

Department of Political Science Department Seminar



Prof Anja Jetschke

"The Alternative Origins of Human Rights Institutions: Refugees, Negative Externalities and Regional Human Rights Commitment in Asia"

Moderator: A/P Sooyeon Kim
30th March 2017, 2.00 to 3.30pm
PS Staff Meeting Room, AS1-04-01,
Department of Political Science, NUS

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ABSTRACT

Why do member states of a regional organization that strongly vary in their level of democracy adopt a regional human rights instrument? This article argues that transnational refugee flows constitute a significant driver of regional human rights commitment. We argue that large and unexpected flows of refugees constitute a specific type of negative externalities influencing member states' willingness to commit to human rights on a regional level. Transnational refugee flows are not only an outcome of human rights violations but can also be a driver of human rights commitment. Repressive practices of member states affect other member states of an existing regional arrangement in a direct and indirect way, both increasing the chance to establish a human rights mechanism. The direct mechanism works through the costs that refugee populations impose on the societies of the receiving states. The indirect mechanism works through the loss of reputation that all other members experience for not sanctioning the human rights violations of their neighbor governments. We use qualitative and statistical evidence from ASEAN to test our theory of negative externalities.

BIO

Anja Jetschke is Professor of International Relations at the University of Göttingen's political science department since 2012. Her Comparative Regional Organizations Project is currently developing the world's largest database on regional organizations. Previously she headed a research program on international governance at the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (Hamburg) and was an assistant professor at the University of Freiburg. She also held research fellowships at Stanford University, Ohio State University and the University of Berlin. Her publications include many articles and chapters on comparative regionalism, ASEAN, and the AICHR, and a prize-winning book, *Human Rights and State Security: Indonesia and the Philippines* (2011). Her doctorate is from the European University (Florence).

