

## Legal Pluralism and the Rule of Law

Shane Chalmers

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Host Institution: Oñati IISJ

**Place: Oñati International Institute for the Sociology of Law**

**Date: Wednesday, 7th December 2016: 15:00 p.m.**

This talk considers the need to reimagine ‘the rule of law’ in light of ‘legal pluralism’. Building on the work of Desmond Manderson and Roderick Macdonald, it considers what it means for law’s *pluralism*—understood as the differences that animate the everyday life of law—to be the very pulse of its *rule*. In doing so, it seeks to open the frame that has been placed around the rule of law in two ways. On one side: to see beyond the law that is made intelligible through institutionalised modes of expression, to the law that is made sensible through the richly expressive media of human culture (opening the frame around the ‘law’ that is seen to rule). And on the other side: to see beyond law as a mode of governance, to the everyday lives of subjects (opening the frame around how this law is seen to ‘rule’). The result points to the need to reimagine the rule of law as a broadly socio-cultural phenomenon rather than a narrowly legal-institutional arrangement, requiring new research to flesh out the revised concept. The talk is informed by the author’s doctoral experience researching the rule of law in Liberia, with Theodor Adorno as philosophical guide. It proceeds in two steps, beginning with the problem of law’s pluralism, before turning to the problem of law’s rule.

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Shane Chalmers is currently an Australian Endeavour Postdoctoral Research Fellow, hosted by the Oñati International Institute for the Sociology of Law. He is also Visiting Fellow, School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) and Affiliate, Centre for Law, Arts and the Humanities (CLAH), at the The Australian National University. He undertook his PhD at RegNet (2016) on the life of the rule of law in Liberia.

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