

Angela Wigger

Neoliberalism Consolidated: The Example of Private Enforcement in EU Competition Regulation

The European Commission heralded the replacement of Regulation 17 of 1962 by Regulation 1/2003 a 'legal and cultural revolution'. What has been labelled the 'modernisation' indeed only formed the prelude of a much more comprehensive reform project. However, the partial privatisation and further Europeanisation of competition rule enforcement of the early 21st century was far less revolutionary than that the European Commission suggests. Rather than a revolutionary break with the past, it merely consolidated the neoliberal orientation of EU competition regulation that had already started in the mid-1980s. In my talk, I will address the content, form and scope of the 2004 reform and contextualise it against the backdrop of the much the much wider neoliberal transformation of EU competition governance. By taking the question 'cui bono' as a point of departure, I will furthermore attempt to explain the configuration of social forces that has informed and contested this reform process, and discuss the broader implications of the reform for the development of capitalism in Europe.