

Third European Conference on Social Networks

Session on Network Science & Law

Wolfgang Alschner¹, Urška Šadl², and Fabien Tarissan³

¹*University of Ottawa, Canada*

²*European University Institute, Florence, Italy*

³*CNRS, University Paris-Saclay, France*

Scholars from a variety of disciplines increasingly use network analysis to study law and courts. Still, the diversity of the methods applied is overwhelming and the value of the approach compared to traditional legal research remains difficult to assess. In this session we aim at exploring the promises and perils of a network analysis of law, combining insights from legal scholarship and perspectives from computational social sciences.

In particular, we are interested in studies analyzing the networks of those who **participate in the making of the law**, that is the (social) networks of counsels, judges or law-making states or institutions. Possible questions includes:

- Lawyers, judges and lawmakers are often perceived as societal elites. Is that reflected in the networks they form? How susceptible are these networks to change?
- Are institutional barriers or biases entrenched in legal networks?
- How do ideas and expertise diffuse through legal networks?

We are also interested in studies exploring the **web of law**, that is networks composed of norms, articles, bills and treaties linked through explicit or implicit references. In that perspective, possible topics can be:

- What are explicit (e.g. cross-references) and implicit (e.g. semantic) ties between legal documents and how can they be measured? What do they tell us about the law or lawmaker?
- How the language of courts, through implicit citations, can reveal its perception of legal concepts?
- How do courts differ in their use of citations? What explains these differences?
- What makes a case important in law? How can we use citation networks to identify such cases or search for relevant precedent?
- Can citation networks reveal how law develops, changes and adapts to its context?

The session welcomes both theoretical work and empirical studies of network theories and social network analysis to any question related to the legal domain such as the ones suggested above.

The abstract (500 words max) must be submitted before March 31 using the website of the conference: <http://www.eusn2017.uni-mainz.de/abstract-submission/>