated at local level in Burkina Faso and how the process hinders or enable local democracy. From Tanzania, Angeline Sithole reported on the effectiveness of indigenous knowledge systems that are employed to address the impact of climate change. Rebecca Rutt's paper examined

the politics and maintenance of narrow notions of sustainability through the European Green Capital Award in Scandinavian cities. Sudarmono Suardi Kiramang reported that clientele networks dissolved with decentralization in parts of Indonesia which resulted in improved fisheries monitoring because the local governments include more people from the families of fishers.

What emerged during the session was that a) the climate is at risk of being used as a weapon to discredit local governments by central authorities disabling their ability to be responsive in the face of disaster, b) climate solutions are being imposed from outside as technocratic imperatives and are undermining local government's ability to have its own agenda or to respond to and build on local coping strategies, c) the urgency and technocratic nature of natural resource management (climate included) is encouraging overriding or circumventing of local governments, and d) there is a lot of work to do on citizen formation (education and solidarity with other scales of social existence) to make local government more effective.
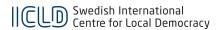
### 4.1.3. Global Migration: Rebel Cities and Communities in Search of Inclusion

**Session leader - Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien, San Diego State University**

The session concerned the role of local government in managing global migration and integrating immigrant and refugee communities. While it was titled "Rebel Cities" what became clear through most of the work presented was that too often local government are able but choose not to act upon further inclusion of these communities.

From Greece, Alexandra Bousiou reported on the role of the local level in the implementation of the European asylum regime at the Southeastern borders. Ezgi Irgil discussed host community members' use of shared urban spaces after the arrival of refugees in Turkey. From Barcelona, Juan Carlos Triviño-Salazar discussed immigration-related conflicts in urban peripheries. From the US, Loren Collingwood reported that sanctuary policies, in signaling a more welcoming, inclusive community, can have effects beyond immigrant communities and help increase Latino social incorporation. Melandri Steenkamp presented a human security approach and local perspectives on climate induced migration in South Africa. Merve Akdemir discussed how socio-spatial mechanisms are actualized in everyday lives of immigrants in the Turkish border.

The session revealed the oftentimes deep divisions between local communities and the national and/or supranational authorities that are responsible for immigration policy. While local governments are largely responsible for the integration of immigrant and refugee communities, they often lack control over these policies, which can lead to resentment from local residents directed towards both higher levels of government and non-native communities. What also became clear during the session was the commonalities in the challenges faced by local government in trying to find solutions that allow for inclusion but at the same time do not alienate or upset residents. This could not only have electoral consequences, but also affect the safety of immigrants and refugees. Many policies that may have begun with good intentions, have in some cases exacerbated difficulties because of the lack of consideration given to the challenges faced by local governments.

During the session, it became clear how some policies, in particular sanctuary policies in the United States or Greece's Migrant Integration Councils, are innovative and have potential applicability to other countries. The session also seemed to suggest that these kinds of policies could have potential success if they were encouraged at the local level by emphasizing the role they play in increasing inclusion and easing conflict.
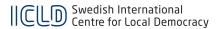
While the national context may vary, many of the issues that need to be addressed as a result of migration flows are in fact very similar. Whether it is Moroccans in Spain, Syrians in Turkey or the Greek Isles, environmental migrants in South Africa, or Mexican and Central American immigrants and refugees in the US, the way that native populations react share a number of characteristics, as do the problems faced by local governments in crafting responses. Another theme that emerged from the session was the need for more collaboration between researchers employing different methodologies. Too often, quantitative and qualitative work do not build on one another. This is unfortunate, as a mixed methods approach could increase our shared knowledge.

### 4.1.4. Children and youth influence in local decision making

**Session leader – Soo Ah Kwon, University of Illinois**

During this session, possibilities for children and youth influence in local decision making was discussed. There were six papers from the following locations: Hungary, India, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Daniel Oross's paper examined the vibrant political participation and cooperation among local government and youth organizations in the Mórahalom subregion in Hungary. Hillary Musarurwa's paper on Norton, just outside of Harare, Zimbabwe examined youth-led participatory action projects to address issues in their community such as leadership training, setting up youth friendly centers, waste management, and voter education. Victoria Makulilo discussed the rise of regional and national policies, including the national youth council act, to institute youth rights and participation in Tanzania but the lack of participation at national and local levels. She attributed this to insufficient political will, absence of regulatory frameworks, and resources. In Tanzania, both Victoria Makulilo and Hillary Musarurwa identified lack of space for youth participation, youth tokenism, fear of youth, hopelessness among young people, and inability to self-organize. Young people in Musarurwa's study identified various factors that challenged young people's lives such as: girl-child abuse, unemployment and lack of income sources, little access to land for housing and projects, political and other forms of direct violence, corruption, among others. Sisanda Mguzulwa's study of youth violence in Khayelitsha, South Africa illuminated the role of structural violence. Her paper examined the reasons for young people's violence and the ways in which said violence can generate mutual understanding and dialogue in the community and support restorative justice efforts. Gireesan Krishnapisharotis´s paper in Ranke Boullia Gram Panchayat, India identified the role of local government institutions in assessing the needs, concerns, issues, problems and priorities of youth in the area to mainstreaming them in its programs. And Carolyne Onyango's paper in Kenya proposed an evaluation of role of alternative programs to end child corporeal punishment in schools.

