



36th Käte Hamburger Lecture

Struggling with Complexity: How Governments Fail to Limit Fragmentation in Global Governance

Tuesday 16th June 2020 (17:30-18:30h)

Online Lecture – Access link will be provided after registration for the event

Global governance is commonly described as complex and governments as motivated by efforts to limit such complexity. This lecture inquires into how governments manage global governance complexity, specifically the question of international institutional proliferation. Government officials often profess that they wish to limit institutional proliferation and cite a variety of reasons, including high administrative burdens, and costs from redundancy and contradictory mandates. Academic studies point to additional reasons why governments have incentives to limit international institutional proliferation, such as the fragmentation of power, organizational inefficiencies, and legitimacy costs. Yet, international institutional proliferation has not abated in recent decades; the number of organizations and the complexity of global governance have, if anything, increased. The lecture explores what historical records reveal about the reasons governments have failed to limit institutional proliferation. It uses historical material from government archives in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States to examine the assumptions, claims, and conclusions of common theories of global governance. The principal empirical focus is a failed initiative by the Group of Seven to limit institutional proliferation. The lecture suggests that innovations in informal cooperation emerged as a means of containing the costs of (formal) complexity and to harness some of its benefits. One effect has been that overall greater global governance complexity has been entrenched despite governments' professed ambitions to limit such complexity.

Programme

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| 17:20-17:30 | Sign in to webinar platform |
| 17:30-17:35 | Welcoming and introductory remarks:

Christine Unrau
Research Group Leader Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research |
| 17:35–18:15 | 36th Käte Hamburger Lecture

Orfeo Fioretos
Associate Professor of Political Science at Temple University in Philadelphia |
| <i>Discussants:</i> | Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre
Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research,
University of Duisburg-Essen |
| <i>Moderator:</i> | Christine Unrau |
| 18:15–18:30 | Q&A with the audience |
| 18:30 | End of the lecture |