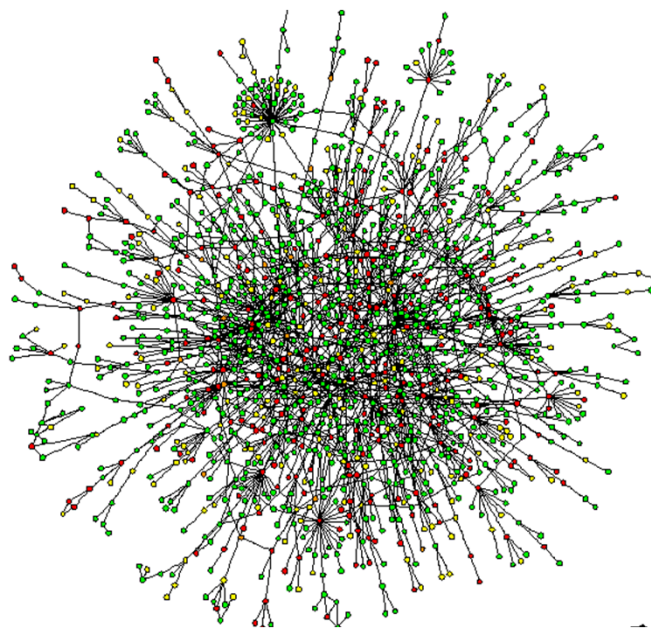# Thinning Out Structural Theory

- A great many constitutional court decisions can be explained as implementing a handful of uncontroversial abstract norms.

- Patterns in constitutional court decisions suggest longstanding consensuses on some basic constitutional requirements. We can explain a great deal of constitutional doctrine with these basic consensus norms and jettison more controversial standard explanations. This provides an alternative to viewing constitutional practice as dominated by conflicts between incommensurable theories of value or interpretation.

- "Pattern norms" suggest additional research treating systems of legal doctrine as complex systems; pattern norms support testable hypotheses concerning legal reasons for judicial decisions.

Accepted for publication; positively reviewed and named "download of the week" by *Legal Theory Blog*.

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