

**What is Transcended in Transnational Policy-Making?:
Knowledge and Authority in European Diplomacy**

Speaker: Merje Kuus
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Chair: Woon Chih Yuan, Department of Geography, NUS

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Abstract

This presentation investigates the production of expert authority in transnational regulatory institutions. Drawing on my recent book on European Union policy-making as well as new research on diplomatic training in Europe, I examine the rules for the production of rules in such institutions. Empirically, the analysis relies on over 120 interviews with nearly 80 policy professionals to offer a fine-grained account of the extraordinarily complex policy fields in Brussels. Conceptually, this primary material is used to foreground the unstandardized character of EU policy-making and the difficulty of studying this and other fields of transnational regulatory power.

The argument is made through two examples. First, I stress the trans-national character of EU decision-making in general and its diplomacy in particular. The effort is not to assess whether the EU is a supranational or intergovernmental body, where the balance is between these tendencies, where it ought to be, or where it is moving. I rather underscore how EU diplomacy blurs and transcends these analytical categories. Second, I highlight the impact of audit cultures on European Union diplomacy. The effort is to document the narratives of transparency and efficiency in the diplomatic field and to link these narratives to the ongoing struggles over the definition of diplomacy and European interest. As similar struggles over the basic building blocks of decision-making unfold in bureaucracies around the world, the Brussels example illustrates broader processes of transnational standard-making.



About the Speaker

Merje Kuus is Professor of Geography at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

She is a political geographer whose work examines the production of expert knowledge in transnational regulatory institutions. Dr. Kuus is the author of *Geopolitics and Expertise: Knowledge and Authority in European Diplomacy* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014), and *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); she is also a co-editor of the Ashgate Research Companion to *Critical Geopolitics* (Ashgate, 2013), and a review editor of the journal *Geopolitics*.

Dr. Kuus has been the recipient of the Fulbright Fellowship and the Killam Fellowship as well as individual research grants from the United States Institute of Peace and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, among other bodies. Her current work investigates diplomatic training in Europe.

ADMISSION IS FREE – ALL ARE WELCOME

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