

Call for Paper Proposals

Environmental Regulation: Experimenting Across Scales

International Research Workshop

29 Nov.- 1 Dec. Tel Aviv, Bar Ilan and Open Universities

Conveners:

Prof. Eyal Benvenisti- Tel Aviv University

Prof. Oren Perez- Bar Ilan University

Prof. Issi Rosen-Zvi- Tel-Aviv University

Dr. Orr Karassin-. Research Institute for Policy Analysis, The
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500 word abstracts to be submitted by March 1st 2015 to
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Workshop Theme

The conference will explore the issue of experimental regulation through the lens of cross-scales (where scales are interpreted broadly to include, spatial, temporal, cultural, and political scales) (Peters et al., 2004; Wilbanks, 2007). The concept of experimental governance that has been developed by Jonathan Zeitlin and Charles Sabel in a series of papers constitutes an influential contribution to the literature on reflexive regulation. Zeitlin notes that what characterizes experimental forms of regulation is that "they systematically provoke doubt about their own assumptions and practices; treat all solutions as incomplete and corrigible; and produce an ongoing, reciprocal readjustment of ends and means through learning from disciplined comparison of local efforts to advance general goals" (Zeitlin, 2011: 188). More specifically, Sabel and Zeitlin argue that experimentalist governance architectures have three salient features (Sabel & Zeitlin, 2011: 1-3; Zeitlin, 2011: 189-191). First, they accommodate diversity by setting broad framework goals and granting discretion to lower levels in adapting general goals to varied local contexts. Second, they provide a mechanism for coordinated learning from local experimentation through regular reporting and assessment and disciplined comparison. Third, both the goals themselves and the means for achieving them are conceived as provisional and subject to revision in light of experience.

The idea of experimental governance can be seen as an attempt to cope with the uncertainties and complexities of regulatory decision-making. By portraying the regulatory endeavor as intrinsically contingent and indeterminate it challenges the illusory assuredness of technique-based regulation. We look at the role experimental regulation has to play in complex environments, given the dwindling hold of the nation state and increased presence of both supranational and subnational regulatory regimes.

The conference will seek to develop the ideas of experimental governance in the context of diverse regulatory dilemmas. It endeavors to further the understanding of experimental regulation both as a theoretical model and as an applicative construct, focusing particularly on cross scale issues. Cross-scale issues emerge at the political level (moving from the local to the national to the transnational), the geographic (cross-impacts between distinct spatial regions), the cultural level (learning across different cultures) and temporal (impacts on future generations). Because in many cases regulation involves such cross-scale issues the challenges involving the design of regulation in such conditions, and in particular – regulation that is able to learn and adapt – are particularly complex and worth exploring.

The conference will focus on the field of environment and health which is particularly fitting for this exploration because environmental-health problems have a strong trans-boundary nature (however, we will also consider proposals that examine broader regulatory issues that are applicable to the environment and health context). It will focus on the question of institutional design, exploring such issues as learning, participation, transparency and legitimacy – all of which become extremely complex as we move between scales. The exploration of experimental regulation through the perspective of cross-scales would also provide an opportunity to reflect, critically on the idea of experimental regulation, its contribution to regulatory studies and its potential blind-spots (e.g., the limits of learning).

Contributing international participants:

Charles Sabel – University of Columbia Law School

Duncan Snidal- University of Oxford

Jonathan Zeitlin- Department of Political Science University of Amsterdam

Kenneth W. Abbott- College of Law Arizona State University

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Bibliography

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- Sabel, C. F., & Zeitlin, J. 2011. Experimentalism in Transnational Governance: Emergent Pathways and Diffusion Mechanisms. *Paper presented at the panel on "Global Governance in Transition", annual conference of the International Studies Association, Montreal, March 16-19, 2011.*
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