

UC Irvine

Symposium: Democracy and Its Development 2005-2011

Title

Foreword -- Symposium: Democracy and its Development, 2005

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Symposium: Democracy and Its Development

The peer-reviewed papers gathered here are representative of the work presented at the first graduate student conference organized by the Center for the Study of Democracy, in February 2005.¹ The conference focused on the development of democracy to better understand the fundamentals of the process. The conference drew submissions from Ph.D. candidates from seven schools in the Southern California area, covering a range of disciplines, methodologies, geographic concentrations and substantive questions about democratic development in the "established" democracies, consolidating democracies, or democratic transitions.

The conference call encouraged a broad conceptualization of democracy and its development. The examples of issues on which we invited proposals included:

- the problems facing the democratic process in the United States, West Europe or other established democracies
- the development of sustainable democracies in Eastern Europe, East Asia, and other new democracies
- sociological and economic conditions related to democratic development
- the role of citizens within the democratic process and methods to expand citizen access and influence
- democracy within institutions and the impact of institutions on the functioning of the democratic process.

Most of the submitted papers came from students in Economics, Political Science, or Sociology programs. Although the papers covered much of the broad terrain indicated in the call, they also displayed exciting congruities or the insights of different methodologies. Many of the student-presenters found colleagues working on related topics. Students also benefited from thoughtful comments from one or more faculty discussants, as well as the comments of other graduate students.

We plan for this conference to be an annual event, and hope that it will encourage cross-fertilization between the strengths of the various programs in the region.

¹ A listing of the full conference program is available at <http://www.democ.uci.edu/confer/gradcall05.htm>

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A word about our virtual host, the California Digital Library eScholarship Repository: The repository is a major initiative by the University of California to explore new ways to share our research. The Center for the Study of Democracy has for some time maintained a working paper collection on the repository, and this has provided an excellent means for many UC scholars to circulate and receive feedback on their work prior to publication. The repository also archives “postprints” - electronic copies of articles written by UC faculty and students that have already been published. For more details see <http://www.cdlib.org/programs/escholarship.html>.

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