Key themes identified during the session were both evidence of youth participation at local level in governance - such as youth-led participatory action projects and cooperation between local government and youth organization - as well as a lack and/or absence of local government and governance structures to support children and youth participation in local decision making. A

disconnect from policy to implementation when it comes to youth inclusion was identified. The session further discussed different local institutions that can support children and youth rights as well as the role of structural violence in young people's lives. Moreover, innovative local approaches and policies where elaborated, such as local government institutions, schools, and ad-hoc youth groups conducting formal and informal needs and assessment and developing programs to address issues in their communities. And the role of active and accessible NGOs in localities that organize programs for young people.

### 4.1.5. Urban creativity and inclusive cities

**Session leader – Liza Rose Cirolia, Centre for African Cities**

This session focussed on urban creativity and the development of inclusive cities. Within this theme, the session explored how urban areas and the local governments which are tasked with their development can better address the plethora of injustices and challenges which contemporary cities, particularly in the Global South, face.
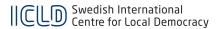
From Bolivia, Juan Cabrera discussed networking services such as water, energy, transport and the possible effects of these reforms on the fragmentation or integration of urban societies. Fitria Feliciani reported on the implementation of the SDGs in different government levels in Indonesia. Arif Budy Pratama´s paper explored emerging smart cities in Indonesia by asking from where ideas of smart city come from? What is transferred? Who is involved? Why transfer? From Kenya, Michael Oloko discusses grassroots initiatives, institutional entrepreneurship and inclusive urban governance. In the Philippines, Ronald Castillo explored the practice of zero waste and its network structures.

Key themes which emerged during this session included: (1) Urban service provision modes (in particular to the urban poor): the session explored how different cities are deploying innovative strategies to ensure that people get services. (2) Urban citizenship and the 'right to the city': how people contribute to making the city in different ways and the extent to which this process can be seen as a site of citizenship. (3) Informality in urban areas: informality was a key theme which crossed most of the discussions and allowed the participants to think within and beyond the state. (4) Urban governance and the autonomy of local authorities: the question of the extent to which local governments are able to control key urban investments and operate outside of the national policy frameworks was a key theme. (5) Everyday practices of city-making: we explored how everyday aspects of city-making are and are not brought into policy discussions. (6) Policy mobility/policy transfer: the question of how ideas move from one place to another, gaining local flavour and applicability was discussed. In some cases, this movement is positive learning and in others it appears to be the imposition of inapplicable global ideas. (7) The localization of global and national agendas at the city-scale: the difference between implementation at the local level and true localization, the latter being where the policies are shifted to respond to local context

### 4.1.6. Local governments in post-conflict countries: conflicts and possibilities

**Session leader – James Manor, University of London**

From Rwanda, Ezechiel Sentama presented local governments in post-violence recovery and what makes them success or fail. Anna Jarstad´s paper explored the spatial aspects of conflicts in

Mitrovica, Kosovo. From Kenya, Francis Onditi discussed the capacities of infrastructure for peace and the role of county governments. Gareth Wall´s paper explored decentralization as a post-conflict state-building strategy in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. Mashood Omotosho´s paper studied facets of local governments roles in post conflict reconstruction at the grassroots in Nigeria. Oleksandr Moskalenko presented the EU's democracy promotion for its relations with its neighbors and the internal Ukrainian reforms aimed at the transition from a post-communist state towards a modern democracy.

While the high-quality analysis of the diverse geographical places largely overlooked democratic local government, the sessions allowed for a more focused discussion on the topic.

