

Title:

Politics of abolition: international advocacy against the death penalty

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Abstract:

The international landscape of death penalty retentionists versus abolitionists has flipped, compared to fifty years ago when only a handful of states had abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Today, abolitionist states make up nearly two-thirds of the countries around the world, with global and regional organizations as well as some abolitionist governments working towards the universal abolition of the death penalty. While the majority of death penalty research has emanated from and focuses on the US, well over 90 per cent of global executions take place outside of the US, even when we exclude executions carried out in China. In 2018, the Australian government, while being surrounded by retentionist states, has joined the international advocacy against the death penalty. The first part of my presentation is about how international organisations define, measure, and track the progress towards the global abolition of the death penalty – and what we may be overlooking as a result. The second part of my presentation concerns the roles governments and organisations (can) play in the abolition of the death penalty.