

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

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 25-Humane Treatment: The Prevalence and Prevention of Torture: On March 25, IU hosted Beth Simmons, Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard.

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"-IDC member Sumit Ganguly hosted a roundtable on the Tibet crisis on March 22. In addition to Professor Ganguly, the panel featured Scott Kennedy, Gedun Rabsal and Elliot Sperling.

Understanding Suicide Terrorism Series: The Center on American and Global Security (CAGS) hosted Professor Martha Crenshaw of Stanford University on April 2. She presented her paper "Suicide Terrorism: What We Know and What We Don't Know."

Upcoming Events

Human Rights in the Neoliberal Imagination: Mapping the "New Sovereignities": IU Film & Media Studies; the Departments of Communication & Culture, Gender Studies, and Political Science; the Program in Cultural Studies; and the Law School are pleased to present...

JOHN NGUYET ERNI

Thursday, April 17th
Jordan Hall, Room A100,
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

ABSTRACT: "The end of sovereignty": this has been an ominous refrain in the chorus of global political and human rights analyses aimed at reformulating a post-Cold War configuration of world power. In cultural studies, the same pronouncement is more likely made through a mix of theoretical exuberance and ambivalence toward a post-nationalist and cosmopolitan imaginary. This presentation takes as a point of departure the rise of "new sovereignties" - a fractured Westphalianism - as a rubric for understanding the political imagination about the international community today. Speaking from a position of trying to bridge cultural studies with human rights legal discourse, I shall address these questions: To what dimensions of the "new sovereignties" can the human rights legal discourse as we know it today still exert influence, given the new configurations of globally disaggregated power? With "rights" today reemerging as a bifurcation, how can cultural studies reconcile a theory of "rights" as subaltern claim-making with that of "rights" as an all-encompassing tool in the neoliberal order of world justice? Through a preliminary mapping of the legal, institutional, and teleological forces that shape the new sovereignties, I attempt to illuminate why rights as international recognition politics for the subaltern is inadvertently complicit with the reproduction of rights constitutive of empire.

JOHN NGUYET ERNI, Professor of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and Visiting Scholar at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, researches on Chinese consumption of transnational culture, Asian pop, cultural tourism, sexualities in Asia, critical public health, and human rights politics. He has held a Rockefeller Humanities Research Fellowship at Columbia University's School of Public Health in the Program on Gender, Sexuality, Health, and Human Rights. In 2005, he completed a Master of Laws in Human Rights at the University of Hong Kong. His books include: *Unstable Frontiers: Technomedicine and the Cultural Politics of "Curing" AIDS*; *Internationalizing Cultural Studies*; and *Asian Media Studies: The Politics of Subjectivities*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PROFESSOR TED STRIPHAS:

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"State Ideology, Senate Roll-Calls, and Heterogeneity in Representation": The Center on American Politics will host Professor Tom Carsey (an IU alum no less!) on Friday, April 11 from 1:30 to 3:00 in Woodburn Hall 218.

Tom Carsey (Ph.D., Indiana University) is the Thomas J. Pearsall distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His research interests center on the general process of representation in U.S. national and sub-national politics. More specifically, he studies electoral behavior, campaigns, political parties, and legislatures in the U.S. He is particularly interested in how contextual factors such as campaign information, the racial make-up of a place, or institutions shape political attitudes and behavior.

Why Study Madrassahs? Islamic Seminaries in South Asia: The India Studies Program will host Ali Riaz, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University on April 11.

Ali Riaz is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University. He has previously taught at universities in South Carolina, England, and Bangladesh. He also worked as a broadcast journalist for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service in London. His most recent publication is *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web* (Routledge, 2008). His previous publications include *God Willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh* (2004); *Unfolding State: The Transformation of Bangladesh* (2005), and *Paradise Lost? State Failure in Nepal* (with Subho Basu; 2007). Dr. Riaz has to his credit more than ten books in Bengali. This presentation is based on his forthcoming book *Faithful Education: Madrassahs in South Asia* (Rutgers University Press, 2008).

Friday, April 11th at 5:30 pm
India Studies House, 825 East 8th Street
(Corner of 8th and Woodlawn)
Free and open to the public

