



THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN
INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL
ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

GLOBAL BRIEFS

VOLUME 1 • FALL 2014

iped.fordham.edu

FORDHAM | IPED

Fordham University's graduate program in International Political Economy and Development trains graduate students in the advanced interdisciplinary analysis of global economic relations and international development issues. Graduates frequently pursue professional careers in international finance and banking, international economic policy, and in international relief and development.

Global Briefs is a student-run newsletter of Fordham's IPED program. It aims to share the public policy insights of students, alumni and faculty on global economic relations, international development, and regional conflict.

Editorial Board

Jordan Radovan

Editor and Designer

Julius Samson

Senior Editor

Kathleen Frazier

Sean Kenney

Contributors

Dr. Henry Schwalbenberg

IPED Program Director

Tel. 718.817.4064

Email: ipedjournal@fordham.edu

iped.fordham.edu

Constance Handley: International Trade Agency (IPED 1997)

Connie Handley currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center (ITEC). President Obama created ITEC within the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) by executive order in February 2012. ITEC takes a "whole-of-government" approach in monitoring and enforcing Americans' trade rights around the world. ITEC uses expertise from across the federal government to assert U.S. trade rights obtained through various international trade agreements. An employee of the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA), Connie was appointed to her current post by the Secretary of Commerce.

According to Connie, one of the challenges for USTR is having to perform a wide range of responsibilities with a small workforce. She shares that there is a certain amount of friction when dealing with other agencies such as the Department of Commerce and Department of Agriculture due to an overlap in responsibilities with these organizations.

For Connie, her biggest achievement while working for the federal government was being part of the team which represented the United States before the World Trade Organization in a dispute settlement case involving softwood lumber from Canada. The case ended with the contingent winning most of the major issues, and even-



tually resulted in a trade agreement with Canada.

Connie advises IPED students looking for a career in Trade, not to limit themselves to USTR and Department of Commerce because there is a multitude of agencies involved in trade issues. In line with working for the ITA, Connie mentions that one of the most useful skills that she learned from the university was accounting and the ability to analyze different forms of information. She adds that IPED offers an advanced, interdisciplinary training which enables students to pull information from various fields like Economics and Political Science, and to use this information to arrive at conclusions and make recommendations.

Identity and Religion: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Central African Republic

By Sean Kenney



Vehicles set on fire by Christian mobs in Bangui, Central African Republic. (The Associated Press)

Religion can be a catalyst for division, as well as a powerful tool for conflict resolution. There is a significant amount of literature that links religion to conflict. Scholars have a plethora of examples to cite in arguing that religion is a problem in conflict transformation – Israel and Palestine, Darfur and Sudan, Afghanistan, and Syria to name a few. Nevertheless, there are positive conflict resolution attributes of religion from the theological framework of the Catholic Church.

Religion is unique in the sense that it brings together diverse forms of identity. The diverse exploration of identities leads to comparisons and contrasts with other people and identity groupings.

When intergroup comparison does produce overt conflict, an escalatory dynamic often is evident.

Because individual identity is partially dependent on the integrity of the groups' identity, threats to the group are experienced as threats to individual identity. In the presence of severe relative deprivation, the infringement of others' group cohesion can weigh heavily. When an individual's personal, social, or economic resources are threatened, a response mechanism is triggered to defend against this loss.

Religion, at best, is only a contributing factor in communal conflict and seldom is the root cause. Conflicts between religious groups may be caused, or fueled by the same material factors that fuel "secular" conflicts between ethnic, racial, or other identity groups.

The tragic conflict in CAR presents a unique microcosm to study the role of religious leaders in medi-

ating conflict. CAR has suffered from decades of military misrule and shadowy democratization, which has hallowed out the state and put CAR at 180/186 on the Human Development Index in 2014. Furthermore, Chad and Sudan have also meddled in CAR's affairs through military interventions.

The goal of the religious leaders in CAR is to facilitate a change in the actors' prejudiced attitudes and perspectives, to a more tolerant and open-minded attitude. The Church is playing an active role in integrative bargaining. This is done through persuasion and long-term creative problem solving between Christian and Muslim communities. The Church is focused on developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interest of each side, emphasizing their peaceful coexistence prior to the Seleka's offensive. Furthermore, interfaith dialogue initiatives and reconstruction have been launched in affected areas, especially where Christians and Muslims are currently living in separate zones. The Church is playing a critical role in bringing the two groups together, and facilitating community rapprochement.

The situation in CAR suggests that religion is probably not the root causes of conflict in many troubled areas. Rather, there are underlying power struggles and political incentives that take advantage of the identities formed by religious practices. Religion fills the diverse identity needs of people but also makes us vulnerable to division. It is a frustrating paradox, but the positive foundations for peace are certainly visible in CAR.

