Hurst

Ruling before the Law

How do legal systems actually operate outside of Western European or North American liberal democracies? To understand law and legal institutions globally, we must go beyond asking if countries comply with idealized, yet under-theorized, rule of law principles to determine how they work in practice. Examining legal regimes across different areas of criminal and civil law in both urban and rural China and Indonesia during distinct periods from 1949 to the present, William Hurst offers a new way of understanding how cases are adjudicated (and with what implications) across authoritarian, developing, post-colonial, and newly democratizing settings. This is the first systematic comparative study of the world's largest Communist and majority-Muslim nations, and the most comprehensive scholarly work in many years on the micro-level workings of either the Chinese or Indonesian legal system at the grassroots, based on a decade of research and extensive fieldwork in multiple Indonesian and Chinese provinces.

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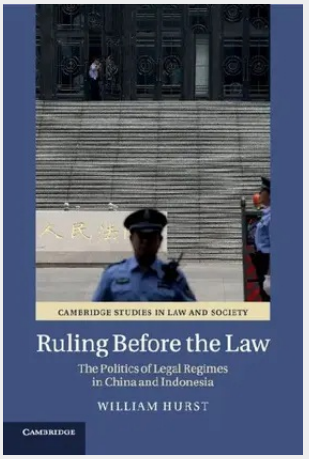

47,30 €
47,30 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9781108445894
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-1-108-44589-4
Verlag: Cambridge University Press
Erscheinungstermin: 02.01.2020
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2020
Serie: Cambridge Studies in Law and Society
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 466 g
Seiten: 319
Format (B x H): 152 x 229 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)