

INDIANA DEMOCRACY CONSORTIUM

The IDC seeks to connect IU's many talented researchers and students working on questions of contemporary democratic change, and to foster new conversations and research projects linking academic scholarship and the broader world of practitioners and policy-makers. The IDC is focused on the basic preconditions of successful democratic transformation - from the enterprises of vibrant civil society networks, to the structure of formal electoral rules and constitutional design, and to the importance of professionalism in managing the affairs of the formal government and the transactions between governmental and non-governmental organizations. The fundamental question that defines the mission of the IDC is quite straightforward: why is it that some democracies succeed and others fail?

Recent Events

March 19-Christopher Moore-Producer / Co-Director, "¿Puedo Hablar? May I Speak?" (Sol Productions in Venezuela, Inc.): "¿Puedo Hablar? May I Speak?" is a new documentary film by Sol Productions which chronicles the 2006 presidential elections in Venezuela. Sol Productions spent nearly three months in Venezuela, filming interviews and events with people from across the political spectrum. The documentary offers its audience a portrait of a Venezuelan society at a crossroads; a re-elected President Chavez, challenged by a mounting opposition; a divided state, but one from which the Sol team manages to extract glimmers of hope for renewed dialogue and a bridging of the political gap. On March 19, the IDC hosted a screening of the film with its producer/director, Christopher Moore, followed by a panel discussion of democracy in Venezuela with IDC members Shane Greene, Jeff Gould, Christiana Ochoa, and IDC Director Jeff Isaac (moderator). This event was sponsored by The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the Communication and Culture Dept., the IU Law School, and the IDC.

March 19-Lecture by Paul Sniderman-“Partisan Asymmetries in Ideological Commitment”

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Lecture: "Russia After Putin," a panel discussion with Professor Elizabeth Wood (History-MIT); Professor Stephen Hanson (Political Science, University of Washington at Seattle), Ambassador Jim Collins, and Regina Smyth (Political Science, Indiana University). Friday, March 21, 12:00-2:00, State Room East, Indiana Memorial Union.

March 20 and 21-Spring Law Conference: The School of Law – Bloomington is hosting two spring conferences which may be of particular interest to you and colleagues.

Please join us for all or a part of:

Symposium on Operationalizing Global Governance

Dates: Thursday, March 20 & Friday, March 21, 2008

Location: Law School, 3rd Floor Lobby and Conference Room

Coffee & Pastries: 9:30 – 10:00am (both mornings)

Panel Sessions – Thursday:

- 10:00am – 12:00pm. Constitution-making in complex local contexts
- 1:15pm – 3:15pm. Corporate self-regulation and private law networks
- 3:30pm – 5:30pm. Civil society – the answer or obstacle to implementation?

Panel Sessions – Friday:

- 10:00am – 12:00pm. Operationalizing global governance in a complex world
- 12:00pm – 1:00pm. Concluding Discussion

Individual and Customary International Law Formation Conference

Dates: Friday, April 4 and Saturday, April 5, 2008

Location: Law School, 1st Floor Lobby and Moot Court Room

Coffee & Pastries: 8:30am – 9:00am (Friday); 9:30am – 10:00am (Saturday)

- 9:00am – 10:00am. Keynote Address by Jordan Paust

Panel Sessions – Friday:

10:00am – 11:45am. Making ancient trans-border custom: the history & the players

1:00pm – 3:00pm. The individual & customary international law formation

3:30pm – 5:30pm. Making law from below

Panel Session – Saturday:

10:00am – 12:00pm. Finding custom: possibilities & obstacles

Please join us for one or more of the sessions. Additionally, please forward this information to your colleagues who would have an interest in these topics. And please let me know if you have any questions.

March 25-Humane Treatment: The Prevalence and Prevention of Torture: On March 25, IU will host Beth Simmons, Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard. She will discuss issues of torture and human rights in Swain East 240 at 4:00.

Beth Simmons
Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs
Director, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs
Government Department, Harvard University

March 25, 2008
Swain East, Room 240-4:00-5:30pm

Abstract:

The Convention Against Torture is one of the strongest legal instruments in the collection of documents that make up the international human rights regimes. This talk is based on a chapter from my forthcoming book *International Human Rights: Law, Politics, and Accountability* which examines why governments sign legally binding human rights agreements, and the conditions under which they are likely to comply with agreements. Most governments ratify human rights treaties, I argue, because they anticipate they will be able and willing to comply at reasonably cost, but some have ratified underestimating the domestic political and social pressures that may accumulate to demand compliance. This chapter focuses on the domestic pressures that treaty ratification can stimulate to comply. I argue these pressures tend to be weakest in stable authoritarian regimes (where political organization to demand human rights is likely to be crushed) as well as in stable democracies (where there is relatively

little incentive to organize to demand implementation of international human rights treaties in the first place). International human rights treaties are likely to have their greatest impact in partially democratic or transitioning regimes, where locals have both the motive and means to demand compliance. I test this theory in this chapter with data on the torture convention ratifications and actual torture practices. The findings support the idea that political mobilization, often complemented by a competent and independent court system, are key in translating the international treaty obligations of the CAT into improved practices on the ground. Nonetheless, in contrast to other potential areas of human rights abuse proscribed by international treaty obligations discussed in the book manuscript, torture is decentralized and difficult to observe, making this one of the most challenging aspects of official rights abuse to stop.

March 22-Roundtable on Tibet Crisis: "The Crisis in Tibet: A Roundtable Discussion"-Over the course of the last week events in Tibet have focused international attention on the simmering discontent among the Tibetan population in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other part of the People's Republic of China. Experts from Indiana University will lead a wide-ranging discussion of the events, their causes and their implications for China, Tibet and the international community. The roundtable is open to all.

Saturday, March 22, 2008
1:30-3:00 p.m.
Ballantine Hall 003

Sumit Ganguly - Center for American and Global Security and India Studies

Scott Kennedy - Research Center for Chinese Politics and Business and East Asian Languages and Cultures

Gedun Rabsal -Department of Central Eurasian Studies

Elliot Sperling -Department of Central Eurasian Studies