IDEASCAPE — Proposals in Development and Public Policy

Foreign Investment, Commercial Courts, and Implications for Democracy:

A Proposal for Research on the Impact of FDI inflows on Commercial Court Creation in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Kathleen Frazier

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, more than 70 percent of developing countries have made efforts toward democratization and increased political freedoms. Interestingly, at the same time, FDI has surpassed official development assistance as a source of capital in developing countries. FDI inflows to developing economies made up more than half of all global FDI in 2013. The potential relationship between FDI flows and democracy has drawn increased attention from scholars and policy makers as they seek to establish the direction and consequences of this relationship. The purpose of this research proposal is to examine the FDI-democracy relationship through the lens of FDI's effects on domestic institutions, specifically the legal system and the creation of commercial chambers and courts.

Independent legal systems and business climate reforms are necessary to attract foreign investment, increase investor confidence, and strengthen domestic business partnerships. One strategy to address these priorities is the creation of separate commercial chambers that provide streamlined legal recourse. In Africa, the results of these new courts have been mixed thus far. In some countries the average case processing time has fallen drastically since the utilization of commercial courts. In Rwanda it fell from 400 to 230 days, while in Gambia and Nigeria the time to enforce contracts initially fell from 766 to 434 days and 730 to 457 days, respectively.



Outside the Ghana Supreme Court Building (Pulse Magazine)

However, initial progress has stalled in other countries. In Ghana, for example, commercial courts had faster case processing times when they were first established in 2005 than they do today.

Changes in one section of the legal system will undoubtedly have ripple effects throughout the rest of the justice sector, and beyond, primarily the local business environment. These linkages raise several questions which are central to the debate about economic globalization and its effect on domestic institutions. Is the establishment of these courts indicative of wider changes and reform within the justice sector, or just a reaction to FDI inflows? What are the potential effects of these courts on the legal system and other democratic institutions? Does the creation of these courts dovetail with the interests of local business leaders, or are they seen as giving

preferential treatment to foreign interests and “big money”?

The proposed study would build on the existing literature regarding FDI inflows and democracy in developing countries. It would further hone these perspectives by examining the specific political effects of FDI on domestic legal systems via the establishment of commercial courts. As new commercial courts are created, or the already existing ones succeed, fail, or stagnate somewhere in between, the data on this subject will only become more robust and necessary to analyze. FDI inflows to Africa are continuing to rise and show no sign of slowing. Its ties to the development of legal systems and consequences for other domestic political institutions will be a vital component for policy makers who seek to balance economic growth with the promotion of democracy.

Faculty Notes from Dr. John P. Entelis

Dr. John P. Entelis is Professor of Political Science and Chairman of the Department of Political Science at Fordham University. He is also Associate Director of the Middle East Studies Program at Fordham. Since 1970, he has been on the faculty of the political science department at the university. He was one of the founders of the IPED program where he was Director from 1979 to 1981. Dr. Entelis received his B.A. degree in political science from Ohio Wesleyan University, Summer Certificates in Arabic Language Study at the American University in Cairo, Harvard University, and Princeton University under NDEA National Defense Foreign Language Fellowships, an M.A. from New York University, and a Ph.D in political science from New York University. At present, Dr. Entelis teaches four graduate courses: Political Economy in the Middle East; Political Risk Analysis; Comparative Political Analysis; and Politics and Petroleum.

Dr. Entelis has lectured widely both in the United States and abroad, to university, government, business, and community groups under the



sponsorship of private, academic, and governmental institutions. He is also the author or co-author of numerous scholarly publications on the comparative and international politics of the Middle East and North Africa including: *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon*; *Comparative Politics of North Africa*; *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*; *Political Elites in Arab North Africa*; *Algeria: The Revolution Institutionalized*; *Culture and Counterculture in Moroccan Politics*; *State and*

Society in Algeria; *And Islam, Democracy*; *and State in North Africa*.

When asked about his views, Dr. Entelis shares that in terms of policy, there is little that the United States and other Western forces could do to solve the chaos in the post-Arab Spring; reforms should come from the people themselves. He adds that the world must be prepared to accept the continuing violence and its consequences in the Middle East, and to embrace the possibility of the violence spreading through the Arab World and surrounding nations.

Dr. Entelis believes that “IPED is a unique interdisciplinary graduate program that fuses strong disciplinary training with direct practical knowledge that allows graduates to pursue positions in the public and private sectors but also prepares them to continue doctoral work in economics, political science, or sociology. The alumni network of IPED graduates has played a significant role in promoting opportunities for current students as they prepare to enter the professional world.”