The participants came up with some especially useful ideas considering how elected local councils might connect to civil society organisations, and to the participatory methods used by those organisations. The session discussed that participatory approaches could strengthen local democracy – and make better equipped to address post-conflict problems – by ensuring that local councils understood citizens' perceptions and needs. Moreover, the session discussed the idea that participatory consultations with citizens needed to occur not once but often, periodically – because citizens' perceptions and needs change over time. The scholars recognized that this required local councils to be flexible, to change their policies and actions in response to changes in popular perceptions.
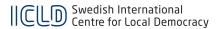
## 4.2. Training Sessions

During the academy, four parallel training sessions (á two hours) took place, offering the possibility for participants to attend two of the following sessions:

**Transdisciplinary co-production,** led by Merritt Polk, Professor, Head of Department, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg and Henrietta Palmer, Artistic Professor, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Urban Design and Planning, Chalmers University of Technology

**Participatory video for research and engagement** led by Crystal Tremblay, Assistant Professor and Special Advisor on Community Engaged Scholarship, Department of Geography, University of Victoria

**SDG synergies approach** led by Nina Weitz, Research Fellow within the Governance and Institutions Unit at Stockholm Environment Institute

**Writing policy research proposal** led by Jesse Ribot, Professor, School of International Service, American University in Washington, in collaboration with Shabbir Cheema, Senior Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Centre for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Merilee Grindle Professor Emerita, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University James Manor Emeritus Professor of Commonwealth Studies, School of advanced studies, University of London and Soo Ah Associate Professor of Asian American Studies, University of Illinois

The purpose of the training sessions was to introduce different methods for action research and co-production and discussing tools for working with the SDGs and policy-oriented research proposals. The training sessions allowed researchers to learn something new. The time allocated was limited and provided an opportunity to get an idea of the methods.

# 5. Local Policy Labs

Local policy labs are interactive sessions that bring researchers, practitioners and policy makers together to brainstorm around concrete problems. They provide an opportunity to address issues of relevance to local governments, with the possibility to suggest policy recommendations and identify potential research topics.

## 5.1.    Method

The method used is inspired by Problem-Based Learning and the Logical Framework Approach. The participants work in groups with a fictive case. The first part of the lab focuses on problem discussion and follow five steps using a problem tree. The group discuss (1) experiences, (2) the main problem, (3) causes, (4) consequences and (5) possible theories explaining the problem. Then they reflect individually on real life policies or programmes used to address similar problems.



*Local policy lab*

The next part of the lab is policy discussion, where the participants analyze the identified policies and their possibilities to address the problem. The group identifies what is missing and comes up with its own transformative policy that addresses the problem.
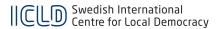
## 5.2.    Lessons learnt

**About the method**

During this session the researchers practiced a policy-oriented approach and got the opportunity to discuss and analyse problems and policies together with practitioners and government officials. With some adjustments the method can be a useful tool to engage with policy makers and stakeholders in order to come up with policy recommendations.

**Key lessons**

The output from the policy labs emerged in a number of innovative policies, among them were policies for youth inclusion, inclusive cities, sustainable cities, direct democracy in urban planning.

### Youth inclusion

- Engagement would be dual-directional (top-down and bottom-up) and multi-sectoral – national, local, private/business, local community, NGO, child/youth clubs to address the challenges
- There would be peer to peer youth capacity building and empowerment which would feed into their participation and engagement in sectoral councils
- Children would be represented on sectoral councils e-g- health, education, employment, politics, sports, etc. so that their views are included in decision-making process and not just window dressing.
- Move away from non-participatory engagements, adult-initiated programmes to participatory engagement and youth initiated programmes

### Inclusive cities

- Carrying out education programmes
- Putting in place human rights guarantee mechanisms
- Developing new participatory and inclusive-based approaches to public space

### Sustainable cities

- Co-housing, mitigation of gentrification effects in urban renewal, testing "labs", environmental efficiency and social benefits, shared facilities and society, ownership formats (own in the sense of belonging)
- Local engagement and how and what to measure and research (knowledge, resources, identities, assets)

### Direct democracy in urban planning

- **Important factors for local engagement:**
- **Knowledge**
  a. Rely on local initiatives and knowledge. Local experts
  b. Balancing expert-people knowledge
  c. Concreteness, visualisation, envisioning
- **Resources**
  a. Low cost, but resources are needed
  b. Use existing infrastructure, spaces, institutions (like neighbourhood committees)
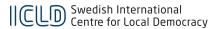- **Identities**
  a. Identification, sense of ownership
  b. Inclusive (social, sector wise), cross generation
  c. Build on existing legitimate organisations
  d. Equality, internally and in relation to external vested interests
- **Planning**
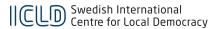  a. Broad, inclusive, swiftness and long term
  **Concrete examples:**
- Festivals, pubs
- Forums/platforms/spaces for interactions
- Planning competition will visualise the opportunities
- Use social media
- Neighbourhood committees

# 6. Further Research

The discussions during the academy resulted in many suggestions for further research. Further research is not only about topics, but also about perspective. In particular, it is important that underrepresented perspectives can be given attention through research, for example by using a gendered perspective or to see reform from the perspective of people who lack formal citizenship rights. The main suggestions that emerged are the following:

