Research Seminar

Just One of the Group:
The African Development Bank and the Accountability Policy Norm in Development Finance

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Originally established to be a Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) by and for African states, the African Development Bank (AfDB) is just one of a growing group of functionally similar institutions comprising the development finance regime complex. Susan Park examines this relatively unknown Bank to identify how and why it took up the accountability 'policy norm,' which provides people affected by Bank financed projects recourse through an Independent Accountability Mechanism (IAM). She argues that the AfDB's adoption of this policy resulted from the diffusion of the accountability policy norm (according to which all MDBs should have such mechanisms) within the development finance regime complex. This argument goes beyond rationalist explanations of member state demands and institutional preferences, because it reveals why non-regional member states, particularly the United States, pushed the AfDB to adopt the policy norm absent local demand for it, and how the AfDB acquiesced by grafting its Independent Recourse Mechanism from other MDBs. Park not only demonstrates how member states reproduce policy norms across independent institutions, but also how the MDBs replicate consistent and coherent responses that reinforce their position within the complex. The diffusion of policy norms details how behavioural expectations and institutional practices convergence within the development finance regime complex, while reinforcing the identity of non-Western led institutions as part of the group.

Prof. Dr. Susan Park is Professor of Global Governance in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney and a Hans Fischer Senior Fellow at the Technical University of Munich (2019-2022). She focuses on how international organisations and global governance can become greener and more accountable. Her most recent books are: Environmental Recourse at the Multilateral Development Banks (CUP 2020); Global Environmental Governance and the Accountability Trap (MIT Press 2019, with Teresa Kramarz), and International Organisations: Theories and Explanations (CUP 2018). She is an Associate Editor of the journal Global Environmental Politics and is Co-Convenor with Dr Kramarz (University of Toronto) of the Earth Systems Governance (ESG) Task Force ‘Accountability in Global Environmental Governance.’ She holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Sydney.

Hochschule für Politik München - Virtual Seminar Room

https://tum-conf.zoom.us/j/63279561947

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Convenors: Prof. Tim Büthe and Prof. Yannis Theocharis on behalf of the TUM-GoV Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Studies