

„Complexity and Networks – A Different Perspective on Statutory Law Regulation“

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How do complex legal systems evolve in the modern world? In recent years, computational methods including natural language processing and network analysis have been used to gain a quantitative understanding of law as a complex adaptive system. In this lecture we will discuss the meaning of complexity science for law and demonstrate the usefulness of these methods by applying them to statutory and regulatory data in the U.S. and Germany. Providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing legal documents as multi-dimensional, dynamic document networks, we'll find astonishing growth of the regulatory burden on society – in both volume and interconnectedness. We will discover where this growth comes from (inter alia social welfare, tax and financial market regulation) and how to employ concepts from computer science and law to handle it. The lecture requires no prior knowledge of complexity science, graph theory or comparative law – but all of the above are naturally helpful.