- Research should be sensitive for the specific context of the cases investigated. This is often critical for an understanding of whether and how democracy functions. Indeed, local democracy reforms that function well in one context may not do so elsewhere. *Comparative studies should be encouraged as these would highlight differences in contexts.*

- There is a need for a deeper *understanding of the current dynamics between decentralization and centralization*. In some countries, decentralization continues to be important but elsewhere there are significant tendencies that central government is tightening the grip over local government. However, we need to treat this less as a dichotomy and to see it more as a dynamic relation and recognize how types of decentralization may vary between settings and how different tools are used. Analyses also need to focus on different levels of government, by zooming in and zooming out. Important is also to investigate how local democracy may survive and resist under centralizing and authoritarian conditions.

- *Local governments without power*, on the relation between government legitimacy and the ability of government to be responsive. Examples: (a) the damage that has been done to elected local bodies as a result of autocratic trends, (b) strategies that might strengthen local democracy in the teeth of these difficulties – one example is associations of local councils to give them voice and bargaining power within their political systems – and (c) the severe limitations on councils' ability to respond to global challenges.

- *Citizens without virtue in terms of climate change issues*: There are a number of cases in which it is the failure of citizens to take a larger more humanistic view that produces sub-optimal policies. This may be a subsidiarity question as well as a question of virtue.

- *Technology is becoming more and more influential in peoples' lives which needs to be understood through further research*. For example, there are still only a few studies about how the cellphone is used in developing countries and whether it can function as a means to enhance local democracy and participation. Other technological innovations may also open up for democracy and participation.

- *Research that gives voice or takes the perspective of the under-represented* is also crucial and will generate new knowledge. This includes the perspective of women, of young people and of the refugees that live in the informal economy and are omitted from the rights that come with formal citizenship.
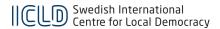
- *Means to counteract climate change and consequences of climate change* will be a key issue in the future and may first affect the countries that have the weakest resources. Research should address issues on how local democracy, participation and development may be affected by these changes, but also how local democracy may contribute to finding solutions.

- *Understand why democratic initiatives advance or recede* – what power relations intervene on their behalf or for their demise, and how those relations are settled in socio-economic conditions that distribute capacities and put certain groups at an advantage for defending their interests. These kinds of political questions are fundamental for understanding the perspectives for local democracy. Exploring how they are answered in different contexts can allow us to examine very different kinds of participatory initiatives within the same conceptual framework

- *The role of youth protest in bringing about change* -   governmental accountability in supporting youth decision making skills at all levels. The role of structural violence in limiting children and youth participation and rights. Research that examines the intersections of youth identities and differences as it intersects with race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, citizenship status, among others.

- *Incorporation of softer infrastructures into analysis for more inclusive cities* - A stronger theoretical lens be applied to city-scale innovations, being more critical of innovations which might undermine the role of the state or public service in service provision. While recognizing the necessity of incremental/informal practices, it may also be important to be explicit about the range of theoretical frames which can be used to 'make sense' of these innovations. Rather than simply focusing on hard infrastructures like water, sanitation, waste etc., more attention could be given to education, health and other soft investments. These investments are key sites in cities where social and political life is realized and they can assist in addressing issues related to youth in cities, migration and intercultural exchange, etc.

# 7. After the Academy

An objective of the academy was to foster collaborations. This section provides a short summary of how the academy is followed up and how to maintain the network.

**Call for proposals**
Discussions in the thematic sessions became input to a call for research proposals during the second half of 2019. All participants of the academy were invited to apply for a research grant distributed by ICLD. The overarching aim of the call is to better understand the role of local governments and local democratic institutions in addressing global challenges. Proposed research should focus on problems and opportunities where there is a potential to generate innovative and transformative policies that can increase the influence of vulnerable people in the decisions made by local governments that affect their lives.

**Special issue**

The knowledge on display at the academy made many participants enthusiastic about keeping the momentum going. To that end, an editing team, consisting of three participants and ICLD, was put together to coordinate an edited volume/special journal issue to bring together the research presented at the academy. All participants were invited to submit a paper proposal based on the theme 'Rebel Cities: Local Government and Global Challenges beyond 2030'. The theme was identified as incorporating a significant slice of the research presented in Umeå.

**Research Network: Association of Local Democracy Scholars**

ICLD will elaborate on the idea of an international research network called 'Association of Local Democracy Scholars' with the purpose to advance, and spread knowledge about local democracy, and to promote the use of research to improve local policymaking. ICLD would support and be a member of this network. The association could produce a journal in the field of local democracy.

**Next academy**

To be arranged in 2021.



*Participants of Local Democracy Academy 2019*