

“Complete Consensus:” Indigeneity, Self-Determination, and Good Governance in the Making of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Abstract by Ryan Tripp

In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly and Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will deliberate “self-determination,” “autonomy or self-government,” and “territorial integrity” in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The following essay reconfigures *Declaration* studies by coalescing the establishment of the United Nations “Expert Mechanism [formerly Working Group] on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” with “Indigenous Caucus” formation.

The 1982 Working Group narrated “indigenous populations” and “internal self-determination” for declarative aims, precipitating a global “Indigenous Caucus” of, by, and for “indigenous observers.” In 1993, the Caucus ceased “external self-determination” demands in exchange for Working Group exclusion of an “indigenous peoples” definition from the *Declaration*, a compromise promoted as “complete consensus.” United Nations appointment of a “Special Rapporteur” from Working Group delegations, rechristened the Expert Mechanism, as well as 2007 *Declaration* ratification fulfilled “expert” narrations of “good governance.” However, an Indigenous Caucus boycott of the 2014 General Assembly plenary session, indigenous testimony from the United States on “good governance,” and lackluster member-state responses to Forum “Principles of Good Governance” all threaten to unravel “complete consensus.”