

In its research and outreach activities, the Centre explores four main themes:

- 1) Voice and participation in policy processes**
- 2) Disorder and democratic voices**
- 3) Law, courts and democracy**
- 4) Transparency, regulation and accountability.**

It hosts seven ongoing externally funded projects, which have received funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS), the Knowledge Platform on Security and the Rule of Law (KPSRL) and the European Commission:

### **THEME 1: Voice and participation in policy processes**

Democratic participation extends beyond the ballot box to policy processes which govern people's daily lives. This theme asks: through what avenues can people express their voice and participate in policy processes? How do popular voice and expertise relate to each other in these processes? What is the form and quality of that voice?

**Democratising access to healthcare: Infertility, childlessness, and treatment seeking in resource-poor settings in Nepal and India**

**Extracting Voice: the subnational law and politics of relationships between mining companies and affected communities in India**

### **THEME 2: Disorder and democratic voices**

Democratic voice requires the existence of venues that are sufficiently ordered and predictable for citizens to meaningfully participate in democratic institutions and to enable expression to be heard. This theme explores how certain forms of inclusion—often understood to be foundational to liberalism—can be manipulated to create disorder in the form of confusion, uncertainty, and unpredictability about whose voice, if any, will be heard at any given time. The theme thus explores how disorder can stifle democratic voice and undermine democratic participation.

**Governance through Disorder: Illiberalism and the politics of unpredictability**

**Democracy and disorder: political unpredictability, illiberal governance and prospects for democratic voice**

### **THEME 3: Law, courts and democracy**

Courts are guarantors of rights essential to democracy and the rule of law. But they can arguably also contribute to a de-politicization of issues. This theme asks: How are the courts being used by civil society actors today? How far can and do they render the state and multinational corporations accountable? How is the use of courts by activists transforming democratic experiences and how are courts themselves transformed in the process?

**Bringing the seed wars to the courtroom: Legal activism and the governance of plant genetic resources in Brazil and India (2015-2019)**

### **THEME 4: Transparency, regulation and accountability**

How might citizens participate in their own governance in an administrative state? Beyond expressions of democratic voice as found in practices like voting and protesting, citizens in democratic societies increasingly exercise their sovereignty using mechanisms of surveillance of the state and grievance redress. Transparency and accountability of regulatory regimes are cornerstones of contemporary democratic politics. This theme explores how transparency and accountability are produced, protected, and—in some cases—manipulated in global, national, and sub-national contexts.

**Extracting Voice: The subnational politics of company-community relationships in the mining sector**

**Negotiating data in a global setting: opportunities, challenges and the common good**

**Transparency: Qualities and Technologies of Global Gemstone Trading (2017-2020)**

*(in collaboration with the Graduate Institute Centre on Conflict, Development & Peacebuilding - CCDP)*