Regulatory Pluralism and Empowerment: Lessons from China about New Environmental Regulators

Presented by Benjamin van Rooij
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Over the last decade, Chinese citizens and NGOs have started to take action against industrial pollution, pluralizing the regulatory landscape originally occupied by administrative agencies. Regulatory pluralism here has an authoritarian logic, occurring without the retreat of party-state control. Under such logic, the party-state both needs and fears new actors for their positive and negative roles in controlling risk and maintaining stability. Consequently, the regime’s relation to regulatory pluralism is ambivalent, shifting between support and restriction. This presentation looks at the preconditions under which citizens have entered the Chinese environmental regulatory landscape. It looks in particular at how power imbalances shape environmental awareness and activism and how this affects the regulatory function citizens can have. It concludes that in a context of regulatory pluralism, regulation and empowerment mutually interact and how regulators must focus on how to regulate in a way that is not disempowering to citizens.

Benjamin van Rooij is the John S. and Marilyn Long Chair Professor of US-China Business and Law at the University of California. His research focuses on implementation of law in a comparative perspective. Since 2000, he has studied how lawmaking affects implementation, regulatory law enforcement and compliance, and rights invocation and legal empowerment. A central theme is how implementation of law can be improved in the context of emerging markets where weak enforcement and widespread violations of law create a vicious circle undermining compliance.

Date: Friday 13 June 2014
Time: 1PM to 2PM
Venue: Room 920
Melbourne Law School
185 Pelham Street, Carlton

Bookings essential
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