DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Advancing Refugee Protection from Bottom Up: Case of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)

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Refugees in Asia have been suffering from insufficient refugee protection mechanisms in the region. It is common in the region that most states are not fully committed to international refugee protection, and Asia is the only region without regional frameworks and national instruments to protect refugees. However, the absence of international and regional instruments and the failure of states in Asia do not necessarily result in a complete vacuum of refugee protection. Instead, it exposes alternative paths in refugee protection. Asian civil society created a regional network, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), in 2008; then, the network organization has been center of constructing alternative refugee protection from bottom-up. Then, how has the Asian civil society become the major norm-entrepreneur in refugee protection whereas the legal and political instruments have been inadequate or malfunctioning? What makes APRRN an emerging counterpart to predominant stakeholders in the international refugee regime? This research argues that APRRN is playing a critical role in the development of alternative refugee protection in Asia. First, APRRN contests the state-centric international refugee laws by transplanting international human rights legal frames. It tries to enhance regional and national refugee protection through the practical implementation beyond formal institutionalization. Second, APRRN challenges conventional power relationships and elevate the subordinate position of the civil society in the international refugee regime by mobilizing resources. APRRN provides a platform to access global agenda-setting and decision-making processes and has become an advocate, instead of remaining a service-provider. As a result, APRRN attempts to overcome the securitization of refugee protection, which is shaped by historical experiences and political culture in Asia, by implementing rights-based principles and practices.

Thursday, April 30, 2020
12 Noon – 2pm

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For those in public attendance who would like to ask questions please send those questions to jairusq@hawaii.edu and he will read them to the candidate.