Brooklyn Lecture in International Business Law: The World Bank's Minimalist Race Agenda

By:

Steven Dean

March 21, 2022

The World Bank's Minimalist Race Agenda

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March 28, 2022

6:00 - 7pm (EST)

Registere here to attend.

Following the murder of George Floyd, the World Bank established an Anti-Racism Task Force that divided the Bank's work into two phases. Phase 1 involves workplace issues including raising awareness, strengthening knowledge, and mitigating instances of racism and racial discrimination. Phase

2 issues will look at the World Bank's development work and its community engagements.

This lecture will focus on the early indications of how the World Bank is addressing issues of race in its development work. My primary claim is that, so far, it seems the World Bank is moving towards a path of institutionalizing a pretty thin understanding of racial discrimination in its development work. This minimalist race agenda does not, for example, include the World Bank facing its role in justifying its lending to the racist South African government during apartheid, in open defiance of international law and of the United Nations.

This lecture will make the case that the World Bank has to face its racist legacy up front, as well as to explicitly disavow the techniques its lawyers and leaders deployed to defend the World Bank's continued lending to apartheid South Africa. Ultimately, my claim then is that by looking back to see how the World Bank has in the past addressed issues relating to race, we, as international economic lawyers, can also better trace the footprints of racism embedded in rules and institutions of the post–Second World War order and what we can do to begin to address them.

Panel: Steven Dean (Brooklyn); Julian Arato (Brooklyn); Afton Titus (University of Cape town).

This event is sponsored by Brooklyn Law School, the Dennis J. Block Center for the Study of International Business Law and the Brooklyn Journal of International Law.

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