

Global Development Research Group

Activities autumn term 2012/3

Events are held at 1-2.30pm in the Meetings Room unless otherwise announced.

19 October 2012: The New Great Game? Introducing Central Asia.

What is Central Asia? What do we make of concepts such as the New Great Game? Is Central Asia besieged by terrorists? This session will introduce the Central Asian region in its contemporary context, looking particularly at themes of natural resource competition, big power politics and Islamic terrorism, which have dominated Western representations of the region in recent years.

Reading:

- Rajan Menon. 2003. "The New Great Game in Central Asia," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 45: 2.

9 November 2012: Soviet and Russian colonialism? A film and reading session.

The legacy of Soviet rule still pervades Central Asia. Ruled from Moscow for over a century, Central Asia underwent a radical modernisation drive during the Soviet period that transformed society, economics and culture. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia continues to maintain strong ties to the region. This session looks back at how the Soviet project was introduced into Central Asia and asks what the more recent legacies of Soviet policies are in the region. It will consider whether Soviet rule in Central Asia should be seen in colonial terms, or whether there is any truth to the Soviet claim that it empowered the Central Asian population. What have been the implications of the fall of the Soviet Union in Central Asia? What role did the collapse play in the emergence of ethnic conflict in the region? Did it usher in a return to Russian hegemony? Where is the Central Asian experience of the Second World War situated in relations with Russia?

Film: *Turksib* (1929), a documentary about the arrival of modernity in Soviet Turkestan. The film portrays the construction of the Turkestan-Siberian railway (connecting Novosibirsk and Tashkent). A masterpiece of cinematography, it is also a great example of skilful propaganda that depicts the unparalleled Soviet technological achievements capable of prevailing over the forces of nature.

Reading:

To be announced

12 November 2012: Guest Speaker: Dr Susan Park, University of Sydney

“Institutional Isomorphism, the Multilateral Development Banks and the Diffusion of Accountability Mechanisms”

Dr Susan Park is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sydney. Recent publications include ‘The World Bank Group and Environmentalists: Changing International Organisation Identities’ (2010, London: Manchester University Press) and the co-edited ‘Owning Development: Creating Global Policy Norms in the IMF and the World Bank’ (with A. Vetterlein, 2010, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

21 November 2012: “Peace pacts and indigenous mobilisation. The case of the Chico Dam struggle in the Philippines.” A presentation by Markus Göransson.

Between 1973 and 1986, indigenous communities in the northern Philippines waged a vigorous campaign against a series of hydroelectric dams that had been planned for their region. Threatened by dislocation, the communities mobilised in common resistance to a project that was supported by both the Philippine government and the World Bank, and which was viewed as essential to the industrialisation of the northern parts of the country. In doing so, the communities overcame also the fragmentation of their own society. Divided into self-contained and often rivalrous tribal communities in the rough and isolated Cordillera Mountains, they nevertheless mounted a common campaign that ultimately proved successful. Markus’ research explored the role of a traditional institution – the peace pact, locally known as the *bodong* – in facilitating the mobilisation of the struggle. Based on two months of fieldwork in the Cordillera Mountains, which involved interviews with peasants, Maoist rebels and other movement participants, the research examines the versatile and dynamic nature of this institution, whose associated practices were often put to new and inventive uses under the pressures of the dam crisis.

Activities spring term 2012/3

8 February 2013: The Security-Development Nexus.

Is security-development nexus a useful analytical tool for researchers, an incentive for policy circles to allocate aid ‘strategically’ or simply conceptual chaos? The meeting will be focusing on the analysis of the concept drawing on examples from Central Asia but we look forward to insights regarding other regions in the hope of achieving a rich comparative discussion.

Readings:

- Chandler David, (2007), "The security-development nexus and the rise of 'anti-foreign policy'", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, No. 10, pp. 362-386

- "The Challenges of Human Security and Development in Central Asia" by M. Laruelle and S. Peyrouse.

18 February 2013: Guest Speaker: Dr John Heathershaw, University of Exeter

"The Global Performance State: International Development, Security Assistance and the Central Asian 'Weak State'"

Dr John Heathershaw is a member of the faculty of the Centre for Advanced International Studies at the University of Exeter and an associate fellow of the Exeter Centre for Ethno-political Studies (EXCEPS). Dr Heathershaw's research spans several themes: security, conflict management and peacebuilding, the emergence and transformation of the state in its post-colonial, global, economic and performative dimensions. He has spent several years working for governmental, international non-governmental and academic institutions in and on Central Asia. He is a member of the board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society and a member of the International Advisory Board of Central Asian Survey. His most recent book is *The Transformation of Tajikistan* (London: Routledge, 2012), co-edited with Edmund Herzig.

Abstract: We are faced with a contradictory picture regarding the sovereign state which was brought forth unexpectedly after the unraveling of the Soviet Union in 1991. The state seems at once omnipresent and perennially absent. Dismissing Central Asian states as quantitatively weak is to disregard the performative processes by which they are qualitatively transformed to become globalized polities with relatively strong executives. Central Asian states are political forms constituted through performances, which have various dimensions. Ethnonational artistic forms, raw violence or rather more banal distributions of basic public goods may be part of the local and national dimensions of state performance. But it is via international and transnational performances that states become institutional structures through which global economic and political networks flow. It is through these technocratic, neo-liberal performances that state actors maintain commissary powers to enable and disable such flows. In this sense, international donors, foreign governments and multinational businesses are complicit in sustaining 'weak states'.

This is a joint event with the Security Research Group.

22 April 2013: The State in Latin America

This reading group meeting begins our discussion on the question of the State in the Global South.

Reading:

Yashar, Deborah (1999) 'Democracy, Indigenous Movements, and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America. *World Politics*, 52(1), pp. 76-104.

9 May 2013: Guest Speaker: Professor Richard Black, University of Sussex

The title of the talk to be confirmed.

Professor Richard Black is Head of the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex and the CEO of the 'Migrating out of Poverty' research consortium, a major international partnership funded by DFID and involving universities in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Bangladesh and Singapore. From 2009-11, Richard served as Chair of the Lead Expert Group for a Foresight project on 'Migration and Global Environmental Change', within the Government Office for Science. In 2012, Richard was elected Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

This is a joint event with the Environmental Politics Research Group and the Citizenship Research Group.