

Problem Statement

Mankind is currently living in the Anthropocene, modifying nature at a faster pace and more intensively than ever before. The consequences are grave: extreme weather events, rising sea levels, climate change, crop failures and mass extinction of species, just to name a few. These, in turn, affect every single area of human life, from health to food security to transportation and trade.

Against this background, it seems unavoidable to adapt the governance of human behavior in such a way it advances to being compatible with nature, thus reconfiguring legal relations beyond anthropocentric. Yet, there is no overarching approach in legal theory encompassing both – the human being with its needs *and* its dependent relationship with the surrounding environment.

A systematic and consistent theoretical framework is required to address the urgent task of protecting nature and the environment. Law in its entirety, not just specific areas of law, must be viewed centrally and primarily from the perspective of environmental protection and nature conservation.

The primary objective of the project “Law and Nature” is the exploration of the viability of such an approach and conceptualizing a broadly interdisciplinary theory. The project is funded by the VolkswagenStiftung (“Volkswagen Foundation”) allowing us to conduct the initial exploratory research, but also possible subsequent in-depth studies. Within the framework of the current workshop, we intend to put the feasibility of the overall approach to a test, but also to identify particular research strategies for its further development.

Organizers

Birgit Peters, Professor of Public Law, International and European Law, Trier University

Nils Schaks, Assistant Professor of Public Law, University of Mannheim



Registration & Further Information

Please confirm your attendance by Tuesday, 5th September 2023, by contacting Nils Schaks via email at nschaks@mail.uni-mannheim.de.

There is no registration fee.

For further details, please contact
<http://schaks.uni-mannheim.de/>

International Symposium

Law and Nature – Towards a New Legal Approach

21st – 22nd September 2023
University of Mannheim, Germany

Place: Lecture Hall O 138 (Fuchs-Petrolub-Saal)



Programme

21st September 2023

10.30 – 11.00	Registration
11.00 – 11.15	Welcome address – Prof. Dr. Birgit Peters, Trier University / Prof. Dr. Nils Schaks, Mannheim University

Keynote Address: "The Status Quo and its Deficits"

In introduction, the existing legal concepts for combating climate change and the destruction of nature, in particular their viability and feasibility will be addressed. In addition, speakers will identify what requirements a comprehensive legal concept would need to meet from the perspective of climate science, in order to become part of a scientifically sound solution.

11.15 – 11.45	Prof. Dr. Christina Voigt, Oslo University
11.45 – 12.30	Discussion
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break

1. panel: "Towards a Comprehensive Approach"

Legal scholarship and legal practice have already addressed natural and environmental degradation, but rather selectively and not in the comprehensive sense envisioned here. The first panel is devoted to the question of how environmental law could and should be shaped in order to establish a new governance regime that enables human

beings to survive in harmony with nature in the long term.

14.00 – 14.30	Prof. Dr. Laura Burgers, University of Amsterdam
14.30 – 15.00	Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Köck, Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung, Leipzig
15.00 – 16.00	Discussion
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break

2. panel: "Objectives and Methodological Approach"

The second panel is concerned with jurisprudence. How could a specific "Law & Nature" perspective on law look like? Which legal methods/principles will it comprise? How can jurisprudential methods reduce identified deficits and contribute to the realization of regulatory goals and to address environmental and nature degradation in the most consistent way?

16.30 – 17.00	Prof. Dr. Maria Lee, University College London
17.00 – 17.30	Prof. Dr. Josh Gellers, University of North Florida
17.30 – 18.30	Discussion

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3. panel: "Values"

The third and final panel is devoted to the values of nature. Nature is too rarely perceived as a value in itself, and when it is, it is often implemented inconsistently. What are the values of nature beyond a logic of exploitability, how can we identify them, and how can we build a new comprehensive concept of rights on this basis?

9.00 – 9.30	Prof. Dr. Elena Lazos Chavero, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales Cd. Universitaria, Coyoacán, Ciudad de México
9.30 – 10.00	Julia Dehm, La Trobe, Melbourne (remote)
10.00 – 11.00	Discussion
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break

General Discussion and Future Prospects: "Law and Nature"

11.30 – 12.15	General discussion
12.15 – 12.30	Closing remarks - Prof. Dr. Birgit Peters, Trier University / Prof. Dr. Nils Schaks, Mannheim University